



Endangered Tibetan Antelopes at sunrise (Hannu Jännnes).

ULTIMATE TIBET & XINJIANG

15 JUNE – 4/8 JULY 2014

LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES

The Ultimate Tibet & Xinjiang tour to Qinghai, Xizang and the much less visited Xinjiang Provinces proved extremely successful, producing a fantastic range of Tibetan Plateau specialities, including every plateau endemic apart from the more or less currently inaccessible Sillem's Mountain Finch, and included the much sought after Lord Derby's Parakeet as well as Tibetan Eared Pheasant, Szechenyi's Monal Partridge (or Buff-throated Partridge), Giant and Tibetan (or Kozlov's) Babaxes, Brown-cheeked (or Prince Henri's) Laughingthrush, Ground Tit (or Groundpecker), Tibetan (or Kozlov's) Bunting, Tibetan (or Roborovski's) Rosefinch and the strange Przevalski's (or Pink-tailed) Finch, the sole member of its family. In addition, our brief visit to the deserts of Xinjiang yielded three important dry country birds with Biddulph's Ground Jay, White-winged Woodpecker and Saxaul Sparrow. Add to these a number of highly desired, but more widespread species, like Blue and White Eared Pheasant, Tibetan and Himalayan Snowcock, Przevalski's, Daurian and Tibetan Partridges, Ibisbill, Tibetan and Pallas's Sandgrouse, the handsome Mongolian and gigantic Tibetan (Long-billed) Lark, Siberian and White-tailed Rubythroats, the very restricted range Przevalski's (or Ala Shan) Redstart and eight other *Phoenicurus* redstarts, Wallcreeper, Chinese and Przevalski's Nuthatch, Henderson's Ground Jay, six species of snowfinch and eight species of rosefinch and you are a long way to understanding why the tours to 'the Roof of the World' are so popular.



Mammalian highlights included Tibetan Fox and Grey Wolf (Hannu Jännes).

To the surprise of many participants, mammals are also well represented on this tour, and we had great views of Grey Wolf, Tibetan and Goitered Gazelle, Tibetan Antelope, Wild Yak, Blue Sheep, the attractive Kiang (or Tibetan Wild Ass), three species of pika, Tibetan Fox and many cute Himalayan Marmots. As well as these avian and mammalian highlights there is the privilege of travelling this remote part of China with its breathtakingly beautiful highland landscapes, the chance to see the fascinating lifestyles and cultures of the local peoples, and, of course, the great food. This new, extended itinerary, in its current format, involves some serious travelling by road. The main tour clocked 6504 kilometres, and after the SE Tibet extension the odometer showed a total of 7877 kilometres, which must be one of the highest totals on any Birdquest tour.

Our exploration of the Tibetan Plateau started at Huzhu Bei Shan, which lies close to the border with Gansu province and is one of the most heavily forested areas in north-eastern Qinghai. Our main target here was the striking Blue Eared Pheasant, and we were not to be disappointed, getting great views of one individual during our first morning. The scenery was spectacular, as it would be throughout the tour, and we saw a marvellous selection of good birds during our two day stay including Himalayan Buzzard, the stunning White-throated Redstart, Chestnut Thrush, Spotted Bush Warbler, Chinese, Gansu and Alpine Leaf Warblers, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Himalayan Beautiful and Chinese White-browed Rosefinches, Grey-headed Bullfinch, a superb Chinese Thrush, Chinese and Przevalski's Nuthatches, a superb adult male Red-flanked Bluetail of the isolated subspecies *albocoeruleus*, White-browed Tit, and both Elliot's and Plain (Père David's) Laughingthrushes. More widespread additions included Northern Goshawk, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Black Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay, Large-billed and Carrion (or Oriental) Crows, Asian House Martin, Amur Wagtail, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Siberian Rubythroat, Kessler's Thrush, Black, Blue-fronted, White-capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts, Greenish and Yellow-streaked Warblers, Large-billed and Hume's Leaf Warblers, Eurasian Treecreeper, Goldcrest and Willow (or Songar), Grey Crested and Rufous-vented Tits. We then drove back to Xining, where we had planned a late afternoon visit to the dry hills near the city, but this had to be cancelled because of a fierce sand storm.

Next morning the weather was much improved, and our visit to the eroded hills in the outskirts of Xining produced the hoped for Pale Rosefinch, now apparently a good split from the Sinai Rosefinch. Then we headed for the Plateau itself, where the first stop was at the huge wetland of the Qinghai Lake. Here a couple of hours birding brought us many new birds including Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes, Whooper Swan, Mallard, Ferruginous Duck, Common and Red-crested Pochard, Common Goldeneye, our first Black-necked Cranes, the only Greenshank of the trip, our first Ground Tits and few Père David's (or Small) Snowfinches. The real surprise of the day was a Cotton Pygmy Goose swimming peacefully with other ducks. This is probably the first record of this tropical duck in Qinghai Province! After lunch in a nearby town we headed for the Gonghe area where couple of hours of late afternoon birding produced stunning Pine Buntings, a singing Black-faced Bunting, Eurasian Wryneck, Crested Lark, the hoped for Mongolian Finch, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, and a female House Sparrow, a major rarity on this itinerary.



Pine Buntings were easy to see near Gonghe (Hannu Jännes).



Rufous-necked Snowfinch and Horned Lark are probably the commonest birds on the plateau (Hannu Jännes).

