

'EASY' SICHUAN

11 – 30 MAY 2005

TOUR REPORT

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS

Birdquest's first 'Easy' tour to Sichuan went without a hitch and we really managed to see a remarkable proportion of Chinese endemics and Sino-Himalayan specialities with just a little bit of physical effort. We travelled through the breath-taking landscapes of Sichuan, enjoyed very tasty food and recorded 275 species of birds. Families that were especially well represented include pheasants and partridges (12 species seen and two more heard), robins, chats and thrushes (29 species), warblers (27 species) and babblers (31 species, including eight species of parrotbills). The Bird of the Trip was without any doubt the fabulous Lady Amherst's Pheasant that we saw so well in its bamboo-choked forest. Other highlights included Severtzov's Grouse, Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, Blood Pheasant, Temminck's Tragopan, White Eared and Blue Eared Pheasants, Black-necked Crane, White-tailed Rubythroat, Rufous-headed Robin, Firethroat, Grandala, Severtzov's Tit-Warbler, Three-toed, Grey-hooded and Fulvous Parrotbills, Sukatshev's, Giant and Red-winged Laughingthrushes, Black-browed, White-browed and Père David's Tits, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Sichuan Jay and Hume's Groundpecker. Quality mammals included Alpine Musk Deer and Chinese Goral.

A long flight took us via Paris and Beijing to Chengdu, the capital of the huge province of Sichuan. We were welcomed by Cathy, our able guide/translator and by our skilful driver Mr Han. It became immediately apparent that amazing changes had happened since my previous visit, as wide highways, many modern high rise buildings, very up to date, cool shops, lots of the newest models of fancy cars and ladies dressed in the latest fashion were the norm here now. In late afternoon we visited a local park for some introductory birding and we spent an enjoyable couple of hours with great birds like Common Kingfisher, Chinese Blackbird, the dainty Rufous-faced Warbler, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, White-browed Laughingthrush and Red-billed Leiothrix.

After our first real Chinese dinner (with chopsticks, of course) we retired early to get ready for the real stuff to come. On the morning of Friday the thirteenth(!!) we visited the same local park, where just after dawn we found many people exercising in groups and performing Taichi or sword fighting. Others had brought their favourite cagebirds to the park and after this first taste of the real China we explored the area and found a couple of Chinese Pond Herons in breeding plumage and a secretive Hwamei. A party of impressive Yellow-billed Grosbeaks stole the show as they were nest-building and quite confiding. After a hearty breakfast we drove to distant Wawu Shan, whilst getting a good idea about the Chinese everyday way of life on the journey. Short stops added Brown Dipper, Black-

capped Kingfisher, Red-rumped Swallow collecting mud at our feet, a party of delightful Ashy-throated Parrotbills and a pair of Russet Sparrows to the list. Upon entering the Wawu Shan area we heard our first Lady Amherst's Pheasant and later surprised a magnificent male Temminck's Tragopan next to the road!! What a welcome. We then checked in to our lovely, fairly rustic accommodation quite high on the mountain. Early next morning we were exploring the surroundings of our hotel, where at the edge of the montane evergreen forest we observed Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler (with its very distinctive song) and several Buff-barred Leaf Warblers and admired the many flowering Anna Paulowna and the strange Handkerchief Trees. Later we took the cable car up to the plateau. A female Temminck's Tragopan was seen on the way up by some lucky souls and once on the top of the mountain, we quietly started to wander amongst the open fir and spruce forest with its dense bamboo undergrowth. It was fairly misty, but dry and the birds kept coming: Lesser Cuckoo, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Aberrant Bush Warbler, Bianchi's Warbler, Blyth's Leaf Warbler, Lemon-rumped Warbler, Great Parrotbill (what a performance!!), Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Fulvous Parrotbill (only feet away!!), White-collared Yuhina, Sichuan Treecreeper and Grey-headed Bullfinch all graced our list. Just after our picnic the mist really became too dense and we birded the lower elevations where a handsome Red-winged Laughingthrush, Yellow-browed and Yellow-bellied Tits and Gould's Sunbird showed.

The following day we concentrated on the medium altitudes of the 'Roof Tile' mountain, but the very misty conditions gave us a very frustrating time at first. Luckily Crested Honey Buzzard, a Besra, a couple of rather furtive Chinese Bamboo Partridges, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Black Bulbul (of the attractive white headed race), adorable Little Forktails, Slaty-backed Forktail, Grey-crowned Warbler, Chinese Blue Flycatcher, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Grey Treepie and a White-rumped Munia found their way to our list, but the day was really saved by the fantastic observation of a male and a female Lady Amherst's Pheasant. What an incredible bird that was!!

Another early morning around the hotel yielded the hard to see well Emei Shan Liocichla and our full day on the plateau was the sunniest day of the tour. We were treated to great views of snowy mountain peaks with a tapestry of dense cloud cover below us. We also obtained great looks in excellent light of many species we had seen before. A threesome of White-throated Needletails held us in trance by their amazing prowess of flight and other goodies included White-browed Bush Robin, Brown Bush Warbler, a magnificent quartet of Parrotbills (Great, Three-toed, Brown and Grey-hooded), Rufous-vented Tit, a male Vinaceous Rosefinch and a great show of both Eurasian and Sichuan Treecreepers, offering great comparisons. By mid afternoon we were again swamped in low cloud, and learned that it had rained the whole day in the hotel area, whilst several of us got sunburnt! That night a naughty Brown Rat tried breaking into Yvonne's chocolate reserve.

Our pre dawn walk the following day was again sabotaged by very misty conditions and although we heard a Tawny Owl close by, we never managed to see it. Its very different voice was a surprise. No wonder it is now usually split off as Himalayan Wood Owl. We then packed up and started to drive down the mountain, stopping only for breathtaking views of three males and a female Lady Amherst's Pheasant!! It was already obvious what the Bird of the Trip was going to be!! A short stop at the entrance gave us a couple of Plain-tailed Warblers, our third member of the Golden-spectacled Warbler complex. Lower down, in a patch of rice paddies and copses we observed a male and a hepatic female Indian Cuckoo and heard a distant Emei Leaf Warbler. We then travelled through the densely cultivated plains of the Red Basin to Chengdu. Beyond the capital of Sichuan we hit some major roadworks in the steep foothills, resulting in some dramatic traffic jams. But, eventually we reached our amazingly fancy hotel in Wolong, where a uniformed valet was waiting for us. To think that on my last visit here we were sleeping in what looked like army barracks!

