



*We had excellent views of the endemic Flamecrest in the high pines forests. All photos by Joshua Bergmark.*

# TAIWAN

**18 – 30 APRIL 2019**

**LEADER: JOSHUA BERGMARK**

The isle of Taiwan. This lovely East Asian country off the coast of China offers some high-quality, easy birding in a very well-developed setting. From searching for migrants in coastal fields and estuaries to traipsing through the cool and misty highlands where endemics abound, this tour has it all! After a three-year hiatus we started with a bang, finding a selection of wonderfully tame Malayan Night Herons in Taipei before moving to the mountains of Dasyueshan where specialties were appearing left right and center! From the glorious Yellow Tit and noisy Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush to confiding male Swinhoe's Pheasants and beautiful Steere's Liocichlas. The following days we found a very nice male Mikado Pheasant by the roadside, the diminutive Flamecrest, Rusty Laughingthrush, Collared Bush Robin, Taiwan Cupwing, Taiwan Barwing, and much more! All too soon we continued onwards towards Hehuanshan Pass, collecting Taiwan Blue Magpie, Chestnut-bellied Tit, Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler and Taiwan Hwamei along the way. We had been having excellent luck, so it was no surprise that after seeing Taiwan Rosefinch and Styan's Bulbul

as we dropped down to the east coast, we had officially seen all 28 currently recognised endemics, even though the tour was not even half done! Of course, part of the reason we allow for so much time on this tour is to guarantee as many of the endemic subspecies as possible, since many of these are vastly distinct from their counterparts in other regions. “Taiwan” Whistling Green Pigeons, “Lanyu” Ryukyu Scops Owls and “Lanyu” Japanese Paradise Flycatchers were highlights on that lovely little island halfway between Taiwan and the Philippines, while back on the mainland we enjoyed “Red” Maroon Oriole, “Owston’s” Spotted Nutcracker, “Taiwan” White’s Thrush, “Sombre” White-browed Bush Robin, “Taiwan” Golden Parrotbill, “Owston’s” Grey-headed Bullfinch, “Taiwan” Brown Bullfinch, and superb views of the rare “Taiwan” Himalayan Owl at a roost. While searching for passage migrants like the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill, Chinese Egret, Oriental Pratincole, White-shouldered Starling, Black-naped Oriole, Brown-headed Thrush, Black-faced Bunting and Little Bunting, we lucked into some exceedingly cooperative Barred Buttonquail, Slaty-breasted Rail and Ruddy-breasted Crake (incidentally, all endemic subspecies in their own rights). While not exactly specialties, it was amazing to watch a migrating kettle of Chinese Sparrowhawks numbering well into the thousands one morning, see a tiny Little Forktail sitting so politely by the side of the road, and get superb looks at some Pheasant-tailed Jacanas in their breeding finery. It is always good fun to sort through the delicious assortment of coloured-up northward-bound shorebirds on the west coast to pick out things like Long-toed Stint, Great Knot, Red Knot, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and, this time, a single Saunders’s Gull. The tour culminated with two freshly-arrived Fairy Pitta which provided excellent views, despite the population’s downward trajectory into endangered territory. In total we recorded 219 species of bird (including one heard only and one leader only). From the 88 available Taiwanese endemic taxon, we found an incredible 86, so avid armchair listers can rest easy! We saw and an additional 11 species of mammal during the tour.



*Malayan Night Herons are wonderfully tame around Taiwan! This one was content searching for worms while our camera clicked!*