Very early the next morning we began our long journey over the outer plateau to Yushu, a road trip of about 650 kilometres. Despite the very long drive, we managed to squeeze in some birding, that included a two hour stop at Bayankala Shan pass, where we spent some quality time with a photogenic pair of Tibetan Rosefinch, and also had great views of Henri's Snowfinch, Brandt's Mountain Finch and Gldenstdt's Redstart. The next morning at Yushu our first birding stop produced a Great Rosefinch, one of the main targets of the day, before it started raining. Due to the heavy rain our next rosefinch stop (for Red-fronted) was cancelled, but later the rain eased off a bit, and we found ourselves on the shores of a rapidly flowing river admiring a pair of Ibisbills with two large chicks, and a family party of White-throated Dippers, where one of the parent was the completely brown colour morph. After crossing a high pass the bad weather was left behind, and we enjoyed a good lunch break in the sunshine photographing some pikas, snowfinches and Little Owls. Later we stopped at a juniper clad hillside and enjoyed great scope views of a total of five Blood Pheasants (four males, one female), and a pair of Tibetan Babax. In addition a pair of White Eared Pheasants were seen, albeit rather briefly. As we still had plenty of time, we headed for the Kanda Shan gorge, where we had a total of five White Eared Pheasant with some really great, close-up views.

New day saw us at a high altitude pass, where our main target, Tibetan Bunting, was secured as soon as we stepped out of the bus. Whilst admiring this very special Tibetan endemic we became surrounded by thick cloud, and soon it started to rain hard, so we thought it best to retreat to a lower altitude. Here we spent some hours birding in an area which gave us great views of Tibetan Babaxes, and Tibetan Partridges. In the



Male Tibetan (or Roborovski's) Rosefinch at nearly 5000 metres (Hannu Jännes).

early afternoon the weather cleared and we headed back to the high pass to see if we could find some of the other quality birds that occur in the area, but things had gone very quiet, and we only managed to repeat our great views of a pair of Tibetan Buntings. Late afternoon was spent checking some bush covered slopes with very little result.

As the new itinerary included only one full day, instead of two, at Beizha forest, we knew that we were in for a very busy day, and missing some of the minor targets would be a possibility. Luckily the road was in such a good condition that we made good progress and reached our first birding spot at dawn, and, after a relatively easy uphill walk, we secured our main target, Szechenyi's Monal Partridge. We spent quite some time admiring and photographing a group of three adults and three chicks as they were feeding in the open just 60 meters from us and followed a more distant group of monal partridges having a serious territorial dispute which included fighting and lots of excited cackling. On the way down we found another, even more confiding group of three adult birds with a very small chick feeding openly on a hill side, and two male Blood Pheasants. Next stop was for a calling Maroon-backed Accentor, which unfortunately proved to be in an unapproachable site the wrong side of a large river and it refused to show. Our mid-day walk on a forest clad slope was surprisingly productive and included our first Dark-sided Flycatchers, showy Slaty-backed Flycatchers, an excellent pair of Giant Laughingthrush, Hodgson's Treecreepers, some, unfortunately rather skittish, Crested Tit-warblers, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Chinese Fulvetta, a gorgeous male Long-tailed Minivet, a rare visitor this far north, skulking Three-toed Woodpecker and Sichuan Leaf Warbler. After a very late lunch we spent couple of hours trying to find Three-banded Rosefinch, but ran out of time and failed to find this attractive species, which is far easier to find cross the border in Sichuan.



Tibetan Bunting at Kanda Shan (Hannu Jännes).

Next morning, heading back north, it was raining heavily again and our attempts to get decent views of the singing Red-fronted Rosefinch in the pouring rain were not very successful. After a delicious sit-down breakfast in Yushu, a city which has now been completely re-build after the devastating earthquake in 2010, the weather cleared up, and we had great birding session on a bush covered hill side where we enjoyed great views of two pairs of Przevalski's Finch, one of the most important birds on the tour. Other sightings included splendid White-tailed Rubythroats and Streaked Rosefinches. Later in the day, after a very long drive, we had a birding stop at one of the roadside wetlands, where the highlight was a pack of five Grey Wolves raiding breeding island of Bar-headed Geese. In addition we found a gorgeous male Lesser Sand Plover and Eurasian Spoonbill.

Next morning it was raining again, and, apart from a couple of short roadside stops and meal breaks, we drove pretty much directly to Lake Qinghai, where we spent the late afternoon checking a large wetland near the village of Heimaihe. Best birds here included a flock of Common Shelducks, a new bird for us, a pair of Black-necked Crane with a small chick, many Pallas's Gulls, a lonely White-winged Tern for Tom only, and some mighty Tibetan Larks. From Lake Qinghai it was a relatively short drive to our hotel in Chaka, our home for the next three nights.

Yet another rainy day found us in a steep sided valley near Chaka searching for the Przevalski's (or Ala Shan) Redstart, which we fortunately found rather easily without having to do too much climbing. Other birds seen in this beautiful area included several noisy Przevalski's Partridges, a couple of Tibetan Partridges, many Brown Accentors, a singing Pine Bunting and, best of all, really great views of a total of five different Wallcreepers. The Himalayan Snowcock that sometimes occurs here was nowhere to be seen, but on our way back to our vehicle we met a shepherd who promised to take us to a surefire snowcock area. After lot of hesitation we were in our vehicle with our local snowcock expert heading for his secret stake-out. The journey took twice the time he had anticipated and the walk was twice the length, but in the end we heard a distant Himalayan Snowcock calling. Unfortunately we were not ready to pursue this bird on this occasion, but maybe next time when we are better prepared for the challenge. Late afternoon was spent checking a large wetland and some semi desert areas, where some new birds like Little Tern were added on the list.