Dawn found us in drizzly conditions high above the village, but luckily it soon cleared and we enjoyed a glorious morning amidst the stupendous mountain scenery of the Wolong Reserve. We were surrounded by tremendous mountains clad in dense conifer forest and bamboo groves. The

birding was fabulous with Lammergeiers, Himalayan Griffon and Black Vultures, Golden Eagle, Rosy Pipits, two awesome male Firethroats, Red-flanked Bluetail, Chestnut Thrush, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Giant Laughingthrush, Black-browed Tit, Tibetan Siskin and Collared Grosbeak, whilst mammals included a rare Alpine Musk Deer and several Chinese Goral. In the afternoon we visited the Giant Panda breeding centre. It was great to see these adorable creatures in action, but we were a bit amazed by the sheer number of animals present. Is that really necessary? Later we explored some nearby fields and forest edge habitat where Ferruginous Flycatcher and Chinese Babax were the highlights.

Next morning, when the first glimmer of dawn was showing far to the east, we were listening to the characteristic display of Wood Snipe far below us on a steep grassy slope. Most of the day was spent birding the higher altitudes of the Balang Shan area in sunny open weather. The magnificent vistas over the surrounding mountains were out of this world and the pass at over 4500m left most of us rather breathless. Snow Partridges showed very well, but the stars here were the extraordinary Tibetan Snowcocks, which strutted about at minimal distance. The photographers went nuts here with these eye-ball to eye-ball views. The supporting cast consisted of Snow Pigeon, Asian House Martin, White-throated Dipper, Alpine Accentor, awe-inspiring Grandalas, Kessler's Thrush and Plain and Brandt's Mountain Finches. A patch of alpine scrub held a terrific male White-tailed Rubythroat, a cooperative female Severtzov's Tit-Warbler and Beautiful and Streaked Rosefinches. Another daybreak at a strategically chosen viewpoint was ruined by dense mist and although we had brief views of two White eared Pheasants, we retreated to a more shrubby slope where Buff-throated Warbler, a female Dark-breasted Rosefinch, a pair of Spot-winged Rosefinches and some White-winged Grosbeaks were noted. Mist then pushed us over the pass where Red-fronted Rosefinches and fat Himalayan Marmots were scoped. Lower down, some nice patches of montane scrub held a smart male White-throated Redstart, Songar Tit and several White-browed Rosefinches. We also checked an attractive cliff where an adult Golden Eagle sat on its eyrie amongst Fork-tailed Swifts, Hill and Snow Pigeons and Crag Martins.

Next sunrise we tried again to look for pheasants from a well-chosen viewpoint, but the only Chinese Monal of the tour was scoped for just a few seconds before the clouds set in again. A real pity. Great views of seven Blood Pheasants saved the day and three Wallcreepers in flight added to the good feeling. At a small open area amidst shrubbery we managed to study a smart male White-bellied Redstart, Giant Laughingthrush and Pink-rumped Rosefinch, whilst Daurian Redstart and Godlewski's Bunting favoured the hotel area. We then continued our travels and on the way to Maerkang we stopped for a cracking male Tiger Shrike, four more showy Wallcreepers, Oriental Turtle Dove and Blue Rock Thrush. On our short exploration of the beautiful old fir and spruce forest of Mengbi Shan we finally obtained good views of a White Eared Pheasant and heard the raucous voice of Verreaux's Monal Partridge. Very early next morning we returned and tried listening for night birds, but the bitterly cold wind kept things in hiding. After some much-appreciated coffee we walked down the road through the splendid old mixed spruce and fir forest, which is interspersed with patches of flowering rhododendron, juniper and thorny bushes. The birding was quite slow, but the rewards were gripping. We all heard Verreaux's Monal Partridge regularly and about half the group managed to lay eyes on this inveterate skulker. No less than seven White Eared Pheasants were found feeding at the edge of an alpine meadow and by the afternoon the number had risen to an amazing 18. Truly spectacular!! We further enjoyed ourselves with splendours like Maroon-backed Accentor, Hodgson's Redstart, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Crested Tit-Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Grey-crested Tit, Przevalski's Nuthatch and a cracking Sichuan Jay. In late afternoon, upon returning to Maerkang we stopped to photograph some magnificent Tibetan houses, complete with prayer flags, impressive hybrid yaks and women in traditional dress.

The following day the Tibetan influence increased as we made our way north on to the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. We first visited a beautiful spruce-clad valley where we picked up Grey-headed Woodpecker and Hume's Leaf Warbler and then drove over wide open plains amidst

thousands of yaks. Black-eared Kites and huge Upland Buzzards sailed overhead, a pair of Ruddy Shelduck were guarding no less than 16 ducklings, several superbly elegant Black-necked Cranes graced a marshy floodplain, huge Tibetan Larks, Oriental Skylarks and Horned Larks foraged amongst the yak droppings, parties of magnificent Citrine Wagtails chased each other over the puddles, a huge Chinese Grey Shrike overlooked its territory, Asian Azure-winged Magpies alarmed at their nest and pied Daurian Jackdaws kept their distance. I could not believe my eyes when I saw the new Hongyuan, with its modern buildings and metalled roads. What a change!! A large Tree Sparrow roost at the hotel held at least 30 House Sparrows, definitely an uncommon visitor to these parts.

