



Icterine Warbler – Estonia – June 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn

Estonia – Midsummer in the Baltic– 3RD to 10TH June 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Early June in Estonia offers good spring birding in northern Europe, the weather settled compared to April and May. The following account is a summary of key highlights of birds seen during the tour. Please note that the day narratives are by no means intended to be exhaustive, instead they outline key highlights for each day. For the sake of consistency all species in the systematic list below possess names as defined by AviList version 2025 (AviList Core Team. 2025. *AviList: The Global Avian Checklist*, v2025. <https://doi.org/10.2173/avilist.v2025>), if a species possesses a more commonly used English name, then this is present within brackets in the systematic list. But its commonly used English name is used within the narratives for sake of reader ease. The systematic list is correct to the best of my knowledge as of June 2026. The tour was led by Tarvo Valker and Andrew Kinghorn.

WEDNESDAY 3RD JUNE

Arrival in Tallinn was early evening. The first bird of the trip not far from the airport was a brief **Northern Goshawk**. The drive to our accommodation was fairly uneventful on the bird and mammal front, but upon arrival at our accommodation we were serenaded by **Thrush Nightingale**. We got our heads down in order to be up early the next morning keen to take in our first day's birding in Estonia.

THURSDAY 4TH JUNE

After a half-decent night sleep, we headed out early to try for our first target; **Barred Warbler**. With patience we did manage to eventually connect with this stunning species in breeding-plumage, the male in his song flight showed well but we managed perched views of a female on numerous occasions. Whilst all this was going on, we had good views of **Caspian Tern** flying overhead and the antics of **Little Tern** were also well received. The morning was getting on, and we retreated back to our hotel for a well-deserved breakfast. Post-breakfast, we headed back out to see if we could see any waders, there was a good selection on that front with numerous **Eurasian Curlew** and **Northern Lapwing** on offer. The bushes were alive with **Icterine Warbler**, always a highlight to see and hear on any trip. From here we headed to a viewing tower, this was definitely worth the effort we had our first **White-tailed Eagles** of the trip and surprises came in the form of **Barnacle** and **Tundra Bean Goose**.

Checking the fields in the area was definitely worth our time, we had multiple stunning male **Montagu's Harriers**, this species breeds in good numbers still in Estonia. Some roadside **Grey Partridge** were a nice surprise, and with patience we added our main target in the area; **Ortolan Bunting**. Whilst watching this bird, a flyover **European Honey Buzzard** was our first of the trip, as was a flyover **White-backed Woodpecker**, but it remained frustratingly difficult to see as is typical at this time of year in Estonia when it comes to the woodpeckers. The day was now getting warm and the bird activity had dropped, so with this in mind we retreated back to our accommodation for a rest before our evening meal and early-evening birding session.

Post-evening meal, we headed to an impressive marsh close by, the avifauna here was seriously impressive. Scanning the marsh itself we got good views of both **Black Tern** and **Little Gulls**, a booming **Bittern** typically remained heard rather than seen. Flyover **Great Egrets** felt like they had reached almost plague-like proportions! With patience most got good views of **Savi's Warblers**, and **Water Rail** was heard calling in the marsh. We also had views on the scope of distant **Red-necked Grebes** that were showing well, even if a little distant. Our final adventure of the day involved looking for **Ural Owl**, it did not take us long before we were enjoying views and atmosphere from two birds, as well as superb views of **European Nightjars**, all from the comfort of the quiet roadside.

FRIDAY 5TH JUNE

The day was started off with a sea-watch, but we could not resist scanning the shoreline of course, a distant adult **White-tailed Eagle** had to be scoped. In terms of passage there was a good passage of **Common Scoter** and within them we also had a single **Velvet Scoter**, a good result. Divers passing here at that time of year tend to be **Black-throated Diver** and indeed with patience we obtained views of one. After a good forty-five minutes or so we decided to call it a day and move on to check

some coastal habitat and harbour. The harbour itself was typically quiet for the time of year, but the surrounding vegetation proved much more productive. We added our only **Firecrest** of the trip and an incredibly showy **Icterine Warbler** was also a trip highlight. Flyover **Common Crossbills** allowed us to obtain brief views, some of our only of the trip.



