



*Photogenic Brown Eared Pheasant at Xuanzhong Si. One of the many highlights on this tour (Hannu Jännes)*

## **EASTERN CHINA**

**3 – 15/27 MAY 2015**

**LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES**

This Eastern China tour started life as one to Southeast China, but, with the addition of the Northeast China extension, blossomed to an epic 25 day journey focused on a whole array of rare and endangered migrants and Chinese endemics. The prime focus of the 'main tour' was to achieve good views of rarities such as Spoon-billed Sandpiper, the critically endangered Courtois's Laughingthrush, the superb Cabot's Tragopan and Elliot's Pheasant and the ultra-rare Chinese Crested Tern. This was successfully achieved alongside a plethora of other goodies which included Black-faced Spoonbill, White-faced Plover, Little Curlew, Great Knot, stunning Saunders's Gulls, Reed Parrotbill, a wealth of Siberian migrants, including such gems as Pechora Pipit, Yellow-rumped, Narcissus and Mugimaki Flycatchers and Siberian Thrush, and forest species like White-necklaced Partridge, Silver Pheasant, Spotted Elachura, Buffy and Moustached Laughingthrushes, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Fork-tailed Sunbird and the delightful Pied Falconet. Quite a haul! The second part of the tour, the 'Northeast Extension', visited a series of sites for various other Chinese specialities. Beginning in Xi'an, we bagged the rare Blackthroat and Crested Ibis as well as stunners that included Temminck's Tragopan and Golden Pheasant. We then moved on to Jiaocheng for the fabulous Brown Eared Pheasants before flying on to Beijing, where the mountains of the nearby Hebei province yielded the endemic Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, Chinese Nuthatch, Green-backed and Zappey's Flycatchers and the rare Grey-sided Thrush. Next was a brief visit south to a recently discovered site for the critically endangered Baer's Pochard and the rare Schrenck's Bittern, whilst at our final destination, the grasslands and wetlands of Jilin province, we found new rarities including the fabulous Jankowski's Bunting as well as Daurian Partridge, Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes, Chinese Grey Shrikes and Asiatic Dowitcher. With almost 400 species recorded and so many rare and sought-after species on offer, this tour is surely due for classic status!



*Saunders's Gull at Yangkou (Hannu Jännes).*

We began the adventure in Shanghai, and from here made our way north on pleasantly quiet roads to Rudong, and more specifically the fishing town of Yangkou. Here, after checking in to our hotel and enjoying our first Chinese meal, we headed out to the seawall to get the first taste of the vast mudflats and massive numbers of migrating waders this area is famous for. Birds encountered during our first wader quest included some Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Grey-tailed Tattler, Red-necked Stints, Mongolian and Greater Sand Plovers, Terek Sandpipers, Sanderlings and Dunlins and many graceful Saunders's Gulls. Later we made a brief check of the 'magic woods', which at the time of the day we visited were rather quiet, but managed to find our first Vinous-throated Parrotbills, a confiding Manchurian Bush Warbler and Chinese Grosbeaks. The late afternoon was spent at a turf farm, where highlights included a flock of Pacific Golden Plovers, many colourful Green-headed and Eastern Yellow Wagtails, a flock of five Little Curlews and, perhaps best of all, a really great pair of Reed Parrotbills!

Early the next morning we were back at the 'magic woods', a landbird migrant hotspot, where four hours of birding rewarded us with Northern Boobook, roosting Grey Nightjar, White-throated Needletail, Black-capped Kingfisher, many Ashy Minivets, Chinese Penduline Tit, good numbers of warblers including Pallas's Leaf, Yellow-browed, Pale-legged Leaf and Eastern Crowned Warblers, Eye-browed Thrush, Grey-streaked, Asian Brown and a splendid male Blue-and-white Flycatcher, several Rufous-tailed Robins, and Tristram's and Black-faced Buntings. Next was a visit to the northern seawall where we enjoyed a picnic lunch whilst waiting for the rising tide, and then walked out on the mudflats to meet the approaching tide that was pushing massive numbers of feeding waders towards us. We enjoyed great views of breeding-plumaged Asian waders, including Great Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Broad-billed Sandpipers, and all the other more regular, but still stunning in breeding dress, waders present, and found, after an intensive search, a couple of breeding-plumaged Spoon-billed Sandpipers, our main target here, that allowed us good views as they fed alongside Red-necked Stints on tidal creeks in front of us. It's such a shame to think that this rarity is possibly on a one-way ticket to extinction. Let us hope the conservation initiatives are a success.



*Male Siberian Thrush at Temple Woods at Yangkou (Angie Cederlund).*

When the tide started to retreat, we repeated our mudflat excursion getting another chance to watch the Spoon-billed Sandpipers and all the other waders. In the late afternoon we were back at the turf farm, where we witnessed illegal trapping of migratory birds with the aid of loudspeakers playing the calls of yellow wagtails and poisoned meal worms and corn used as bait. Around the three loudspeakers were tens of dead or dying Green-headed and Eastern Yellow Wagtails, 12 Pechora Pipits, two Richard's Pipits, two Little Curlews, a Whimbrel, a Pacific Golden Plover etc. Trapping migratory and wintering birds for food is a common practise in many corners of China, and it seems to have a big impact on the numbers of many bird populations.



*Poisoned Green-headed and Eastern Yellow Wagtails at Yangkou (Hannu Jännes).*



*Magic Woods, one of the migrant hotspots in Yangkou (Hannu Jännes).*

For example the population of Yellow-breasted Bunting, which has its main wintering areas in China, has plummeted over 90% due to unsustainable hunting. Despite the cruel and very depressing scene, we managed to see some live birds too, including a few Pechora Pipits, Pintail Snipe and a singing Yellow-breasted Bunting.

Next morning we tried another migrant hotspot, the small Temple Woods, which were teeming with birdwatchers, but also held new and exciting birds for us including an untypically obliging male Siberian Thrush, gorgeous male Narcissus and Yellow-rumped Flycatchers, a female Mugimaki Flycatcher, a male Siberian Rubythroat, Black Bulbul, a vagrant here, our first Dusky Warblers, many Red-billed Starlings and a Forest Wagtail. Later we checked other forest habitats and a number of fish ponds without much success before heading to the hotel for lunch and check-out. After lunch we still had time to check few more pools, where we soon found our main target, the Long-toed Stint, plus several Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and few Oriental Pratincoles. As we had an agenda to adhere to, we were soon heading back south to Shanghai and on to the Pudong Wetlands, where we had a brief failed attempt to try and find the rare Marsh Grassbird (Japanese Swamp Warbler) before checking into our hotel.

Next morning we were back at the Pudong Wetlands, and quickly located two singing Marsh Grassbirds, but unfortunately they were rather far off in an inaccessible area, and we had to make do with poor views of them in song flight. Next came Yangshan Island reached by a rather impressive 30km bridge. Once on the island, which is basically a container port, we birded the remaining natural habitat, but migration hadn't been good the previous night and we had to be content with Meadow and Chestnut Buntings, Hair-crested Drongo, a very confiding Brown-flanked Bush Warbler, several Blue Rock Thrushes and a Stejneger's Stonechat. The long drive to Wuyuan, which followed, was interrupted by a good lunch break at a highway service area where, in addition to a good Chinese restaurant, products of McDonalds and Starbucks were also on offer! When we arrived in Wuyuan in the evening we were met by Mr Ni & Mr Lee, who would be our guide and interpreter for the next eight days.



*Courtois's Laughingthrush at Shimen Village (Hannu Jännes).*

The following day, we headed for the now famous Shimen Village, one of the few haunts of the critically endangered Courtois's Laughingthrush. We were not disappointed, as a large gang of these colourful birds marauded through the riparian woodland and adjacent tea plantations, and we also found some other excellent birds including Masked Laughingthrush, displaying Chinese Sparrowhawks, Oriental Dollarbirds, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Black-naped Oriole, and a couple of singing Arctic Warblers. For lunch we headed for Xiao Qi, another famous village among birders and especially bird photographers, where we were entertained by a cracking Pied Falconet, and also saw Black Eagles, displaying Crested Goshawk and a pair of Crested Kingfishers. In the afternoon we birded the area around a



*Pied Falconet at Xiao Qi Village (Hannu Jännes).*



Early morning breakfast at Wuyuan (Hannu Jännes).

small village, where we saw Fork-tailed Sunbird, Streak-breasted and Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler, many Huet's Fulvetta and a Long-billed Plover that was well spotted by CG. Unfortunately the main objective of the afternoon, the Short-tailed Parrotbill, was not seen by everyone.

