



The magnificent Reeves's Pheasant was one of the many specialties seen on this tour (Brendan Ryan).

EASTERN CHINA

3 – 27 MAY 2017

LEADER: HANNU JÄNNES

Birdquest's Eastern China tour, an epic 25 day journey across much of eastern China, focusses on an array of rare Chinese endemics and migrants, and this year's tour once again proved a great success. The focus of the first part of the tour is to achieve good views of rarities like Spoon-billed Sandpiper, the critically endangered Blue-crowned (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 much sought after species including White-faced Plover, Great Knot, stunning Saunders's Gulls, Reed Parrotbill, eastern migrants, including Pechora Pipit, Japanese Robin, Japanese Paradise, Yellow-rumped, Narcissus and Mugimaki Flycatchers, and forest species like Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher, White-necklaced Partridge, Silver Pheasant, Buffy and Moustached Laughingthrushes, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Fork-tailed Sunbird and the delightful Pied Falconet. Quite a haul!



Crested Ibis at Dongzhai Nature Reserve (Brendan Ryan).

The second part of the tour, the 'Northeast Extension', visited a series of sites for various other Chinese specialities. Beginning in Wuhan, we bagged the amazing Reeves's Pheasant and Crested Ibis, as well as stunners that included Fairy Pitta and Chestnut-winged Cuckoo. 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, 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, as an unexpected bonus, Demoiselle and Siberian Cranes, Oriental Stork and Chinese Grey Shrike plus an array of Siberian migrants. With over 350 species recorded and so many rare and sought-after species on offer, this tour is surely due for classic status!

We began our adventure in Shanghai. From here we made our way north on pleasantly quiet roads to Rudong, and more specifically the fishing town of Yangkou. Here, after checking into our hotel and enjoying our first Chinese meal, we headed out to the seawall to get our first taste of the vast mudflats and huge numbers of migrating waders for which this area is famous. Due to gale force winds and low high tide our wader quest was not the most productive, but we still managed to see Dunlin, Sanderling, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler, a few Lesser Sand Plovers, Far Eastern Curlews, Terek Sandpipers plus many graceful Saunders's Gulls. We also managed to locate a Spoon-billed Sandpiper in a flock of Red-necked Stints, but unfortunately the views were rather poor, and some of the group completely missed the bird.



Male Reed Parrotbill, the king of the reedbeds (Brendan Ryan).

Next morning, due to heavy rain and gale force wind, the birding was rather slow and unproductive to begin with, but when the rain stopped around midday we finally started to achieve some success, though generally speaking the numbers of migrating passerines, both in terms of quantity and quality, were well below those we have been used to seeing in past visits. Obviously the horrible weather had completely blocked migration, but nevertheless our walk in the 'Magic Forest', although rather quiet, produced some good birds that included Mugimaki, Yellow-rumped, Asian Brown and Grey-streaked Flycatchers, Manchurian Bush Warbler, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Tristram's Bunting, Vinous-throated Parrotbills, and, best of all, a Brown-breasted Flycatcher, a vagrant in this part of China. A late afternoon stroll in the temple area, gave us some idea of what the migration can be here, when a very small patch of wood produced Amur Paradise Flycatcher, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Blue Robin, Narcissus Flycatcher and Chestnut Bunting. It was also great to see a pair of stunning Reed Parrotbills at a nearby reed bed.

On our last morning at Yangkou we were back at the tidal flats. The weather was much improved, and we spent an enjoyable few hours walking the vast mudflats, where, amongst the species we had seen previously new birds were Greater Sand Plover, Great and Red Knots, and rather vocal Broad-billed Sandpipers. We also managed to locate two different Spoon-billed Sandpipers during the morning, but unfortunately these birds were rather flighty, and it was difficult to show them to everyone. The remainder of our time at Yangkou was split between agricultural areas and the Magic Wood, but the migration still hadn't really picked-up and we didn't find anything new. In the evening we drove south to Shanghai and then on to the Nanhui area for the night.

Early the next morning, with the sun shining at last, we visited the Nanhui wetlands, an area of reed beds, pools and other types of "wasteland" habitats rapidly disappearing under the pressures of development. Our first goal was to find the enigmatic Marsh Grassbird, which proved obliging on this occasion even allowing



Marsh Grassbird at Nanhui wetlands (Hannu Jännes).

some decent scope views. Other birds in the wetlands included the lovely Reed Parrotbills, many Oriental Reed Warblers, Zitting Cisticolas and a Lesser Coucal. We also found Marsh Sandpiper, two Garganey, Long-toed Stints and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, plus the only Caspian Tern of the trip. After breakfast we were back at Nanhui, concentrating our efforts on the “Magic Car Park”, a small parking lot surrounded by dense stand of trees. This small man-made wood acts like a magnet for migrating passerines as it is pretty much the only patch of forest in the middle of vast coastal plains, and, as a consequence, a few pretty amazing discoveries have been made. At first things seemed pretty quiet, but after a time birds then began to appear. First we had a Brown Boobook, then a couple of Eye-browed Thrushes, followed by both male and female Narcissus, Mugimaki, Dark-sided, Grey-streaked, Asian Brown and, best of all, a stunning male Japanese Paradise Flycatcher, a new bird for the leader! 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!



First-summer male Narcissus Flycatcher (Hannu Jännes).



Male Pied Falconet with prey (large butterfly) at Xiao Qi village (Brendan Ryan).

The following morning we birded the area around Kengkou, a charming village, where we saw an array of new and interesting birds including Black Eagle, displaying Crested Goshawks, Oriental Dollarbird, Swinhoe's and Grey-chinned Minivets, Eurasian Jay, Grey Treepie, Collared Finchbill, Rufous-faced Warbler, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Streak-breasted and Grey-sided Scimitar Babblers, Rufous-capped Babbler, many Huet's Fulvetas, Moustached and Masked Laughingthrushes and Fork-tailed Sunbird, but unfortunately we failed to find one of our main objectives, the Short-tailed Parrotbill. For lunch we headed for Xiao Qi, another village famous among birders, especially bird photographers, where we were entertained by a cracking Pied Falconet close to its nest hole. We were told that the island near Shimen village, where everybody usually goes for Blue-crowned (Courtois's) Laughingthrush was now off-limits as the locals had closed access to minimize the pressure created by visiting bird photographers, to this critically endangered species. Obviously there was a plan B, which included a visit to another Blue-crowned Laughingthrush site the following morning on our way to Emeifeng, but as we had plenty of time left with "nothing much to do", I requested a change of plan and an afternoon visit to try and see the laughingthrush. Our driver was rather unhappy about this extra 100 kilometres of driving, but in the end he couldn't really refuse and we were on the way to the village of Haikou. On route we stopped at a bridge to admire a flock of sixty White-throated Needletails whizzing around and a couple of Long-billed Plovers feeding by the river. At the village we were directed to a huge tree which seemed to be the epicentre for a large flock of the amazing Blue-crowned Laughingthrushes, and we spent a long time admiring these fabulous birds. Other birds here included Brown Boobook and an Ashy Drongo.

Next day we were back at Kengkou in the rain, where we had to work hard before we managed to locate the difficult to find Short-tailed Parrotbills. Luckily it had stopped raining, when we connected with a pair and we enjoyed great close-up views. It was also good to obtain good views of a singing Dusky Fulvetta during the morning. As the rain set in again it was time to head on, and we embarked on the long drive to Emeifeng. We met our local guide Mr Lao Ling at the town of Taining, and reached Emeifeng just in time for a late



Blue-crowned Laughingthrush at Haikou village (Brendan Ryan).

afternoon gamebird drive along the winding mountain road, which gave us the first taste of the area's birding potential including a pair of Chinese Bamboo Partridge, three Silver Pheasants and a male Elliot's Pheasant.