Next morning, some thorough exploring of willow scrub and dense riverine vegetation yielded scope views of Wryneck and Père David's Laughingthrush, whilst nearby we observed Siberian Stonechat, Tiger Shrike, the localized White-browed Tit and a magic pair of incredibly well-behaved Severtzov's Tit-Warblers feeding young in their Long-tailed Tit-like nest. We then found several cute Hume's Groundpeckers bounding over the open plains and posing near their newly-dug nest holes. A large marsh held Black Stork, Greylag Goose, Ferruginous Duck, no less than 18 Black-necked Cranes, Brown-headed Gull and some Pale Martins. Major road works for a new highway delayed our arrival at Jiuzhaigou a bit. This scenically magnificent national park with its turquoise lakes and sensational vistas is one of the hotspots for Sichuan tourism and to keep the large number of mainly Chinese tourists in order, access is now only in well organised park buses, which concentrate the visitors in particular areas. With our own transport we managed to get away from the masses and after our photo was taken for the entrance ticket, we made our way into this marvellous park. On the drive in a pair of Blood Pheasants and several Common Pheasants got the adrenalin flowing and at our first port of call Pat found a pair of Severtzov's Grouse quietly feeding in a bush, eating buds. And although the birds were a bit distant, the scope views were much appreciated. After a bit of hanging about a pair of Sukatshev's Laughingthrushes came to inspect us and in a nearby valley we found five territories of the little-known Rufous-headed Robin, several of which allowed great views. Further examination of the forest and glades added Blyth's Pipit, 10 species of Phylloscopus warbler, Chinese Blue Flycatcher, Père David's Tit, Chinese Nuthatch and Spotted Nutcracker to our list. Shortly after daybreak, on our second day in Jiuzhaigou; we scoped a Blue Eared Pheasant on a distant alpine meadow, but sadly it disappeared too quickly. Hordes of Chinese tourists arrived to visit the wonders of the Primeval Forest, so we retired to a quiet valley where a Northern Goshawk showed off its white vent in display and where Sooty Tits played hard to get. In the afternoon we had a lovely time with eight Three-banded Rosefinches quietly feeding on buds, with several very tame Elliot's Laughingthrushes and a charming Siberian Chipmunk. Four Blue Eared Pheasants and a Wild Boar favoured a distant slope.

Just after dawn we were scrambling about on a scrubby hillside outside Jiuzhaigou National Park where rewards included Spectacled Parrotbill (parrotbill number eight of the tour), Spot-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, Collared Finchbill and Chinese Babax. Later; at a marshy lake we observed a pair of Chinese Spot-billed Duck and several Pale Martins. Higher up, at the scrubby edge of coniferous forest we marvelled at a Long-tailed Thrush feeding unassumingly in the open and nearby a gorgeous male Siberian Rubythroat showed off its scarlet gorget. But, best of all was the Blue Eared Pheasant that David found on a nearby slope, allowing us to admire its beautiful finery, its white ear tufts and scarlet bare orbital area.

We then left Jiuzhaigou and returned to the lowlands by following the turbulent Min river for most of the day till we reached famous Qingcheng Shan in late afternoon. Just when we wanted to go birding the heavens opened and we ended the day with Crested Myna as the only notable bird. At dawn things looked a bit brighter and whilst sipping coffee Red-billed Starling and Grey-capped Greenfinch posed in the hotel gardens. New birds in the nearby foothills of Qingcheng Shan included Forest Wagtail, Swinhoe's Minivet (great views of six) and a dynamite male Yellow-rumped Flycatcher. The park itself was full of tourists and only Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler and a Brown-capped Fulvetta could be found. After a filling brunch we drove to Chengdu airport and started the long journey

home. And thus ended our fabulous adventure through the land of the Middle Kingdom, with its remarkable pheasants, parrotbills and tasty Sichuan cuisine. I really look forward to my next 'Easy' Sichuan tour.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: Three were seen in the Chengdu area and one showed well at the marshy lake above Jiuzhaigou.

ARDEIDAE

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Good numbers were observed in Chengdu, at Qingcheng and near Beijing airport.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: Seven observations of this widespread species.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*: Scattered records of small numbers, always in lovely breeding plumage.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Small numbers were seen on the longer journeys.

CICONIIDAE

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*: Just four showed in the Hongyuan region.

ANATIDAE

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*: Twelve in the marshlands of the Hongyuan region. The race involved is *rubrirostris*.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*: Quite common in the Hongyuan region. The pair with 16 chicks was quite amazing!! Obviously the favourite bird of our driver.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*: A drake on the marshy lake above Jiuzhaigou.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: Fairly common at Jiuzhaigou.

Chinese Spot-billed Duck *Anas zonorhyncha*: Good views of a pair on the marshy lake above Jiuzhaigou.

Ferruginous Duck (F Pochard) *Aythya nyroca*: Seven were noted in the vast marsh near Hongyuan. It is considered as **Near-Threatened** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Goosander (Common Merganser) *Mergus merganser*: Just a few in the Hongyuan region.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B) *Pernis ptilorhynchus*: No less than 20 observations, often of small migrating flocks. Several excellent close up views.

Black-winged Kite (Black-shouldered Kite) *Elanus caeruleus* (NL): One was seen by several participants at the Wallcreeper site not far from Rilong at an altitude of 2600m.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*: Fairly common in the Hongyuan region.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*: No less than ten observations of this magnificent species. We managed to see the wispy beard!! Both adults and dark immature birds were noted.

Himalayan Griffon Vulture (H Griffon) *Gyps himalayensis*: Fair numbers at Balang Shan and in the Maerkang and Hongyuan regions.

Eurasian Black Vulture (Cinereous Vulture) *Aegypius monachus*: We observed a couple flying with Himalayan Griffon Vultures at Balang Shan. It is considered as **Near-Threatened** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*: No less than five sightings of this powerful bird of prey. We saw some display over the Rufous-headed Robin valley at Jiuzhaigou and observed one circling for minutes over the Primeval Forest.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus*: One showed well at Wawu Shan.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*: Small numbers all over our itinerary.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*: Just a handful of observations of this well-known species.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*: Eight sightings of these big 'eagle-buzzards' in the Hongyuan region.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*: No less than ten observations. We found a cliff at Balang Shan with more than a dozen old eyries, of which one was occupied.

FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: As always, surprisingly scarce: only three were noted.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: Four observations of this elegant and speedy raptor.

TETRAONIDAE

Severtzov's Grouse (Chinese Grouse) *Bonasa sewerzowi*: Pat did a marvellous job finding a pair quietly feeding on buds at Jiuzhaigou. Good scope views of this uncommon endemic!!! It is considered as **Near-Threatened** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

PHASIANIDAE

Snow Partridge *Lerwa lerwa*: No less than nine of these handsome birds were spotted at Balang Shan and admired by all in the scope. Great stuff!!!

Verreaux's Monal Partridge (Chestnut-throated P) *Tetraophasis obscurus*: We all heard their distinctive voices at Mengbi Shan and half the group managed to observe one far down a steep slope.