Next morning we were back at the same village trying to relocate the parrotbill, but failed miserably, and as rain set in, it felt like it was time to head on, and we embarked on the long drive to Emeifeng, which was even longer than we had anticipated thanks to our Chinese team, that became completely lost on the highway, arriving there late in the evening. With the effective closure of Wuyishan to foreign tourists, we have re-orientated our search for the incomparable Cabot's Tragopan to this reserve. As with Wuyishan, Emeifeng has a comparatively impoverished avifauna, but within it are several sought-after specialities. We had three full days to explore the area, which is famous for its high winds, fog and rain. That said, we did very well, and achieved simply stunning views of several amazing Cabot's Tragopans and numerous ghostly Silver Pheasants. However Elliot's and Koklass Pheasants were unusually difficult to find this year, probably because numerous local people were working on the slopes harvesting an exceptionally good bamboo shoot crop and possibly chasing the birds further from the road. Despite this we did manage three roadside sightings of splendid male Elliot's Pheasants, but the Koklass Pheasant managed to avoid us completely. Apparently other birdwatchers visiting the area around the same time experienced similar problems, some of them even missing the Elliot's Pheasant. Other great birds found during our walks along the main road, the 'tragopan trail' and the agricultural areas at the base of the mountain, included Mandarin Ducks, Striated Heron, Yellow-bellied Prinia, a pair of the superb Moustached Laughingthrushes, a pair of White-necked Partridges, Chinese Bamboo Partridges, Speckled Piculet, Lesser Yellowthroat, hulking Great Barbets, Large Hawk and Lesser Cuckoos, Grey-chinned Minivet, Mountain, Chestnut and Black Bulbuls, the local Huet's Fulvetta, stunning Buffy Laughingthrushes (complete with amazing songs), Black-chinned and Indochinese Yuhinas, a showy Spotted Elachura (formerly known as Spotted Wren Babbler), Rufous-faced, Chestnut-crowned and White-spectacled Warblers (here, the form *intermedia* has yellow spectacles!), Verditer Flycatcher, Slaty-backed, Little, Spotted and White-crowned Forktails, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Brown Dipper, and stunning Yellow-cheeked, Yellow-bellied and Sultan Tits. At higher altitudes we found lovely Blyth's Shrike-Babblers as well as Brown Bush Warblers and Buff-throated Warblers. After a final attempt to find any of the species we were still missing, it was time to move on again, and once again it was a fairly long drive, this time south to Fuzhou and on to our comfortable hotel in Changle. The hotel was well positioned as it gave us quick and easy access to Shanyutan Island at the mouth of the Min Jiang River, a

site that has become famous in recent years as a regular location for the critically endangered Chinese Crested Tern.



*Cabot's Tragopans were easy to see on Emeifeng (Angie Cederlund).*



*Bamboo shoot collector at Emeifeng (Hannu Jännes).*



*Two critically endangered Chinese Crested Terns at Shanyutan (Angie Cederlund).*

Next day we were up and off well before the sun rise thanks to the ridiculously early high tide. As soon as we reached the island, we noticed a large flock of terns gathering at the tip of a sandbar and very soon located three Chinese Crested Terns in a big flock of Greater Crested Terns. Magic! We then spent a long time marvelling at these super rare birds, the holy grail of Chinese birding. Later, after a picnic breakfast, we started to check the waders that were dispersed along the shoreline, but were very soon confronted by a guard who told us to leave the island immediately. Not even Mr Ni's attempt to show him our written permits to visit the area were enough to satisfy him, and we had to leave the area by foot, passing through an area of thick, sticky mud, which was good fun! Despite the rather early and speedy exit from the island, we managed, in addition to the Chinese Crested Terns, to log on some new and interesting birds including the taxonomically interesting White-faced Plover, which breeds here, several Black-faced Spoonbills, two Yellow Bitterns, Black-tailed Gulls, Black-browed Reed Warbler, White-shouldered Starling and large numbers of roosting waders including smart Great and Red Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, many Terek Sandpipers, hundreds of Sanderlings and good numbers of Red-necked Stints in their pristine breeding plumage. The afternoon was spent at some fishponds where new birds included Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Red Turtle Dove.

Next morning we made yet another early start as we headed for the impressive Fuzhou Forest Park, where we managed to enter the park well before the official opening time thanks to our guide's contacts. We spent the whole day in the hot and humid park checking various trails and enjoying a good seated lunch in a local restaurant. Best birds in the relatively quiet forests included several heard only White-necklaced Partridges (plus one glimpsed one by CG), one Silver Pheasant for some, a couple of Black Eagles and Crested Goshawks, a family of two adult and two juvenile Slaty-backed Forktails, many Fork-tailed Sunbirds, White-breasted Waterhen, Red-whiskered Bulbuls, Common Tailorbird, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Blue Whistling Thrush, and a pair of gorgeous Scarlet Minivets, the last six species being new additions to our bird list. Apparently the Black-throated Laughingthrushes seen by us in the park originate from released cage birds, and are not countable!

Next morning we headed to Changle Airport where we said goodbye to Warren and welcomed on board the dynamic Dutch duo, Marcel and Wilfried, who joined us for the Northeastern China extension. After a flight to Xi'an, where we arrived at noon, we continued by bus to the town of Yangxian, where we arrived early enough to visit a small wood where the Crested Ibises were breeding, and enjoyed great views of two gorgeous pink and dove-grey adults at their nest with three large chicks. Before our arrival to Yangxian we were told that due to some new restrictions by local police, we would only be allowed to visit the ibis breeding centre, but once on the spot there was no sign of these restrictions, and in the end we could go

wherever we wanted with the local guide! Next morning we found a few localized species including Dusky Fulvetta (heard only), White-browed Laughingthrush, the noisy endemic Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, Swinhoe's Minivet, many Brown-breasted Bulbuls, our first Yellow-throated Buntings and a delightful male Chinese Blue Flycatcher together with its rather dull partner. Next came a long drive along the old winding road to Foping, with a stop along the way for a late but, sumptuous lunch and some birding, which yielded a drake Mandarin Duck, a badly needed Sulphur-breasted Warbler, our first Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers, Amur Falcons and Crested and Black-capped Kingfisher. After arriving in Foping, we still had time for a brief excursion near the hotel, where we scored our first and only Alström's Warblers of the trip.



*Crested Ibis at Yangxian (Angie Cederlund).*



*White-naped Yuhina was common at Foping Nature Reserve (Angie Cederlund).*

We had the best part of two days to explore Foping Nature Reserve, an area of montane, bamboo-dominated forest, that was full of new birds for us. Highest priority was the rare and recently-rediscovered Blackthroat, which proved to be a difficult bird to connect with this time. Despite spending the whole morning in the prime habitat where two birds had been seen the day before, we only had two very brief encounters with heard only birds. During the morning's Blackthroat search we managed to find some other great birds including Barred and Elliot's Laughingthrush, Three-toed and Great Parrotbill, Grey-hooded Fulvetta, Sooty Bushtit, many Long-tailed Minivets, Spotted Nutcracker, Coal and Green-backed Tits, Yellow-bellied, Baikal and Brown Bush Warblers, Chinese Leaf, Large-billed and Claudia's Leaf and many Marten's Warblers, White-collared Yuhina, Indian Blue Robin, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, White-bellied Green Pigeon for some, Speckled Wood Pigeon and many Himalayan Cuckoos. In the afternoon we explored further and had good views of Baikal Bush Warbler, a pair of beautiful Fire-capped Tits in a bird wave, Slaty Blue Flycatcher and Slaty Bunting. On the way back to our vehicles we finally connected with a slightly more co-operative Blackthroat, which was singing eagerly, and finally showed well for some. While chasing the Blackthroat most of us also managed a decent view of a gorgeous male Golden Pheasant, which is a common bird in these forests.

