

Mikado Pheasant (Dave Farrow)

TAIWAN

19 APRIL – 2 MAY 2015

LEADER: DAVE FARROW.

Our tour to Taiwan this year was once again was a greatly enjoyable trip, and we were successful in seeing all of the recognisable endemic taxa bar one. It was also notable that we enjoyed fine weather most of the time, once again dodging the rain that often plagues visitors to this fascinating and beautiful island. Highlights and favourites of this trip included stunning Mikado and Swinhoe's Pheasants that gave prolonged views on multiple occasions, a superb Fairy Pitta that revealed himself to us in a jungle gully, and good views of both Taiwan Hill Partridges and Taiwan Bamboo Partridges. We had wonderful daytime views of Lanyu Scops Owl and Northern Boobook, enjoyed several confiding Malayan Night Herons, plus many attractive endemic passerines such as Red Oriole, Taiwan Blue Magpies, Collared Bush Robin, White-whiskered, Rusty and Rufous-capped Laughingthrushes, Black-necklaced and Taiwan Scimitar Babbler, Taiwan Barwing, Steere's Liocichla, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Wren Babbler, Taiwan Bush Warbler, Taiwan Varied and Yellow Tit, Taiwan Rosefinches, and the tiny Flamecrest. We saw charming Golden and Vinous-

throated Parrotbills, Siberian Rubythroat, Little Forktail and Japanese Paradise Flycatchers, Silver-backed Needletails, Black-faced Spoonbills, and Collared Scops Owls roosting in a temple. We saw some exciting migrant waders such as Little Curlews, a Masked Booby on the ferry to Lanyu, and an immature Siberian Crane – the first record for Taiwan. Good mammals seen were Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel and Taiwan Serow.

Once all had arrived in Taipei from the far corners of the globe we were ready to start our Taiwanese birding adventure. After an early breakfast, we met our guides Yenhui and Jade, and set off in a rather large bus, our first destination being a short way across town to the lush subtropical enclave of Taipei Botanical Garden. Here under the trees we found two Malayan Night Heron, seemingly feeding in slow motion and oblivious to the many people also using the place for their Tai Chi and stretching exercises. This is surely the best place in the world to see this species, and they are common throughout the city if not the country. Here we saw our first Taiwan Barbet, excavating a nest hole in a dead stump, Light-vented Bulbuls and an introduced White-rumped Shama. We then headed up to Yangmingshan, the wooded hills overlooking the city, and had great looks at a Taiwan Whistling Thrush hopping on a lawn, and saw migrant Oriental Honey Buzzard and Western Ospreys passing overhead. We then set a course for the mountains of Dasyueshan, and once off the highway we made a stop in the foothills where we found a Taiwan Hwamei and Oriental Cuckoo. Further up the road and at higher elevations, we were able to peer down a slope and see a male Swinhoe's Pheasant creeping along, together with two females, and a confiding Steere's Liocichla made his introduction. Further up the mountain we added a fine pair of the endemic Collared Bush Robin and our first Coal Tits before checking in to our guesthouse.



Taiwan Bush Warbler



Taiwan Whistling Thrush

Woken by torrential rain and thunder, we nevertheless we proceeded with our plan and drove up to the higher elevations. We were able to shelter in a conveniently situated building where we enjoyed an al-fresco breakfast, entertained by White-whiskered Laughingthrushes and Taiwan Rosefinches feeding under the cover of nearby bushes, while a pair of Taiwan Bullfinches appeared on treetops for us. Then the cream of the crop came walking out in the drizzle, a male Mikado Pheasant, which then spent a long time feeding in the open, in the rain. What an intense pleasure it is to have a prolonged view of this bird, even if it was a regular visitor to this spot, no doubt attracted to corn that had been put down for it. The rain eventually stopped, the mist rolled in, and we continued with our search for the higher altitude species. We had superb views of a Taiwan Bush Warbler that sat on the edge of the grass and pumped out his mechanical sounds, and further up the trail we had some brief views of a Taiwan Wren Babbler, a Spotted Nutcracker (of the spotless *owstonii* race) and a couple of Taiwan Fulvetta, and Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler. Eventually in the gloom we had a good view of a pair of Sombre Bush Robin, and a glimpse of one of the many Taiwan Shortwings singing here. In the afternoon we headed a downhill to where the forest was warmer, and found a slightly more obliging Taiwan Shortwing, Rufous-faced Warbler, Grey-chinned Minivet, several Vivid

Niltava, Taiwan Yuhina, White-eared Sibia, a gorgeous Yellow Tit, White-tailed Robin, Crested Serpent Eagles, had a better look at a Taiwan Wren Babbler and finished with a pair of Rusty Laughingthrush slipping through the undergrowth furtively. Also here we saw Taiwan Macaque and Reeve's Muntjac, and after dinner we had a great view of Red-and-White Giant Flying Squirrel just outside our cabins. Quite a day, with more than half the endemics already under the belt!

