

An updated review of bird diversity in Central Altai highlands

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Abstract

The Katun and North Chuya ridges are the highest and most popular mountain ranges in the Altai Republic. The Katun ridge is 150 km long and includes 386 glaciers; its highest mountain is 4509 m. The mountain ranges received the status of World Heritage Sites in 1998. The deepening tourist and recreational development of the Katun and North Chuya ridges is accompanied by a change in bird numbers and species diversity; therefore, constant monitoring is needed to support the bird species database. The purpose of our research was to supplement the modern information on the fauna and bird population of the highlands of central Altai within the Katun and North Chuya ridges. We conducted field observations during 2010–2022 in Central Altai on hiking routes along the Katun and North Chuya ridges with a total length of 1015.4 km to the highest elevation of 3400 m. The bird diversity of the Katun and North Chuya ridges is represented by 53 species from 11 orders and 21 families. We also registered 21 rare and endangered species, among them the extremely rare species are: great cormorant, ruddy shelduck, and Eurasian goshawk; very rare species are: black kite, upland buzzard, common buzzard, booted eagle, golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, bearded vulture, common kestrel, red grouse, demoiselle crane, common cuckoo, scops owl, pygmy owl, nightjar, black woodpecker, Richard's pipit, grey wagtail, red-billed chough, raven, greenish warbler, white-winged redstart, common rosefinch, and common crossbill; rare species are: sparrowhawk, red-necked phalarope, water pipit, fieldfare, long-tailed tit, marsh tit, great tit, and Brandt's mountain finch; and the common species are: spotted nutcracker, common chiffchaff, and willow tit.

Keywords

Avifauna, population, rare species, Central Altai, Katun ridge, North Chuya ridge