The next morning we were back at the previous day's Blackthroat site, but unfortunately the bird was no longer present, and the best bird of a rather quiet mornin, was a stunning male Temminck's Tragopan. Before leaving Foping Nature Reserve completely behind us, we still had some time to do birding along the approach road, which produced two Blyth's Pipits, a Mountain Hawk Eagle, Grey-crowned and Klossi's Leaf Warblers and a gorgeous Tawny Fish Owl at its day time roost. Later, close to our hotel, we spotted two Collared Crows from the bus. In the afternoon we headed back to Xian, where we arrived late in the evening thanks to the strange route our Chinese team choose. Next morning we visited Xi'an's main tourist attraction, the magnificent Terracotta warriors and enjoyed a quick lunch before a flight to Taiyuan from where we transferred on to Jiaocheng for a comfortable night's rest.



*Brown Eared Pheasant at Xuanzhong Si (Angie Cederlund).*

The following day we were up with the sparrows as usual, but as we arrived at the nearby monastery Xuanzhong Si, our access was blocked by a massive new gate apparently build to keep badly behaving birders and bird photographers in control (Pete Morris take note!). However, we managed to wake-up the guard who told us that the gate would not open until seven am, but after a little persuasion he agreed to call his boss and let us in. As soon as were in, Bethy found a pheasant walking on the edge of a gully, only 50 meters away and the usual panic and mayhem ensued till everyone had sighted the spectacular Brown Eared Pheasant. Soon a man arrived with a small bag of food and called in three pheasants, which ate from his hand. What a magnificent show! Other goodies sighted during the morning included Plain Laughingthrush, Yellow-streaked Warbler, the local *lepidus* form of Long-tailed Rosefinch, three Black Storks, a flock of White-throated Needletails, a single Pacific Swift, Godlewski's Buntings, Silver-throated Bushtits (a recent split from Long-tailed Bushtit) and a Chinese Thrush. We also heard some distant Chinese Hill Warblers, but they simply refused to show. Our quick twitch was over, and after a quick freshen up and lunch, we made our way back to Taiyuan and took the very fast and comfortable train to Beijing. In Beijing we met our new guide who took us for a ridiculously big dinner, which contained ca20 dishes, including 10 plates of dumplings! Next we headed west to the small resort village of Jiangshuihe where we arrived later than planned for thanks to our driver who missed a crucial turn on the way.

Next day we spent the first part of the morning exploring areas around the village. At first the birding was pretty slow, but eventually we found a nest building pair of Chinese Beautiful Rosefinches, one of our main targets in this area. After this success we jumped on a ski lift and were whisked to the top of the Lingang Shan! Walking down is always easier than up, and we enjoyed a few hours walking down through some lovely mature woodland and grassy slopes seeing timid Grey-sided Thrushes, Hume's, Chinese and Two-barred Leaf Warblers, Eurasian Wren, Meadow Buntings, Rosy Pipits, Red-billed Choughs and Hill Pigeons. We also found a singing 'Gansu' Red-flanked Bluetail (the isolated *albocoeruleus* form of the red-flanked bluetail complex), which has been recorded here at least once before, and spent some time sound recording and photographing the rather confiding first summer male. After lunch and a short siesta the rest of the afternoon was largely spent looking for a Chinese Hill Warbler, which we eventually managed to locate, but unfortunately it was very shy and offered only brief views for some.



*Reed Parrotbills were common at Hengshui Hu (Hannu Jännes).*

Next morning, after a short birding session around the village, we moved along the road to Xiaolongmen Forest, in the hope of more Chinese endemics, and we were not disappointed as a sweet song led us to the handsome Zappey's Flycatcher which was happy to flash its beautiful blue and white plumage at us from a tree top. Also here we caught up with some diminutive Chinese Nuthatches and tiny Asian Stubtails, sighted a White-backed Woodpecker, several Songar (aka Willow) Tits, handsome Silver-throated Bushtits and had great views of both Green-backed and Yellow-rumped Flycatchers. Later our attempt to find White-throated Rock Thrush produced two distant heard only birds, but as a bonus we found another Zappey's Flycatcher which performed extremely well for us. After a very successful morning we reboarded the bus and headed off on another longish drive, this time to Hengshui Hu, south of Beijing. Once again the motorway system was good, and despite a few issues, we arrived at the vast lake in good time for some pleasant late afternoon birding. Oriental Reed Warblers, and White-winged and Whiskered Terns were plentiful, Von Schrenck's and Yellow Bitterns were flying over the reeds and a scan across the lake produced our first, but unfortunately very brief Baer's Pochard amongst a flock Ferruginous Ducks. Luckily the following morning we got much better views of two more Baer's Pochards, had really great views and photo ops of some magnificent Reed Parrotbills, and sighted some more Von Schrenck's, Yellow and even a single Black Bittern. While we were birding, our local guide contacted local fisherman to buy some freshly caught 'Black Fish' the lake is famous for. During the purchase he was also offered two wild caught live ducks, which he bought in order to save their lives. At closer inspection these ducks proved to be Ferruginous Ducks, which we released back in the lake. Let's just hope that this incident was a one off and not a proof of regular duck trapping around this lake, which is supposed to be one of the last strongholds of the critically endangered Baer's Pochard! As usual though, we had a schedule to keep to, and were soon on the road, heading back to Beijing from where we flew to Wulanhaote (or Ulanhot), and onward by road to the city of Baicheng for an overnight stay.



*Tumuji grasslands, THE site for the endangered Jankowski's Bunting (Hannu Jännes).*

The next morning we were up very early heading to the Tumuji Grasslands in Inner Mongolia and the enigmatic Jankowski's Bunting. After couple of hours of drive along narrow village roads we eventually arrived at a scrubby area, and after a search had the fabulous Jankowski's Bunting within our sights. During our time in this rapidly diminishing habitat of grass and wild peach we also managed to locate the attractive Pallas's Reed and Japanese Reed Buntings, and in the surrounding farmland, Japanese Quails, numerous Richard's Pipits, a few Blyth's Pipits, Eurasian Skylarks, and Mongolian and Asian Short-toed Larks and a total of 10 rather distant Great Bustards. After our success in finding the mega rare bunting we were able to explore the area a little more freely. A stop at a promising looking muddy pond proved to be a smart move as the handful of trees fringing the pond were heaving with tired migrants, including many Pallas's and some Two-barred Leaf, Arctic, Dusky, Radde's and Thick-billed Warblers, a gorgeous male Siberian Blue Robin, male Yellow-rumped and several Taiga Flycatchers and Chinese Grey Shrike. Later we searched the scrub for Daurian Partridge and soon found two pairs. On the way back to Baicheng we had another stop at a large patch of forest where, among a number of migrants we had already seen earlier, were two Long-eared Owls, a new bird for us.

Early the next morning we headed for the Xianghai Nature Reserve, where we checked into our comfortable accommodation and enjoyed a very good breakfast including platefuls of delicious Chinese doughnuts. Later, while heading for the cranes, we received fresh news about the whereabouts of a flock of Swan Geese, and were soon admiring a group of these stylish birds. The wetland favoured by these handsome birds was teeming with other birds including Ruddy Shelduck, Mallard, Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Garganey, Common Pochard, Black-necked Grebe, Black-tailed Godwit and Little Ringed Plover, all new to us, and the forests around held good numbers of breeding Amur Falcons, Daurian Jackdaws and even Chinese Penduline Tits. Next we did a foray to a large grassy plain where a pair of Oriental Plover had started to breed earlier in the season, but we couldn't locate them. Apparently there had been too much disturbance by local sheep herders. In the afternoon it was finally time to visit the area for cranes, where we were first shown a splendid White-naped Crane, the most elegant of all the Asian cranes, and later a female Red-crowned Crane with two small chicks on a small island. Then things changed dramatically as the unringed mate of the breeding female Red-crowned Crane appeared on the scene and, to defend his family, launched a serious attack on us. Obviously our local guide knew exactly what was going to happen as he was armed with a big stick and managed to keep the totally crazy bird away from us during our hasty retreat. Apparently this male has spent so much time with the captive bred and released Red-crowned Cranes that it has become totally unafraid of human beings. Once we had got rid of the mad crane we spent the rest of the day checking various wetlands and added Asiatic Dowitcher, which apparently breeds here, to our bird list and enjoyed great views of White-winged and Whiskered Terns, Eurasian Bittern, another White-naped Crane (at nest) and a pair of Falcated Duck in flight. Back in the town we still had some time for a short birding session around our hotel, where we finally had great views of a Chinese Hill Warbler.