Commencing in Taipei we first attempted to twitch some Chinese Egrets, but the birds could not be found at their usual high tide roost! Eastern Yellow Wagtails, Oriental Skylark, Plain Prinia, Dunlin, Greater Sand Plover and Kentish Plover were noted before we quickly moved on to our main destination. The botanic gardens at the center of town were bustling as usual (although somewhat unusually, they also shook during our visit due to a 6.1M earthquake!), but this didn’t stop the beautiful Malayan Night Herons from happily



going about their business! We had excellent views of an adult bird, and our first endemic fell in the form of Taiwan Barbet giving unusual eye-level views! Introduced Oriental Magpie Robins and White-rumped Shamas serenaded us before we quickly dashed over to another park where after a bit of searching, we found both White-bellied Green Pigeon, and a tree full of Brown-headed Thrush! Also here were Oriental Turtle Doves, Oriental Magpies, and a Black-collared Starling. Beginning our traverse of Taiwan, we made headway towards Hsinchu where the coastal ponds held a few interesting visitors. The usual African Sacred Ibis were joined by drakes of Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Teal, and Garganey. Breeding plumage waders also delighted, with Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank and a Grey-tailed Tattler. On the coast, a flock of Sanderling ran along the shore, and pairs of both Little Bunting and Black-faced Bunting were pished in. We enjoyed our first dining adventure before Savannah Nightjars sung us to sleep.



*Some lovely low-down views of Taiwan Barbet are always appreciated in the parks of Taipei!*

We awoke to heavy rain, but our spirits were not dampened! A quick stop at a small bridge netted us the cute Plumbeous Water Redstart and a dapper Brown Dipper. While having our field breakfast at a strategic location further up towards Dasyueshan, a gorgeous male Swinhoe's Pheasant was found loitering just down the slope. He stood motionless for a few minutes as the happy birdwatchers peered down at him before slinking away. The rain continued, as did we, but after patiently waiting around the entrance gate the clouds cleared and we were able to have an enjoyable first walk. The elegant endemic White-eared Sibia was common, and we sorted through a few Black-throated Bushtits and Green-backed Tits before a pair of endemic Yellow Tits made an excellent appearance. Vivid Niltava and White-tailed Robin perched out next to the track while Eurasian Jay and Eurasian Nuthatch provided a distinctly European vibe! A singing Brown Bullfinch of the dusky endemic race perched at length on a dead snag for us before we moved on. Another roadside stop found us the sometimes tricky endemic Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush with their huge white throats on display, along with Asian House Martin and our first looks at the beautiful Steere's Liocichla. On the approach to our accommodation, we flushed an endearing Little Forktail out of a ditch beside the road, but he quickly perched and remained in full view only a few metres up the hill so that everyone could get out of the vehicle and enjoy this cracking species at point blank range. A walk down the road during the afternoon was slow going, but the cute Rufous-faced Warbler, some shy Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, and a female White-backed Woodpecker were all logged before the heavens opened once more. Probably the highlight was having good looks at the rare resident Taiwan form of White's Thrush, the taxonomy of which is so confused that it may end up becoming yet another endemic!



*This Taiwan Bush Warbler was very happy to sing his heart out (almost) in the open!*

The rain stopped overnight and was replaced by fog, but we nevertheless got up early, and were rewarded by a very calm male Mikado Pheasant by the roadside who allowed us to get out of the vehicle and watch him feed at point-blank range for as long as we wanted. Further up, the clouds parted for a precious five minutes and we immediately ran into a feeding flock - the tiny endemic Flamecrest mingled with Taiwan Fulvetta and Coal Tit, while White-whiskered Laughingthrush patrolled nearby. As the mist descended again we hit the trails, finding White-browed Bush Robin (this distinct form again likely a future endemic, Sombre Bush Robin), and stupendous views of a Taiwan Cupwing creeping along like a mouse. The Taiwan form of Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler performed well, but not as well as the Taiwan Bush Warbler pair which all but walked onto the road in full song! Multiple pairs of Collared Bush Robin and a brief Oriental Cuckoo rounded out the morning, but we were back out again immediately after lunch in order to try and get below the clouds. Succeeding in this eventually, we found no less than five Swinhoe's Pheasant, with one male being particularly flashy as he showed off to his girls. The endemic Rusty Laughingthrush showed well to some of the group (the rest would catch up their views later on), and a few glowing Taiwan Whistling Thrush showed well crossing the road. Spotlighting had us try to get a visual on at least a dozen different Mountain Scops Owl, but as is typical for the species none were responsive. We were consoled by excellent look at a number of the beautiful Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel.