(Lesser Spotted Eagle – Estonia – June 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn)

We came across a fantastic roadside **Lesser Spotted Eagle** post lunch, the bird was obliging enough to allow us to pull up alongside it for some really fantastic views before the bird retreated a little back into the trees. After lunch we headed off to look for some raptors in the Hindaste area, upon arriving it was clear immediately we had timed the visit well, a large soaring raptor was on view, stopping the vehicle for a closer look revealed it to be an immature **Eastern Imperial Eagle**, this was only the third ever record for Estonia, a national rarity! Other raptors in the area were much more expected, a distant **White-tailed Eagle** flew over and a flypast brief **European Honey-Buzzard** were also well received. One of the other highlights here was to watch multiple hunting male **Montagu's Harriers**, it is very hard not to be inspired by this truly stunning species.

SATURDAY 6TH JUNE

After a late-ish breakfast we headed off for one last look for coastal waders, but passage had seemed to have halted for us. A very distant singing **Golden Oriole** was understandably well received, but was outshone by a showy **Wryneck** singing atop of a barn and showing well. From here we headed off toward Audru polder nature reserve in the Pärnu area. This is an extensive area of reedbed and marshes right by the coast. We started off by checking the marshes themselves, here we added some smart breeding-plumage wading birds, including **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Eurasian Curlew**. However, the real target here did materialise with good views of **Marsh Sandpiper**, a little distant in the scope but this can be a hard bird to catch up with on its breeding grounds in Europe. We had a break for lunch and returned after some wet weather had moved through, it was breezy but we did have some breathtaking views of **Penduline Tit** and several pairs of **Citrine Wagtails** showed remarkably well. Despite the strong winds the **Great Reed Warblers** put on a strong performance and we even managed views of some of the individuals.

With the weather forecast to be less than optimal we took a break until the evening. Post-evening meal, we went back out again to try some nearby mixed woodland. We tried numerous times for Pygmy Owl, but to no avail. Though we did get good views of White-backed Woodpecker, in the end we ended up with both this species and **Great Spotted Woodpecker** together in the same tree. To finish off the evening we headed out in the hope of Great Snipe, on this occasion at this lek it was not to be, but we did get a good dusk chorus from **Corncrake**, and one bird showed remarkably well on the roadside.



(Corncrake – Estonia – June 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn)

SUNDAY 7TH JUNE

We had a more relaxed morning and headed off to look for some forest birds, we didn't even need to get into the vehicle before a new trip bird, a **Eurasian Hobby**, flew over the van and away. On arrival at the forest, we immediately heard another trip target, a **Greenish Warbler** started singing and with patience showed reasonably well. We then took a walk into the surrounding woodland, we had good views of multiple **Pied Flycatchers** as well as **Crested Tit**. Eventually we got good views of a **Pygmy Owl**, the bird flew in and performed nicely before heading off back into deeper forest. It was followed shortly after by a singing **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, this individual also turned out to be an attractive male. Further into the forest and at our final stop, we had excellent views of a **Middle Spotted Woodpecker**, this male was in a slightly unusual forest for the species with a lot of conifers dominating.

We had some afternoon downtime and then headed back out for an evening session. We had good views of **European Nightjar** and rodding **Woodcock** put on a good show. We were, however, keen to get out for some pre-breakfast birding and so retreated back to our accommodation for a reasonably early finish.

MONDAY 8TH JUNE

We started the day off early and headed to an undisclosed location close to our accommodation to look for **Greater Spotted Eagle**. Very quickly after having exited the vehicle we located a lone,

distant bird sitting atop an isolated tree, upon looking through the telescope it became apparent it was indeed a **Greater Spotted Eagle**, it soon after flew past us giving good views, landing in the field to forage for prey before perching up in a tree again. Critically, this bird was both ringed and satellite tagged, meaning it had also been DNA tested and confirmed to be unadmixed rather than a hybrid. There are growing conservation issues with this species, it is in decline and the sparseness of suitable mates has driven birds to start hybridising with **Lesser Spotted Eagle**, a species that is closely related and overlaps in range. Without a doubt this was the rarest species (in European terms) we encountered on the trip. We then headed back to the hotel for some breakfast and to pack up as we were moving on.