During our stay on Emeifeng, we spent our first night in a brand new, but unfortunately too small guesthouse in a nearby town, and the rest of the nights at the rather run-down "resort" on the top of the mountain. During our visit we did the obligatory gamebird drives along the mountain road every morning and afternoon, and the rest of the time was split between various birding walks at different habitats and altitudes. Obviously the gamebirds are high on every birders agenda here, and we were not disappointed as multiple sightings of Silver Pheasant, Elliot's Pheasant (up to five on the best day), Cabot's Tragopan and Chinese Bamboo Partridge were obtained. White-necklaced Partridges were commonly heard, but difficult to see, and although we managed several brief sightings of the species, some of us had to leave the mountain without being able to actually see the species.



Elliot's Pheasant was seen extremely well on Emeifeng (Stefan Johansson).



Red Giant Flying Squirrel on Emeifeng (Stefan Johansson).

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, Black Baza, Black Eagle, Crested Goshawk, several Chinese Sparrowhawks, stylish Blue-throated Bee-eaters at a breeding site, the hulking Great Barbet, Blyth's Shrike-babbler, amazing Sultan and Yellow-cheeked Tits, Mountain, Chestnut and Black Bulbuls, Buff-throated, singing Hartert's (a surprise here), Sulphur-breasted, White-spectacled, Chestnut-crowned and Brown Bush Warblers, the local Huet's Fulvetta, stunning Buffy Laughingthrushes (with their amazing song), several showy Chinese Hwameis, Red-billed Leiothrix, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Black-chinned and Indochinese Yuhinas, Small Niltava, Slaty-backed, Spotted and White-crowned Forktails and Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. It was regrettable that Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Keith's bogey bird, was only heard couple of times, but we had better luck with a Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher (a lifer for the leader!) that we managed to see on our last morning on the mountain. In addition to great birds, we met several birders, both groups and individuals, on the mountain including the Belgian birding machine Mark Van Beirs and his lovely wife Kathleen, who were working on Mark's pretty sad world list of a mere 9000 species!



Chinese Bamboo Partridge on Emeifeng (Brendan Ryan).

After a last morning birding at Emeifeng and a lunch at Taining, it was time to move on, 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.



Indochinese Yuhina and Grey-headed Parrotbill on Emeifeng (Brendan Ryan).



Watching Chinese Crested Terns and Spoon-billed Sandpiper on Shanyutan Island (Hannu Jännes).

Next day we were up and off early to make sure that we could walk cross the muddy creek that separates the Shanyutan Island from the mainland during low tide. There are some, apparently quite complicated permit issues regarding foreigners visiting the Island, which I don't fully understand, but nevertheless we managed to stay on the island as long as we needed, and even dragged the above mentioned (permit less!) Belgian couple with us. As the large terns don't arrive on the island before high tide, we had plenty of time to watch other birds, which included Black-tailed Gulls, tens of breeding plumaged White-winged Terns and large flocks of waders which included Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers, Grey Plover, the taxonomically interesting White-faced Plover, which breeds here, Great and Red Knots, Sharp-tailed, Curlew, Broad-billed and Terek Sandpipers, and hundreds of Sanderlings, Dunlins and Red-necked Stints. It was really enjoyable to scan through the flocks of roosting waders in their colourful breeding plumages, and eventually we managed to located couple of scarcer species, a Little Stint, and then a showy winter-plumaged Spoon-billed Sandpiper! There were three Chinese bird photographers on the island, and when the Great Crested Terns started to gather at the tip of the sand spit, they eventually chased the whole flock away, before the Chinese Crested Terns had arrived. This created quite a bit of friction between us and them, and even verbal abuse was heard, but luckily the terns really didn't seem to mind the disturbance, and just relocated themselves to another spot, where the two Chinese Crested Terns finally joined the flock of 50 Greater Crested Terns, seriously disrupting our session with the Spoon-billed Sandpiper! It was thrilling to watch the ultra-rare terns, with the known world population of only around 50 individuals, in such lovely sunny weather! The rest of the afternoon was spent in checking agricultural areas for White-shouldered Startling, which we finally located at a small, but very smelly, rubbish dump. For the night we drove to Fuzhou so that we could be closer to our next day's birding destination, Fuzhou Forest Park.

The next day 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 lunch in a local restaurant. The most wanted bird in the relatively quiet forests was without a doubt the two White-necklaced Partridges, which we all managed to see this time, and the most surprising find was a singing Japanese Robin, which was seen by those of us who dared to climb the very steep hillside. In the evening we said goodbye to Stefan and Lennart and welcomed on board Michael, who joined us for the Northeastern China extension.



Displaying male Reeves's Pheasant at Dongzhai NNR (Hannu Jännes).



Female Reeves's Pheasant (Hannu Jännes).

The following day we flew to Wuhan, in Hubei Province, and continued by bus cross the provincial border to Henan Province and on to our accommodation at Dongzhai Natural Nature Reserve. At first things were a bit chaotic as our local guide, instead of arranging an English speaking interpreter, relied on a totally useless language translation app he had on his mobile phone, causing my stress hormone levels to immediately shoot through the roof! Luckily he and his drivers had pretty good idea of what we needed, and he also obtained access to areas which are normally off limits to ordinary birders and photographers. Our afternoon



Amur Paradise Flycatcher, Dongzhai NNR (Hannu Jännes).

birding session included a visit to see a family of Crested Ibis at their nest, and later a couple of hours in a hide, where we had good views of female, and somewhat more limited views of, a male Reeves's Pheasant, the main target bird of this leg of the tour! Other new birds encountered during the day included Oriental Scops Owl, Collared Crow, Large Cuckoo-shrike and Hair-crested Drongo.

The new day saw us in a protected forest on Lingshan Mountain, where Reeves's Pheasants were positively common, but there appeared to be very few other birds around. In addition to the pheasant the other target bird in this area was Fairy Pitta, which, we were told, was only possible to see from the vehicle by driving along the road through the bird's habitat. After driving the road back and forth couple of times, we got fed up, jumped out of the vehicles, and started walking. It didn't take long before we had located a nest building Fairy Pitta, which afforded us all wonderful views! Absolutely brilliant!!! Other birds seen during the day included a few Black Bazas, Grey-faced Buzzard, Black-capped Kingfishers, two Speckled Piculets, Swinhoe's Minivets, a pair of Tiger Shrikes, a few Black-naped Orioles, Ashy and Hair-crested Drongos, Brown-breasted Bulbuls, Daurian Redstart and very confiding Forest Wagtails.



Nest building Fairy Pitta at Dongzhai (Brendan Ryan).



Forest Wagtail at Dongzhai (Hannu Jännes).

Our last morning at Dongzhai started with yet another hide session for all but Brendan, who went to see, and photograph, the Crested Ibises. This time the Reeves's Pheasants played the ball and we finally had good photo ops of this magnificent pheasant. Later our guide took us to see some of the other birds of the area, which included a brilliant white morph Amur Paradise Flycatcher, adult and young Collared Scops Owls, Crested Kingfisher, and a colony of Blue-throated Bee-eaters. We also checked several possible areas for Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, but only managed to connect with it at the last possible site, where we obtained really nice views, both in flight and then perched, of a calling bird. Our drive back to Wuhan and our hotel took quite a bit longer than anticipated as our driver got completely lost on the way!