Before breakfast we rechecked a few lower altitude spots and succeeded in greatly improving our views of Taiwan Barwing when one was tempted onto an open branch where it sat still for a lengthy period. Taiwan Partridge and another group of Rusty Laughingthrush were less obliging, only seen by some of the group. Back up the top of the mountain we were once again shrouded in fog (which remained for the rest of the day), but this didn't stop us from collecting the newly split Taiwan Shortwing, and more views of species mentioned previously. It rained most of the afternoon, but a brief dry period before dinner allowed us to finally locate a cooperative pair of Rusty Laughingthrush which were so close that we could make out every detail even through the thickest fog! Spotlighting proved futile in these conditions, but a Chinese Ferret-badger was seen on the road while we unsuccessfully tried to get under the cloud.





*The two big drawcards in Taiwan's mountains – a male Mikado Pheasant (top) and Swinhoe's Pheasant (bottom). Wow!*

Having had a great start on the mountain birds despite the foul conditions, we elected to leave Dasyueshan early the next morning and head for new pastures. On the way down our extensive trawling for Island Thrush finally paid off when a hyperactive bird responded overhead, but frustratingly only the leader was able to get



on it. This difficult white-headed subspecies is widely regarded as yet another Taiwanese endemic, but as their breeding season starts later in the year it is perpetually a struggle to connect with one on tour. To make up for this loss a Collared Owlet showed very nicely, Ashy Wood pigeons perched unobscured in a tree, and more Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush kept the photographers busy. Moving down further, we passed the overlapping Tropical Birding group who beckoned us over to where a Taiwan Partridge was scratching around unconcernedly just off the road - great stuff! In the degraded habitat at the base of the road we made a fortuitous stop for two White-rumped Munia. Before getting back in the car, a nearby Taiwan Bamboo Partridge was taped onto the road for stellar views, and our first Striated Prinia sat up on some wires.



*The endemic Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush can sometimes be a little tricky, but these ones showed well!*

As we made our way towards Wushe, a nice tract of mid-elevation forest quickly got us to grips with a superbly friendly Chestnut-bellied Tit at eye-level, and a handful of stunning Taiwan Blue Magpies moving around in the trees. Some mistletoe attracted a pair of Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers and a Plain Flowerpecker, but our neck muscles sure did some hard work before everyone was satisfied! Grey Treepie, Swinhoe's White-eye, and "Amur" White Wagtail were noted before we moved on to a Buddhist temple with both Taiwan Scimitar Babbler and the bright red Taiwan form of Maroon Oriole in attendance. In the same spot we additionally found Bronzed Drongo, some migrating Crested Honey Buzzards, and a Crested Goshawk perched up with a sparrow in his talons. Our first Striated Swallows and Pacific Swallows were spotted nearby, Collared Finchbills competed with more Taiwan Bamboo Partridges for our attention, and a lone Black Eagle made a pass as we approached our accommodation in the evening.

With clear skies early in the morning we knew it was going to be a great day. Exploring the backroads around Wushe we quickly found a family of endemic Black-necklaced Scimitar Babblers, soon followed by some musical Taiwan Hwamei (safe from hybridisation up here!). Nearby we enjoyed confiding Rufous-capped Babblers perched in the open and a pair of Taiwan Whistling Thrush singing on a wall, while the abundant Steere's Liocichlas continued to evade our cameras (however they still showed beautifully!). Some skittish Eyebrowed Thrush were eventually seen by everybody, and we then went to breakfast! Birding our way up to Hehuanshan Pass some productive stops added Brown-flanked Bush Warbler, the cute Vinous-throated Parrotbill, a male Snowy-browed Flycatcher, and another soaring Black Eagle passing by below

eye-level. By the time we reached the pass some clouds were beginning to roll through, but the tame Taiwan Rosefinch certainly did not mind! We spent a few hours exploring the area, enjoying magnificent views of Flamecrest, Collared Bush Robin and White-whiskered Laughingthrush. Eventually we were able to add a handsome "Owston's" Grey-headed Bullfinch and Eurasian Wren, but the Alpine Accentor eluded us despite much effort. As we drove down towards to spectacular Taroko Gorge, two Yellow-throated Marten ran off the side of the road and were seen by those in the front. A quick bout of migrant-spotting at the river mouth as the sun set found us Brown Shrike, Long-tailed Shrike, Grey-throated Martin, Richard's Pipit, two roosting Savanna Nightjars, and a trio of Oriental Pratincoles in lovely breeding plumage.