*Swan Geese at the Xianghai NR (Angie Cederlund).*

On our last, somewhat murky and rainy morning at Xianghai, we checked an old stake-out and other promising looking spots for Manchurian Reed Warbler, which appears to be very scarce bird here, but failed to find it. However we did manage to see an array of interesting birds during the morning's birding including some new species like Little Owl, Greylag Goose, Daurian Starling, Bluethroat and Citrine Wagtail, and old acquaintances like a showy Long-eared Owl, many Lanceolated Warblers, a few Pechora Pipits, and Yellow-breasted and Black-faced Buntings. Back at the hotel Libby found a confiding Yellow-browed Bunting, a first for the trip, which gave us great views. Rest of the day was spent travelling back to Beijing, where we arrived very late in the evening. Luckily the bar of our hotel was still open, and we enjoyed our last night drinks and well deserved dinner there well after midnight. Next morning it was time to say goodbye to everyone and thank everyone for being such a great company, which, together with all the excellent birds and exciting places, made this such a memorable tour.

#### **TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE FIRST LEG (SE CHINA) OF THE TOUR**

- 1st CHINESE CRESTED TERN
- 2nd CABOT'S TRAGOPAN
- 3rd SPOON-BILLED SANDPIPER
- 4th REED PARROTBILL
- 5th SPOTTED ELACHURA

#### **TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE SECOND LEG (NE CHINA) OF THE TOUR**

- 1st BROWN EARED PHEASANT
- 2nd JANKOWSKI'S BUNTING
- 3rd CRESTED IBIS
- 4th RED-CROWNED CRANE
- 5th SWAN GOOSE



Red-crowned Crane at Xianghai NR (Angie Cederlund).

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

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

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**(CR)**= Critically Endangered, **(E)**= Endangered, **(V)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known (or at least where I am fairly sure), is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.



Drake Mandarin Duck en route to Foping (Angie Cederlund).

- Swan Goose** ◇ *Anser cygnoides* (V) Ten birds were seen well at the Xianghai NR.
- Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* Four at the Xianghai NR [*rubrirostris*].
- Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna* Three at Yangkou and 20 at the Xianghai NR.
- Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* Five at the Xianghai NR.
- Mandarin Duck** ◇ *Aix galericulata* A group of six near Emeifeng, and one drake en route to Foping.
- Gadwall** *Anas strepera* Several at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Falcated Duck** *Anas falcata* A pair in flight at the Xianghai NR.
- Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* A pair at the Xianghai NR.
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* Several at the Xianghai NR [*platyrhynchos*].
- Eastern Spot-billed Duck** ◇ *Anas zonorhyncha* Widespread in small numbers.
- Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* A few at the Xianghai NR.
- Garganey** *Anas querquedula* Five at the Xianghai NR.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina* Common at the Xianghai NR.
- Baer's Pochard** ◇ *Aythya baeri* (CR) A total of three males at Hengshui Hu.
- Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* (NT) Quite numerous at Hengshui Hu, and one at the Xianghai NR.
- Daurian Partridge** ◇ *Perdix dauurica* Seen well at the Xianghai NR, and north of Baicheng [*suschkini*].
- Japanese Quail** ◇ *Coturnix japonica* (NT) Several in Yangkou-Shanghai, and many in the NE grasslands.
- White-necklaced Partridge** ◇ *Arborophila gingica* (NT) See note.
- Chinese Bamboo Partridge** *Bambusicola thoracicus* Sighted at Emeifeng, and heard at several sites [nominate].
- Temminck's Tragopan** ◇ *Tragopan temminckii* Good views of a male at the Foping NR.
- Cabot's Tragopan** ◇ *Tragopan caboti* At Emeifeng we saw males, females and even small chicks [nominate].
- Koklass Pheasant** ◇ *Pucrasia maculophya* (H) Heard at Foping [*ruficollis*] and at Jiangshuihe [*xanthospila*].
- Silver Pheasant** ◇ *Lophura nycthemera* Several daily at Emeifeng, and one in Fuzhou Forest Park [*fokiensis*].
- Brown Eared Pheasant** ◇ *Crossoptilon mantchuricum* (V) Brilliant views of a total of five birds at Jiaocheng.
- Elliot's Pheasant** ◇ *Syrnaticus ellioti* (NT) Three sightings of a male at Emeifeng.
- Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus* See note.
- Golden Pheasant** ◇ *Chrysolophus pictus* See note.
- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* First seen around Yangkou [*poggei*].
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* [nominate].
- Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* A singleton at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Crested Ibis** ◇ *Nipponia nippon* (E) Great views, including a gorgeous pair with three chicks, at Yangxian.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* Several seen at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Black-faced Spoonbill** ◇ *Platalea minor* (E) Eight at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.



An exceptionally confiding Japanese Quail near Tumuji grassland (Angie Cederlund).

- Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Great views at the Xianghai NR, also heard near Shanghai [nominate].
- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen well at Shanyutan, Hengshui Hu and at the Xianghai NR.
- Von Schrenck's Bittern** ◊ *Ixobrychus eurhythmus* Seen well in flight at Hengshui Hu.
- Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* Two in flight from the bus en route to Emeifeng, and one at Hengshui Hu.
- Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Fairly common and widespread [nominate].
- Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* Singletons near Emeifeng, and en route to Foping [*atricapilla*-group].
- Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus* Widespread.
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Common and widespread.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Fairly common [*jouyi*].
- Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Several at Hengshui Hu and at the Xianghai NR [*manilensis*].
- Eastern Great Egret** *Ardea [alba] modesta* First seen around Yangkou. Not yet split by the IOC.
- Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* Singleton at the fishponds near Changle [nominate].
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Common in the south, but not noted after Xi'an [nominate].
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* One at Yangkou, and a few at the Xianghai NR [*sinensis*].
- Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* One at Wuyuan was a write-in.
- Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Small numbers were noted [*orientalis*].
- Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* (NL) One was seen at Foping by one group member.
- Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus nipalensis* Good views of one at Foping NR.
- Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Four at Wuyuan, one at Emeifeng, and two at Fuzhou park [nominate].
- Mountain Hawk Eagle** *Spizaetus nipalensis* Good views of one at Foping.
- Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* Noted at Wuyuan, Yangxian and Foping [*indicus*].
- Chinese Sparrowhawk** ◊ *Accipiter soloensis* Regularly seen in the south.
- Japanese Sparrowhawk** ◊ *Accipiter gularis* (NL) One was identified by Marcel at Foping NR.
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Singletons at Jiangshuihe and Xiaolongmen Forest Park.
- Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* (NL) One distant bird at Jiangshuihe by Marcel.
- Eastern Marsh Harrier** *Circus spilonotus* Rather common at Tumuji and at the Xianghai NR.
- Black-eared Kite** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* (NL) One from the bus between Emeifeng and Changle.
- Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus* Singletons at Yangxian, Foping and Xiaolongmen.



*Red-crowned Crane at Xianghai NR (Hannu Jännes).*

**Eastern Buzzard** *Buteo japonicus* One near Tumuji grasslands.

**Great Bustard** ◊ *Otis tarda* (V) A total of ten in the 'Tumuji grasslands', north of Baicheng [*dybowskii*].

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A few were seen [nominate].

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Small numbers, first seen at Yangkou [nominate].