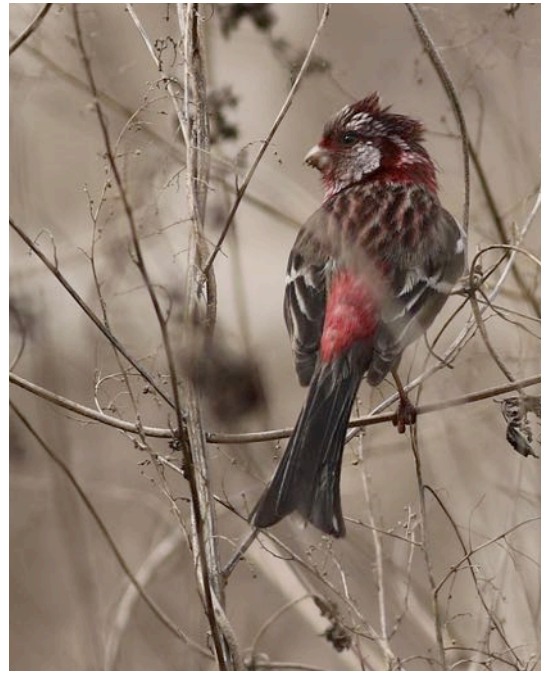
Oriental Turtle Dove at Dongzhai (Hannu Jännes).



Brown Eared Pheasant at Xuanzhong monastery (Hannu Jännes).

The next day found us on a flight to Taiyuan from where we transferred on to the city of Jiaocheng. As we had plenty of time in our hands before sunset, we decided to pay a birding visit to nearby Xuanzhong Si monastery. Thanks to the help of local people, it didn't take long before we had our main target, Brown Eared Pheasant, in the bag. It is unfortunate that the whole pheasant business here has become rather commercialised, and the experience no longer has an authentic feel! Other birds sighted here during the afternoon included Spotted Nutcracker, Coal and Willow Tits, Plain Laughingthrush, Beijing Babbler, and Long-tailed Rosefinch of the local *lepidus* form.

The following day we were back at the monastery, and this time, without the Chinese “pheasant whisperers”, the encounter with two different Brown Eared Pheasants hiding under junipers was far more enjoyable. After spending time watching and photographing the pheasants, we concentrated on other interesting birds of the area which included two Black Storks, some Beijing Babblers, a family party of Silver-throated Bushtits, Yellow-bellied Tit, Yellow-streaked, Pallas's Leaf, Claudia's Leaf and Chinese Leaf Warblers and Godlewski's and Meadow Buntings. After a quick freshen up and lunch in our hotel, we made our way back to Taiyuan and took the very fast and comfortable train to Beijing. In Beijing we met our new guide, Beijing Willy, and headed west to the small resort village of Jiangshuihe where we arrived late in the evening.



Meadow Bunting and Long-tailed Rosefinch (Brendan Ryan).

Next day, after an early breakfast, we headed straight to the main birding spot, a patch of forest near the top of Lingang Shan (2300 mts asl). As the sky lift we have used on earlier trips here was out of order, we had to climb 500 vertical meters from the road to reach our destination. After lots of huffing and puffing, we finally reached our destination, seeing a male Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, one of our main targets in the area, in doing so. The high altitude birch forest was full of bird song, with Hume's and Chinese Leaf warblers particularly common, but we also had half a dozen Greenish Warblers, only recently found to occur here, couple of Eurasian Wrens, one Grey-sided and two Chinese Thrushes and a first-summer Red-flanked Bluetail of the subspecies *albocoeruleus*. A walk on the grassy hillside yielded a female Long-tailed Minivet, Hill Pigeons, and Godlewski's and Meadow Buntings. After lunch and a short siesta, the rest of the afternoon was spent walking down the main road without seeing a great deal of interest.

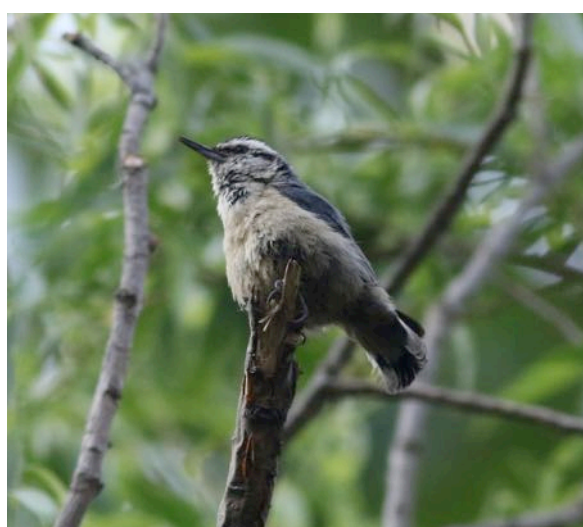
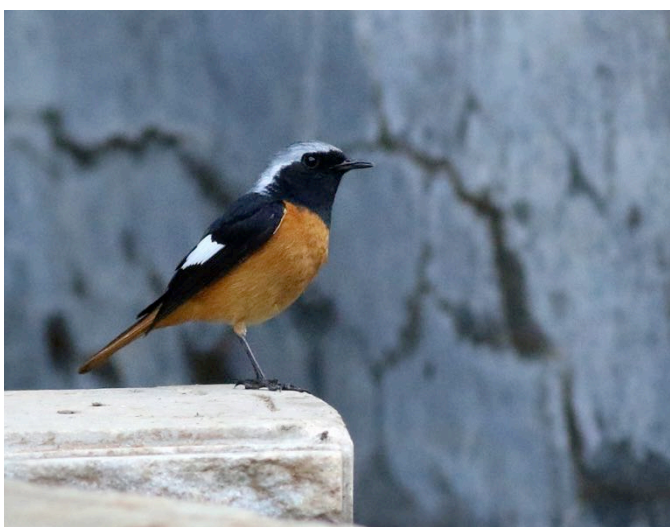


Chinese Leaf Warbler and Hume's Leaf Warbler at Lingang Shan (Brendan Ryan).



Zappey's and Green-backed Flycatchers at Xiaolongmen Forest (Brendan Ryan).

Next morning, after a short birding session along the main road, where we had brief views of a singing Alström's Warbler (another recent discovery in this area), we moved along the road to Xiaolongmen Forest, in the hope of more Chinese endemics, and we were not disappointed as our morning session here produced diminutive Chinese and Eurasian Nuthatches and tiny Asian Stubtails, White-backed and Grey-capped Pygmy Wodpeckers, several Marsh Tits, handsome Silver-throated Bushtits, singing Eastern Crowned and Claudia's Leaf Warblers and brilliant Green-backed and Yellow-rumped Flycatchers plus a splendid Siberian Blue Robin. The Zappey's Flycatcher played hard to get this year, and it wasn't until we ventured to another side valley that we had brilliant views of this really great looking bird. 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 we arrived at the vast lake in good time for some pleasant late afternoon birding. Oriental Reed Warblers and Whiskered Terns were plentiful, Yellow and Eurasian Bitterns were flying over the reeds and a scan across the lake produced our first five Baer's Pochards and Ferruginous Ducks.



Daurian Redstart and Chinese Nuthatch at Xiaolongmen Forest (Brendan Ryan).



Blunt-winged and Oriental Reed Warblers at Hengshui Hu (Brendan Ryan).

The following day we had further views of Baer's Pochards, had really great sightings, with photo ops, of magnificent Reed Parrotbills and many more Yellow Bitterns, but there was no sign of the much wanted Von Schrenk's Bittern. Whilst working on the bittern, other birds popped up from the reed beds including a really showy singing Blunt-winged Warbler and a much briefer Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler. As usual though, we had a schedule to keep, and were soon on the road, heading back to Beijing, where we spent the night in the rather plush CITIC Hotel with a very good Chinese restaurant.