White Eared Pheasant at Kanda Shan (Hannu Jännes).

The next morning in Chaka we headed east over the Rubber Mountain pass and spent the morning walking a valley, where our main target, the *weigoldi* subspecies of Smoky Warbler, showed well. In addition we finally had good views of a male Red-fronted Rosefinch, that was singing its heart out, and we even found a male Przevalski's Finch. In the afternoon we searched the semi desert areas near Chaka finding our main quarry, the amazing Henderson's Ground Jay, which showed well for us all. Two brief, distant Pallas's Sandgrouse, our first Blanford's Snowfinches, a couple of Mongolian Finches and a Mongolian Lark were seen. For the first few hours of our last morning in Chaka we went back to the Przevalski's Redstart valley, where we soon flushed a pair of Daurian Partridge, a bird we had missed on our previous visit, and eventually had great scope views of the male sitting on a top of a ridge. The other target bird we still needed took a bit longer to find, but eventually we did find, in pouring rain, a very wet, rather dispirited, Chinese Grey Shrike of the local subspecies *giganteus*. We then headed for Golmud (or Geermu), where we arrived, after a long, slow drive, late in the evening. A couple of short stops en route yielded a family party of Common Rock Thrush and a pair of Henderson's Ground Jays.

Another travelling day saw us driving the 750 kilometres from Golmud to Ruoqiang in Xinjiang Province through some very impressive desert and mountain landscapes. There was not much time to stop for birds but an afternoon coffee break in good habitat in the Altun Mountains, which mark the boundary between Qinghai and Xinjiang, brought us Margelanian Lesser Whitethroat, several Great Rosefinches and a family party of Isabelline Shrikes.

Next morning found us in dry country near Ruoqiang, exploring the southern edge of the Taklimakan desert that occupies much of the Tarim Basin, where we soon found some gorgeous Biddulph's Ground Jays and handsome Saxaul Sparrows, both important target birds for us. A calling White-winged Woodpecker was more difficult to locate, but after some intensive searching we all managed acceptable views. Also few Desert Whitethroats were noted here, but the views were less than perfect. On the way back to our hotel for lunch and a siesta(!), we checked a large wetland, where among other things, Black Stork, Long-legged Buzzard, Pied Avocet, Whiskered Tern, Northern Pintail, Bearded Reedling, Black-headed Gull, Citrine Wagtail and Common Starling were added on our bird list. A late afternoon foray in very hot and windy weather on the outskirts of the city provided one more target bird, the local form of Chinese Hill Warbler (or Tarim Bush-dweller), a potential split, and we also had brief views of a Barred Warbler.



Tibetan Partridge (Hannu Jännes).



Adult (left) and juvenile Tibetan Babax (Hannu Jännes).

On the way back to Golmud the next day we spent a few hours at a road side wadi, where we all finally connected with Pallas's Sandgrouse (a total of 25 were seen), and saw several Desert Wheatears, including singing males, and also, perhaps surprisingly, a single Henderson's Ground Jay. Later in the day driving towards Golmud, we experienced first a hailstorm, then some heavy rain and finally a serious sandstorm, all of which slowed our progress and it was late in the evening before we reached our accommodation in Golmud.

Next morning we began our southward journey of over 1000 kilometres to Lhasa and, after a road side breakfast at a very scenic spot with mighty snow-capped peaks in the background, we arrived at our first scheduled stop at the base of Yuzhu Feng (6178 meters asl). This is a very scenic highland plateau surrounded by several snow-capped peaks and a shrinking glazier. At the base of the glazier there is a simple base camp at 5100 meters asl used by mountaineers for acclimatization and training before they move on to the higher peaks. It has been speculated, based on the altitude and available habitat, that the enigmatic Sillem's Mountain Finch, which was rediscovered few years ago about 100 kilometres west, could



Blanford's Snowfinch and Henri's Snowfinch (Hannu Jännes).



White-rumped Snowfinch and Père David's Snowfinch (Hannu Jännes).

also occur in this area. During the very limited time available we didn't even have a chance to start searching for this mega as it is a really huge area and reaching the most promising looking habitats would have required hours of walking. Instead we did some road side birding with little result as the birds are pretty thin on the ground at this altitude, and the number of species low. After a picnic lunch at the base camp, we had to move on as we still had one important target bird, the enigmatic Tibetan Sandgrouse, scheduled for the day. Late in the afternoon we reached our surefire sandgrouse site, and, after an easy level walk in suitable habitat Tom, our right wing man, waved that he had found the birds. A few minutes later we all were admiring a flock of six Tibetan Sandgrouse males feeding peacefully some distance away in beautiful afternoon light. What a sight, and for me one of the absolute highlights of the trip as this species can be very tricky to find. Other interesting observations during the afternoon included a genuinely Wild Yak and a roadside Tibetan Fox digging out a pika from its hole. We reached the small roadside village of Budonquang and our basic accommodation, which wasn't half as bad as I had expected, late in the evening, and were ready for bed after quick dinner in a local Muslim restaurant. Budonquang at 4600 meters asl was the highest altitude place where we spent the night, and I think that we all were suffering at least some symptoms of the AMS



Two Tibetan endemics, Giant Babax and Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush (Hannu Jännes).

(Acute Mountain Sickness) despite our long acclimatization at lower altitudes. One of the early symptoms of AMS is the lack of sleep, and as this was boosted by a cohort of crazy Tibetan mastiffs barking, in turns, all night long just outside our accommodation, we didn't manage too much sleep during that night!

