

Status of East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* in Kazakhstan

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In the Palearctic, East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* breeds in north-central and eastern Siberia, west to the west-central Taimyr peninsula and (locally) the Yenisey river south to $c60^{\circ}$ N, and east to the Chukotka and Kamchatka peninsulas south to $c57^{\circ}$ N. There seems to be a rather broad zone of hybridization with nominate *alba* in central and western Taimyr and along the Yenisey river. It, *ocularis*, winters mainly on the Asian mainland, east to southern China, southward to Indochina, Thailand and Malaysia and west through Myanmar and northeast India as far west as Rajasthan (Alström *et al* 2003).

The East Siberian Wagtail is regarded as being a vagrant in Kazakhstan (Gavrilov & Gavrilov 2005, Wassink & Oreel 2007), with only two records up to 2006 (Wassink & Oreel 2007). However, there have been five records there subsequently, involving at least 12 birds. All records from Kazakhstan are listed below and their locations shown in Figure 1:

20 May 1998, adult male, Korgalzhyn ($50^{\circ} 35' N$, $70^{\circ} 01' E$), Aqmola province (Heinicke *et al* 2006, Wassink & Oreel 2007).

12 May 2003, adult male, Kolshengel ($44^{\circ} 20' N$, $75^{\circ} 33' E$), Almaty province (Gavrilov & Gavrilov 2005, Wassink & Oreel 2007).

7–11 May 2007, at least five birds, Kolshengel, Almaty province (Bird 2007, Hendriks 2007, Wassink & Oreel 2008).

26 May 2008, one first-summer bird, photographed, Aydarli ($44^{\circ} 06' N$, $75^{\circ} 55' E$), Almaty province (Wassink 2009a).

7 May 2009, one first-summer bird, Kyzylkol lake ($43^{\circ} 45' N$, $69^{\circ} 30' E$), South Kazakhstan province (Wassink 2009b).

13–16 May 2009, at least three first-summer birds, Kolshengel, Almaty province (Wassink 2009b, Plate 1).



Figure 1. Biogeographical map of Kazakhstan (Wassink & Oreel 2007) showing locations of East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) ocularis* records. Aydarli and Kolshengel are indicated using a common star.



Plate 1. East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) ocularis*, first-summer, Kolshengel, Kazakhstan, 14 May 2009. © Jos van den Berg



Plate 2. East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla (alba) ocularis*, first-summer male, Topar lakes, Kazakhstan, 18 May 2009. © Arend Wassink

18 May 2009, two birds (including one singing first-summer male), Topar lakes (44° 58' N, 75° 09' E, Almaty province (Wassink 2009b, Plate 2).

In addition, an apparent adult male hybrid between *ocularis* and nominate *alba* was photographed at Korgalzhyn, Aqmola province on 15 June 2004 (Heinicke *et al* 2006, Wassink & Oreeel 2007).

These records suggest that small numbers of East Siberian Wagtails regularly pass through Kazakhstan in spring, at least west to the Tengiz-Korgalzhyn region and Kyzylkol lake. The fact that this taxon has not been recorded on autumn migration in Kazakhstan can presumably be explained by the very low observer density during that period.

East Siberian Wagtail resembles nominate *alba* but shows a blackish eye-stripe and, on average, more white on the median and greater coverts than the eastern '*dukhunensis*' population of the latter. In some birds, the blackish eye-stripe is absent on the lores (Alström *et al* 2003). These might easily be mistaken for hybrids, especially in the case of first-summer birds showing retained juvenile outer greater coverts with extensive dark centres, resembling nominate *alba*.

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