Early the next morning we flew to Wulanhaote (or Ulanhot), where our local guide wanted to take us straight to Xianghai NNR, where there was a small flock Siberian Cranes lingering, and he was afraid that they could leave the area any time. After a long drive, with a short stop at an Oriental Stork nest, we reached the wetland site, but it took a lot of searching, and quite a deal of walking, before we located the group of five magnificent Siberian Cranes. They were a bit too distant for good photos, but decent scope views were obtained. During the day we also sighted Amur Falcons and Daurian Jackdaws, which both are common birds here. For the night we drove to the city of Baicheng.

The next day we were up very early heading to the Tumuji Grasslands in Inner Mongolia and the enigmatic Jankowski's Bunting. After a drive of two hours along narrow village roads, and a brief stop for two roadside Demoiselle Cranes, we eventually arrived at a scrubby area, where we spent next couple of hours birding in the most beautiful weather. It didn't take us long to locate our first fabulous Jankowski's Bunting, and in total we sighted four individuals (two lone males and a pair) during our visit. During the time spent in this rapidly diminishing habitat of grass and wild peach we were visited by two local officials, who were guarding the area and the buntings from disturbance. It seems that the last strongholds of this critically endangered species are now under some sort of protection, and combined with the discovery of some new breeding sites, the future of this very rare species seems somewhat brighter than just couple of years ago. Other birds seen during our lovely pre-breakfast walk included Pallas's Reed and Japanese Reed Buntings, Lanceolated Warblers, Siberian Rubythroat, numerous Richard's Pipits, a few Blyth's Pipits, Eurasian Skylarks, 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 in a more relaxed frame of mind. A visit to a dried pond fringed by a handful of trees yielded migrating Radde's, Pallas's Leaf and Two-barred Warblers, Taiga Flycatchers, Little, Chestnut and Black-faced Buntings, and great views of two Chinese Grey Shrike, whilst a walk through agricultural fields rewarded us with Daurian Partridges and a very obliging Chinese Penduline Tit. Later we walked a grassy valley finding several handsome Mongolian Larks and, just before a massive rain storm hit us, we located two Long-eared Owls and one Little Owl in woodland. Due to the appalling weather we returned to our hotel somewhat earlier than we have done normally.

Early the next morning we headed for the Xianghai Nature Reserve, where our pre-breakfast birding at large lakes in sunny, but freezing cold and windy weather, yielded Swan Geese, Black-necked Grebe, Great Cormorant, several Eastern Marsh Harriers and one first-summer Pied Harrier, a pair of Citrine Wagtail plus an array of commoner wetland species we had seen earlier on the tour. After good breakfast in a local café, we searched the village for Daurian Starlings and soon located a group of them around a tree with many woodpecker holes. Later in the morning the wind died down and we spent the rest of the day in perfect weather searching for some target species we still needed. One of the main objectives was to find Red-crowned Crane, which we saw well although rather distantly. Walking thorough some poplar plantations was also highly rewarding as we finally achieved great views of a male Siberian Blue Robin and spotted male and female Siberian Thrushes, both giving us good scope views. Other Siberian migrants seen during our forest walk included a male Chestnut Bunting, a couple of Radde's Warblers, Dusky, Pallas's Leaf and Yellow-browed Warblers and Dark-sided Flycatchers. At our last stop, a large dam with plenty of good habitat, we found good numbers of migrating waders, a pair of Baer's Pochards, Chestnut-eared Bunting and two Bearded Reedlings, which were a write in.

Next morning was spent travelling to Beijing, where we were met by our local guide who took us first for lunch and then to see the Great Wall at Mutianyu. There were very few other tourists on the wall and we enjoyed couple of late afternoon hours admiring this amazing construction and the brilliant views over the distant valleys. Back in CITIC hotel it was time to enjoy farewell dinner and thank everybody for being such 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 SPOON-BILLED SANDPIPER**
- 2nd CHINESE CRESTED TERN**
- 3rd BLUE-CROWNED LAUGHINGTHRUSH**
- 4th CABOT'S TRAGOPAN & ELLIOT'S PHEASANT**
- 5th JAPANESE PARADISE FLYCATCHER**

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

- 1st JANKOWSKI'S BUNTING**
- 2nd REEVES'S PHEASANT**
- 3rd FAIRY PITTA**
- 4th MONGOLIAN LARK**
- 5th SIBERIAN CRANE**



Looking for the Jankowski's Bunting at Tumuji grassland (Hannu Jännes).

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).

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. 2017. IOC World Bird Names v7.3. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

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.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* Noted at Xianghai, largest flock ca75 individuals [*rubrirostris*].

Swan Goose ◊ *Anser cygnoides* Twenty birds, some providing good views, at the Xianghai NR.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* A pair at Tumuji, and two at the Xianghai NR.

Mandarin Duck ◊ *Aix galericulata* A total of six near Emeifeng, and one at Xianghai NR.

Gadwall *Anas strepera* Small numbers at the Xianghai NR [nominata].

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Widespread in small numbers [*platyrhynchos*].

Eastern Spot-billed Duck ◊ *Anas zonorhynchos* Widespread in small numbers.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Small numbers at the Xianghai NR.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* Two at Nanhui wetlands, and a total of six at the Xianghai NR.

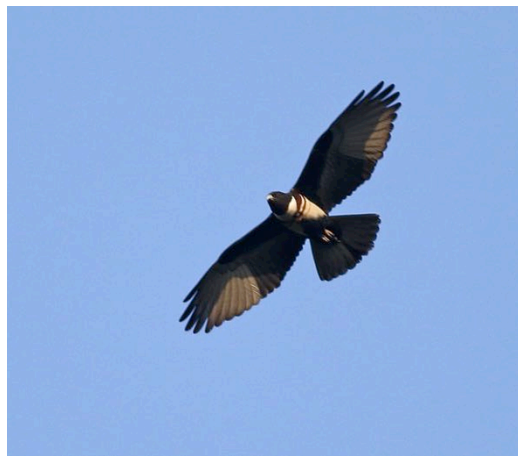
Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* Common at the Xianghai NR.

Baer's Pochard ◊ *Aythya baeri* A total of seven at Hengshui Hu, and a pair at the Xianghai NR.

Cabot's Tragopan on Emeifeng (Stefan Johansson).



- Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* Quite numerous at Hengshui Hu, and seven at the Xianghai NR.
- Daurian Partridge** ♦ *Perdix dauurica* Two were seen north of Baicheng [*suschkini*].
- Japanese Quail** ♦ *Coturnix japonica* A few were flushed north of Baicheng.
- White-necklaced Partridge** ♦ *Arborophila gingica* Mostly heard, but also sighted on Emeifeng and in Fuzhou.
- Chinese Bamboo Partridge** *Bambusicola thoracicus* Seen at Emeifeng, and also heard at Wuyuan [nominate].
- Cabot's Tragopan** ♦ *Tragopan caboti* At Emeifeng we had great views of a male [nominate].
- Silver Pheasant** ♦ *Lophura nycthemera* Several daily at Emeifeng, and four in Fuzhou Forest Park [*fokiensis*].
- Brown Eared Pheasant** ♦ *Crossoptilon mantchuricum* Brilliant views of a two birds at Jiaocheng.
- Elliot's Pheasant** ♦ *Syrmaticus ellioti* Several sightings at Emeifeng. Brilliant!
- Reeves's Pheasant** ♦ *Syrmaticus reevesii* Stunning encounters with this magnificent bird at Dongzhai NR.
- Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus* Common and widespread. See note.
- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* First seen around Yangkou [*poggei*].
- Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* [nominate].
- Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Small numbers at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Two birds at Xuan Zhong monastery.
- Oriental Stork** ♦ *Ciconia boyciana* Two occupied nests and excellent views at the Xianghai NR.
- Crested Ibis** ♦ *Nipponia nippon* (E) Great views, including a splendid pair at nest at Dongzhai.
- Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* Several seen at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* Great views at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Seen in Wuhan and again, in good numbers, at Hengshui Hu.
- Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* (LO) One in flight from the bus on route to Emeifeng.
- Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Fairly common and widespread [nominate].
- Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* (NL) Singleton at Kengkou [*atricapilla*-group].
- Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus* Widespread.
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Common and widespread.



