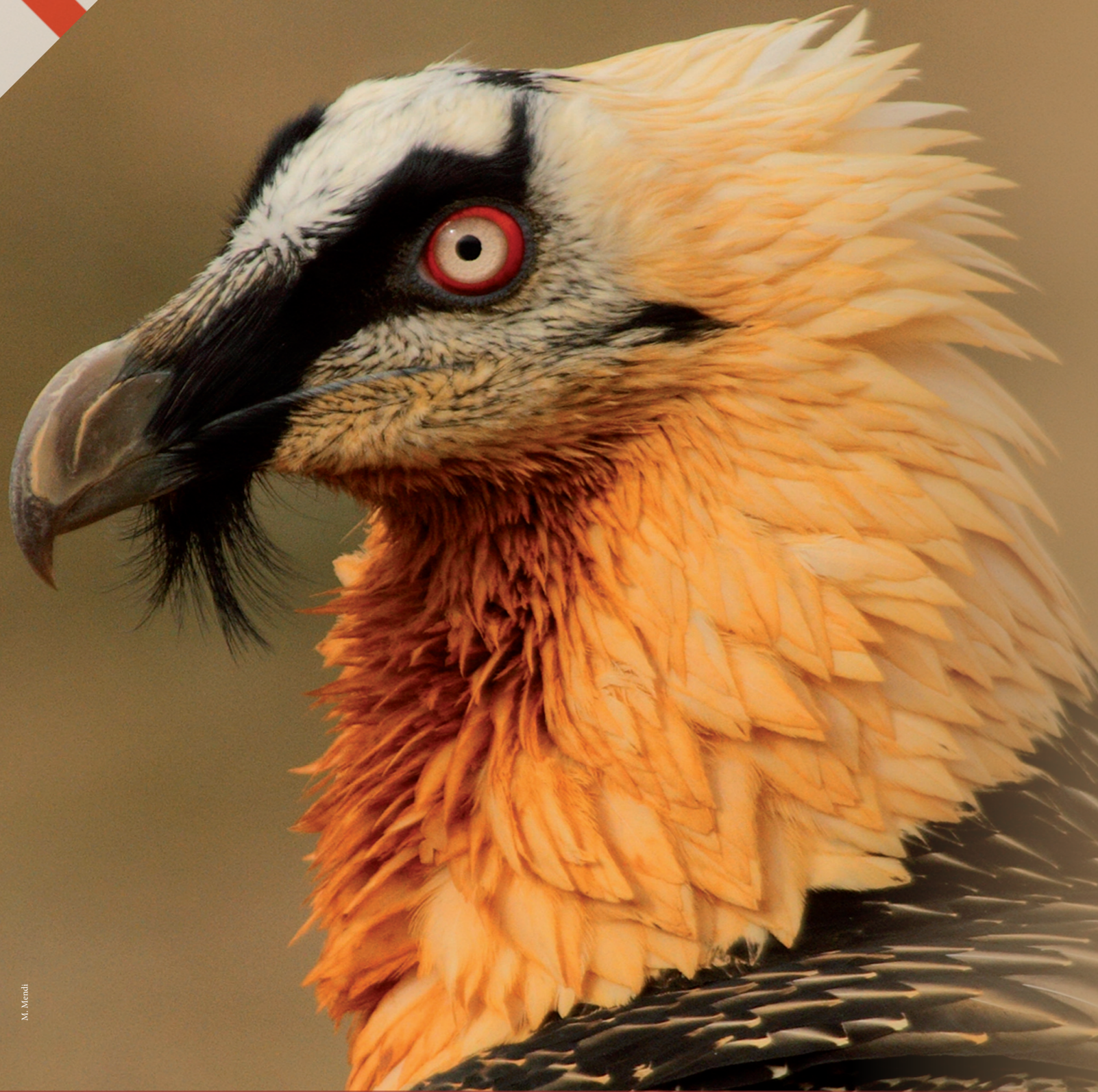




# GEORGIA

The pearl of the Caucasus



Georgia is situated at an intersection between different biogeographical regions, and this is reflected in the richness of its nature and wildlife: there is a high number of endemic or localized species, and a wonderful mix of northern, eastern and mediterranean elements. Asia and Europe come in contact here, and the varied and rugged environment guarantees a wide selection of habitats in which to look for birds. Large parts of Georgia are still very wild and with low human density, and not only in the mountain areas: the open, arid areas present in the south east for instance have little human population, and host a great set of very interesting bird species, as well as a lot of localized reptile and amphibian species. Also the cultivated areas offer good opportunity for birdwatching, while the vast expanses of both broadleaved and coniferous forests offer refuge for large mammals such as Brown bear, Wolf and Lynx. The greater Caucasus mountain range lies in the north of the country, and its highest peak here reaches over 5000 metres! Batumi, on the Black Sea coast, is now famous as one of the best hot spot on earth for observing raptor migration, especially in the autumn passage, with incredible numbers and a large variety of species. Georgia is a fantastic country for nature lovers, and a trip here is sure to satisfy even the most demanding birdwatcher.