We started early and ascended to the highest point on the road in fine weather, and while our crew prepared our breakfast we strolled around the car park and found a delightful pair of Golden Parrotbill that approached to within three metres, followed soon after by a Flamecrest high in a massive conifer which was then joined by a Taiwan Barwing that then came in to inspect us from a closer vantage point. Hurrah! What a terrific start to the day. After eating our al-fresco breakfast we descended the mountain only to find a male Mikado Pheasant feeding at the roadside, which really didn't seem to mind when we piled off the bus! We checked out of our digs and headed downhill, and a stop in some lush roadside forest found our target, Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush, that appeared in a friendly flock working their way through the big trees in this lush forest. Also here we found an immature male Swinhoe's Pheasant, a glimpse of Dusky Fulvetta, and a vocal Snowy-browed Flycatcher. A stop in secondary habitat lower down produced Collared Finchbills, more Rusty Laughingthrushes and a zippy Strong-footed Bush-Warbler. We headed towards a small forest park in the foothills, where we enjoyed splendid views of several Taiwan Blue Magpies that were being lured by pieces of papaya, a Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Grey-capped Woodpecker, but our target of Taiwan Varied Tit eluded us, despite us being able to hear it in the treetops. We then headed towards our night stop at Wushe, at an altitude of 1700m.



Swinhoe's Pheasant female



Swinhoe's Pheasant male

We headed out at dawn for an amble around the lanes around our accommodation, and enjoyed a particularly birdy hour with a couple of Black-necklaced Scimitar Babblers that showed well, a great look at a Taiwan Hwamei, a close view of a pair of delightful Vinous-throated Parrotbills, and a stunning look at the normally elusive Taiwan Bamboo Partridge that was walking about in the open. We also saw Rufous-capped Babbler, numerous Steere's Liocichla, White-eared Sibia and Collared Finchbill. After some breakfast we headed up into the forest and had a good walk along a very wet trail through the forest, seeing Taiwan Wren Babbler, a glimpse of one of several Taiwan Shortwings that were singing mostly unseen, many Taiwan Yuhinas and Black-throated Bushtits, and a quartet of Brown Bullfinch were nice to see. The air was busy with raptors and we saw Oriental Honey Buzzards, Black Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Crested Goshawk and Chinese Sparrowhawk. The afternoon was much quieter, but we added Ashy Woodpigeon and watched Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers at higher elevations.

More early morning explorations around our well-positioned hotel produced a Taiwan Whistling Thrush, Black-faced Bunting, more Taiwan Bamboo Partridges, another quartet of Brown Bullfinch, Taiwan Rosefinch and a fine male Siberian Rubythroat giving us a bit of song. After breakfast we headed uphill, with a stop to look over some forest giving us looks at a Grey-capped Woodpecker, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Grey-chinned Minivet, many White-eared Sibias and Steere's Liocichlas. Continuing up to higher elevations and over the pass at 3275m, we enjoyed some Taiwan Fulvettas and Eurasian Wren, and a trail into the forest gave us nice views of Flamecrest, several Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers and an Oriental Cuckoo. A trio of Black Eagles occupied the airspace, one of them indulging in a bit of sky-dancing. A long slow drive along a winding narrow road took up most of the afternoon, but some stops to check mountain rivers yielded Little Forktails, Plumbeous Water Redstarts and a Brown Dipper, a pair of Crested Goshawks, and at the entrance to the Taroko gorge we saw several Silver-backed Needletails among many Pacific Swifts. The rain moved in during the late afternoon, and we headed through the dramatic Taroko gorge to our night stop on the seaward side. A Slaty-legged Crake could be heard singing his monotonous song throughout the rainy night from the riverside scrub.

Early morning birding took place around the nearby Taroko river mouth, where we found the endemic Styan's Bulbuls, Oriental Skylark, Common Pheasant, a juvenile Peregrine sat on the beach, Golden-headed Cisticola and Yellow-bellied Prinias, Vinous-throated Parrotbills, East Siberian Wagtail, Little Terns, Brown Shrike, and a surprise Brown-headed Thrush. After some breakfast we headed down to another river mouth, where we saw Western Osprey, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Red-necked Stint, Green-headed Wagtails, a Richard's Pipit, several friendly Oriental Pratincoles and a thrilling trio of Little Curlews that fed in some bare fields at close range. Further inland we walked around a forested lake, the best thing we found here was a vivid green Bamboo Viper poised to catch frogs on a damp wall. We headed southwards in the afternoon, and at a stop in some fields we found more Richard's Pipits, a Long-tailed Shrike and some more Little Curlews, before heading to our night stop in Taitung city.