Chinese Goshawk and Black Baza (Brendan Ryan).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Fairly common [jouyi].
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Fairly common at Hengshui Hu and at the Xianghai NR [manilensis].
Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* Widespread in small numbers. Not yet split by the IOC.
Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* A handful of birds were noted [nominate].
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Common in the "south", but not seen after Dongzhai [nominate].
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* 25 or so at the Xianghai NR [sinensis].
Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* One at Nanhui wetlands, and another near Shanyutan Island.
Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Three birds were noted [vociferous].
Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* Two at Emeifeng, and seven at Dongzhai. Brilliant birds.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* One was seen at Fuzhou Forest Park.
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* A total of eight birds from Wuyuan to Dongzhai [nominate].
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Noted at Wuyuan, Emeifeng and Fuzhou Forest Park [indicus].
Chinese Sparrowhawk ♦ *Accipiter soloensis* Regularly seen from Wuyuan to Dongzhai.
Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* A handful of birds at the Xianghai NR.
Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* A first-summer bird at the Xianghai NR.
Black Kite *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* Two on route to Dongzhai, and another one there.

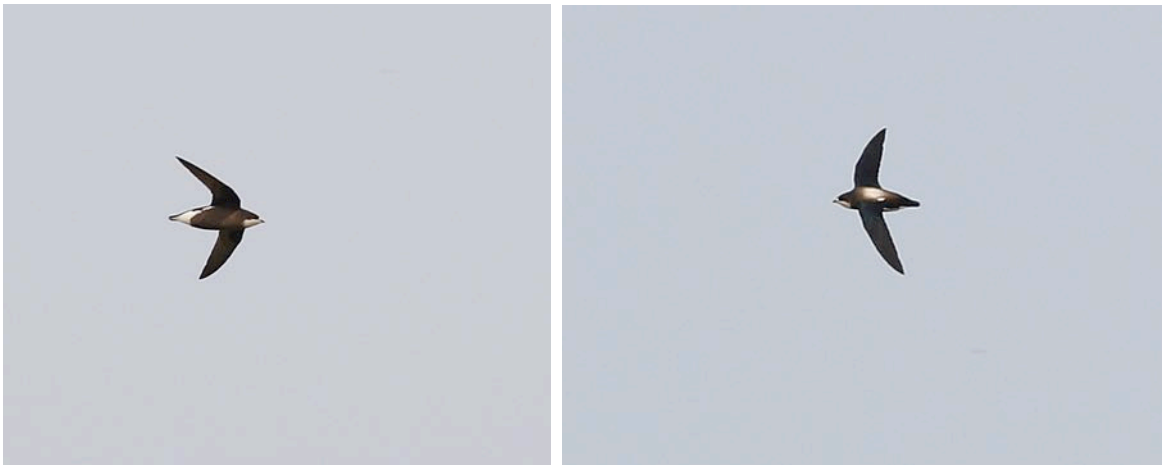


Grey-headed Lapwing (Brendan Ryan).



Eastern Common Tern (Brendan Ryan).

- Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus* Singleton at Dongzhai.
- 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 Yangkou [nominate].
- Siberian Crane** ♦ *Grus leucogeranus* A flock of five including two youngsters at the Xianghai NR.
- Demoiselle Crane** ♦ *Grus virgo* Two on route to Tumuji, north of Baicheng.
- Red-crowned Crane** ♦ *Grus japonensis* A total of five at the Xianghai NR.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* Good numbers at Yangkou, and one at Shanyutan [*osculans*].
- Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Common in Jilin, also noted at Yangkou and Shanyutan.
- Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Small numbers at Yangkou and at Xianghai NR.
- Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus* Common in the northeast.
- Grey-headed Lapwing** ♦ *Vanellus cinereus* Widespread in small numbers.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* Small numbers at Yangkou and in the northeast..
- Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* Noted at Yangkou, Shanyutan and at the Xianghai NR.
- Long-billed Plover** ♦ *Charadrius placidus* Two birds near Wuyuan.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Noted at Nanhui, in Changle and at Xianghai NR [*curonicus*].
- Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Small numbers at Yangkou, Shanyutan and Dongzhai [*nihonensis*].
- Kentish Plover** ♦ (White-faced P) *Charadrius [alexandrinus] dealbatus* Several at Shanyutan. Not yet split by IOC.
- Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius [mongolus] mongolus* Only small numbers at Yangkou, and at Shanyutan.
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Only one in the Rudong area, 100 or so at Shanyutan [nominate].
- Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* One at Dongzhai.
- Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura* Fairly common around Yangkou.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* A few at Yangkou and at Dongzhai [nominate].
- Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern Black-t G)** *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides*
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Small numbers at Yangkou [*baueri/menzbieri*].
- Whimbrel (Eurasian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Noted at Yangkou, Shanyutan and Xianghai [*variegatus*].
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* Small numbers at Yangkou and in the northeast [*orientalis*].
- Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis* Ten, with some excellent views, at Yangkou.



White-throated Needletails in Wuyuan (Brendan Ryan).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* A few at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Jilin province.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Dongzhai and in Jilin province.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* One at Nanhui, and six at the Xianghai NR.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers at Yangkou, and 50 at Shanyutan.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Just a few encounters.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Small numbers at Yangkou, at Dongzhai and in Jilin province.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* A few at Yangkou.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* Good numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in the Xianghai NR.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers throughout. First seen around Yangkou.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Noted at Yangkou, Shanyutan and in the Xianghai NR [nominate].

Great Knot ♦ *Calidris tenuirostris* Only small numbers 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* Small numbers in the Rudong area and ca1000 at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Abundant in Yangkou and at Shanyutan, one at Xianghai.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* Two at Xianghai NR.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* Six at Nanhui wetlands and eight in the Dongzhai area.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* Good numbers at Yangkou, at Shanyutan and in Xianghai.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Ten at Shanyutan and 20 at Xianghai.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Abundant at Yangkou and at Shanyutan.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* One at Shanyutan Island.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper ♦ *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* Two in the Rudong area, and one at Shanyutan.

Broad-billed Sandpiper ♦ *Limicola falcinellus* Small numbers in the Rudong area and 50 at Shanyutan [sibirica].

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* A handful of birds in the northeast.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Saunders's Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus saundersi* Good sightings with breeding plumaged birds at Yangkou.

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* 18 at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.

Vega Gull ♦ (Mongolian G) *Larus [vegae] mongolicus* One at Yangkou and two at the Xianghai NR.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Noted at Yangkou, Nanhui and Shanyutan [affinis].

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* One at Nanhui wetlands.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Up to 70 at Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary [cristatus].

Chinese Crested Tern ♦ *Thalasseus bernsteini* Great views of two at Shanyutan. Mega!

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Noted in coastal areas, and all larger inland wetlands [sinensis].