Tibetan Snowcock *Tetraogallus tibetanus*: We noted five amidst the awesome high mountain scenery at Balang Shan, where amongst others we observed and photographed a pair at minimal distance. We all know their eye colour now!! The distinctive Palearctic genus *Tetraogallus* consists of five closely-related species, which all occur in remote and steep mountainous areas and are all highly-desired by Palearctic birding enthusiasts. One usually has to work hard to see snowcocks!!! Pat's favourite.

Chinese Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola thoracica*: A couple showed briefly along the roadside at Wawu Shan.

Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*: We did well with this attractive pheasant, turning up seven at Wolong, a single male at Mengbi Shan and three at Jiuzhaigou. Excellent views for all!!!

Temminck's Tragopan *Tragopan temminckii*: A splendid male showed quite well at Wawu Shan. Subsequently two females were seen by some of the party.

Koklass Pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha* (H): Heard in the mist at Balang Shan. No luck with this one, alas.

Chinese Monal *Lophophorus lhuysii*: Rather poor views of one at Balang Shan, just before the mist came in. Frustrating!! It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World", a splendid book on the dire fate of 10% of the world's avifauna.

White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*: Marvellous sightings of these huge and impressive beasts. Brief views of two at Balang Shan were followed by great scope views of up to 18 together at Mengbi Shan. Truly splendid. It is considered as **Near-Threatened** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Blue Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon auritum*: Increasingly difficult to see at Jiuzhaigou, where we first scoped four birds miles away, but then luckily David found us a much closer bird that allowed prolonged scope study. It was quietly feeding at the edge of an alpine meadow

and was suddenly startled by a pair of interacting Goshawks. Glorious moments. The favourite bird for Yvonne and David.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*: Scattered records of small numbers from Balang Shan to Jiuzhaigou. No less than 19 races are known from China.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus* (H): Heard distantly at Wolong.

Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*: No less than six magnificent observations at Wawu Shan! One of the males performed so well for all of us that this attractive species was voted Bird of the Trip. Definitely my best observations ever of this usually secretive bird. The bird is named after Sarah, Countess Amherst (1762-1838), first wife of William Pitt Amherst, Governor General of Bengal from 1822 till 1828. The favourite bird for Cliff, Alain and Fritz.

RALLIDAE

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: A few observations of this widespread species.

GRUIDAE

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*: A total of 22 of these magnificent birds in the marshlands of the Hongyuan region. The last one of the family for Pat. It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World", a splendid book on the dire fate of 10% of the world's avifauna.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola*: We all heard the distinctive 'song' emanating from the mist below us very early in the morning at Balang Shan, where one was glimpsed. It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*: Common in the Hongyuan region.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: One at Jiuzhaigou.

LARIDAE

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*: Three were found in the Hongyuan region.

STERNIDAE

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Small numbers at wetlands in the Hongyuan region. We saw birds with black bills (*longipennis*), but also with partially red bills (race?).

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove (R Pigeon) *Columba livia*: Feral birds were fairly common in the Red Basin, with a few elsewhere.

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*: Eight showed quite well on the Golden Eagle cliff at Balang Shan.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*: A total of 31 of these smart pigeons at Balang Shan, and then we saw nine more above Jiuzhaigou.

Speckled Wood Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*: Brief views of a flying bird at Wawu Shan.

Red Turtle Dove (R Collared D) *Streptopelia tranquebarica*: A female was scoped at lower altitudes at Wawu Shan.

Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D) *Streptopelia orientalis*: Four observations on our travels.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*: Fairly common in Chengdu.

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon (W-t Pigeon) *Treron sphenura*: A couple showed rather briefly at Wawu Shan.

CUCULIDAE

Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparverioides*: Widespread and fairly common in forested areas, with four nice observations. Calls all through the night as well as all day!

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*: We obtained good views of a male and a hepatic female below Wawu Shan. We also heard it at Qingcheng.

Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus*: Widespread and fairly common, especially in more open areas.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*: Widespread but rather uncommon in forested areas. Usually heard only, but several excellent observations at Wawu Shan.

Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus*: Fairly common at Wawu Shan and Jiuzhaigou. Mostly heard, but several remarkable scope studies.

Dronko Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* (H): We heard one below Wawu Shan.

Common Koel (Asian K) *Eudynamys scolopacea*: A few heard and one male briefly seen at Wawu Shan.

STRIGIDAE

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H): We heard one at Wawu Shan, but it remained at the other side of the valley.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* (H): One was quite interested in the tape at Wawu Shan, but the mist sabotaged our endeavours. It sounds quite different from our well-known European form and this form is now often split off as Himalayan Wood Owl *Strix nivicola*.

APODIDAE

Himalayan Swiftlet *Collocalia brevirostris*: Up to 30 together at Wawu Shan.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*: Magnificent views of several flying low over the forest on top of Wawu Shan. They were obviously displaying and showed very very well. The race involved is *nudipes*.

Common Swift *Apus apus*: Eight at Beijing airport.

Fork-tailed Swift (Pacific S) *Apus pacificus*: Fairly widespread but patchy, in small or moderate numbers.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis*: Small numbers on our travels in the Red Basin.

ALCEDINIDAE

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*: One was scoped at the base of Wawu Shan.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*: An adult and two recently fledged young were scoped at the park in Chengdu. Always good fun.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe (Common Hoopoe) *Upupa epops*: A couple of sightings on the Tibetan Plateau and a single bird near Chengdu.

PICIDAE

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*: Terrific scope studies of two in riverine scrub near Hongyuan. Gorgeous.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*: A distant male near Maerkang and a better performing male at Qingcheng.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* (H): We only heard one at Jiuzhaigou.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*: A couple were seen at Jiuzhaigou.

Darjeeling Woodpecker *Dendrocopos darjellensis* (H): We heard one at Wawu Shan.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*: A single bird showed to some of us at Wawu Shan, and was heard the next morning.

ALAUDIDAE

Tibetan Lark (Long-billed Calandra Lark) *Melanocorypha maxima*: A total of 11 in the Hongyuan region, at the edge of the species' distribution. Great views.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*: Very common in the Hongyuan region.