Striated Swallow



Masked Booby

The next day we made our way to the jetty and boarded our ferry, a white torpedo that sped us towards Lanyu Island at great speed. This being the first time we have taken this method of transport to the island we didn't really know what to expect, but an early encounter a large pod of fast-moving Dolphins was a good sign. A Gannet-like creature approached the boat and began to circle it – an immature Masked Booby! This bird stayed with the boat for several minutes before drifting off. Also seen were a few Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, though the rapid pace of the boat didn't help us get good views. As we neared the island, cowled with a black cloud over its peak, three smart Pomarine Skuas came thumping past complete with spoons. At the jetty we disembarked, and loaded up into small minibuses. A short way down the road we

stopped to study a collection of migrant Oriental Pratincoles, Red-necked Stint, Greater Sand and Mongolian Plovers standing on the beach. The island is still well forested, and we headed to a deep gully among tall trees where we found a pair of Japanese Paradise Flycatchers – the male alas without long tail streamers, plus Lowland White-eye. We ate a picnic lunch here, and then nearby a Lanyu Scops Owl could be heard calling. A short foray into the jungle was all that was required, and the bird was found sat in a large-leaved tree, peering down at the excited humans! Once we were sated with our views of this delightful fellow, we moved on to watching some fine Taiwan Green Pigeons and red-bellied *philippensis* Blue Rock Thrushes, and on another beach found Pacific Reef Egret, Ruddy Turnstone, Striated Heron and Pacific Golden Plover. In another forested corner we walked under large trees, and found perched Philippine Cuckoo Doves and a roosting Northern Boobook. We spent the night in one of the larger villages that ring the coast of this small island.

With the logistical constraints put upon us by the changing of flights, ferries etc, we found ourselves in the curious position of having seen all the target birds, leaving us to time to search for migrants before our ferry departed in the afternoon. In the early morning we saw Taiwan Green Pigeons, Brown-eared Bulbuls and Blue Rock Thrushes, though the weather was a bit too nice for dumping tired migrants on these shores. After a hearty breakfast in a small village cafe we set off on a circumnavigation of the island, and drove up to a lighthouse perched on a cliff top where we found Olive-backed Pipits dropping in, Sand Martins and Red-rumped Swallows, while around the beaches and roadsides we saw Black-faced Bunting and two Little Bunting. A return to an area of big trees produced another look at Northern Boobook and Philippine Cuckoo Doves, and on the shorelines were Mongolian Plovers, Oriental Pratincoles and Pacific Reef Egret. A visit to a traditional islander's house was interesting, built into a sunken pit as a result of the frequent battering by typhoons here, a cramped hovel that also doubled as a smokehouse for fish! We eventually boarded our ferry, hopeful that it would be as entertaining as on the way over, but the seas were virtually birdless with just a small number of Streaked Shearwaters seen. The weather however was calm, the crossing took less time, and we headed into Taitung for the night.



Lanyu Scops Owl



Northern Boobook

Before leaving this coast, we spent a bit of time at Zhiben where we saw Richard's Pipits, Oriental Skylarks, Long-tailed Shrikes, Green-headed Wagtails, Black-naped Oriole, Intermediate Egret and Malayan Night Heron, plus an outdoor breakfast laid out for us. We had quite a long drive, around the south of the island and then northwards along the western coastal plain, to reach our night stop of the Firefly Guesthouse. On arrival we were taken by our hosts up to a blind in the forest, where we sat by a feeding station for a couple of hours. A family of Taiwan Partridges appeared, the small but fully feathered young rushing in first to Hoover up some grain, the adults hanging back nervously. A magnificent male Swinhoe's Pheasant came to visit on three occasions, at one point passing just two metres in front of us! A satisfying afternoon, we

headed back for some dinner, before being taken out on a night-drive by our host, part of the included package even if the Owls stayed away!

Further explorations along the lanes among these forested hills produced several White-bellied Green Pigeons, while Dusky Fulvettas offered only glimpses and the Taiwan Scimitar Babblers skulked. Overhead we saw Black Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle and Crested Goshawk, then after a hearty breakfast of steamed buns, we said goodbye to our hosts and headed out along the wooded lanes some more. No new birds were found but activity was good and we found many Black-throated Bushtits and Rufous-faced Warblers. Moving downhill towards the coast, we visited a pocket-sized reserve for Pheasant-tailed Jacana and we saw numerous examples in full breeding dress, uttering their unusual calls. Also here we found a Long-toed Stint, Common Snipe, and a superb pair of Greater Painted Snipe that were feeding just in front of the hides. We continued onwards to the coastal wetlands, and at various points around the southern block of salt pans and fishponds we found Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns, Red-necked and Long-toed Stints, Pacific Golden, Mongolian and Kentish Plovers, Broad-billed and Curlew Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Eastern Black-tailed Godwits, Cinnamon and Yellow Bitterns, Black-shouldered Kite, Caspian Terns and two Black-faced Spoonbills. At dinner we enjoyed some superb oysters, and headed for our night stop in a rather eccentric Temple guesthouse.