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* First seen at Shanyutan near Changle [nominate].

**White-naped Crane** ◊ *Grus vipio* (V) Two adults and a nest at the Xianghai NR.

**Red-crowned Crane** ◊ *Grus japonensis* (E) Several at the Xianghai NR, though some were re-released birds.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* Decent numbers at Yangkou. Distinctive eastern race, *osculans*.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Common in Jilin, also noted at Yangkou and Shanyutan.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Small numbers at Yangkou, near Changle and at Xianghai NR.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Common in the northeast.



Saunders's Gull at Yangkou (Hannu Jännes).

- Grey-headed Lapwing** ◊ *Vanellus cinereus* Widespread in small numbers.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* Small numbers at Yangkou.
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Common at Yangkou.
- Long-billed Plover** ◊ *Charadrius placidus* Good views of two different birds near Wuyuan.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Small numbers at Xianghai NR [*curonicus*].
- White-faced Plover** ◊ *Charadrius [alexandrinus] dealbatus* Several at Shanyutan. Not yet split by IOC.
- Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Small numbers at Yangkou and Shanyutan [*nihonensis*].
- Mongolian Sand Plover** *Charadrius [mongolus] mongolus* Common at Yangkou, and one at Shanyutan.
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Common in the Rudong area and at Shanyutan [nominate].
- Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Six at the fishponds near Changle.
- Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura* Fairly common around Yangkou.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* Singletons at Yangkou and at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Asian Dowitcher** ◊ *Limnodromus semipalmatus* (NT) At least 6 in breeding plumage at the Xianghai NR.
- Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* (NT) Ten at the Xianghai NR.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Common at Yangkou, and one at Shanyutan [*baueri/menzbieri*].
- Little Curlew** ◊ *Numenius minutus* Great views of up to eight at the turf farm near to Yangkou.
- Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Small numbers at Yangkou [*variegatus*].
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* (NT) Small numbers in the northeast [*orientalis*].
- Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* A few at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.
- Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus* Just a few encounters around Yangkou.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.
- Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes* (NT) Small numbers at Yangkou and one at Shanyutan.
- Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* Good numbers at Yangkou and at Shanyutan.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers throughout. First seen around Yangkou.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers at Yangkou [nominate].
- Great Knot** ◊ *Calidris tenuirostris* (V) Great views around Yangkou and at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* Noted in small numbers at Yangkou and at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* Good numbers in the Rudong area and at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* Abundant in the Rudong area and at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata* Small numbers in the Rudong area and at Shanyutan.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Small numbers of breeding plumaged adults at all coastal sites.



*Tawny Fish Owl was an unexpected bonus at Foping NR (Angie Cederlund).*

- Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Abundant at Yangkou and 20 at Shanyutan.
- Spoon-billed Sandpiper** ◊ *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* (CR) Great views of 2-3 in the Rudong area.
- Broad-billed Sandpiper** ◊ *Limicola falcinellus* Small numbers in the Rudong area [*sibirica*].
- Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum* Two at Yangkou, and common at the Xianghai NR.
- Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* One at Hengshui Hu, and common in Jilin province.
- Saunders's Gull** ◊ *Chroicocephalus saundersi* (V) Plenty of stunning breeding plumaged birds at Yangkou.
- Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris* Ten at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* A few at Yangkou and at Shanyutan [*affinis*].
- Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* A few at Yangkou and at Shanyutan.
- Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Up to 100+ at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary [*cristatus*].
- Chinese Crested Tern** ◊ *Thalasseus bernsteini* (CR) Great views of three at Shanyutan. Mega!
- Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Good numbers in coastal areas and a few at Xianghai NR [*sinensis*].
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* Common at the coastal sites and a few at the Xianghai NR [*longipennis*].
- Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* Rather common at Shanyutan and at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* Very common at the Xianghai NR.
- Rock Dove** *Columba livia* Introduced. Also known as Feral Pigeon, or, by some, Beaman's Pigeon!!
- Hill Pigeon** ◊ *Columba rupestris* Good views of several around Jiangshuihe Village.
- Speckled Wood Pigeon** *Columba hodgsonii* One was heard well, and seen briefly by some of us at Foping.
- Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* Widespread in small numbers, first seen around Yangkou.
- Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* One at Hengshui Hu, and a few in Jilin. Introduced [*xanthocyclus*].
- Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Common and widespread.
- Barred Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia unchall* (H) Heard only at Emeifeng [*minor*].
- White-bellied Green Pigeon** ◊ *Treron sieboldii* (NL) One was seen by Marcel at Foping NR [*fopingensis*].
- Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* One at Wuyuan, and two more heard in Fuzhou Forest Park [nominate].
- Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis* One at Nanhui wetlands in Shanghai [*lignator*].



*Amur Falcon and Ashy Drongo (Hannu Jännes).*

- Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Quite a few, mostly heard birds, were encountered in the south.
- Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococyx sparverioides* Regularly heard and also seen at Foping.
- Rufous Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ *Hierococyx hyperythrus* See note.
- Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus* Seen well at Emeifeng and several others heard.
- Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* (H) See note.
- Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus* (H) Several were heard at Foping NR.
- Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus* (H) Heard at Jiangshuihe Village and Xiaolongmen Forest Park.
- Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* Abundant at the Xianghai NR and at Hengshui Hu [nominate].
- Oriental Scops Owl** ◊ *Otus sunia* (H) Heard at Jiaocheng [*stictonotus*].
- Tawny Fish Owl** ◊ *Ketupa flavipes* Great views of a roosting bird at the Foping NR.
- Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) Commonly heard in the south.
- Little Owl** *Athene noctua* One seen at the Xianghai NR [*plumipes*].
- Northern Boobook** ◊ *Ninox japonica* One at Yangkou [nominate].
- Grey Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus jotaka* Good views of a roosting bird at Yangkou [nominate].
- White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus* Good views at Yangkou and Jiaocheng.
- Common Swift** *Apus apus* Small numbers were noted [*pekinensis*].
- Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* Only one, at Jiaocheng [nominate].
- House Swift** *Apus nipalensis* Small numbers were noted on four days in Fujian [nominate].
- Oriental Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis* Small numbers in the south [*cyanicollis*].
- Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata* A total of six were noted.
- Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* Widespread in small numbers [*bengalensis*].
- Crested Kingfisher** *Megaceryle lugubris* One near Shimen village, and two on the drive to Foping [*guttulata*].
- Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Two near Wuyuan [*insignis*].
- Blue-throated Bee-eater** *Merops viridis* (LO) One from the bus on the way to Changle for the leader only [nominate].
- Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* Widespread in small numbers [nominate].
- Great Barbet** *Megalaima virens* Common at Emeifeng and Fuzhou Forest Park [*guttulata*].
- Speckled Piculet** *Picumnus innominatus* Noted at Wuyuan, Emeifeng and Yangxian [*chinensis*].
- Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos canicapillus* Two at Wuyuan and one at Fuzhou [*scintilliceps*].
- Darjeeling Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos darjellensis* (LO) One at the Foping NR [*desmursi*].