Horned Lark (Shore Lark) *Eremophila alpestris*: Fairly common in the Hongyuan region.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Pale Martin *Riparia diluta*: Several in the Hongyuan region and better views over the lake above Jiuzhaigou.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris*: Regular observations in the highlands.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Common in the Red Basin.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: Fairly common in the Red Basin and up to the foothills. Magnificent views of one collecting mud at our feet on our rive to Wawu Shan.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*: Fairly widespread away from the plains and sometimes fairly numerous, with up to 60 in a day. Great looks at birds in their nest on a rock face at Balang Shan.

MOTACILLIDAE

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*: A single bird on top of Wawu Shan. The very long hind toe was very obvious.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*: A few on the Tibetan Plateau, but we obtained our best views in a glade at Jiuzhaigou.

Olive-backed Pipit (O Tree P) *Anthus hodgsoni*: Unusually few this year, with just a few observations.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*: Common at Balang Shan and a few at Jiuzhaigou. Lovely breeding attire.

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*: Good views of several in the trees at Qingcheng Shan where the males continually uttered their see-saw song.

Citrine Wagtail (Yellow-hooded W) *Motacilla citreola*: c15 in the Hongyuan region. Splendid to see up to four birds chase each other in display.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*: Fairly widespread in small numbers, being most common at Wawu Shan.

Himalayan Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] alboides*: Common almost throughout. We also saw birds that looked like *personata* near Hongyuan and at Qingcheng Shan.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Coracina melaschistos*: One showed briefly in a park at Chengdu.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*: Fairly common in all higher altitude forested areas.

Swinhoe's Minivet (Brown-rumped M) *Pericrocotus cantonensis*: Perfect scope views of six at Qingcheng Shan.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Collared Finchbill (C Finch-billed Bulbul) *Spizixos semitorques*: Four below Jiuzhaigou and six at Qingcheng Shan.

Chinese Bulbul (Light-vented B) *Pycnonotus sinensis*: Fairly common in the Red Basin up to the foothills.

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*: Small numbers at Wawu Shan and at Qingcheng Shan. Really smart looking with their white heads.

CINCLIDAE

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*: Six observations of this well-known species. Great scope studies at Balang Shan.

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasi*: Two showed very well not far from Wawu Shan.

TROGLODYTIDAE

Winter Wren (Northern W) *Troglodytes troglodytes*: Recorded in small numbers from Balang Shan to Mengbi Shan.

PRUNELLIDAE

Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*: Singles at Mengbi Shan and Jiuzhaigou. Always quite secretive.

Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiatea*: Fairly common at high altitudes at Wawu Shan, Balang Shan and Mengbi Shan, plus a single at Jiuzhaigou.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*: Four showed well high up at Balang Shan.

TURDIDAE

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*: Two fine males were seen in the scrub south of Jiuzhaigou.

White-tailed Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*: A couple of males of these stunning little birds at Balang Shan. Always a delight to observe.

Rufous-headed Robin *Luscinia ruficeps*: Great views of this mega-bird at Jiuzhaigou. Three individuals were seen, but five were present on territory and singing. One of the least known birds in Asia! It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Firethroat *Luscinia pectardens*: Stunning views of two males at Wolong, where we also heard another two. A magnificent species!! It is considered as **Near Threatened** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World". The favourite bird for Les and Keith.

Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*: Fairly common by voice at Wolong and Jiuzhaigou, although few actually seen.

Red-flanked Bluetail (Orange-f Bush Robin) *Tarsiger cyanurus*: Fairly common at higher levels at Balang Shan, in the Maerkang region and at Jiuzhaigou.

Golden Bush Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*: A single of these glowing little birds at upper levels on Wawu Shan.

White-browed Bush Robin *Tarsiger indicus*: Small numbers of these secretive birds were heard at Wawu Shan and Wolong, with a splendid male performing at length on Wawu Shan.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*: Common in the Hongyuan region.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*: Small numbers below Mengbi Shan, near Hongyuan and near Jiuzhaigou.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*: Common in high level forest and alpine meadows at Balang Shan and Mengbi Shan.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*: Small numbers of these very smart redstarts were seen at Balang Shan, in the Maerkang region and at Jiuzhaigou.

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*: Just a few records.

Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*: Widely distributed and fairly common along rivers throughout, apart from the Hongyuan region.

White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*: A male really showed off in the lower reaches of Balang Shan.

White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*: One was heard at Wawu Shan where Alain saw a skulky female.

White-capped Redstart (River R, River Chat) *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*: Common from Wolong to Jiuzhaigou, apart from the Hongyuan region.

Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*: Perfect scope views of wonderful males in sunny conditions at Balang Shan. The blue colour of their finery is really out of this world. We also admired their bee-eater-like flight.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maura*: Small numbers in the Hongyuan region.

Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*: Small numbers in the Wawu Shan area.

Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*: Small numbers at Chengdu and at Qingcheng Shan.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*: Four males were noted near cliff faces on travelling days.

Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*: Widely scattered records of small numbers from Wawu Shan till Mengbi Shan.

Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*: Great scope views of a foraging bird near Jiuzhaigou. Much appreciated!!

Chinese Blackbird (Mandarin B) *Turdus mandarinus*: Common at Chengdu and small numbers elsewhere in the Red Basin. This very distinctive form surely deserves full species status.

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*: Fairly common from Wolong to Jiuzhaigou, although absent from the Hongyuan region. Attractive!!

Kessler's Thrush (White-backed T) *Turdus kessleri*: We found this striking species fairly commonly from Balang Shan to the approaches to Jiuzhaigou. A town bird at Hongyuan.

Chinese Thrush (C Song T) *Turdus mupinensis* (H): We heard this accomplished songster at Jiuzhaigou, but could not get it in our bins. A bit disappointing.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*: Splendid views of this adorable little creature along a stream at Wawu Shan. A real delight.

Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*: Two at Wawu Shan were quite distant but gave quite good views in the streambed far below us. We then found a pair feeding their offspring along a small stream upon leaving Wawu Shan. Great scope views.

SYLVIIDAE

Chestnut-headed Tesia *Tesia castaneocoronata* (H): We heard this delightful mite at Wawu Shan and Jiuzhaigou, but couldn't entice it into view.

Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*: Common, by voice at Wawu Shan, where we obtained good views. Others were heard elsewhere on our travels. A very distinctive song.

Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler *Cettia major*: Several were heard at Wawu Shan and we managed to get fair views of this skulker in a shrubby patch at Mengbi Shan.

Aberrant Bush Warbler *Cettia flavolivacea*: Common at Wawu Shan, where several showed at length.

Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*: A few were seen in the high altitude bamboo at Wawu Shan.

Brown Bush Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris*: Brilliant views of two at Wawu Shan, where we heard several others. Also heard at Jiuzhaigou. Quite a song!!

Plain-tailed Warbler *Seicercus soror*: Small numbers at Wawu Shan. On average, the lowest altitude representative of the 'Golden-spectacled Warbler' complex.

Grey-crowned Warbler *Seicercus tephrocephalus*: Fairly common at moderate altitudes at Wawu Shan and at Wolong.

Bianchi's Warbler *Seicercus valentini*: Common in most high altitude areas.

Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*: Small to moderate numbers in Chengdu, below Wawu Shan and at Qingcheng Shan, where it favoured tall bamboos while uttering its remarkably hard-to-pinpoint song. A striking species.

- Blyth's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*: Common in most forested areas at moderate to high altitudes.
- Emei Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus omeiensis* (H): Very frustrating this year, as the birds failed to respond to the tape. A total of three were heard at Wawu Shan. Birdquest trips have located this species across a huge swathe of Central China!
- Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*: A few were recorded on our travels. We also saw the form which in the past was split off as Two-barred Greenish Warbler *P. plumbeitarsus* at Wawu Shan and near Rilong.
- Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*: Commonly recorded from all forested areas at moderate to high altitudes, but rare around Maerkang. The most distinctive song in Sichuan!!
- Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*: Five migrants were found in a park in Chengdu on our first afternoon.
- Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*: Common in all high altitude forests.
- Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*: Numerous in all higher altitude forested areas.
- Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*: Small numbers were noted at Wolong and at Jiuzhaigou. Sings from the treetops. A recent study (Martens et al, 2004) suggests to change the scientific name of Chinese Leaf Warbler to *P. yunnanensis*, whilst yet another new species has now been recognized in the Pallas's Warbler complex: Sichuan Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus forresti*.
- Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*: A single migrant was noted on the north side of Balang Shan.
- Hume's Leaf Warbler (Buff-browed W) *Phylloscopus humei*: Small to moderate numbers from the Maerkang region to Jiuzhaigou. A very distinctive song.
- Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*: A few at Mengbi Shan and at Jiuzhaigou.
- Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*: Fairly common in the high altitude scrub of the Hongyuan region.
- Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*: Fairly common in high altitude scrub from Balang Shan to the Hongyuan region and Jiuzhaigou.
- Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus subaffinis*: Just one at Balang Shan. Obviously under recorded.
- Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*: Small numbers at Balang Shan and in the Maerkang area.
- Severtzov's Tit-Warbler (White-browed T-W) *Leptopoecile sophiae*: We first had great looks at an unobtrusive female at Balang Shan and we then experienced incredible moments with a male and a female feeding their youngsters in their Long-tailed Tit-like nest in scrub in the Hongyuan region. They went about their business whilst we were admiring them just metres away. What a splendid bird the male is!! Those colours, simply out of this world.
- Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*: A single only at Mengbi Shan, where some of us had some problems getting onto this unobtrusive little bird!

MUSCICAPIDAE

- Chinese Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis glaucicomans*: A male at Wawu Shan and then great looks at a pair at Jiuzhaigou. Chinese Blue Flycatcher is a preferable English name as this requires no modifier for the residual Blue-throated Flycatcher.
- Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*: Good views of five at Wawu Shan. A widespread species.
- Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*: A couple at Wolong performed very well.
- Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*: Four observations of migrants in Chengdu and at Wawu Shan.
- Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*: Just a couple of sightings. Unobtrusive this year.
- Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*: Small numbers in the conifer forests. Usually detected by the distinctive thin warbling song.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophciata*: Small numbers in most high altitude forested areas.
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*: A truly gorgeous, snazzy male showed very well at Qingcheng Shan. What a stunner!!
Grey-headed Flycatcher (G-h Canary F) *Culicicapa ceylonensis*: Small numbers at Wolong and at Qingcheng Shan.

TIMALIIDAE

Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*: It took a while, but after a bit of effort we obtained fair views of two at Jiuzhaigou.
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*: A single bird showed to some of us at Qingcheng Shan.
Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer* (H): A single bird was heard singing from across a stream at Wolong.
Pygmy Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla* (H): Just a couple of audio encounters at Wawu Shan.
Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*: Fairly common at Chengdu, Wawu Shan and at Qingcheng Shan.
Great Parrotbill *Conostoma oemodium*: Magnificent eye-ball to eye-ball views of a couple of birds at Wawu Shan. What a performance!!
Three-toed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis paradoxus*: Good looks at a single bird in the bamboo at Wawu Shan. Impressive and rarely observed!!
Brown Parrotbill *Paradoxornis unicolor*: A single bird, after a fair amount of effort at Wawu Shan. Thanks to Hannu and Hadoram.
Spectacled Parrotbill *Paradoxornis conspicillatus*: Great close up looks at four below Jiuzhaigou. Later we found another distant party.
Ashy-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis alphonsianus*: Small numbers in the Wawu Shan region. Lovely creatures.
Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*: Quite common and showing well at Chengdu and also noted at Qingcheng Shan.
Grey-hooded Parrotbill (Crested P) *Paradoxornis zappeyi*: This very restricted range endemic was fairly common at Wawu Shan. A magnificent encounter with several birds. It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World", a splendid book on the dire fate of 10% of the world's avifauna.
Fulvous Parrotbill *Paradoxornis fulvifrons*: Quite a few of these beautiful little birds at Wawu Shan. One of my favourites. Simply endearing.
Chinese Babax *Babax lanceolatus*: We found three at Wolong and then another two below Jiuzhaigou. Scope views.
Père David's Laughingthrush (Plain L) *Garrulax davidi*: Fairly common in the Hongyuan area and in the drier scrub above Jiuzhaigou. The bird is named after the famous Abbé Père Armand David, a 19th century French missionary to China, naturalist, intrepid explorer and author. A splendid book about this amazing man and his accomplishments is: "Travels in Imperial China: The Exploration & Discoveries of Père David" by George Bishop
Sukatschev's Laughingthrush (Snowy-cheeked L) *Garrulax sukatschewi*: Splendid views of a pair at close range at Jiuzhaigou. This Chinese endemic is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World", a splendid book on the dire fate of 10% of the world's avifauna.
Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax maximus*: Fairly common at Balang Shan and in the Maerkang region. Many great views. Olga's favourite species.
Spotted Laughingthrush *Garrulax ocellatus* (H): One was heard at Wolong.
Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*: Good views of a single at Chengdu.
White-browed Laughingthrush *Garrulax sannio*: Common and very cooperative at Chengdu.

