

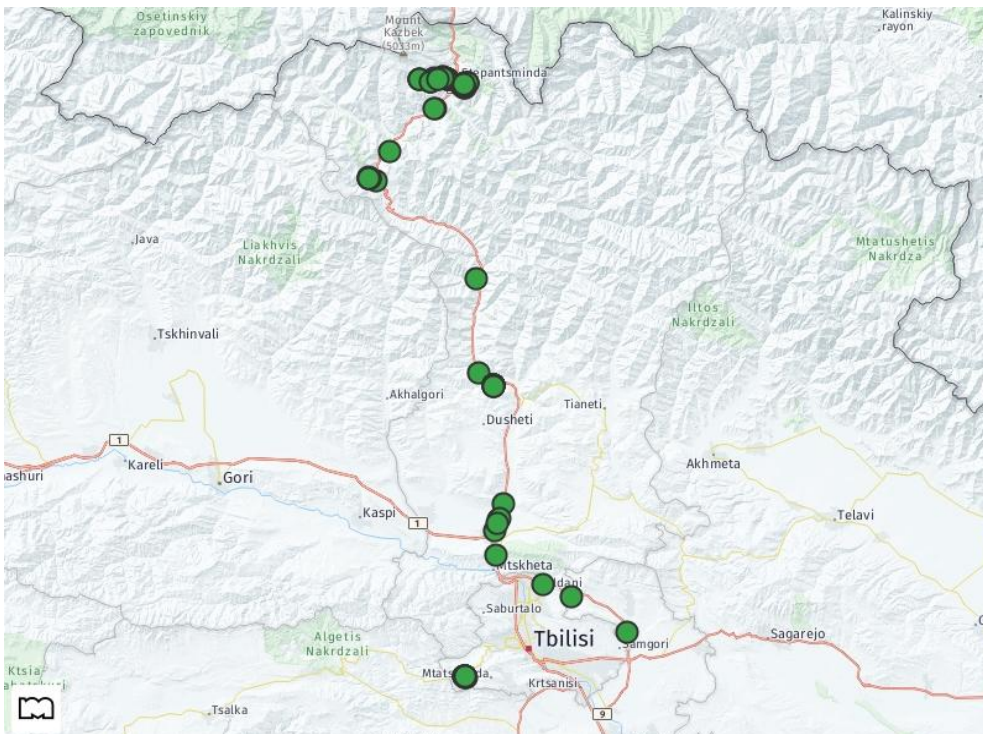
Georgia

25 - 29 May 2022

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Introduction

End of May we did a short 5-day trip to Georgia with the goal of seeing a handful of lifers in the Caucasus mountains. The best time to visit is earlier in the year (end of April/ beginning of May) when most birds are found lower down in the valleys because of the snow. Our late visit meant we had to hike higher up, but still we managed to find 5+ Caucasian Snowcocks (more were heard) and 8+ Caucasian Grouses on the ridges above us. Great Rosefinch and Güldenstädt's Redstart turned out to be more tricky but we managed to find both (and luckily bright plumaged males). And with singing Mountain Chiffchaffs in the valley and an additional stop for Krüper's Nuthatch near Tbilisi the trip ended with 6 lifers but also a long list of cool birds along the way: Ring Ouzels, Twites, Alpine Accentors, Common Rock Thrush, Bearded Vulture, singing Barred Warblers, Greenish Warblers and Common Rosefinches, and a nice roadside stop for Red-breasted and Semi-collared Flycatcher.



For some photos see: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/EsTiYZ47DKuJocvK7>

A map with gps points of all observations is available here (download from iGoTerra):

<https://www.google.nl/maps/d/edit?mid=15OSAU1BKXX2ivxHuPttB1aX30cM-P-k&usp=sharing>

Itinerary

Day 1	Wednesday 25 May	Flight from Amsterdam to Riga, and then flight Riga to Tbilisi through the night
Day 2	Thursday 26 May	Arrival at Tbilisi around 5am, we pickup rental car and drive to Samadlo just west of Tbilisi for Krüper's Nuthatch, then drive north with stop at Ananuri Forest (Red-breasted Flycatcher) and arrive in Stepantsminda. Short afternoon birding east of village (first Caucasian Snowcock seen high up + Great Rosefinch) Mountain Chiffchaff is common.
Day 3	Friday 27 May	Full day hiking up towards Kazbegi glacier with several Caucasian Snowcocks on the ridges. Given the amount of snow we had to hike through, we turned around a bit above the Altihut where we found a pair of Güldenstädt's Redstart (around 3050m)
Day 4	Saturday 28 May	Birding on the east side of Stepantsminda where we find several Caucasian Grouse high up on the Rhododendron covered slopes. Also Bearded Vulture & Red-fronted Serin here.
Day 5	Sunday 29 May	Last morning, we scan from the Gergeti Trinity Church and find several Caucasian Grouse again. Driving back to Tbilisi we do another stop at Ananuri Forest and this time find the Semicollared Flycatcher. Back at the airport at 2pm to fly back to Amsterdam

Although it is possible to see all targets in just a few days, most birders visit Georgia on a longer trip, where you can combine it with the drier areas south-east of Tbilisi and/or with a visit to the raptor-migration hotspot at Batumi. We were really impressed by the stunning landscapes, the great food and friendly people so we hopefully can come back one day to explore more of this beautiful country.