We had a fair bit of driving to do before reaching our next accommodation, it was to be our final accommodation of the tour. On arrival we headed to a well-known spot for **Booted Warbler**, it didn't take too long before the target bird was located. In the end there were at least three singing males, but one in particular showed well with some patience. Nearby a typically gravelly industrial area held a pair of **Little Ringed Plovers**, that offered a flavour of home! After sorting our lunch and bags we headed for some local birding in the immediate area. Our first stop was at a wetland area close by, we had calling **Little Crake** almost immediately upon arrival, this is a rare breeding species in Estonia and breeds in varying numbers in Estonia depending upon the year. A slow walk along some good habitat provided an extremely well-picked-out **Black Stork** overhead, a tricky species to connect with in Estonia. We had our only **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** of the tour here and the bird obliged for us. Post our evening meal we then headed out for our birding session of the day. We headed straight for a **Great Snipe** lek, on arrival the calm conditions meant we immediately heard the males calling and were fortunate enough to locate some birds on the deck, they offered great views in the scope. A real surprise came in the form of a roadside **Great Grey Shrike**, our only observation on the tour of this species. We watched the lek for some time before deciding to call it a night and returning back to the hotel.

TUESDAY 9TH JUNE

After a late breakfast we took a short drive to take a look for some species we were missing. We went to some fantastic woodland, once again **Wood Warbler** was common and easy to see and a surprise came in the form of a calling **Spotted Nutcracker**, but despite exercising some patience the bird would not show. We also had good views of **Nuthatch** and **Crested Tit**, always well received. From here we headed off to look at Lake Peipsi, this lies on the border between Estonia and Russia. From here we had good views of flyover **White-tailed Eagle** and scanning over into Russia we could see **Great Egrets** in good numbers along the reedbed there. Post lunch we visited a beautiful circular walk, here we added **Kingfisher** to the trip list as well as **Grey Wagtail**, multiple of the latter were seen. This picturesque spot also held **Wood** and **Willow Warbler**. We had some downtime in some unpleasant weather, we went out again in the evening and finally managed visuals of **Golden Oriole**, we also had a very vocal **Great Reed Warbler** which was well received.

WEDNESDAY 10TH JUNE

It was our final morning's birding; we took a very short trip to our final morning birding of the trip. We didn't have to wait long before one of the final targets of the trip fell; **Blyth's Reed Warbler** was singing and with patience showed. As is usual the **Golden Orioles** remained remarkably difficult to see, but their glorious song echoed around the early morning chorus. On the way back to the vehicle and unusually showy **Thrush Nightingale** was also very well received; despite having heard multiple individuals it was always good to finally get good prolonged views of this often-showy species.

After breakfast it was time to start making our way back toward Tallinn. We stopped at a charming nature reserve where we finally got **Grey-headed Woodpecker** as well as good views of a singing male **Red-backed Shrike** and a flyover male **Golden Oriole**. Sadly, a brief **Wryneck** alongside the **Grey-headed Woodpecker** could not be relocated upon exiting the vehicle. Another highlight here included our only **Redwings** of the trip. We arrived in Tallinn with plenty of time. This allowed for one final birding stop near the airport to look for Northern Goshawk, whilst we were not successful on this occasion, we had great views of **Wood Warbler** and **Pied Flycatcher**.

We headed back to Tallinn airport where the tour concluded.

Systematic List

LIST KEY:

Green = Species expected to be encountered regularly on a typical tour of Estonia during this period.

Amber = Species less likely to be seen routinely, but with focused effort are still reasonably achievable.

Red = Species that are difficult to observe on a standard tour and generally require targeted searching; this category also includes vagrants.

No.	Species List	Scientific name
1	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
2	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>
3	Tundra Bean Goose	<i>Anser serrirostris</i>
4	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
5	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
6	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>
7	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
8	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
9	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>
10	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
11	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
12	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
13	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
14	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
15	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
16	Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>
17	Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
18	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
19	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
20	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>
21	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>
22	Horned Grebe (Slavonian)	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>
23	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>
24	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
25	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
26	Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
27	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
28	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
29	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
30	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
31	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
32	Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
33	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
34	Corn Crake (Corncrake)	<i>Crex crex</i>
35	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
36	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
37	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>
38	Little Crake	<i>Zapornia parva</i>
39	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
40	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>