Next morning, back in the same Muslim restaurant, various dog eradication plots were drawn over breakfast before we boarded the vehicle and headed south. Soon after leaving Budonquang we encountered good numbers of roadside mammals including Kiangs, Tibetan Gazelles, many Tibetan Antelopes, a Wild Yak, and an excellent Grey Wolf, and we enjoyed many short photo stops in the beautiful crisp and clear morning weather. The rest of the day was spent mostly in the bus on pretty bad roads, but by late afternoon we reached the Tangkula Shan pass at 5231 meters asl, the highest altitude reached on this tour, where we spent some time taking photos and some of us even managed to find time to eat some locally made yoghurt!

Next day, our final leg to Lhasa, was even more uneventful than the previous one. Perhaps the only features worth mentioning were a Blue Rock Thrush (a new bird for us) found by Ken and the total of eight police check posts along the road, which all took anything between 5-25 minutes to get through. Lhasa must be one of the most tightly guarded cities in the world! Finally, by early evening, we reached Lhasa, and headed straight to one of the many monasteries in the city centre, where our next target bird, the Lord Derby's Parakeet occurs in small numbers. The monastery was already closed when we arrived there, but this didn't cause too much trouble as we soon found at least three parakeets feeding in conifers along one of the main streets nearby. The status of this small parakeet population in the middle of Lhasa is unclear, but most probably it originates from released/escaped cage birds. Our last birding excursion was out of Lhasa to Shuksep Nunnery or Xiong Si as it is called in Chinese. The access to the best birding area is very easy nowadays thanks to the recently built road that takes you straight to the door steps of the nunnery. While enjoying breakfast at daybreak in the small car park, we had great encounters with two important Tibetan endemics, the Giant Babax and Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush, and we even found a group of Tibetan Eared Pheasants feeding on a distant hill side. As soon as we entered the nunnery we came across a group of these pheasants that were so tame (they have become used to being fed by the nuns) that we could get close enough for 'head shots' with the cameras. They had obviously had a successful breeding season as there were several small chicks around too.



Tibetan Eared Pheasant near Lhasa (Hannu Jännes).

The other high priority target bird, Tibetan Snowcock, took longer to find, but after a short climb we saw a couple of totally unafraid individuals walking around us like chickens and giving their magical advertising calls! One never tires of seeing normally shy birds that have become so approachable, and we all agreed that this was one of the most magical experiences of the entire tour. During the morning we also saw Tibetan Blackbirds, Tibetan Partridges and Streaked and Pink-rumped Rosefinches. Our last new birds of the tour were Russet Sparrow and the rare and declining Pallas's Fish Eagle along the Lhasa River, and then it was back to the city for some cultural 'musts'. After a good lunch we visited the vast and amazing Potala Palace, the centrepiece of Lhasa. Even though it has a museum-like quality now that its chief resident is no longer present, it is still an extraordinary and very special place. At the end of the afternoon we continued to the Jokhang Temple, the most important religious site in the city and the focus for pilgrims from all over Tibet. In the evening, after our last dinner and log call together, it was time to say goodbye to Bob, Ken and John who were heading back home the next day.

The rest of us, who were taking the SE Tibet extension, had an early start the next morning as we had a 450 kilometres journey to our next destination, the city of Nyingchi. The long and rather slow journey, mainly thanks to the ridiculously low average speed limit, was rather uneventful apart from a car breakdown. Luckily we were still close to Lhasa when our car broke down and getting a replacement vehicle took less than an hour. The city of Nyingchi, which was going to be our base for the next three nights, was surprisingly modern and seemed to live mostly on Chinese tourism. The city was full of hot pot restaurants and good hotels, including ours. For the next two days we birded various forest habitats between 3900 and 2800 meters asl around the small town of Lulang, ca90 kilometres south of Nyingchi. The valleys of south-eastern Tibet receive moisture-laden monsoon air from the lowlands of north-eastern India in summer and the resultant rainfall allows for the development of relatively rich coniferous (pine-spruce) and mixed forests along the valley sides and floors. The main reason to visit this area was of course the enigmatic Lord Derby's



One of the 21 picnic breakfasts we enjoyed on this tour (Hannu Jännes).

Parakeet, which we saw extremely well, and in good numbers on both days. In addition a host of new birds including Speckled Wood and Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons, Spot-winged and Collared Grosbeaks, Himalayan Swiftlet, a nice male Besra, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, Black-faced and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, Long-tailed Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, Blue Whistling Thrush, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Himalayan Cuckoo, Red-billed Leiothrix, Whistler's, Lemon-rumped and Blyth's Leaf Warblers, Indian Blue Robin, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Green-backed Tit, Yellow-billed Magpie, Spotted Nutcracker, Tibetan Serin and Chestnut-flanked White-eye were added to our bird list. The list of new species could have been longer, but unfortunately our permits didn't allow us to visit any of the lower altitude areas, which here reach down to 2200 meters asl, but we fully enjoyed our two day adventure in this very seldom birded area.

The next morning, before our long journey back to Lhasa, we had our first hotel breakfast of the entire trip. Back in Lhasa we had a stroll in the older parts of the city before a dinner in one of the more popular restaurants in the city. Next day it was time to head for the comforts of home after our long and remarkable journey across 'The Roof of the World'.