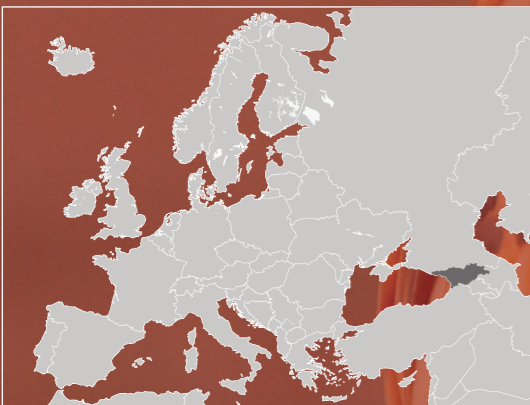
The mountain areas in and around Kazbegi are rightly famous for being the best place where to see fantastic species such as Caucasian Snowcock, Caucasian Black Grouse, Great Rosefinch and Guldenshtadt's Redstart; the scenery here is gorgeous, with steep mountainsides and a very interesting river bed with mixed shrubs. We shall be looking for Twite, Shore Lark and White-winged Snow Finch, as well as Golden Eagle and Lammergeier. Early

## GEORGIA

### Birdwatching & Photography



SKUA Nature promotes and develops nature tourism in Armenia in collaboration with Eco tours Georgia. Our goal is to create nature itineraries for birdwatching and photographic tours, and we also try to develop botanical and butterfly tours.



M. Merdi

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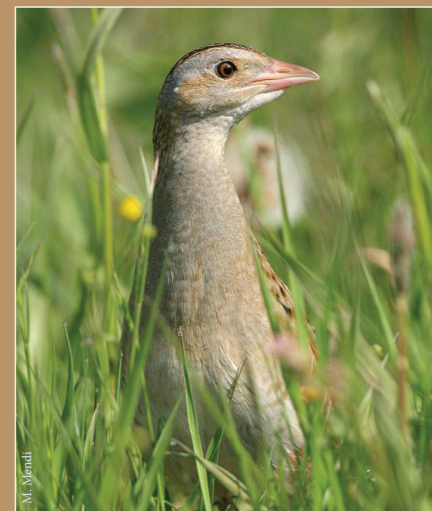
may is the best time of year in order to see the target species mentioned above together with a number of migrants such as Barred, Eastern Orphear and Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, as well as breeding Corncrakes, Mountain Chiffchaff and Red fronted serins.

The area around Chachuna, in the south east, has a fantastic landscape with savannah-like open areas, mixed with rolling hills, rocky outcrops and riverine forests: an exciting place in which to look for great birds and not only. Carnivores are well represented here with Jackal, Wolf, Brown Bears and even Jungle Cat! Any sighting of mammal will be a matter of luck, but the abundance of birdlife will keep us busy: Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Chukar, Black Francolin, Black-headed Bunting, Finch's Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, White-throated Robin, European Rollers and Bee-eaters, Menetries's Warbler are among the birds we will look for. Chachuna is also noted for one of the largest communities of breeding birds in the Caucasus. Raptor breeders include Long- legged Buzzard, Lesser and Common Kestrels, Black Kite, Egyptian, Cinereous and Eurasian Griffon Vultures, Levant and Eurasian Sparrowhawks, Northern Goshawk, European Honey Buzzard, Common Buzzard, Imperial, Lesser Spotted, and Short- toed Eagles, Eurasian Hobby, and Saker Falcon. Quite an impressive list: though not all of them can be guaranteed, there are good chances for many of them.

The area around the Davit Gareji monastery is one of the most spectacular sites in Georgia, where historical and wildlife attractions are located side-by-side and can be watched at the same time. Mediterranean-type arid badland landscape with multi-colored clay hills covered with shrub and steppe- like vegetation, the site of one of the oldest Christian monasteries in the world.

In Davit Gareji can be seen; breeding colonies of Eurasian Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Blue-rock Thrush; large aggregations of European Bee-eaters, Rose-coloured Starling and Rock Dove. Other interesting birds are Calandra Lark, Isabelline Wheatear, Finsch's and Pied Wheatear, Rock Nuthatch, Lesser-grey Shrike, Spanish and Rock Sparrow.

The spectacular area in the Javakheti plateau, close to the armenian border, hosts high altitude lakes and wetlands, great breeding habitat for both White and Dalmatian Pelicans, various duck species, Armenian Gull, Common Crane and Citrine Wagtail.





*In autumn more than  
one million raptors  
migrate through  
Georgia*



M. Bianchi



M. Bianchi



M. Bianchi

Accommodation in Georgia is in most areas very comfortable and western style, except in a few remote areas where more basic conditions prevail, adding a bit of adventurous feeling to the experience! Food is invariably very good, fresh and tasty, with a lot of local specialities not to be missed. Infrastructure and roads are mainly good, with some roads where low speed has to be maintained, thus allowing good birding opportunities!

CALENDAR **S O N D J F M A M J J A**

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