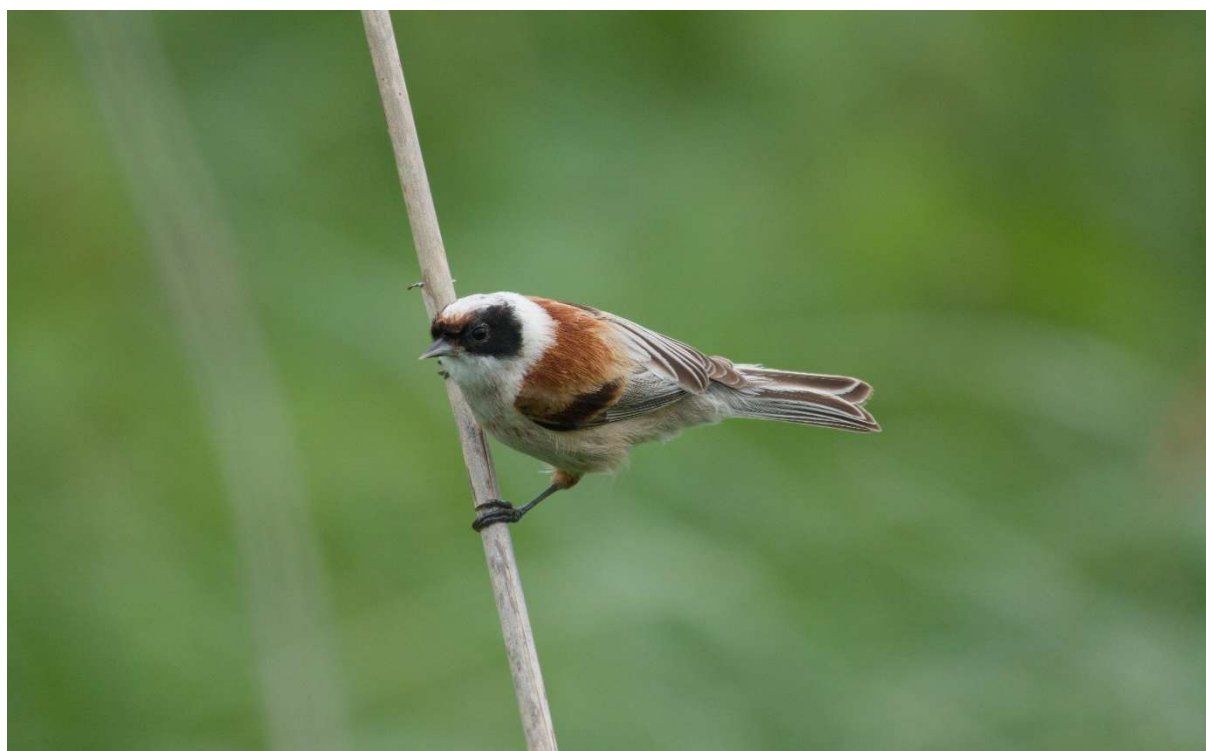


41	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
42	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>
43	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
44	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
45	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
46	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
47	Eurasian Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>
48	Great Snipe	<i>Gallinago media</i>
49	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
50	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
51	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
52	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
53	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
54	Little Gull	<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>
55	Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
56	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
57	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
58	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
59	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
60	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
61	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
62	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
63	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>
64	Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>
65	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
66	White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
67	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
68	Great Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>
69	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
70	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
71	European Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
72	Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>
73	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga pomarina</i>
74	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
75	Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
76	Eastern Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>
77	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
78	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
79	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
80	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
81	Eurasian Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>
82	Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>
83	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
84	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
85	Middle Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes medius</i>
86	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>
87	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
88	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>
89	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
90	Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>
91	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
92	Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
93	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>



94	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>
95	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
96	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
97	Common Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
98	Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>
99	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
100	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
101	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
102	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
103	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
104	Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
105	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
106	Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
107	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
108	Crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes cristatus</i>
109	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
110	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>
111	Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
112	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
113	Eurasian Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz pendulinus</i>
114	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
115	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
116	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
117	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
118	Common Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
119	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
120	Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
121	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
122	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
123	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
124	Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>
125	Booted Warbler	<i>Iduna caligata</i>
126	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
127	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
128	Marsh Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
129	Eurasian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
130	Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
131	River Warbler	<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>
132	Savi's Warbler	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>
133	Common Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>
134	Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
135	Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
136	Barred Warbler	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>
137	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
138	Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
139	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
140	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
141	Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
142	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>
143	European Pied Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>
144	Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
145	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>

146	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
147	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
148	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
149	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
150	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
151	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
152	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
153	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
154	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
155	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
156	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
157	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>
158	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
159	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
160	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
161	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
162	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
163	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
164	Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
165	European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
166	Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
167	Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>
168	Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
169	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
170	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>
171	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
172	Ortolan Bunting	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
173	Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
174	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
175	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>



(Penduline Tit – Estonia – June 2026 – © Andrew Kinghorn)