'BIRDS OF THE TRIP' WINNERS:

Main Tour

1st: Tibetan (or Roborovski's) Rosefinch

2nd: Tibetan Snowcock

3rd: Przevalski's (or Pink-tailed) Finch

4th: Tibetan (or Koslov's) Bunting

5th Biddulph's Ground Jay, Tibetan Sandgrouse and Red-billed Chough



Om mani padme hum... Red-necked Snowfinches studying Tibetan scripts (Hannu Jännes).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Bar-headed Goose ◊ *Anser indicus*

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* One at Lake Qinghai, and another in the wetlands south of Maduo.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* Flock of eight at Lake Qinghai, and 10 near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* See note.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* A total of eight on the wetlands in Qinghai.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Scattered records of small numbers.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* A total of ten near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* A total of 30 at Lake Qinghai, and 200 near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* Three at Lake Qinghai.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Two in the wetlands south of Maduo.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* Four at Lake Qinghai.

Common Merganser (Goosander) *Mergus merganser*

Verreaux's Monal Partridge ◊ (Chestnut-throated P) *Tetraophasis obscurus* (H) Heard once at Huzhu Bei Shan.

Széchenyi's Monal Partridge ◊ (Buff-throated P) *Tetraophasis szechenyii* Great views at Beizha Forest.

Himalayan Snowcock ◊ *Tetraogallus himalayensis* (H) One very distant bird was heard near Chaka.

Tibetan Snowcock ◊ *Tetraogallus tibetanus* Amazing views at Shuksep near Lhasa. Also heard at Kanda Shan.



We had amazing views of Tibetan Snowcocks near Lhasa (Hannu Jännes).

- Przevalski's Partridge** ◊ (**Rusty-necklaced P**) *Alectoris magna* Magnificent views near Chaka and also in Xining.
- Daurian Partridge** ◊ *Perdix dauurica* A total of four including great scope views near Chaka.
- Tibetan Partridge** ◊ *Perdix hodgsoniae* Several encounters with excellent views.
- Blood Pheasant** ◊ *Ithaginis cruentus* Great views of a flock of five near Nanqien. Also two males at Beizha Forest.
- White Eared Pheasant** ◊ *Crossoptilon crossoptilon* Several encounters in the Nanqien area with some mega views.
- Tibetan Eared Pheasant** ◊ (**Elwes's E P**) *Crossoptilon harmani* Common at Shuksep near Lhasa. See note.
- Blue Eared Pheasant** ◊ *Crossoptilon auritum* Great views of one at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Common Pheasant (Ring-necked P)** *Phasianus colchicus* Common in the Xining-Huzhu Bei Shan region.
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*
- Black-necked Grebe (Eared G)** *Podiceps nigricollis*
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* A total of three near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* One in the wetlands south of Maduo. A write-in.
- Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus* A singleton at Kanda Shan near Nanqien.
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* A total of 12 road side birds in the southern Qinghai.
- Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*
- Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)** *Gypaetus barbatus* Several encounters with this magnificent bird.



And Tibetan Partridges were showing well too (Hannu Jännes).

- Himalayan Vulture (H Griffon Vulture) *Gyps himalayensis*** Fairly common and widespread in Qinghai and Tibet.
- Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*** A total of eight were noted, all in Qinghai.
- Besra *Accipiter virgatus*** Good scope views of one near Lulang in SE Tibet.
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*** A few were noted.
- Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*** One at Huzhu Bei Shan, and a nest with two chicks at Beizha Forest.
- Black Kite *Milvus migrans*** Scattered records of ones and twos. See note.
- Pallas's Fish Eagle** ♦ ***Haliaeetus leucoryphus*** One sub-adult at the Lhasa river was a pleasant surprise.
- Upland Buzzard** ♦ ***Buteo hemilasius*** Abundant on the plateau.
- Himalayan Buzzard** ♦ ***Buteo burmanicus*** Noted in the forests of Huzhu Bei Shan, Beizha and Lulang.
- Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*** One roadside bird near Ruoqiang.
- Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra***
- Black-necked Crane** ♦ ***Grus nigricollis*** A total of 12 including one small chick in Qinghai.
- Ibisbill** ♦ ***Ibidorhyncha struthersii*** A total of six including a family with two large chicks between Yushu and Nanqien.
- Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***
- Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*** One at a wetland near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.
- Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***
- Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*** One handsome male south of Maduo, and ten or so near Budonquang.
- Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***
- Common Redshank *Tringa totanus***
- Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***
- Brown-headed Gull** ♦ ***Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus***
- Black-headed Gull (Common B-h G) *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*** Common near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.
- Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G) *Ichtyaetus ichthyaeus***
- Vega Gull *Larus vegae*** Four birds, including a juvenile, near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang. See Note.



Hill Pigeon showing the characteristic tail pattern (Kristine Wallstrom).

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* One near Chaka, and a total of six near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Two near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

White-winged Tern (W-w Black T) *Chlidonias leucopterus* (NL) One seen by Tom at Lake Qinghai near Heimaihe.

Tibetan Sandgrouse ♦ *Syrrhaptes tibetanus* Excellent views of a flock of six males.

Pallas's Sandgrouse ♦ *Syrrhaptes paradoxus* 25 with some excellent views in Xinjiang. Also two birds near Chaka.

Rock Dove (R Pigeon) (feral) *Columba livia*

Hill Pigeon ♦ *Columba rupestris*

Snow Pigeon ♦ *Columba leuconota* A handful of birds were noted in southern Qinghai.

Speckled Wood Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii* A total of 11 near Lulang in SE Tibet.

Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D) *Streptopelia orientalis*

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron sphenurus* (H) The unmistakable song of this species was heard near Lulang.

Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturates* (H) Two birds were heard near Lulang.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Little Owl *Athena noctua*

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* A few were noted in the Lulang area.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Salim Ali's Swift ♦ *Apus salimalii*

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* One at Gonghe.

White-winged Woodpecker *Dendrocopus leucopterus* Two rather skittish birds near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*

Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus* One heard, and briefly seen, at Beizha Forest.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* Noted in all areas with extensive conifer forests.