*It's not often you get Chestnut-bellied Tits singing to you at eye-level in a little bush - another endemic in the bag!*

Returning to the same area the next morning we had wonderful looks at Chestnut Munia, Yellow-bellied Prinia, and a displaying Golden-headed Cisticola - three more endemic subspecies to our list. Moving south towards the Tropic of Capricorn we explored a number of inlets, fields, and ponds. Although the day was very warm, our midday encounters with Slaty-breasted Rail, Ruddy-breasted Crake, and Barred Buttonquail left us speechless. Each species was first spotted crossing the road and disappearing, but they all behaved exactly as desired with a tiny bit of roadside taping! Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Common Pheasant and Lesser Coucal were all new, while had repeat encounters with Yellow Bittern, Oriental Pratincole, and a Black-faced Bunting. Passing into the tropics, we were definitively out of the bulbul hybrid zone, so while stopped to check out some breeding Black-naped Terns we enjoyed our last Taiwanese endemic - Styan's Bulbul. Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Black-naped Oriole, White-shouldered Starling and a nesting Eastern Reef Egret (with both colour morphs as chicks) rounded out our very successful day.

The ferry across to Lanyu Island can sometimes produce a few tropical seabirds, but not today! Once we arrived we were thirsty for birds, so set to work exploring some of the better forest. The local subspecies of Brown-eared Bulbul and Lowland White-eye proved common, and we had a nice look at a female Japanese Paradise Flycatcher. Philippine Cuckoo-Dove took more work before we eventually had some fabulous looks, however the vocal "Taiwan" Whistling Green Pigeons taunted us from the canopy with their strange haunting call and only some of the group managed to see one through a small window. As dusk descended



an unobscured “Lanyu” Ryukyu Scops Owl finally materialised in our view after having heard many, and we enjoyed watching a Northern Boobook calling from his roost. As such, the torches never needed to come out of our bags, and we headed back to town for dinner.



*This Taiwan Hwamei was all too happy chortling away on a wire early in the morning!*





*The endemic Collared Bush Robin was very conspicuous at Hehuanshan Pass in particular!*



*One rarely sees Barred Buttonquail this well! This female of the endemic Taiwanese subspecies literally strutted circles around the car!*





*The Lanyu Island form of Ryukyu Scops Owl is probably best considered endemic to the island, where they are positively abundant!*

The next morning we revisited the green pigeons, and everybody was able to secure great views of this difficult and probable future Taiwanese near-endemic (they are also present on a handful of tiny islands in the extreme northern Philippines). After a bit of searching, we also tracked down a superb male Japanese Paradise Flycatcher of the endemic race, showing off his tail streamers which are significantly shorter than the birds to the north in Japanese territory. We were also astounded by a fantastic raptor migration, with two particularly large kettles in view simultaneously which contained thousands of Chinese Sparrowhawk. A handful came lower so we could have good looks at their distinguishing features, and one Grey-faced Buzzard also made a pass. Lesser Coucal and a nice Blue Rock Thrush were observed before we boarded the return ferry. It was again quiet on the birding front, but at least we managed a handful of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and a single Streaked Shearwater which was seen by everyone right at the end. A long drive over to the west coast was punctuated by a nice stop at some fields where Pheasant-tailed Jacanas in breeding plumage put on a lovely show. We also flushed a Common Snipe from a flooded patch of grass, where a male Greater Painted Snipe was briefly seen disappearing into a dense patch. Since it was almost sunset we hung around, and soon three of these spectacular crepuscular birds wandered out into the open where we had great looks and even saw one female displaying to the male with a few jumps and wing flaps.