Annotated checklist

- 1 **Caucasian Grouse** *Lyrurus mlokosiewiczii* NT Lifer
5 Stepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 4 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 2 **Caucasian Snowcock** *Tetraogallus caucasicus* Lifer
1 heard Stepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Stepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 heard Kazbegi 2022-05-27, 1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27, 1 heard Stepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 1 heard Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 3 **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba melba*
1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 4 **Common Swift** *Apus apus apus*
20 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Pasanauri 2022-05-29, 1 2022-05-29
- 5 **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus canorus*
1 heard Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 heard Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 heard Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Stepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 6 **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*
1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-26
- 7 **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
1 2022-05-29

- 8 **Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus barbatus*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 9 **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26
- 10 **Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus fulvus*
3 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 3 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 11 **Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos homeyeri*
1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 12 **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus nisus*
1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-26
- 13 **Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo menetriesi*
4 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 14 **Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops epops*
1 2022-05-26, 1 2022-05-29
- 15 **European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*
1 heard Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26
- 16 **Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major tenuirostris*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri 2022-05-29
- 17 **Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius martius*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26
- 18 **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus*
1 2022-05-29
- 19 **Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*
8 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Stepantsminda 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 20 **Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius krynicki*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 21 **Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica bactriana*
1 2022-05-29
- 22 **Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax docilis*
2 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27
- 23 **Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhocorax graculus graculus*
1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-26, 1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 24 **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix sharpii*
3 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 25 **Northern Raven** *Corvus corax laurencei*
1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 26 **Coal Tit** *Parus ater michalowskii*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29

- 27 **Eurasian Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus satunini*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 28 **Great Tit** *Parus major major*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 29 **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata caucasica*
1 2022-05-29
- 30 **Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
8 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 31 **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica rustica*
1 2022-05-26, 1 2022-05-29
- 32 **Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 33 **Mountain Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus sindianus lorenzii* Lifer
1 heard Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 3 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 34 **Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita caucasicus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26
- 35 **Green Warbler** *Phylloscopus nitidus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 36 **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** *Iduna pallida elaeica*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26
- 37 **Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla dammholzi*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 38 **Barred Warbler** *Curruca nisoria nisoria*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 2 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 2 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 39 **Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes hyrcanus*
1 heard Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 40 **Krüper's Nuthatch** *Sitta krueperi* Lifer
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26
- 41 **Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea caucasica*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 42 **Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris caucasica*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 43 **Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
1 2022-05-29
- 44 **Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos philomelos*
1 heard Samadlo 2022-05-26

- 45 **Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus viscivorus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 46 **Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula aterrimus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 47 **Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus amicornum*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28,
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 48 **European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula caucasicus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 49 **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 50 **Semicollared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 51 **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros ochruros*
10 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 52 **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisisicus*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26
- 53 **Güldenstädt's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus erythrogastrus* 
1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 54 **Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 55 **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26
- 56 **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe libanotica*
4 Strepantsminda 2022-05-26, 1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 57 **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus domesticus*
1 2022-05-29
- 58 **Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris montana*
1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 59 **Dunnoek** *Prunella modularis obscura*
1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-26, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 60 **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea cinerea*
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 61 **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba alba*
1 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-29
- 62 **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis trivialis*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26

- 63 **Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta coutellii*
10 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-26, 1 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 64 **Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs coelebs*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 65 **Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes nigricans*
1 Ananuri Forest 2022-05-29
- 66 **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus kubanensis*
1 heard Samadlo 2022-05-26, 1 heard Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26, 2 Gergeti Trinity Church 2022-05-27, 1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 3 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 3 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28, 1 Georgia-Russia Friendship Monument 2022-05-29
- 67 **Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilla rubicilla* 
1 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-26
- 68 **Twite** *Linaria flavirostris brevirostris*
1 Kazbegi 2022-05-27
- 69 **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis brevirostris*
1 Samadlo 2022-05-26
- 70 **Red-fronted Serin** *Serinus pusillus*
2 Strepantsminda--Elia Church 2022-05-28
- 71 **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia prageri*
2 Samadlo 2022-05-26