Grey-headed Woodpecker (Grey-faced W) *Picus canus* (H)



Black Woodpecker at Nanqien (Hannu Jännes).

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* Subspecies *milvipes*.

Lord Derby's Parakeet ◊ *Psittacula derbyana* A magnificent flock of 40-50 birds near Lulang, and three in Lhasa.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* Fairly common in the Lulang area, and one in Beizha forest.

Isabelline Shrike ◊ (Xinjiang S, Chinese S) *Lanius isabellinus* Common in Xinjiang. See Note.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

Chinese Grey Shrike ◊ *Lanius sphenocercus* One very wet bird near Chaka. See note.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* One at Beizha forest near Nanqien.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Azure-winged Magpie ◊ (Asian A-w M) *Cyanopica cyanus*

Yellow-billed Magpie (Gold-billed Blue M) *Urocissa flavirostris* A few in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Henderson's Ground Jay ◊ (Mongolian G J) *Podoces hendersoni* Three encounters with this stunning bird.

Biddulph's Ground Jay ◊ (Xinjiang G J) *Podoces biddulphi* Four, a family party, near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.

Spotted Nutcracker (Eurasian N) *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Rather common in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Alpine Chough (Yellow-billed C) *Pyrrhocorax graculus* Four at Kanda Shan.

Daurian Jackdaw ◊ *Coloeus dauuricus* Fairly common in the Nanqien area.

Rook ◊ *Corvus frugilegus* Two were seen briefly from the bus near Xining. See Note.

Carrion Crow ◊ *Corvus corone* A handful of birds at Huzhu Bei Shan and in Xinjiang. See note.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris* Two at Beizha forest, and four in the Lulang area.

Grey Crested Tit *Lophophanes dichrous* Noted at Huzhu Bei Shan, Beizha forest and Lulang.

White-browed Tit ◊ *Poecile superciliosus* Two at Huzhu Bei Shan, and one near Rubber mountains.

Willow Tit ◊ *Poecile montanus* Small numbers at Huzhu Bei Shan. See Note.



In Xinjiang we drove through some very impressive desert and mountain landscapes (Hannu Jännes).

- Sichuan Tit** ◇ *Poecile weigoldicus* Small numbers at Beizha.
- Ground Tit (Hume's G, Groundpecker)** *Pseudopodoces humilis* Common and widespread.
- Japanese Tit** ◇ *Parus minor*
- Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* Small numbers in the Lulang area.
- Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus* Four near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang
- Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*
- Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* Two near Gonghe.
- Horned Lark (Shore L)** *Eremophila alpestris* One of the most common and widespread birds on the plateau.
- Hume's Short-toed Lark** ◇ *Calandrella acutirostris*
- Mongolian Lark** ◇ *Melanocorypha mongolica* A few were noted including some really good views near Chaka.
- Tibetan Lark** ◇ (Long-billed Calandra L) *Melanocorypha maxima*
- Asian Short-toed Lark** ◇ *Alaudala cheleensis*
- Pale Martin** ◇ *Riparia diluta*
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
- Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
- Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*
- Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropsis daurica*
- White-browed Tit-warbler** ◇ (Severtzov's T-w) *Leptopoeile sophiae* Two near Lhasa.
- Crested Tit-warbler** ◇ *Leptopoeile elegans* Two at Beizha forest near Nanqien.
- Smoky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fulgiventis* Great views of one near Rubber mountains.
- Alpine Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus occisinensis*
- Yellow-streaked Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus armandii*
- Buff-barred Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus pulcher*
- Gansu Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus kansuensis* Seen well at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Chinese Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* Several birds, including some great views, at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus chloronotus* Two in the Lulang area.
- Hume's Leaf Warbler (Buff-browed W)** *Phylloscopus humei*
- Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
- Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Common in Lulang, and four at Huzhu Bei Shan.



White-bellied Redstart (Kristine Wallstrom).

- Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* Rather common in the Lulang area.
- Sichuan Leaf Warbler (Pale-rumped W)** *Phylloscopus forresti* Fairly common at Beizha forest near Nanqien.
- Whistler's Warbler** *Seicercus whistleri* Rather common in the Lulang area.
- Spotted Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella thoracica* Several encounters with some excellent views at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Giant Babax** ◇ *Babax waddelli* Common at Shuksep, near Lhasa, and also sighted between Lhasa and Nyingchi.
- Tibetan Babax** ◇ (Kozlov's B) *Babax koslowi* Easy to see in the Nanqien area.
- Giant Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax maximus* A few at Beizha forest, and also sighted at Lulang.
- Plain Laughingthrush** ◇ (Père David's L) *Garrulax davidi*
- Elliot's Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron elliotii*
- Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush** ◇ (Prince Henri's L) *Trochalopteron henrici* Common in Tibet.
- Black-faced Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron affine* Two birds near Lulang in SE Tibet.
- Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron erythrocephalum* (H) Heard in the Lulang area.
- Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea* Small numbers in the Lulang area.
- Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria* One in the outskirts of Ruoqiang.
- Desert Whitethroat (Small W)** *Sylvia minula* A few near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.
- Margelanic Lesser Whitethroat** ◇ *Sylvia [minula] margelanica* A few in the Altun Shan range in Xinjiang.
- Chinese Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe striaticollis* Great views of one at Beizha forest.
- Chinese Hill Warbler** ◇ (Tarim Bush-dweller) *Rhopophilus [pekinensis] albosuperciliaris* See Note.
- Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythropleurus* A few in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.
- Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*
- Eurasian Wren (Winter W, Northern W)** *Troglodytes troglodytes*
- Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** *Sitta nagaensis* Six in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.
- Chinese Nuthatch** ◇ (Snowy-browed N) *Sitta villosa* A few, with some excellent views, at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Przevalski's Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta przewalskii* Noted at Huzhu Bei Shan, Beizha and in the Lulang area.
- Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* Some terrific views near Chaka.
- Eurasian Treecreeper (Common T)** *Certhia familiaris* Two at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- Hodgson's Treecreeper (Himalayan T)** *Certhia hodgsoni* Noted at Beizha forest and in the Lulang area.
- Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
- Long-tailed Thrush** ◇ *Zoothera dixoni* Great views of one near Lulang in SE Tibet.
- White-collared Blackbird** *Turdus albocinctus* Rather common in SE Tibet.
- Tibetan Blackbird** ◇ *Turdus maximus*
- Chestnut Thrush** ◇ *Turdus rubrocanus*