Black-faced Spoonbill



Fairy Pitta

We were out early, and scouting around the river mouths, fishponds and salt pans that cover this coast. The birding began slowly but a cooperative Slaty-breasted Rail was a nice find, and we found many shorebirds on muddy flats such as Sharp-tailed and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Red-necked and Long-toed Stints, while Pacific Golden Plover was the most numerous shorebird. Kentish Plovers and Black-winged Stilts were showing a lot of breeding activity, while migrant Pied Avocets were displaying to each other. At our final stop of Aogu wetlands, two Ruddy-breasted Crakes showed well in a roadside ditch, and we found Dunlin, Grey Plover and Common Redshank to remind some of us of home. A flock of 24 Black-faced Spoonbills were a fine sight, and we added Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. The continuing fine weather was probably too good for the best numbers and selection of shorebirds, many would have kept traveling northwards. We headed inland to the foothills, en route making a stop at an ornate Buddhist Temple where two Collared Scops Owl had adopted a bizarre roosting spot on its ceiling! Continuing to Huben, soon after arriving in the warm bamboo-dominated forest we were enjoyed good looks at Taiwan Scimitar Babblers, they are positively conspicuous here. In a narrow well-vegetated gully we crept towards where a Fairy Pitta was calling loudly, and eventually we were all able to enjoy good views of this jewel as he cooperated by singing from a perch among the trees. Feeling very contented with our encounter, we turned our attentions to one of our last outstanding endemics, Red Oriole. A search around the village margins duly produced a stunning view of one that posed at close range, and overhead we saw a migrant Eastern

Buzzard, Chinese Sparrowhawk, and the ever-conspicuous Crested Serpent Eagles. After going back for some more looks at Taiwan Scimitar Babbler and a Malayan Night Heron, we headed into town for supper, seeing a Savanna Nightjar, and hearing many more calling loudly from the rooftops surrounding our hotel.

With the dividend of some extra time in hand, we headed out to a small forest 'recreation-area' set amid the forested valleys, where we hoped to find one of our last outstanding birds, the newly-split Taiwan Varied Tit. Despite the distraction of noisy leaf-blowers, we managed to find a sneaky pair that showed twice, but behaved very furtively, presumably nesting at this time of year. Also here we found White-bellied Erpornis, numerous Grey-chinned Minivets and Black Bulbuls, and in the air we saw Crested Goshawks and Crested Serpent Eagles. Having completed our mission here, we hit the highways and headed northwards to the north coast to 'twitch' a vagrant Siberian Crane. An immature, it had been present all winter on some wet fields, and represents the first record for Taiwan. It showed well, at close range, in front of a crowd of 50+ photographers. Also here we saw Black-eared Kite, Oriental Cuckoo, and a mobile flock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers.

Then the time had come for some Taipei traffic and the end of our adventure, but not before another fine meal where we were able to toast our success and congratulate ourselves on a great trip, before going our separate ways.



Pheasant-tailed Jacana



Little Curlew

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).

Taiwan Partridge ◊ *Arborophila crudigularis* Good looks at a pair with two chicks at the Firefly Homestay.

Taiwan Bamboo Partridge ◊ *Bambusicola sonorivox* Several seen very well near Chingjing Farm Guesthouse.

Swinhoe's Pheasant ◊ *Lophura swinhoii* Great views of males at the Firefly Homestay, both at Dasyueshan.

Mikado Pheasant ◊ *Syrnaticus mikado* Two males seen superbly well at Dasyueshan.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Several birds seen along the eastern side of Taiwan.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A few seen around the west coast wetlands, such as at Aogu.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck ◊ *Anas zonorhyncha* Regular encounters along our route.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* A male seen at Aogu wetland.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* A female seen at Aogu wetland.

Garganey *Anas querquedula* A single at Hualien with the following species.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* A male at Hualien river mouth.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* Several birds seen on both legs of the Lanyu ferry crossings.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* Three or more seen en route to Lanyu.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Not uncommon on the west coast wetlands, a few seen elsewhere.

Sacred Ibis (introduced) *Threskiornis aethiopicus* A few seen around the west coast wetlands.

Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* At least 32 seen around the coastal wetlands, with 24 at Aogu. See note.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* A couple of singles seen around the west coast wetlands.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* A good look at one trying to hide near Chigu.

Malayan Night Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus* Great close views of several birds along our route.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Common around the west coast wetlands.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A single seen on the shore on Lanyu.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* A couple of sightings on Lanyu, another on the west coast.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Frequent and numerous, in smart breeding plumage.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A few seen along the way, more on the west coast.

Eastern Great Egret *Ardea modestus* Numerous on the west coast wetlands, a few elsewhere.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* A handful of sightings, some in breeding dress with dark bills.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Frequently seen, and numerous on the west coast wetlands.

Pacific Reef Egret *Egretta sacra* A few dark birds seen around the shores of Lanyu island.

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* An exciting moment when an immature started following the ferry to Lanyu.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A couple of migrants seen over Yangmingshan, another two at Hualien.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Several seen around the west coast wetlands.

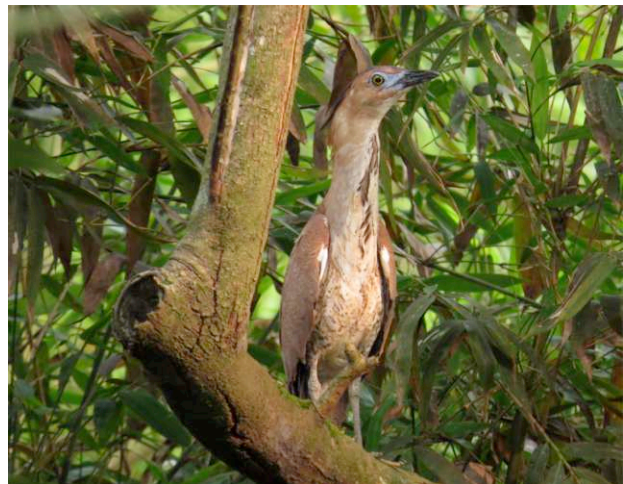
Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis orientalis* Soaring birds seen at Yangmingshan, Wushe and Guanghai.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* Frequently seen, a common bird in Taiwan it would seem.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* Several sightings, with a pair seen skydancing high up near Hehuanshan.



Black Eagle



Malayan Night Heron

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Not uncommon in the hill forest, with several good sightings.

Chinese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter soloensis* A couple of birds at Wushe, a better look at one at Huben.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus* A single seen flying around at Jinshan on our last afternoon.

Eastern Buzzard (Japanese B) *Buteo japonicus* A single migrant seen over Huben was a write-in.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* An immature bird sat on the beach at Taroko river mouth.

Slaty-legged Crane *Rallina eurizonoides* (H) One singing all night near our hotel at Taroko.

Slaty-breasted Rail *Gallirallus striatus* A single seen well on the coastal wetlands near Beimen.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A small number seen on Lanyu island.

Ruddy-breasted Crane *Porzana fusca* Two showed well in a ditch at Aogu.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Not uncommon around the west coast wetlands.

Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* A nice ending to the trip, with a good look at the Taiwan's first ever at Jinshan.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* A single migrant on Lanyu, abundant on the west coast wetlands.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* A few dozen seen on the west coast wetlands.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Very numerous on the west coast wetlands, also some seen on Lanyu.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* A flock of a dozen at Aogu.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Regular encounters along our route.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Good numbers seen on the west coast wetlands, some with tiny chicks.

Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus* Quite a few seen on the west coast wetlands, also a few on Lanyu.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* A single on Lanyu was the only one identified.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* A pair at Guantian were a lovely sight.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* At least 20 of these wonderful birds at their Guantian reserve.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Several seen at the Jacana reserve at Guantian

Eastern Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa melanuroides* Just two seen on the west coast wetlands.

Little Curlew ♦ *Numenius minutus* Marvellous views of three at Hualien, another three seen nearer Taitung

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Some at Hualien, a flock seen crossing the sea from the Lanyu ferry.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Two at Hualien rivermouth, three on the west coast wetlands.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Several seen on the west coast wetlands.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Quite a few on the west coast wetlands.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* A few on the west coast wetlands, also at Taroko river mouth and Jinshan.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* A small number on the west coast wetlands, also on Lanyu.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Several sightings in a number of localities.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A small number on Lanyu, a few more seen on the west coast wetlands.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* In good number on the west coast wetlands, also seen on Lanyu and Hualien.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* A fair number on the west coast wetlands, seen very well.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper



Mongolian Plover

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* Some fine examples on the west coast wetlands, also at Jinshan.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Common on the west coast wetlands, many in bright plumage.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* A small flock seen at Aogu.