*Long-tailed Shrike (Hannu Jännes).*

- White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos* A female at Xiaolongmen Forest Park [*sinicus*].
- Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* See note.
- Lesser Yellownape** *Picus chlorolophus* Great views at Emeifeng. Quite rare here [*citrinocristatus*].
- Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* See note.
- Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* (H) Heard only at Emeifeng and Wuyuan [*sinensis*].
- Pied Falconet** ◊ *Microhierax melanoleucos* Great views of one at Xiaoqi Village, north of Wuyuan.
- Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* A few. First seen at Yangkou [*interstinctus*].
- Amur Falcon** ◊ *Falco amurensis* Very common in the northeast, especially at the Xianghai NR. Real crackers.
- Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* A handful of birds were noted.
- Large Woodshrike** *Tephrodornis virgatus* (H) One was heard at Fuzhou Forest Park.
- Black-winged Cuckooshrike** *Coracina melaschistos* A singleton at Shimen Village, Wuyuan [*intermedia*].
- Swinhoe's Minivet** ◊ *Pericrocotus cantonensis* Seen well at Yangxian, and again at Xi'an.
- Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus* Common at Yangkou.
- Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris* Common at Emeifeng [*griseogularis*].
- Scarlet Minivet** *Pericrocotus speciosus* A lovely pair at Fuzhou Forest Park [*fohkiensis*].
- Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus* Common at Foping NR [nominate].
- Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* Fairly widespread, both *lucionensis* and *confusus* were noted.
- Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Fairly common for the first part of the tour [nominate].
- Chinese Grey Shrike** ◊ *Lanius sphenocercus* A few were seen well in the northeast [nominate].
- Blyth's Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius aeralatus* Good views of this smart bird at Emeifeng [*ricketti*].
- Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* Singletons at Wuyuan and Hengshui Hu [*diffusus*].
- Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Small numbers. First seen at Yangkou [*cathoecus*].
- Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Sighted at Wuyuan, Yangxian and Fujian [*leucogenis*].
- Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus* One at Yangshan and several in the Yangxian-Foping area [*brevirostris*].
- Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Widespread in small numbers [*sinensis*].
- Azure-winged Magpie** ◊ *Cyanopica cyanus* Two forms: *swinhoei* first seen at Yangkou, *interposita* at Hengshui Hu.
- Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythroryncha* Fairly common [nominate].
- Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae* First seen at Shimen Village, and quite a few others later on [*sinica*].
- Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* First seen at Yangkou, and especially common in the north [*serica*].



*Collared Finchbill (Angie Cederlund).*

- Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* See note.
- Red-billed Chough** *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Good numbers seen near Jiangshuihe Village [*brachypus*].
- Daurian Jackdaw** ◊ *Coloeus dauuricus* Rather common with excellent views at the Xianghai NR.
- Oriental Rook** ◊ *Corvus [frugilegus] pastinator* A few seen around the Xianghai NR. Not yet split by the IOC.
- Oriental Crow** *Corvus [corone] orientalis* A few seen around the Xianghai NR. Not yet split by the IOC.
- Collared Crow** *Corvus torquatus* Two at Foping.
- Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* Small numbers. First seen on the way to Yangxian [*colonorum*].
- Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Two en route to Foping [*calochrysea*].
- Fire-capped Tit** *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* A pair at the Foping NR [*olivaceus*].
- Sultan Tit** *Melanclora sultanea* One at Emeifeng [*seorsa*].
- Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Small numbers at Foping NR [*eckodedicatus*] and two at Jiangshuihe [*pekinensis*].
- Yellow-bellied Tit** ◊ *Pardaliparus venustulus* Noted at Foping, Jiangshuihe-Xiaolongmen and Xuanzhong.
- Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris* Two birds both at Xuanzhong and Xiaolongmen
- Songar Tit** ◊ *Poecile [montanus] songarus* Several at Jiangshuihe/Xiaolongmen. Not split by IOC [*stoetzneri*].
- Japanese Tit** *Parus minor* Two forms: nominate first seen around Yangkou, and *tibetanus* first seen in Foping NR.
- Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* Common in Foping NR [*yunnanensis*].
- Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Machlolophus spilonotus* Seen daily at Emeifeng [*rex*].
- Chinese Penduline Tit** ◊ *Remiz consobrinus* Seen at Yangkou and at the Xianghai NR.



*Red-rumped Swallow (Hannu Jännes).*

- Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Seen at Yangkou and in the Changle area [*weigoldi*].
- Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Common in the 'Tumuji grasslands' [*intermedia*].
- Mongolian Lark** ◇ *Melanocorypha mongolica* A handful of these brutes seen well in the 'Tumuji grasslands'.
- Asian Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala cheleensis* Seen well in the 'Tumuji grasslands' at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Collared Finchbill** *Spizixos semitorques* Rather common from Wuyuan to Xi'an [*semitorques*].
- Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus* Seen in Fuzhou Forest Park. Introduced here?
- Brown-breasted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Common from Yangxian to Xi'an [*andersoni*].
- Light-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis* Very common. First seen at Yangkou [nominate].
- Mountain Bulbul** *Ixos mcclllandii* Seen at Wuyuan, Emeifeng and Fuzhou Forest Park [*holtii*].
- Chestnut Bulbul** ◇ *Hemixos castanonotus* Seen at Emeifeng and Fuzhou Forest Park [*canipennis*].
- Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* See note.
- Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* Scattered records.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Common and widespread.
- Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* Five at Xuanzhong Si and two at Jiangshuihe.
- Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Common and widespread [*japonica*].
- Pygmy Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla* Brief views of singing bird for some at Emeifeng [nominate].
- Rufous-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus albogularis* Rather common at Wuyuan and at Emeifeng [*fulvifacies*].
- Manchurian Bush Warbler** ◇ *Horornis canturians* See note.
- Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** ◇ *Horornis fortipes* See note.
- Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler** ◇ *Horornis acanthizoides* Common in Foping NR. Great song too!
- Asian Stubtail** ◇ *Urosphena squameiceps* Heard at Jiangshuihe Village, and seen and heard at Xiaolongmen Forest.
- Silver-throated Bushtit** ◇ *Aegithalos glaucogularis* Seen at Jiaocheng, and again at Xiaolongmen [*vinaceus*].
- Black-throated Bushtit** *Aegithalos concinnus* Quite common. First seen near to Wuyuan [nominate].
- Sooty Bushtit** ◇ *Aegithalos fuliginosus* Fairly common in Foping NR.
- Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Common in Jilin, and small numbers elsewhere [nominate].
- Buff-throated Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus subaffinis* Excellent views at Emeifeng.
- Yellow-streaked Warbler** *Phylloscopus armandii* A few seen at Jiaocheng, and Jiangshuihe [nominate].
- Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi* Three with other migrants near 'Tumuji grasslands'.
- Chinese Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* Common at Foping NR and at Jiangshuihe.
- Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* Common in Jilin, and small numbers elsewhere.
- Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Common around Yangkou, only few elsewhere.



*Pallas's Leaf Warbler near Tumuji (Angie Cederlund).*

**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* Seen high up in Foping NR and near to Jiangshuihe Village [*mandellii*].

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis* Quite a few migrants seen, many of which were in song.

**Two-barred Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* Small numbers from Jiaocheng to Jilin.

**Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus tenellipes* A total of seven around Yangkou. See note.

**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Common in Foping NR. Very distinctive voice.

**Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus* Small numbers were noted in several places.

**Claudia's Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus claudiae* Fairly common in Foping NR, and around Jiangshuihe Village.

**Emei Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus emeiensis* (H) Difficult to find this year, only two were heard in Foping NR.

**Kloss's Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti* A few in Foping NR.

**Sulphur-breasted Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus ricketti* Good views en route to Foping Also heard at Emeifeng.