Male and female Kessler's Thrush (Hannu Jännes).

- Kessler's Thrush** ◊ (White-backed T) *Turdus kessleri*
Chinese Thrush ◊ (C Song T) *Turdus mupinensis* Good views of a singing bird at Huzhu Bei Shan.
Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* A few at Beizha forest near Nanqien.
Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara* Couple of birds near Lulang in SE Tibet.
Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea* Rather common in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.
White-bellied Redstart ◊ *Luscinia phoenicuroides*
White-tailed Rubythroat ◊ (Himalayan R) *Calliope pectoralis* Excellent views near Yushu.
Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* Excellent views at Huzhu Bei Shan.
Red-flanked Bluetail (Northern B, Siberian B) *Tarsiger cyanurus* Great views at Huzhu Bei Shan.
Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus* (H) Heard in the Lulang area.
Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* A few in the Lulang area.
Slaty-backed Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula hodgsonii*
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophliata* One in the Lulang area.
Przevalski's Redstart ◊ (Ala Shan R) *Phoenicurus alaschanicus* One male and two females near Chaka.
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Hodgson's Redstart ◊ *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
White-throated Redstart ◊ *Phoenicurus schisticeps*
Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*
Güldenstädt's Redstart ◊ (White-winged R) *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*
Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*
Plumbeous Water Redstart (Plumbeous R) *Phoenicurus fuliginosus*
White-capped Redstart (W-c Water R, River Chat) *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*
Common Rock Thrush (Rufous-tailed R T) *Monticola saxatilis*
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* One female at the road side while approaching Lhasa.
Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*
Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
Mrs Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae* Fairly common in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.
Saxaul Sparrow ◊ *Passer ammodendri* Fairly common in the Ruoqiang area in Xingjiang.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* One female in Gonghe was a surprise.
Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* Noted in Tibet.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
Henri's Snowfinch ◊ (Prince Henri's S) *Montifringilla henrici* Noted in small numbers on four days.
Tibetan Snowfinch ◊ (Adams's S, Black-winged S) *Montifringilla adamsi*



Przevalski's Finch and Pink-rumped Rosefinch (Hannu Jännes).



Male and female Tibetan Rosefinch (Hannu Jännes).

- White-rumped Snowfinch** ◇ *Onychostruthus taczanowskii* Fairly common and widespread.
- Père David's Snowfinch** ◇ (Small S) *Pyrgilauda davidiana* Three at Lake Qinghai.
- Rufous-necked Snowfinch** ◇ *Pyrgilauda ruficollis* Common and widespread.
- Blanford's Snowfinch** ◇ (Plain-backed S) *Pyrgilauda blanfordi* Four at Chaka, and 10 or so at Yuzhu Feng.
- Robin Accentor** ◇ *Prunella rubeculoides*
- Rufous-breasted Accentor** ◇ *Prunella strophciata*
- Brown Accentor** ◇ *Prunella fulvescens*
- Maroon-backed Accentor** ◇ *Prunella immaculata* (H) One was heard at Beizha Forest.
- Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Manchurian W)** *Motacilla [tschutschensis] macronyx* Two near Gonghe.
- Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola citreola* Several birds near Ruoqiang in Xinjiang.
- Tibetan Wagtail** ◇ *Motacilla [citreola] calcarata* A few individuals of this distinctive form were noted. See Note.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
- Himalayan Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] alboides*
- Amur Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis*
- Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* One near Chaka.
- Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*
- Przevalski's Finch** ◇ (Pink-tailed F) *Urocynchramus pylzowi* Three near Yushu, and one at the Rubber Mountains.
- Collared Grosbeak** *Mycerobas affinis* Several singing males near Lulang in SE Tibet.
- Spot-winged Grosbeak** *Mycerobas melanozanthos* Four birds near Lulang in SE Tibet was a great surprise.