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Noted in coastal areas, and all larger inland wetlands [longipennis].

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Common in the northeast and at Hengshui He. A few elsewhere [nominate].

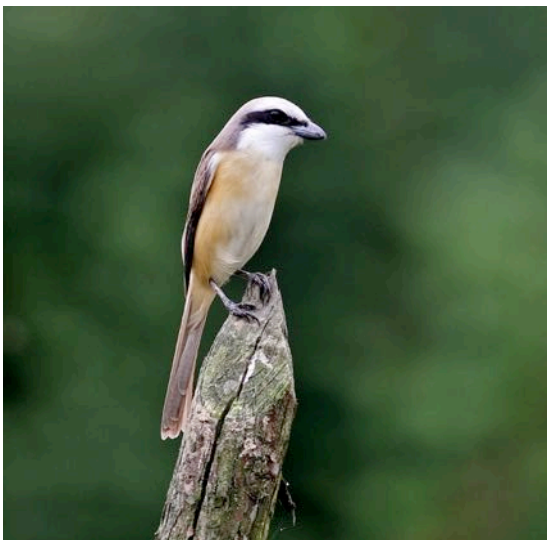
White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Numerous on Shanyutan and at the Xianghai NR. A few elsewhere.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* Introduced. Also known as Feral Pigeon, or, by some, Beaman's Pigeon!!



Grey-chinned Minivet (Stefan Johansson).

Hill Pigeon ♦ *Columba rupestris* Good views of several around Jiangshuihe Village.
Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* Widespread in small numbers, first seen around Yangkou.
Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* [*xanthocyclus*].
Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Small numbers in the Yangkou area.
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* Common and widespread.
Barred Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia unchall* (H) Heard only at Emeifeng [*minor*].
Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* One near Changle, one in Fuzhou and one at Hengshui He [nominate].
Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Two encounters in Yangkou and one at Nanhui wetlands [*lignator*].
Chestnut-winged Cuckoo ♦ *Clamator coromandus* Brilliant views at Dongzhai NR. In addition three were heard.
Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Quite a few, mostly heard birds, were encountered.
Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* One singing bird at Fuzhou Forest Park in Fujian.
Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococyx sparveriioides* Regularly heard and also seen at Dongzhai NR.
Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus* (H) Heard several times at Emeifeng.
Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* One was seen and several were heard in the latter part of the tour.

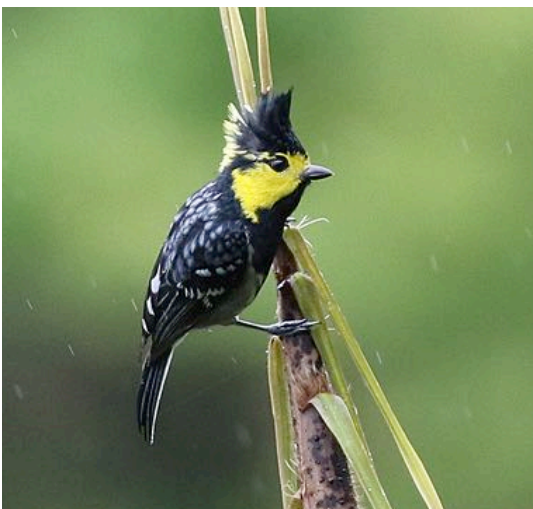


Brown Shrike and Tiger Shrike (Brendan Ryan).



Adult and juvenile Red-billed Blue Magpie (Stefan Johansson).

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Abundant at the Xianghai NR and at Hengshui Hu [nominate].
Collared Scops Owl *Otus lettia* Two, an adult and a juvenile, at Dongzhai NR.
Oriental Scops Owl ♦ *Otus sunia* One was seen at Dongzhai. Also heard there and at Jiaocheng [*stictonotus*].
Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) Five were heard during the first leg of the tour.
Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* Four encounters and some nice views during the first leg of the tour.
Little Owl *Athene noctua* Two seen at the Xianghai NR [*plumipes*].
Northern Boobook ♦ *Ninox japonica* One seen at Nanhui and in Wuyuan, heard at Dongzhai NR [nominate].
Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* A total of four in the northeast.
Grey Nightjar ♦ *Caprimulgus jotaka* Heard and seen briefly at Dongzhai NR [nominate].
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* Brilliant flock of 60 in Wuyuan.
Common Swift *Apus apus* Small numbers were noted [*pekinensis*].
House Swift *Apus nipalensis* Small numbers were noted on five days in Wuyuan and Fujian [nominate].



Yellow-cheeked Tit and Black-throated Bushtit (Brendan Ryan).



Oriental Skylark and Mongolian Lark (Brendan Ryan).

Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Small numbers in the south [*cyanicollis*].

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* A total of five were noted in the Dongzhai area.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Widespread in small numbers [*bengalensis*].

Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* One in the Dongzhai area [*guttulata*].

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* One near Wuyuan, and another one near Shanyutan [*insignis*].

Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis* Three near Emeifeng and five near Dongzhai NR [nominate].

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Widespread in small numbers [nominate].

Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* Encountered in small numbers from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park [*guttulata*].

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* Noted at Dongzhai NR [*chinensis*].

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus* One at Xiaolongmen Forest Park [*scintilliceps*].

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* See note.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* One at Xiaolongmen Forest Park [*sinicus*].

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* Few birds were noted in the Yangkou area and on Emeifeng. See note.

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* (H) Heard at Emeifeng, Wuyuan and Fuzhou Forest Park [*sinensis*].

Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus* Great views of one at Fuzhou Forest Park.

Pied Falconet ♦ *Microhierax melanoleucos* Great views of one at Xiao Qi Village, north of Wuyuan.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A few. First seen at Xuan Zhong monastery [*interstinctus*].

Amur Falcon ♦ *Falco amurensis* Very common in the northeast, especially at the Xianghai NR. Real crackers.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* Two birds were noted.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* One in the Yangkou area and another one in the northeast.

Fairy Pitta ♦ *Pitta nympha* A nest building bird at Dongzhai NR.

Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* (H) One was heard at Jiang Shui He.

Large Woodshrike *Tephrodornis virgatus* One at Fuzhou Forest Park.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* One at Dongzhai [*rexpineti*].

Swinhoe's Minivet ♦ *Pericrocotus cantonensis* Seen well in Wuyuan, and again at Dongzhai NR.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* (H) Only heard at Yangkou.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* Small numbers at Wuyuan, Emeifeng and Fuzhou [*griseogularis*].

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* A female at Jiang Shui He [nominate].

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* One at Fuzhou Forest Park [*fohkiensis*].

Tiger Shrike *Lanius tigrinus* Two, a pair, at Dongzhai NR.

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*].



Brown Bush Warbler and Chestnut-crowned Warbler (Brendan Ryan).

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Scattered few were noted [*diffusus*].
Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Widespread, sometimes in good numbers. First seen at Yangkou [*cathoecus*].
Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Sighted at Wuyuan and at Dongzhai [*leucogenis*].
Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* Rather common at Dongzhai [*brevirostris*].
Amur Paradise Flycatcher ♦ *Terpsiphone incei* One at Yangkou, and a total of three at Dongzhai. Brilliant birds!
Japanese Paradise Flycatcher ♦ *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* One gorgeous male at Nanhui's Magic Car Park!
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Widespread in small numbers [*sinensis*].
Azure-winged Magpie ♦ *Cyanopica cyanus* Two forms: *swinhoi* first seen at Yangkou, *interposita* at Hengshui Hu.
Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha* Fairly common [nominate].
Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* First seen in Wuyuan, and several others later on [*sinica*].
Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* First seen at Yangkou, and especially common in the north [*serica*].
Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Small numbers at Jiaocheng, also heard at Jiangshuihe [*interdicta*].
Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Good numbers seen near Jiangshuihe Village [*brachypus*].
Daurian Jackdaw ♦ *Coloeus dauuricus* Rather common with excellent views at the Xianghai NR.
Rook ♦ (Oriental Rook) *Corvus [frugilegus] pastinator* Seen around the Xianghai NR. Not yet split by the IOC.
Collared Crow ♦ *Corvus torquatus* Small numbers daily at Dongzhai NR.
Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* Small numbers. First seen at Nanhui [*colonorum*].