*Chinese Leaf Warbler (Angie Cederlund).*



*Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler (Angie Cederlund).*

- White-spectacled Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus affinis* Common at Emeifeng. Yellow spectacles [*intermedius*].
- Grey-crowned Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus tephrocephalus* A few roadside birds at Foping NR.
- Martens's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus omeiensis* Common around the buildings in Foping NR.
- Alström's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus soror* One was seen and another one heard near our hotel at Foping.
- Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps* Seen daily at Emeifeng, and also heard at Foping [*sinensis*].
- Oriental Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis* First seen around Yangkou. Especially abundant at Hengshui Hu.
- Black-browed Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* Seen well at Shanyutan, Hengshui Hu and Xianghai NR.
- Thick-billed Warbler** ◇ *Iduna aedon* Three birds in the northeast [*rufescens*].
- Baikai Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella davidi* Great views of singing birds at Foping NR [nominate].
- Brown Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella luteoventris* A few at Emeifeng and at Foping NR, where seen well.
- Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata* Many flushed at Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Marsh Grassbird** ◇ *Locustella pryeri* (NT) Poor views of two at Pudong Wetlands [*sinensis*].
- Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* First seen around Yangkou. Not the same species as in Europe! [*tinnabulans*].
- Striated Prinia** *Prinia crinigera* (H) Two were heard near Yangxian.
- Yellow-bellied Prinia** *Prinia flaviventris* Rather common in Fujian [*sonitans*].
- Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata* Fairly common from Yangkou to Fujian [*extensicauda*].
- Common Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sutorius* Two at Fuzhou Forest Park [*longicauda*].
- Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler** ◇ *Pomatorhinus gravivox* Good views of four north of Yangxian [nominate].
- Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler** ◇ *Pomatorhinus swinhoei* Rather common from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park.
- Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* See note.
- Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyridopsis ruficeps* Fairly common from Wuyuan to Yangxian [*davidi*].
- Dusky Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe brunnea* (H) Heard north of Yangxian [*superciliaris*].
- Huet's Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe hueti* Rather common from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park [nominate].
- Chinese Hwamei** ◇ *Garrulax canorus* Rather common from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park [nominate].
- Moustached Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax cineraceus* Stunning views of a superb pair at Emeifeng [*cinereiceps*].
- Barred Laughingthrush** *Garrulax lunulatus* One at the Foping NR.
- Masked Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax perspicillatus* Noted at Wuyuan and in the Fuzhou-Changle area.
- Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax pectoralis* One at Fuzhou Forest Park [*picticollis*].
- Black-throated Laughingthrush** *Garrulax chinensis* A few at Fuzhou Forest Park. Released cagebirds?
- Blue-crowned Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax courtoisi* (CR) Big flock at Shimen Village, Wuyuan. Superb!
- Plain Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax davidi* Great views of a few at Xuanzhong Si, Jiaocheng [nominate].
- Buffy Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax berthemyi* Common at Emeifeng with some great views [nominate].
- White-browed Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax sannio* Common at Yangxian [*oblectans*].



*Daurian Starling at Xianghai (Angie Cederlund).*

- Elliot's Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron elliotii* Seen well at Foping NR [nominate].
- Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea* Small numbers at Emeifeng and at Foping NR.
- Grey-hooded Fulvetta** ◇ *Fulvetta cinereiceps* Excellent views of a pair at Foping NR [*fessa*].
- Chinese Hill Warbler** ◇ *Rhopophilus pekinensis* Noted at Jiaocheng, Jiangshuihe and Xianghai [nominate].
- Great Parrotbill** ◇ *Conostoma aemodium* Great views at Foping NR.
- Three-toed Parrotbill** *Cholornis paradoxa* One at the Foping NR.
- Vinous-throated Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora webbiana* See note.
- Short-tailed Parrotbill** ◇ *Neosuthora davidiana* Brief views of one for some near to Wuyuan [nominate].
- Reed Parrotbill** ◇ *Paradoxornis heudei* (NT) Great views at Yangkou, Pudong Wetlands, and at Hengshui Hu. Mega!
- Indochinese Yuhina** ◇ *Yuhina torqueola* Seen daily at Emeifeng, and also at Fuzhou Forest Park.
- White-collared Yuhina** ◇ *Yuhina diademata* Common in Foping NR [nominate]. Marcel's favourite bird!
- Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta* Seen daily at Emeifeng, with many good views [*pallida*].
- Japanese White-Eye** *Zosterops japonicus* Seen at a few sites. First seen around Yangkou [*simplex*].
- Spotted Elachura** ◇ *Elachura formosa* See note.
- Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* One at Jiangshuihe [*idius*].
- Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* A singleton at Foping NR, and others at Xiaolongmen Forest [*sinensis*].
- Chinese Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta villosa* A couple seen well in Xiaolongmen Forest [nominate].
- Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristatellus* Widespread. First seen on the way to Yangkou [nominate].
- Red-billed Starling** ◇ *Spodiopsar sericeus* An attractive starling, seen well many times.
- White-cheeked Starling** *Spodiopsar cineraceus* Seen at a number of locations.
- Black-collared Starling** *Gracupica nigricollis* Small numbers in the Changle area.
- Daurian Starling** ◇ *Agropsar sturninus* A pair at nest and a singleton in the village at Xianghai.
- White-shouldered Starling** ◇ *Sturnia sinensis* Good views on the way from Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
- Siberian Thrush** ◇ *Geokichla sibirica* Excellent male at Yangkou, and another one at Emeifeng.
- Chinese Blackbird** *Turdus [merula] mandarinus* Rather common. Not yet split by IOC.
- Grey-sided Thrush** ◇ *Turdus feae* Great views of two on Lingshan, near to Jiangshuihe Village.
- Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* A scattered few of this skittish migrant.
- Chinese Thrush** ◇ *Turdus mupinensis* Great views at Xuanzhong Si, Jiaocheng.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis* Rather widespread in small numbers [*prosthopellus*].
- Grey-streaked Flycatcher** ◇ *Muscicapa griseicticta* Five at Yangkou.
- Dark-sided Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* Two at Emeifeng, and three in the northeast [nominate].
- Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica* Scattered few were noted [nominate].
- Chinese Blue Flycatcher** ◇ *Cyornis glaucicomans* Good views of a pair north of Yangxian.
- Blue-and-white Flycatcher** ◇ *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* Two, a stunning male and a female at Yangkou.



*Mugimaki Flycatcher (Angie Cederlund) and Green-backed Flycatcher (Hannu Jännes).*

- Zappey's Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyanoptila cumatilis* A total of three males with some great views in Xiaolongmen Forest.
- White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana* (H) A few were heard in Foping NR.
- Indian Blue Robin** *Larvivora brunnea* Fairly common by voice in Foping NR, but only a couple seen.
- Siberian Blue Robin** *Larvivora cyane* Two beautiful males near 'Tumuji grasslands'.
- Rufous-tailed Robin** ◊ *Larvivora sibilans* Small numbers daily at Yangkou. Also sighted at Xianghai.
- Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* One female at the Xianghai NR.
- Siberian Rubythroat** *Calliope calliope* About 3 seen in total.
- Blackthroat** ◊ *Calliope obscura* (V) Good views of a male for some of us at Foping NR.
- Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* See note.
- Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* Three at Emeifeng.
- Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus leschenaulti* One at Emeifeng, and a family of four at Fuzhou Forest Park.
- White-crowned Forktail** *Enicurus leschenaulti* Fairly widespread [*sinensis*].
- Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* Three sightings, including a juvenile, at Emeifeng [*bacatus*].
- Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus* A few were noted [nominate].
- Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula zanthopygia* A total of seven including some cracking males.
- Narcissus Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula narcissina* Great views of a male at Yangkou.
- Green-backed Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula elisae* Several near to Jiangshuihe Village and in Xiaolongmen Forest.
- Mugimaki Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula mugimaki* A few migrants in the Yangkou-Shanghai area.
- Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* A handful of birds were noted.
- Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor* A few at Foping NR [*diversa*].
- Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus* Rather widespread and common [*leucopterus*].
- Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Rather common along various rivers [nominate].
- White-capped Redstart** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* (LO) One at Jiangshuihe.
- Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* Noted at Yangshan, en route to Xi'an and at Jiaocheng .
- Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush** *Monticola rufiventris* A family party, including two juveniles, at Emeifeng.
- White-throated Rock Thrush** *Monticola gularis* (H) Two distant birds were heard at Xiaolongmen.
- Stejneger's Stonechat** ◊ *Saxicola stejnegeri* A singleton on Yangshan Island.
- Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii* Seen twice at Emeifeng [*pallasii*].
- Mrs. Gould's Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga gouldiae* A few at Foping NR [*dabryii*].



Russet Sparrow, male and female (Hannu Jännes).