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*: Common in all higher altitude forested areas. Best experiences were had in the Primeval Forest at Jiuzhaigou where birds were totally unafraid. The two without any orange in the wing at Balang Shan are still puzzling....

Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus*: A few at Wawu Shan took a while before they surrendered. What a cracker!!

Emei Shan Liocichla *Liocichla omeiensis*: Regularly heard at Wawu Shan, where we struggled a bit to get good views of this Chinese endemic. The species' range is wider than once thought. It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*: We saw several at Chengdu and found it to be common at Wawu Shan. Sometimes called the Chinese Nightingale.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis*: A single in misty conditions at Wawu Shan. A pity we couldn't find it again.

Chinese Fulvetta *Alcippe striaticollis*: Three showed well at Mengbi Shan and another two were found at the Primeval Forest in Jiuzhaigou.

Streak-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinereiceps*: Common and cooperative at Wawu Shan.

Brown-capped Fulvetta *Alcippe brunnea*: A single showed briefly at Qingcheng Shan.

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*: Fair numbers at Chengdu and at Qingcheng Shan.

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis*: A single showed nicely at Wawu Shan.

White-collared Yuhina *Yuhina diademata*: Fairly common at Wawu Shan and at Wolong. Very approachable in flowering rhododendrons.

AEGITHALIDAE

Sooty Tit (White-necklaced T) *Aegithalos fuliginosus*: A rather poor showing at Jiuzhaigou, where just two birds were noted. A Chinese endemic.

Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti*: Good views of one in a patch of scrub on the lower slopes of Balang Shan. Not often recorded!

Black-throated Tit (Red-headed Tit) *Aegithalos concinnus*: Small to moderate numbers in Chengdu, at Wawu Shan and at Qingcheng Shan. Delightful little critters.

PARIDAE

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus*: Great looks at two at Wawu Shan. Unobtrusive!!

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*: One performed quite well in the high altitude scrub of the Hongyuan region. Endemic to west central China.

Songar Tit *Parus songarus*: Small numbers at Balang Shan, Mengbi Shan, in the Hongyuan region and above Jiuzhaigou. Recent genetic studies show that *songarus* in the strict sense is close to Willow Tit *P. montanus* after all, so may not merit specific status, whereas the *weigoldicus/affinis* forms of the Tibetan Plateau are very distinct, so these may soon be split off as Tibetan Tit or suchlike. Keep tuned.

Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous*: Not uncommon in the high altitude forests of Mengbi Shan and Jiuzhaigou.

Père David's Tit (Rusty-breasted Tit) *Parus davidi*: Good looks at small numbers at Jiuzhaigou. A bird of beautiful mixed forest. Endemic to central China.

Yellow-bellied Tit *Parus venustulus*: Small numbers of this handsome Chinese endemic at Wawu Shan and Jiuzhaigou.

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*: Regular in all high altitude forests.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*: Fairly common at Wawu Shan, Wolong and Jiuzhaigou.

Japanese Tit *Parus [major] minor*: Scattered records of small numbers from the Red Basin right up to the Tibetan Plateau in the Hongyuan region.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*: Fairly common in most forested areas.

SITTIDAE

- Chinese Nuthatch (Snowy-browed N) *Sitta villosa*: Repeated great looks at posing birds at Jiuzhaigou.
A real cutie!!
- Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*: A couple performed well in the Maerkang region. Always a good one to get.
- Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* (H): Heard only at Jiuzhaigou, but we had other birds to see.

TICHODROMADIDAE

- Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*: Fantastic views of this magnificent species!!! No less than seven were seen at Balang Shan and en route to Maerkang. One of those must see birds!!
Always a favourite!!

CERTHIIDAE

- Eurasian Treecreeper (Common T) *Certhia familiaris*: A few at Wawu Shan, at Wolong and in the Maerkang region.
- Sichuan Treecreeper *Certhia tianquanensis*: Small numbers at Wawu Shan and two at Jiuzhaigou. This interesting relict form, restricted to northwest Sichuan, was originally described as a new race of Eurasian Treecreeper but has recently been treated as a full species (and is probably more closely related to Brown-throated Tree creeper *C. discolor*). We heard and saw both Sichuan Treecreeper and Eurasian Treecreeper at the same time in the firs at Wawu Shan. Interesting comparison.

NECTARINIIDAE

- Gould's Sunbird (Mrs Gould's S) *Aethopyga gouldiae*: Small numbers at Wawu Shan and at Wolong.
The male is a real jewel.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

- Chestnut-flanked White-eye *Zosterops erythropleurus*: Small numbers at Chengdu and Wawu Shan.
- Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus*: Common at Chengdu and Qingcheng Shan and small numbers at Wawu Shan.

ORIOLIDAE

- Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*: Four showed brilliantly at Qingcheng Shan and a single was seen below Wawu Shan.

LANIIDAE

- Tiger Shrike *Lanius tigrinus*: No less than six were noted. The male devouring that bumblebee in an orchard near Rilong was quite something. We also found a nest at Qingcheng Shan.
More secretive than other shrikes.
- Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*: Five observations. One at Jiuzhaigou was particularly approachable.
- Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*: Fairly common in the Red Basin.
- Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*: Common from Wolong to Jiuzhaigou. No less than 52 observations!!
- Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*: Good views of one of these large shrikes in the Hongyuan region.

DICRURIDAE

- Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*: Regular encounters.

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*: Small numbers at Wawu Shan and at Qingcheng Shan. A great tail.

CORVIDAE

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*: Small numbers of the race *sinensis* all over the tour. No less than 40 races have been described of this well-known species.