Now on the west coast almost our entire day was devoted to exploring the bird-rich ponds, fields and patches of mud. With a key emphasis on the breeding-plumage shorebirds using the East-Asian Flyway, we scoped up and studied some beautifully patterned and coloured Broad-billed Sandpiper, Red Knot, Great Knot, Spotted Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit, Long-toed Stint, Red-necked Stint, Little Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Eurasian Curlew, and a Whimbrel. Of course the morning was highlighted to most by some endangered Black-faced Spoonbills which showed well both on the deck, and in the air. Driving around on our search for more flocks of shorebirds, we slowly added some terrestrial species such as Chestnut-tailed Starling, Asian Koel (a bit of a rarity here), and Scaly-breasted Munia (less so). Some more ponds held a Cinnamon Bittern attending two fluffy chicks, a few dozen handsome Pied Avocet, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern, and we had nice looks at Swinhoe's White-eye in the surrounding scrub.





*Due to the timing of most tours in South-East Asia, we rarely get to see Pheasant-tailed Jacana looking like this!*



*Taiwan is probably the best place to see the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill, but timing is crucial as they move north early in May!*

After lunch we visited Aogu Wetlands, but although we did add Eurasian Wigeon and Great Cormorant, it was otherwise quiet. Ready for a change of scenery again, it was time for us to return to the mountains. After checking in to our hillside hotel we worked on becoming aquatinted with Dusky Fulvetta, and succeeded not long before the heavens opened for the rest of the day.



*This "Owston's" Spotted Nutcracker differs markedly from his mainland counterparts in that he has very few spots!*

A last session in the high mountains nailed us a few key missing species. First up was a Spotted Nutcracker (here in Taiwan with almost no spots!) stealing food from a family trying to have breakfast in the car park. We quickly followed this up with two diminutive Golden Parrotbills which hopped up above the dense bamboo giving us a lovely show. The highlight however was certainly a Himalayan Owl of the endemic Taiwan subspecies found on the roost, even if it did involve going just a tad off trail... Descending from the mountain we successfully searched out Russet Sparrow and White-bellied Erpornis, another two endemic subspecies for the bank. Brown Bullfinch made another appearance, on a roadside wire this time, and since there were no targets left some of us spent the late afternoon in the famous Firefly hide where we saw two of the regular Taiwan Partridge and some more Swinhoe's Pheasant. Subsequent spotlighting went well - not only did we have stupendous views of Collared Scops Owl, but the appearance of a dumpy bird sitting on the road topped this. It was a bright green and yellow ball sporting a vibrant blue wing patch... Fairy Pitta! We had point blank views before it took off northwards, maybe even towards Huben! Some die-hard participants continued into the night, desperate to not dip Mountain Scops Owl on yet another bird tour. The birding gods looked down on us and finally relented, letting the three of us have point blank views of one responsive bird.

We left early to maximise our time at Huben in order to obtain some more traditional views of that star bird which had seemed so dazed in our torches the night before! During the morning we visited a dozen territories active in either 2017 and 2018, but not even one pitta was heard. We did have more looks at Maroon Oriole, Taiwan Scimitar Babbler and some Bronzed Drongo, plus one Oriental Cuckoo perched up nicely in the scope for a few minutes. Contrary to what many taxonomic notes and lists indicate, it seems that the breeding birds in Taiwan with a double note call should be attributed to Oriental rather than Himalayan, even though the latter species occurs to the west in China, and all the way north to Beijing where it is again replaced by Oriental. Late in the afternoon we headed out for another attempt, but this time with Mr Chang the Pitta Man. Soon enough his usual birds began calling back, and some slippery manoeuvres up the bamboo slope finally got us a beautiful Fairy Pitta calling from an exposed perch. Lovely stuff! With severe threatening processes in their wintering grounds ongoing, it is a wonder that this special bird has not yet been uplisted to endangered!