Yellow-browed Warbler (Hannu Jännes) and Pallas's Leaf Warbler (Brendan Ryan).



Short-tailed Parrotbill at Wuyuan (Stefan Johansson).

- Sultan Tit** *Melanochlora sultanea* Two, with brilliant views, at Emeifeng [*seorsa*].
- Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Small numbers at Xuan Zhong Si [*eckodedicatus*] and at Jiangshuihe [*pekinensis*].
- Yellow-bellied Tit** ♦ *Pardaliparus venustulus* Noted at Jiangshuihe-Xiaolongmen and Xuan Zhong Si.
- Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris* Six birds at Xiaolongmen [*hellmayri*].
- Willow Tit** ♦ (Songar T) *Poecile [montanus] songarus* Several at Jiangshuihe and Xuan Zhong Si [*stoetzneri*].
- Japanese Tit** *Parus minor* Two forms: *artatus* first seen around Yangkou, and *commixtus* in the south.
- Yellow-cheeked Tit** *Machlolophus spilonotus* Seen daily at Emeifeng [*rex*].
- Chinese Penduline Tit** ♦ *Remiz consobrinus* Great views in the northeast. Also noted at Hengshui He.
- Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus* Two at Xianghai, a write-in [*russicus*].
- Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Seen near Changle and in the Dongzhai area [*weigoldi*].
- Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* Common in the 'Tumuji grasslands' [*intermedia*].
- Mongolian Lark** ♦ *Melanocorypha mongolica* A handful of these bird brutes seen well in the 'Tumuji grasslands'.
- Asian Short-toed Lark** *Aldadala cheleensis* Seen well in the 'Tumuji grasslands' at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
- Collared Finchbill** *Spizixos semitorques* Rather common from Wuyuan to Dongzhai [*semitorques*].
- Red-whiskered Bulbul** *Pycnonotus jocosus* Seen in Fuzhou Forest Park. Introduced here?
- Brown-breasted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Seen on route to Wuyuan and at Dongzhai [*andersoni*].
- Light-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis* Very common. First seen at Yangkou [nominate].
- Mountain Bulbul** *Ixos mccllellandii* Seen at Emeifeng and at Dongzhai [*holtii*].
- Chestnut Bulbul** ♦ *Hemixos castanonotus* Noted almost daily from Wuyuan to Dongzhai [*canipennis*].
- Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Small numbers from Wuyuan to Dongzhai [nominate].
- Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* Scattered records.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Common and widespread.
- Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* One at Jiangshuihe.
- Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Common and widespread [*japonica*].
- Pygmy Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla* (H) Heard twice on Emeifeng [nominate].
- Rufous-faced Warbler** *Abroscopus albogularis* Rather common at Wuyuan and at Emeifeng [*fulvifacies*].
- Manchurian Bush Warbler** ♦ *Horornis borealis* A few were seen and heard at Yangkou-Nanhui.
- Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** ♦ *Horornis fortipes* Common at Dongzhai. A few elsewhere [*davidianus*].
- Asian Stubtail** ♦ *Urosphena squameiceps* Seen and heard at Xiaolongmen Forest. Brilliant little bird.
- Silver-throated Bushtit** ♦ *Aegithalos glaucogularis* Seen at Jiaocheng, and again at Xiaolongmen [*vinaceus*].



Blue Whistling Thrush (Brendan Ryan).

Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* Small numbers on Emeifeng and Dongzhai [nominate].

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Common in Jilin, and singletons 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* One with other migrants near 'Tumuji grasslands'.

Chinese Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* Common at Jiangshuihe, and also noted at Jiaocheng.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* Common in Jilin, and a few elsewhere.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* Common around Yangkou, only few elsewhere.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* Seen high up near Jiangshuihe village [*mandellii*].

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* Small numbers of migrants seen.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A handful of birds at Jiangshuihe. See note.

Two-barred Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* One in Jilin Province.

Pale-legged Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus tenellipes* See note.

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

Claudia's Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus claudiae* Fairly common in Hebei, and one at Jiaocheng.

Hartert's Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus goodsoni* Three singing birds on Emeifeng [*fokiensis*]. See note.

Sulphur-breasted Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus ricketti* Several were heard on Emeifeng, but only one brief sighting.

White-spectacled Warbler ◇ *Seicercus affinis* Common at Emeifeng. Yellow spectacles [*intermedius*].

Alström's Warbler ◇ *Seicercus soror* One was seen near Jiangshuihe. See note regarding Greenish Warbler.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps* Seen daily at Emeifeng [*sinensis*].

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* First seen around Nanhui. Especially abundant at Hengshui Hu.

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* Seen well at Hengshui Hu.

Blunt-winged Warbler ◇ *Acrocephalus concinens* Two birds seen well at Hengshui Hu.

Brown Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella luteoventris* A few at Emeifeng, where seen well.

Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* Several flushed at 'Tumuji grasslands' [nominate].

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler ◇ *Locustella certhiola* One at Hengshui Hu.

Marsh Grassbird ◇ *Locustella pryeri* Good views of one at Nanhui Wetlands [*sinensis*].



Amur Wagtail (Brendan Ryan).

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* First seen around Yangkou. Not the same species as in Europe! [*tinnabulans*].

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Small numbers daily from Wuyuan to Changle [*sonitans*].

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Fairly common from Yangkou to Dongzhai [*extensicauda*].

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* Two at Fuzhou Forest Park [*longicauda*].

Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus swinhoi* Rather common from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park.

Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* See note.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyridopsis ruficeps* Fairly common at Wuyuan [*davidi*].

Dusky Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe brunnea* Good views of two at Wuyuan [*superciliaris*].

Huet's Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe hueti* Rather common from Wuyuan to Fuzhou Forest Park [nominate].

Chinese Hwamei ◇ *Garrulax canorus* Rather common from Wuyuan to Dongzhai [nominate].

Moustached Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax cineraceus* Good views of a pair in Wuyuan [*cinereiceps*].

Masked Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax perspicillatus* Rather common from Wuyuan to Dongzhai.

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis* Two in Wuyuan [*picticollis*].

Blue-crowned Laughingthrush ◇ (Courtois's L) *Garrulax courtoisi* Ten at Haikou 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].

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* Small numbers at Emeifeng.

Beijing Babbler ◇ (Chinese Hill Warbler) *Rhopophilus pekinensis* Handful of birds at Xuanzhong Si, Jiaocheng.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill ◇ *Sinosuthora webbiana* See note.

Short-tailed Parrotbill ◇ *Neosuthora davidiana* Great views of two near Wuyuan [nominate].

Reed Parrotbill ◇ *Paradoxornis heudei* Great views at Yangkou, Nanhui Wetlands, and at Hengshui Hu. Mega!

Indochinese Yuhina ◇ *Yuhina torqueola* Seen daily at Emeifeng.

Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta* Seen daily at Emeifeng, with many good views [*pallida*].

Japanese White-Eye *Zosterops japonicus* Seen at several sites. First seen around Yangkou [*simplex*].