Broad-billed Sandpiper ♦ *Limicola falcinellus* A small number seen well on the west coast wetlands.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Frequent encounters, some great views at Hualien and Lanyu.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* A couple of flocks seen on the west coast wetlands.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Seen often around the coasts.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Large numbers seen on the west coast wetlands.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Some smart birds seen on the west coast wetlands, a write-in.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* Five birds seen en route to Lanyu, some with smart 'spoons'.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Available.

Ashy Wood Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis* A couple in flight at Dasyueshan, another at Wushe, never posing.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* A scattering of sightings, most seen in the Guanghaihua area.

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Common in the lowlands.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* Commonly seen in most areas except in mountain forest.

Philippine Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia tenuirostris* Good views of some on both days on Lanyu.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* (H) Heard on Lanyu and at Huben.

White-bellied Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron sieboldii* A good few vocal birds seen around Guanghai.

Taiwan Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron formosae* A handful seen well on both days on Lanyu.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Multiple good views on Lanyu, also in the Taitung area.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparveroides* (H) Heard at Dasyueshan.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* Three seen at widely scattered locations, others heard.

Mountain Scops Owl ♦ *Otus spilocephalus* (H) Several heard distantly around Guanghai.

Collared Scops Owl *Otus lettia* Two seen roosting on a temple ceiling near Huben was highly unusual!

Lanyu Scops Owl ♦ *Otus botelensis* Many heard, one seen at roost in the daytime. Cute! See note.



Lanyu Scops Owl



Collared Scops Owl

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) Heard at Dasyueshan and Guanghai.

Northern Boobook ♦ *Ninox japonica* One seen in daytime on both days on Lanyu.

Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* Seen at Chigu and Douliou, many calling around our hotel at the latter.

Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis* Eight or more seen flying around the Taroko gorge.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* Numerous at Taroko, many on Lanyu and a few in-between.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* Common and frequently seen.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Odd ones seen along the way.

Taiwan Barbet ♦ *Megalaima nuchalis* Seen in Taipei on day one, then at Huben at the end, but frequently heard.

Grey-capped Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* A few encounters along the way.

Fairy Pitta ♦ *Pitta nympha* Super views of an initially furtive bird in the woods at Huben. Hurrah! See note.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* Regularly seen in the warmer forests along our route.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A few migrants seen on Lanyu and around the coasts.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* A few sightings at lowland sites.

White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis zantholeuca* A pair at Baxianshan were a late addition to our list.

Red Oriole ♦ *Oriolus ardens* A superb view of a male at Huben. Clearly a good split!

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* A single at Zhiben was a write-in.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Common in the lowlands throughout the country, but absent on Lanyu.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* A small number of sightings in foothill forests.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* A single at Huben was a write-in.

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* Singles seen at Huisun, Taroko and Huben.

Japanese Paradise Flycatcher ♦ *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* A pair in a gully on Lanyu, male without a long tail.

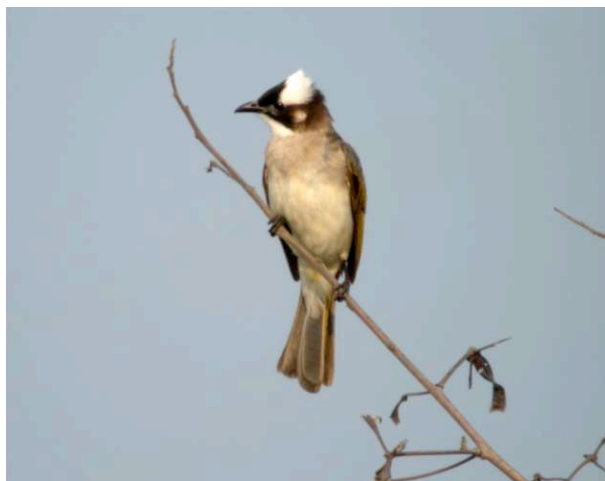
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* A single at Dasyueshan.

Taiwan Blue Magpie ♦ *Urocissa caerulea* Five or more birds coming to papaya bait at Huisun.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* Widespread, and common in places.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* A few seen around the west coast sites.

Spotted Nutcracker ◇ *Nucifraga caryocatactes* A single at Dasyueshan was the only sighting.
Large-billed Crow *Corvus japonensis* Not common, a few seen between Dasyueshan and Taitung
Coal Tit *Periparus ater* A single at Dasyueshan was the only sighting, complete with crest.
Taiwan Varied Tit ◇ *Poecile castaneoventris* Two seen at Baxianshan on our last morning were a welcome sight.
Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* Seen regularly in the hill forests.
Yellow Tit ◇ *Parus holsti* Just two seen, in the woods at Dasyueshan.
Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Not uncommon along the coasts at Hualien and Jhiben.
Collared Finchbill ◇ *Spizixos semitorques* Just seen on three occasions, each time in foothills forest.
Light-vented Bulbul ◇ *Pycnonotus sinensis* Seen commonly in lowland habitats, except in the south east.