Sichuan Jay *Perisoreus internigrans*: Just one showed well at Mengbi Shan. This Chinese endemic always behaves unobtrusively. It is considered as **VULNERABLE** by BirdLife International in "Threatened Birds of the World".

Blue Magpie (Red-billed B M) *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*: Not uncommon at Wawu Shan, at Wolong and at Qingcheng Shan. Interesting behaviour at the nest at Wolong!!

Azure-winged Magpie (Asian A-w M) *Cyanopica cyanus*: Not uncommon in the Hongyuan region and near Beijing airport. Following the discovery of significant genetic differences, the isolated Iberian form *cooki* (which lacks a white tail tip) merits being split off as Iberian Magpie or Iberian Azure-winged Magpie. If the latter name is adopted the residual *C. cyanus* is renamed Asian Azure-winged Magpie.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*: A single bird was seen in the lower reaches of Wawu Shan.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*: Fairly common in the Hongyuan region.

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*: Eight of these odd little bounders in the Hongyuan region, right at the edge of their range. Perfect scope views near their nest holes. Recent genetic research suggests that *Pseudopodoces* (but not the very different-looking *Podoces*) is an aberrant, terrestrial tit! Hence the use of the name Hume's Groundpecker rather than the more familiar Hume's Ground Jay.

Spotted Nutcracker (Eurasian N) *Nucifraga caryocatactes*: Small numbers at Jiuzhaigou. Here members of the southern group, with much less spotting.

Alpine Chough (Yellow-billed C) *Pyrrhocorax graculus*: Common at Balang Shan.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*: Small numbers at Balang Shan, near Hongyuan and in the Jiuzhaigou region.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*: A total of seven in the Hongyuan region.

Oriental Crow *Corvus orientalis*: Small numbers from the Maerkang region to Jiuzhaigou. Now that Hooded Crow *C. cornix* has been once again split from *C. corone* it is logical to give specific status to the now hugely isolated eastern population.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*: Scattered records of small numbers from Wawu Shan to Jiuzhaigou.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*: Eight individuals of the huge Tibetan race in the Hongyuan area. Really big boys!!

STURNIDAE

Red-billed Starling (Silky Starling) *Sturnus sericeus*: Scope views of a male in a treetop at Qingcheng Shan. Unexpected.

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*: Several on roadside wires in the Red Basin and also seen near Beijing airport.

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: No less than 30 in a roost of Eurasian Tree Sparrows at Hongyuan. The following day we found several more in a patch of willow scrub along a river. Quite a surprise!!

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*: A male and a female showed well below Wawu Shan.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*: Recorded in small to moderate numbers in the Red Basin and the Maerkang/Hongyuan region.

ESTRILDIDAE

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*: Just a single at the edge of a weedy patch on Wawu Shan.

FRINGILLIDAE

Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*: Great views of small numbers at Qingcheng Shan.

Tibetan Siskin (Tibetan Serin) *Carduelis thibetana*: A dozen at Wolong and small flocks of up to 10 at Jiuzhaigou. Repeated good looks.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*: Small numbers in the Hongyuan region.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*: Small numbers at Balang Shan. A flock of c100 favoured the gardens of Rilong after a severe snowstorm.

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*: Up to 60 at Balang Shan. Close up views.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch *Carpodacus nipalensis*: Females were seen at Balang Shan and at Jiuzhaigou.

Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R) *Carpodacus erythrinus*: A few at Wolong and Mengbi Shan.

Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*: Small numbers at Balang Shan, Mengbi Shan, in the Hongyuan region and en route to Jiuzhaigou.

Pink-rumped Rosefinch (Stresemann's R) *Carpodacus eos*: Good views at Balang Shan and Mengbi Shan.

Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus*: Great looks at a male at Wawu Shan. Tertian tips!!

Dark-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus edwardsii* (NL): Les and Keith saw a female at Jiuzhaigou.

Three-banded Rosefinch *Carpodacus trifasciatus*: Brief looks at two males at Mengbi Shan and fantastic close up views of eight at Jiuzhaigou. Splendid!!

Spot-winged Rosefinch *Carpodacus rodopeplus*: Scope views of a male and a female at Balang Shan. Unexpected.

White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura*: Small numbers at Balang Shan, in the Maerkang region and at Jiuzhaigou.

Streaked Rosefinch (Eastern Great R) *Carpodacus rubicilloides*: A single bird in alpine scrub at Balang Shan was our only observation.

Red-breasted Rosefinch (Red-fronted R) *Carpodacus puniceus*: After some searching we eventually came across a male and a female quietly feeding amongst mossy rocks at Balang Shan. This hardy species is usually considered to be the highest breeding species in the Palearctic.

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*: Fairly common at Jiuzhaigou and also a few at Wawu Shan and Wolong. A lovely species.

Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*: Good views of a pair at Wolong and then splendid looks at a male at Mengbi Shan. A real cracker!!

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*: Small numbers at Balang Shan, Mengbi Shan and Jiuzhaigou. Many good views.

Yellow-billed Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*: At least 10 at Chengdu. Some were nest building and performed very well. Also called Chinese Grosbeak.

EMBERIZIDAE

Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*: Scattered records of small numbers between the Balang Shan region and Jiuzhaigou.

MAMMALS

Black-lipped Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*: Three in the Hongyuan region.

Moupin Pika *Ochotona thibetana*: Scattered records of singles or couples from Balang Shan, Mengbi Shan and Jiuzhaigou.

Père David's Rock Squirrel *Sciurotamias davidianus*: A couple at Jiuzhaigou.

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus*: Small numbers at Mengbi Shan and Jiuzhaigou. Sometimes extremely tame.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*: A few at Balang Shan and quite a few in the Hongyuan region.

Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel *Dremomys pernyi*: A single at Wolong.

Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel *Tamiops swinhoei*: A few at Wawu Shan.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus* (NL): Les, Alain and Yvonne had great looks as one tried to get friendly at Wawu Shan.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*: A large boar was favouring the Blue Eared Pheasant meadow at Jiuzhaigou.

Alpine Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster*: Good looks at two at Wolong. An often poached animal!!

Chinese Goral *Nemorhaedus caudatus*: Three were found feeding along forest edges at Wolong. Strange animals!!

Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur*: We found 20 high up at Balang Shan and another 14 above Jiuzhaigou.