- Fork-tailed Sunbird** *◊ Aethopyga christinae* Great views near to Wuyuan and in Fuzhou Forest Park.
- Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans* Seen in the Yangxian-Foping area, and again at Jiangshuihe.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Two forms seen, the widespread *saturatus* and *dybowski* in the northeast.
- White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata* A scattered few were seen [*yunnanensis*].
- Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *◊ Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* Common at Yangkou.
- Eastern Grey-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla [tschutschensis] macronyx* One male at Yangkou.
- Green-headed Wagtail** *◊ Motacilla [tschutschensis] taivana* Common at Yangkou.
- Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* Two at the Xianghai NR.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Small numbers throughout.
- Amur Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* The widespread White Wagtail.
- East Siberian Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] ocularis* Small numbers at Yangkou, and one at the Foping NR.
- Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* Many migrants noted and abundant in the 'Tumuji grasslands' north of Baicheng.
- Blyth's Pipit** *◊ Anthus godlewskii* Two at Foping NR and Jianshuihe, and a handful of birds in the northeast.
- Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Fairly common at Yangkou, only few elsewhere.
- Pechora Pipit** *◊ Anthus gustavi* A few at Yangkou, and five at the Xianghai NR. Great views.
- Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus* Two on the top of Lingshan at Jiangshuihe.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* A handful of birds at Yangkou.
- Chinese Grosbeak** *◊ Eophona migratoria* Good numbers at Yangkou and in the Shanghai area [*sowerbyi*].
- Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* (H) Two heard only birds [*grebnitskii*].
- Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** *◊ Carpodacus davidianus* See note.
- Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus sibiricus* Great views of several smart males at Xuanzhong Si [*lepidus*].
- Grey-capped Greenfinch** *Chloris sinica* Relatively widespread in small numbers [nominated].
- Eurasian Siskin** *Spinus spinus* Two sightings at Yangkou.
- Slaty Bunting** *◊ Emberiza siemsseni* Great views of a couple of birds at Foping NR.
- Godlewski's Bunting** *◊ Emberiza godlewskii* See note.
- Meadow Bunting** *◊ Emberiza cioides* See note.
- Jankowski's Bunting** *◊ Emberiza jankowskii* (E) See note.
- Tristram's Bunting** *◊ Emberiza tristrami* A few at Yangkou and in the woods near 'Tumuji grasslands'.
- Chestnut-eared Bunting** *Emberiza fucata* A singleton at Yangkou [nominated].



*Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch at Jiangshuihe (Hannu Jännes).*

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* A singleton at Jiangshuihe and eight in the Xianghai area.

**Yellow-browed Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza chrysophrys* One seen at the hotel garden in Xianghai.

**Yellow-throated Bunting** *Emberiza elegans* Two forms: *elegantula* at Yangxian; *ticehursti* at Jiangshuihe.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola* (E) See note.

**Chestnut Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza rutila* A handful of birds were noted.

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala* See note.

**Pallas's Reed Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza pallasi* Common at 'Tumuji grasslands', north of Baicheng.

**Japanese Reed Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza yessoensis* A male at 'Tumuji grasslands', north of Baicheng [*continentalis*].

## MAMMALS

**Tolai Hare** *Lepus tolai* A couple of sightings on the second part of the tour.

**Père David's Rock Squirrel** *Sciurotamias davidianus* A few seen around Xuanzhong Si and Jiangshuihe.

**Daurian Ground Squirrel (D Souslik)** *Spermophilus dauricus* Several seen in Jilin Province.

**Siberian Chipmunk** *Tamias sibiricus* One at Xiaolongmen Forest Park.

**Perny's Squirrel (Owston's Long-nosed S)** *Dremomys pernyi* (NL) A singleton in Wuyuan.

**Pallas's Squirrel (Red-bellied S)** *Callosciurus erythraeus* A singleton at Fuzhou Forest Park.

**Maritime Striped Squirrel (Formosan S S)** *Tamiops maritimus* Several sightings in the south.



Siberian Blue Robin (Angie Cederlund) and Tristram's Bunting (Hannu Jännes).

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds. 2015. IOC World Bird Names v5.2. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

### **White-necklaced Partridge** *Arborophila gingica*

A pair at Emeifeng, where the species was also heard daily. In addition several birds were heard at Fuzhou Forest Park.

### **Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

We saw three forms of this widespread pheasant. The form *torquatus* was first seen around Yangkou, the form *kiangsuensis* was first seen around Yangxian, and also seen at Jiaocheng and the form *pallasi* was seen in the Jilin part of the tour.

### **Golden Pheasant** *Chrysolophus pictus*

One male seen at the Foping NR, and many more heard there and in the Yangxian area.

### **Rufous Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx hyperythrus*

Marcel and Wilfried saw one at the hotel garden in Beijing after the tour had officially ended.

### **Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*

Heard at Yangxian and Foping [nominat]. Marcel and Wilfried saw one at the hotel garden in Beijing after the tour had officially ended.

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

We recorded three subspecies of this widespread species. At Yangkou, we saw the form *cabanisi*. At Foping NR, we recorded the distinctive form *beicki* which showed brownish cheeks, a broad red band on the nape, extensive red on the vent, small, linear white wing patches, and black on the cheeks which does not join with black on nape. Finally, at the Xianghai NR, I think the form we saw is *japonicus*.

### **Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

Note that the Chinese and southern Asian birds are split by the HBW illustrated checklist as Black-naped Woodpecker *P. guerini*. We saw two forms: *sobrinus* – in the south; and *kogo* - three seen at Xuanzhong Si (Monastery), Jiaocheng.

### **Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Two forms: *macella* at Foping and the spottier *interdicta* at Jiaocheng and Jiangshuihe.



Godlewski's Bunting (Angie Cederlund).

**Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

One at Yangkou was an unexpected vagrant. In addition rather common from Wuyuan to Yangxian [nominate].

**Manchurian Bush Warbler** *Horornis canturians*

A few seen and more heard at Yangkou and also seen on Yangshan Island. Strangely, the IOC World List has recently placed the subspecies that we see, *canturians*, in Japanese Bush-Warbler *H. diphone*, leaving Manchurian Bush Warbler as a monotypic species *H. borealis*. For now, we have not followed this as the large *canturians* and *borealis* seem much closer to each other than they do to *diphone*. Some authors lump all these forms in Japanese Bush Warbler *C. diphone*. Confused?

**Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** *Horornis fortipes*

Great views of one at Yangshan Island near Shanghai, and rather commonly encountered in the Yangxian-Foping area [*dauidianus*].

**Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*

The identification was based on the distinct song we heard from couple of different individuals. To date, other than song, there does not seem to be a reliable way of separating this species from the Sakhalin Leaf Warbler in the field, and indeed a well-photographed individual in the UK looks destined to escape specific identity, despite intense scrutiny!

**Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

Rather common in the south. Two forms: *stridulus* in Fujian and *styani* (heard only) at Yangxian.

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Sinosuthora webbiana*

Rather common and widespread. Two forms: nominate first in Yangkou; *mantschuria* first at Jiaocheng.

**Spotted Elachura** *Elachura formosa*

Heard and seen very well indeed at Emeifeng. This entertaining species has recently been elevated to its own monotypic family!

**Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*

A first-summer male of the isolated Central Chinese (Gansu, Qinghai) form *albocoeruleus* was sound recorded and photographed at Jiangshuihe. This form, 'Gansu Bluetail', is very similar to the northern form *cyanurus*, and best identified by its distinctive song. There is at least one previous record of this form in Jiangshuihe.

**Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus***

A total of four, including a nest building pair, at Jiangshuihe. After a lot of taxonomic shuffling and reshuffling 'the real' Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch is now confined to a rather small area in Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Hebei and Beijing.

**Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii***

A few birds at Xuanzhong Si, also seen at Jiangshuihe and Xiaolongmen area [*omissa*].

**Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides***

Two forms: *castaneiceps* on Yangshan Island and *weigoldi* at Jiangshuihe and Xianghai.

**Jankowski's Bunting *Emberiza jankowskii***

A pair of this very rare bird was seen in the 'Tumuji grasslands'. This species is currently classified as Endangered by BirdLife international as it is undergoing a very rapid population decline, perhaps primarily owing to conversion of its grassland habitat for agriculture, pasture and forestry. Surveys are urgently required to determine its status over its large former range, and unless additional stable populations are discovered in the near future it may require uplisting to Critically Endangered.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola***

Singletons at Yangkou and Hengshui Hu, and two at the Xianghai NR [*ornata*].

**Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala***

Small numbers at several sites, first seen at Yangkou. Two forms: *sordida*, with a yellow belly and greenish head, and *spodocephala*, with grey head and white belly.



*Long-tailed Rosefinch of the subspecies lepidus (Hannu Jännes).*



*Photo: Angie Cederlund*