Light-vented Bulbul



Red Oriole

Styan's Bulbul ◇ *Pycnonotus taivanus* Seen in good number from Hualien southwards.
Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Frequently encountered in lower altitude forests.
Brown-eared Bulbul ◇ *Microscelis amaurotis* Only seen on Lanyu where not uncommon, subspecies *hartertii*.
Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* Several sightings along the east coast and west coast wetlands.
Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A small migrant flock around the lighthouse on Lanyu.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common, and nesting in towns and villages.
Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Seen throughout though in smaller numbers than the above.
Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus* Seen very well, collecting mud at Dasyueshan.
Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* At least four migrant birds seen around the lighthouse on Lanyu.
Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata* In good numbers around some of the towns in the west and south.
Taiwan Wren-Babbler ◇ *Pnoepyga formosana* Two seen at Dasyueshan, another at Wushe, many heard.
Rufous-faced Warbler ◇ *Abroscopus albogularis* Seen very well at Guanghai, also at Dasyueshan and Wushe.
Strong-footed Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis robustipes* One energetic fellow seen lower down at Dasyueshan.
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis acanthizoides* Good views at Dasyueshan and around Hehuanshan.
Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* Very numerous in the warmer hill forests.
Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* (H) One hidden songster at Hualien.
Taiwan Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella alishanensis* A cheeky fellow seen very well at Dasyueshan.
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A couple seen along our route.
Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* A few seen around the east coast river mouths.
Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Several at Taroko river mouth, also seen on the west coast.
Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Regular sightings in lowland habitats.
Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis* Two seen very well at Chingjing.
Taiwan Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus musicus* Superb looks at Huben where they were conspicuous.
Rufous-capped Babbler ◇ *Stachyris ruficeps* A few sightings at Chingjing, Guanghai and Huben.
Dusky Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe brunnea* Never showing well, glimpses at Dasyueshan and Guanghai.
Grey-cheeked Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe morrisonia* A few sightings in the warmer forests of this bespectacled fellow.
Taiwan Hwamei ◇ *Garrulax taewanus* Great looks at Chingjing, also en route to Dasyueshan. Heard often.
Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax ruficeps* Great views of an arboreal flock at Dasyueshan.

Rusty Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax poecilorhynchus* Furtive pairs seen well at Dasyueshan and Guanghua.

White-whiskered Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax morrisonianus* Confiding and conspicuous at the higher altitudes.

Steere's Liocichla ◇ *Liocichla steerii* Very numerous and noisy in the hill forests.

Taiwan Barwing ◇ *Actinodura morrisoniana* A pleasing encounter with a vocal bird at Dasyueshan.

White-eared Sibia ◇ *Heterophasia auricularis* Common in the hill forests, most numerous at Guanghua.

Taiwan Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe formosana* Two seen in fog at Dasyueshan, better looks at four birds at Hehuanshan

Vinous-throated Parrotbill ◇ *Paradoxornis webbianus* Two at Chingjing, four at Taroko rivermouth; a lovely bird.

Golden Parrotbill ◇ *Paradoxornis verreauxi* Another star bird, close views of a curious pair at Dasyueshan.

Taiwan Yuhina ◇ *Yuhina brunneiceps* Numerous and obvious at Dasyueshan, Wushe and Guanghua.

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* Scattered sightings at lower altitudes.

Lowland White-eye ◇ *Zosterops meyeri* Multiple sightings on Lanyu Island.

Flamecrest ◇ *Regulus goodfellowi* Some fair views at Dasyueshan, better looks at Hehuanshan.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* One seen on the pass at Hehuanshan.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Two at Dasyueshan, another at Baxianshan.

Javan Myna ◇ (introduced) *Acridotheres javanicus* Common in lowland areas and open country.

Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* In smaller numbers than the above, around human habitation.

White-cheeked Starling ◇ *Spodiopsar cineraceus* A single at least flying around at Taroko rivermouth.

Black-collared Starling (introduced) *Gracupica nigricollis* Two seen at Jinshan.

Chestnut-cheeked Starling ◇ *Agropsar philippensis* A flock of 15+ flying around at Taroko rivermouth.

Brown-headed Thrush ◇ *Turdus chrysolaus* A single at Taroko rivermouth was a surprise.

Taiwan Shortwing ◇ *Brachypteryx goodfellowi* Often heard, at least three seen, but never well..

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* A nice male showed well at Chingjing.

Taiwan Bush Robin ◇ (Sombre B R) *Tarsiger formosanus* Showed well on a foggy morning at Dasyueshan.