White-winged Grosbeak ◊ *Mycerobas carnipes*
Grey-headed Bullfinch ◊ *Pyrrhula erythaca*
Mongolian Finch ◊ (M Trumpeter F) *Bucanetes mongolicus* One near Gonghe, and two near Chaka.
Plain Mountain Finch ◊ *Leucosticte nemoricola*
Brandt's Mountain Finch ◊ (Black-headed M F) *Leucosticte brandti*
Common Rosefinch (Scarlet R) *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Streaked Rosefinch ◊ (Eastern Great R) *Carpodacus rubicilloides*
Great Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus rubicilla* Two near Yushu, and four at Altun Shan in Xinjiang. See Note.
Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* Rather widespread in small numbers. See Note.
Pink-rumped Rosefinch ◊ (Stresemann's R) *Carpodacus waltoni* Common in S Qinghai and Tibet.
Pale Rosefinch ◊ (Sinai R) *Carpodacus stoliczkae* Two, a pair, near Xining. See Note.
Tibetan Rosefinch ◊ (Roborovski's R) *Carpodacus roborowskii* Great encounter at Bayankala Shan.
Chinese White-browed Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus dubius*
Red-fronted Rosefinch ◊ (Red-breasted R) *Carpodacus puniceus* Seen at three different sites.
Grey-capped Greenfinch (Oriental G) *Chloris sinica*
Twite *Linaria flavirostris*
Red Crossbill (Common C) *Loxia curvirostra* Four at Beizha forest near Nanqien.
Tibetan Serin ◊ (T Siskin) *Spinus thibetana* Quite numerous in the Lulang area in SE Tibet.
Pine Bunting ◊ *Emberiza leucocephalos* Great views near Gonghe, and also noted in the Chaka area.
Godlewski's Bunting ◊ *Emberiza godlewskii*
Meadow Bunting ◊ *Emberiza cioides* Three near Xining.
Tibetan Bunting ◊ (Kozlov's B) *Emberiza koslowi* Great encounter with four different birds at Kanda Shan.
Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* Two near Gonghe.





Young Plateau (or Black-lipped) Pikas (Hannu Jännes).

MAMMALS

Black-lipped Pika (Plateau P) *Ochotona curzoniae*

Glover's Pika *Ochotona gloveri* One between Yushu and Nanqien.

Moupin Pika *Ochotona thibetana* One near Lhasa.

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai* Two near Gonghe.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus* Common and widespread.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata* A total of five with some excellent views.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* A total of ten including a family party of five.

Grey Wolf (Wolf) *Canis lupus* First six at a wetland south of Maduo and then a very close one near Budonquang.

Thorold's Deer (White-lipped D) *Cervus albirostris* Eight at Beizha forest, and three near Lhasa.

Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* First two at Yuzhu Feng, and then a total of ca100 near Budonquang.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata* Common and widespread on the plateau.

Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* Small numbers were noted in Xinjiang.

Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur*

Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass) *Equus kiang*

Yak *Bos grunniens* A total of four between Budonquang and Pana.



Tibetan Snowcock and Tibetan Eared Pheasant (Hannu Jännes).

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the tour. John found one female plumaged bird in the large wetlands at the eastern end of Lake Qinghai on 17th June, which is probably the first record of the species in Qinghai Province. This small tropical duck breeds south of the Yangtze River, but there have been several records of vagrants further north in China in recent years.

Tibetan Eared Pheasant (Elwes's E P) *Crossoptilon harmani*

In addition to birds observed in Lhasa we heard an eared pheasant calling near Lulang in SE Tibet. Based on distribution this record also refers to Tibetan Eared Pheasant.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

The form *lineatus* encountered on this tour is sometimes treated as a separate species Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

We had great views of one handsome male in the wetlands south of Maduo, and ten or so near Budonquang. The recently suggested split of Lesser Sand Plover (or Mongolian Plover) *C. mongolus* into two species: Lesser Sand Plover *C. atrifrons* (including *pamirensis*) and Mongolian (Sand) Plover *C. mongolus*, has not been accepted by IOC.

Vega Gull *Larus vegae*

The form *mongolicus*, which we encounter in small numbers in Xinjiang, is currently treated as a subspecies of Vega Gull by IOC.

Isabelline Shrike (Xinjiang S, Chinese S) *Lanius isabellinus*

The form encountered on this tour (*arenarius*) is currently treated as a subspecies of Isabelline Shrike by IOC.

Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*

The form *giganteus* (Tibetan Grey Shrike) encountered on this tour is currently treated as a subspecies of Chinese Grey Shrike.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

The form *pastinator* (Oriental Rook) encountered on this tour is treated as a subspecies of Rook by IOC.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

The form *orientalis* (Oriental Crow) encountered on this tour is treated as a subspecies of Carrion Crow by IOC.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

Songar Tit *Poecile songarus* is now lumped with Willow Tit by IOC.

Margelanic Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia [minula] margelanica*

This form is treated as a subspecies of Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia minula* by IOC.

Chinese Hill Warbler (Tarim Bush-dweller, Tarim Babbler) *Rhopophilus [pekinensis] albosuperciliaris*

Two birds of the morphologically and vocally distinct form *albosuperciliaris* in the outskirts of Ruoqiang. It has been suggested recently that the Chinese Hill Warbler should be split into two species: the eastern *Rhopophilus pekinensis* and the western *Rhopophilus albosuperciliaris*, but this treatment has not yet been adopted by IOC. The IOC World List now treats *Rhopophilus pekinensis* as a *sylviid* babbler, but retains the name Chinese Hill Warbler.

Tibetan Wagtail *Motacilla [citreola] calcarata*

The black-backed form *calcarata* encountered in the Qinghai and Tibet sections of this tour is treated as subspecies of Citrine Wagtail by IOC.

Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla*

After being its own species for a few years the form *severtzovi* (Spotted Great Rosefinch) encountered on this tour is now re-lumped with the Caucasian Great Rosefinch *C. rubicilla*, and the name Great Rosefinch is used for the enlarged species. A taxonomic “yo-yo” movement!

Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*

The recent splitting off of Chinese Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius* only refers to the easternmost subspecies *davidianus*, which occurs in NE China. All other subspecies including the form *argyrophrys* encountered on this tour belong to Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch.

Pale Rosefinch (Sinai R) *Carpodacus stoliczkae*

The eastern populations are now treated as a separate species from Sinai Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus*.



Lord Derby's Parakeet (Hannu Jännes).