Spotted Elachura ◇ *Elachura formosa* (H) One distant bird was heard near Kengkou in Wuyuan.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Two at Jiangshuihe [*idius*].

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Two at Xiaolongmen Forest [*sinensis*].

Chinese Nuthatch ◇ *Sitta villosa* Two 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 Wuyuan and in the Changle area.

Daurian Starling ◇ *Agropsar sturninus* A group of six in the village at Xianghai.
White-shouldered Starling ◇ *Sturnia sinensis* Good views of six near Shanyutan, Min Jiang Estuary.
Siberian Thrush ◇ *Geokichla sibirica* Excellent views of a male and female at Xianghai.
Japanese Thrush ◇ *Turdus cardis* (NL) One was sighted by Lennart at Nanhui car park.
Chinese Blackbird ◇ *Turdus [merula] mandarinus* Rather common.
Grey-sided Thrush ◇ *Turdus feae* Good views of one on Lingshan, near to Jiangshuihe Village.
Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* Only a few were noted.
Chinese Thrush ◇ *Turdus mupinensis* Good views of two on Lingshan, near to Jiangshuihe Village
Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Rather widespread in small numbers [*prosthopellus*].
Grey-streaked Flycatcher ◇ *Muscicapa griseisticta* Small numbers were noted on seven days.
Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* Small numbers were noted on six days [nominate].
Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* Small numbers were noted on six days [nominate].
Brown-breasted Flycatcher ◇ *Muscicapa muttui* One vagrant in the Yangkou area was a pleasant surprise.
Brown-chested Jungle Flycatcher ◇ *Cyornis brunneatus* One singing bird on Emeifeng. YABADABADUU!
Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* One male was seen and few more heard on Emeifeng.
Blue-and-white/Zappty's Flycatcher ◇ *Cyanoptila cyanomelana/cumatilis* See note.
Zappty's Flycatcher ◇ *Cyanoptila cumatilis* A total of three males with some great views in Xiaolongmen Forest.
Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane* A few birds with brilliant views of one male at Xianghai.
Rufous-tailed Robin ◇ *Larvivora sibilans* (H) Two were heard at Yangkou.
Japanese Robin ◇ *Larvivora akahige* A lingering male at Fuzhou Forest Park was a great surprise.
Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* One at Yangkou.
Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* About three seen in total.
Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* See note.
Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus leschenaulti* Few at Emeifeng, and one at Fuzhou Forest Park.
White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus leschenaulti* Fairly widespread [*sinensis*].
Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus* Noted on three days at Emeifeng [*bacatus*].
Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* A few were noted [nominate].
Yellow-rumped Flycatcher ◇ *Ficedula zanthopygia* Two at Yangkou and three in Xiaolongmen Forest Park.
Narcissus Flycatcher ◇ *Ficedula narcissina* Small numbers at Yangkou and Nanhui car park. Males are stunning!
Green-backed Flycatcher ◇ *Ficedula elisae* Several 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 in the northeast.
Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus* Widespread and common [*leucopterus*].
Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Rather common along various rivers [nominate].
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* One near Yangkou.
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* Noted on three days at Emeifeng.
White-throated Rock Thrush *Monticola gularis* A male was sighted briefly at Xiaolongmen.
Stejneger's Stonechat ◇ *Saxicola stejnegeri* A few in the northeast.
Fork-tailed Sunbird ◇ *Aethopyga christinae* One near to Wuyuan and a pair in Fuzhou Forest Park.
Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* Seen on route to Wuyuan, at Xuanzhong Si 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* Small flocks in Wuyuan and at Emeifeng [*yunnanensis*].
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* One in the Wuyuan area.
Forest Wagtail ◇ *Dendronanthus indicus* Noted in Yangkou and Dongzhai, where brilliant views.
Eastern Yellow Wagtail ◇ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* Scattered few identified.
Green-headed Wagtail ◇ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] taivana* A few were identified at Yangkou and at Xianghai.
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* Three at the Xianghai NR [nominate].
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Small numbers throughout.
Amur Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* The widespread white wagtail.
Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* Some migrants noted and abundant in the 'Tumuji grasslands' north of Baicheng.
Blyth's Pipit ◇ *Anthus godlewskii* 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 Nanhui.
Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* A singleton at Yangkou.

Chinese Grosbeak ◇ *Eophona migratoria* Good numbers at Yangkou, few elsewhere [sowerbyi].

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Few birds were noted [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 [nominata].

Godlewski's Bunting ◇ *Emberiza godlewskii* A few birds at Xuanzhong Si, also seen at Jiangshuihe [omissa].

Meadow Bunting ◇ *Emberiza cioides* A handful of birds were noted [weigoldi].

Jankowski's Bunting ◇ *Emberiza jankowskii* Four at 'Tumuji grasslands', north of Baicheng. See note.

Tristram's Bunting ◇ *Emberiza tristrami* A few at Yangkou and one in the woods at Xianghai.

Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata* A singleton Xianghai [nominata].

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* Only small numbers were noted this time.

Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans* One female [ticehursti] at Jiangshuihe.

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

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* Small numbers at Yangkou/Nanhui and again in the northeast.

Pallas's Reed Bunting ◇ *Emberiza pallasii* Common at 'Tumuji grasslands', north of Baicheng [polaris].

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

MAMMALS

Red Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista petaurista* Great views of two of these cute animals on Emeifeng.

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* One at Xiaolongmen Park. Odd looking beast!

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

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

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

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.

Hare *Lepus sp* An unidentified hare was seen at Dongzhai.

Siberian Weasel *Mustela sibirica* One at Nanhui.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* (NL) One in the northeast.

Long-tailed Goral *Naemorhedus caudatus* One near Jiangshuihe. A split from Chinese Goral.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

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 Jiaocheng and the form *pallasii* was seen on the Jilin part of the tour.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

We recorded three subspecies of this widespread species. At Yangkou, we saw the form *cabanisi*. At Dongzhai NR, we recorded the form *mandarinus* and 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*.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

The *obscuratus* form of Greenish Warbler, together with Alström's Warbler, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, the *albocoeruleus* form of Red-flanked Bluetail and even Grey-winged Blackbird, have recently been discovered during the breeding season in

the mountain forests around Jiangshuihe in Hebei province. This is a major range extension for these central Chinese, and in the case of the Blackbird, mainly Himalayan species.

Hartert's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus goodsoni*

This was a pleasant surprise as there seems to be very few previous records of this species from Emeifeng. The initial identification was confirmed by comparing sound recordings of the Emeifeng birds to other potential species of leaf warblers.

Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes*

Small numbers in the Yangkou-Nanhui area, and one in the northeast. The identification was based on the distinct song we heard from one individual. 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.

Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*

Rather common in the south. Two forms: *stridulus* in Fujian and *styani* at Dongxhai.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Sinosuthora webbiana*

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

Blue-and-white/Zappey's Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelan/ cumatilis*

A total of four females were seen in the Yangkou-Nanhui area. There are currently no known identification features to separate these two species in female plumage, but Blue-and-white Flycatcher is the common migrant here at this time of the year.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

A first-summer male of the isolated West-central Chinese (Gansu, Qinghai) form *albocoeruleus* was seen and heard at Jiangshuihe. This form, 'Gansu Bluetail', is very similar to the northern form *cyanurus*, and best identified by its distinctive song. See also the note re. Greenish Warbler.

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

A total of four at Jiangshuihe. After a lot of taxonomic shuffling and reshuffling 'the real' Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, which we encountered on this tour, is now confined to a rather small area in Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Hebei and Beijing.

Jankowski's Bunting *Emberiza jankowskii*

Four 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 upgrading to Critically Endangered.