Collared Bush Robin ◇ *Tarsiger johnstoniae* Multiple sightings at Dasyueshan, also at high up at Hehuanshan.



Collared Bush Robin



Taiwan Rosefinch female

Oriental Magpie Robin (introduced) *Copsychus saularis* (H) Heard near Beimen.

White-rumped Shama (introduced) *Copsychus malabaricus* Singles seen in Taipei and Huben.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa* Three on rivers en route to Taroko, another at Baxianshan.

White-tailed Robin ◇ *Myiomela leucura* Common in hill forests, where seen frequently.

Taiwan Whistling Thrush ◇ *Myophonus insularis* Good views at Yangmingshan, also seen at Wushe.

Little Forktail ◇ *Enicurus scouleri* A single at Dasyueshan, and two en route to the Taroko gorge.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* Not uncommon on Lanyu, red-bellied birds of the *philippensis* race.

Ferruginous Flycatcher ◇ *Muscicapa ferruginea* Several birds seen well at Dasyueshan and Wushe.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher ◇ *Ficedula hyperythra* A couple of good views at Dasyueshan and Wushe.

Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida* Several sightings in hill forest where not uncommon by voice.

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* One seen on a mountain river en route to the Taroko gorge.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectum* A few seen around Wushe and at Huisun.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Not uncommon around towns and agriculture.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* A small number seen around our route.
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Seen around the west coast wetlands, also at Jinshan.
Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* A bad view of one at Hehuanshan was all that we could manage.
Eastern Yellow Wagtail ◇ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* A handful at Hualien river mouth.
Green-headed Wagtail ◇ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] taivana* Several on the east coast and at Guantian.
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Migrants seen on Lanyu, a couple of sightings elsewhere.
Amur Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* A small number seen at scattered locations.
East Siberian Wagtail *Motacilla [alba] ocularis* Seen on Lanyu, also at Hualien river mouth.
Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* Several nice examples seen along the east coast at various sites.
Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Five migrant birds seen around the lighthouse on Lanyu, also at Guanghaiua.
Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* (H) One heard at Taroko river mouth.
Brown Bullfinch *Pyrrhula nipalensis* A good few seen around Wushe, another five seen at Guanghaiua.
Taiwan Bullfinch ◇ *Pyrrhula owstoni* Two at Dasyueshan were the only ones of the trip.
Taiwan Rosefinch ◇ *Carpodacus formosanus* Plenty of these lovelies at Dasyueshan, also some at Hehuanshan.
Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* Two on Lanyu showed very well.
Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* Singles seen at Chingjing and on Lanyu.

MAMMALS

Perny's Squirrel (Owston's Long-nosed S) *Dremomys pernyi* Several seen at Dasyueshan.
Pallas's Squirrel (Red-bellied S) *Callosciurus erythraeus* Several encounters, at lower elevations.
Maritime Striped Squirrel (Formosan S S) *Tamiops maritimus* A handful of sightings.
Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel (White-faced F S) *Petaurista alborufus* Two showed well at Dasyueshan.
Brown Rat (introduced) *Rattus norvegicus* (NL) One seen on Lanyu.
Taiwan Macaque *Macaca cyclopis* Odd ones seen in the hill forest.
Reeves's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* A couple of sightings at Dasyueshan, heard more often.
Taiwan Serow *Capricornis swinhoei* A single seen standing by the road at Dasyueshan.
Dolphin sp. A pod of 20 plus from the Lanyu ferry alas went unidentified.

REPTILES etc

Bamboo Viper *Trimeresurus stejnegeri* An evil looking fellow seen well at Liyu Lake

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Black-faced Spoonbill ◇ *Platalea minor*

A total of about being 32 seen around the west coast wetlands. The Black-faced Spoonbill is a globally threatened species listed as 'Endangered' by Birdlife. The total population as counted in the 2012 census is 2693 birds, with an estimated 1600 being adults, which means we saw about 1.2% of the world population!

Lanyu Scops Owl ◇ *Otus botelensis*

Many heard in the daytime on Lanyu, one seen very well at roost in the daytime. While some might argue for specific status for this *botelensis* taxon, ongoing research in Japan suggests that there is a northern group of Ryukyu Scops Owl that occur in Okinawa, Amami and the Daito Islands, and a southern group of Ryukyu Scops Owl that occur on Lanyu and Ishigakijima, that show genetic differences. The Calayan population is not considered yet in this study.

Fairy Pitta ◇ *Pitta nympha*

Very pleasing to see one so well at Huben, in a nice jungle gully. They are clearly becoming a very difficult bird to see, the usual site in southern Japan no longer supporting a population it seems.



White-whiskered Laughingthrush



Greater Painted Snipe female