*One fantastic bird to end our time in the mountains – the distinct Taiwan subspecies of Himalayan Owl!*



*And an excellent bird to wrap up the tour with – the exquisite Fairy Pitta at Huben!*



With everything in the itinerary done and dusted, we needed an ambitious plan for the final day. Island Thrush was chosen as the best target, and we were able to arrive back at Dasyueshan fairly early to give it one last shot. No luck sadly, but the weather was excellent and our birding netted us two new ones - Mountain Hawk Eagle and Grey-headed Woodpecker. We also briefly joined a large gathering of local photographers who all had their impressive lenses aimed at an overly-excited Collared Owlet. Heading to the coast we wound our way northwards towards Taipei, checking a variety of mudflats, estuaries and fields. Two White-cheeked Starling on a wire were seen by those sitting in the front, and at long last a breeding-plumage Chinese Egret was located on what must have been our fifteenth attempt for the tour! After a few final shorebirds and a Common Kingfisher, it was time to bid this lovely island farewell after another immensely successful circuit in great company!

### **BIRD OF THE TOUR (AS VOTED FOR BY THE GROUP)**

- 1: Swinhoe's Pheasant (12 points)
- 2: Fairy Pitta (10 points)
- 3: Taiwan Cupwing (9 points)
- 4: "Red" Maroon Oriole (8 points)
- 5: "Taiwan" Himalayan Owl (7 points)



*A happy group at Huben with every main target in the bag!*



## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRD SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Total number of bird species recorded: 219

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).

**Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* One male at Hsinchu on our first day, two more at Aogu.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata* At Hsinchu and Aogu.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope* Small numbers at Aogu.

**Eastern Spot-billed Duck** ◊ (Chinese S-b D) *Anas zonorhyncha* Regularly noted down the east coast.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Three at Hsinchu, some more at Aogu.

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* Just a few at Hsinchu on our first day.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* One breeding plumage male at Aogu.

**Taiwan Partridge** ◊ (T Hill Partridge) *Arborophila crudigularis* Excellent views at Dasyueshan, some more at Firefly.

**Taiwan Bamboo Partridge** ◊ *Bambusicola sonorivox* First seen at Dasyueshan, good looks at Wushe.

**Swinhoe's Pheasant** ◊ *Lophura swinhoii* At least five different birds on one day at Dasyueshan.

**Mikado Pheasant** ◊ *Syrnaticus mikado* One male and one female at both Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Common Pheasant (Ring-necked P)** *Phasianus colchicus* Some nice looks at this endemic subspecies in the east.

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas* One performed a flyby on our return from Lanyu.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Ardenna pacifica* Small numbers on the way back from Lanyu.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Noted throughout in small numbers.

**African Sacred Ibis (introduced)** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* A common introduction, especially on the west coast.

**Black-faced Spoonbill** ◊ *Platalea minor* Good numbers still hanging around in the Beimen district.

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* Some excellent looks at birds in flight and perched up throughout the tour.

**Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* One adult bird with adorable chicks standing in the open at Beimen!

**Malayan Night Heron** ◊ *Gorsachius melanolophus* Regular in parks all over Taiwan, great looks in Taipei.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Commonly noted in the lowlands.

**Striated Heron (Little H)** *Butorides striata* Just a few on the east coast.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Common throughout.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* A few at various estuaries along the coast.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Regular throughout.

**Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* Just a few noted on the east coast while searching for Chinese Egret.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Regular throughout.

**Pacific Reef Heron** *Egretta sacra* Lovely looks at a white adult attending a nest with both white and grey chicks!

**Chinese Egret** ◊ *Egretta eulophotes* At long last, a breeding plumage bird near the airport at the end of the tour!

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Small numbers at Aogu.

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Singles along the east coast.

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Small numbers throughout.

**Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B)** *Pernis [ptilorhynchus] orientalis* Some migrating near Nantou.

**Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* Common throughout the hills.

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** ◊ *Nisaetus nipalensis* A rare bird in Taiwan, just the one on our last day at Dasyueshan.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* Two different birds in the vicinity of Wushe.

**Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* One very nicely perched bird eating a sparrow near Nantou.

**Chinese Sparrowhawk** ◊ (C Goshawk) *Accipiter soloensis* Good looks on a few occasions, thousands on Lanyu.

**Black Kite (Black-eared K)** *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* Just the one over our vehicle driving toward Beimen.

**Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus* Nice looks at one bird passing over with the sparrowhawks on Lanyu.



*A Crested Goshawk feasting on a Eurasian Tree Sparrow near Nantou.*



*One of the many Chinese Sparrowhawks we saw this tour. Only a few were seen perched like this, as most were busy migrating!*



**Slaty-breasted Rail** *Gallirallus striatus* Two very confiding birds in the fields south of Hualien.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Regularly noted throughout the lowlands.

**Ruddy-breasted Crake** *Porzana fusca* Two seen very well south of Hualien in an open plantation.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Common throughout.

**Eurasian Coot (Common C)** *Fulica atra* Not common in Taiwan, but noted twice on the west coast.

**Barred Buttonquail** *Turnix suscitator* Brief looks near Taroko, fantastic views south of Hualien!

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Common throughout.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* A few dozen of these lovely birds in the Beimen district.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* One of the more abundant shorebirds on our route.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* Small numbers in the lowlands.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Quite common on most shorelines.

**Lesser Sand Plover (M Sand P)** *Charadrius [mongolus] mongolus* Good numbers on the west coast.

**Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Only small numbers near Taipei and at Taroko.

**Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* Lovely views of three birds near Beimen one evening.



Some midday showoffs – two Ruddy-breasted Crake (top), and a Slaty-breasted Rail (bottom) on our way south from Hualien!



**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Some superb breeding plumage individuals near Beimen.

**Whimbrel (Eurasian W)** *Numenius phaeopus* Just the one near Beimen.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* One on the west coast, and one on the east coast.

**Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern B-t G)** *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* Singletons in the Beimen area.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* One or two at Beimen.

**Great Knot** ♦ *Calidris tenuirostris* Some very distant individuals on an estuary at Beimen.

**Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* One particular bird sporting lovely breeding plumage at Beimen.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** ♦ *Calidris falcinellus* Two birds showing their double eyebrow at Beimen.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *Calidris acuminata* Hundreds on the west coast.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Hundreds on the west coast.

**Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* At least a dozen birds in the fields near Beimen.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* Some in lovely breeding plumage around Beimen.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* Small group observed on our first day at Hsinchu.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* Only one near Taipei on our first morning.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* At least two in breeding plumage using a pond densely packed with stints at Beimen.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* One at the Pheasant-tailed Jacana site.

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* Scattered along the west coast.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Some noted throughout.

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes* Small numbers throughout.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Showing very nicely in Beimen.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Quite common around Beimen.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Regularly noted throughout the lowlands.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* Some fantastic looking individuals in breeding plumage at Beimen.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Regular around the coast.



*Slightly hidden, but a female Greater Painted-snipe nonetheless!*

**Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum* Everywhere! Estuaries, fields, and hawking overhead while pitta hunting!

**Saunders's Gull** *Chroicocephalus saundersi* One surprised us at an estuary near Beimen.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* One roosting group near Beimen.



**Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Some were carefully scrutinised, loafing on posts offshore from Beimen.

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons* Good numbers all around the coast.

**Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana* A few on the east coast as we drove to Taitung.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* Hundreds on the west coast.

**Rock Dove (introduced)** *Columba livia* Noted throughout.

**Ashy Wood Pigeon** *Columba pulchricollis* Lovely perched views at Dasyueshan, some more at Alishan.

**Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous T D)** *Streptopelia orientalis* Fairly common in the lowlands.

**Red Turtle Dove (R Collared D)** *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Abundant in the lowlands.

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Common in the lowlands.

**Philippine Cuckoo-Dove** *Macropygia tenuirostris* Some showed very well on Lanyu.

**Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* Heard a few times on Lanyu. Flush views there, and at Huben.

**White-bellied Green Pigeon** ♦ *Treron sieboldii* Excellent views at a park in Taipei.

**Whistling Green Pigeon** ♦ (Taiwan G P) *Treron [formosae] formosae* Good numbers on Lanyu as usual.

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis* Seen on the east coast, and on Lanyu.

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* One perched up calling in a row of shrubs near Beimen.

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparveroides* Heard regularly at Dasyueshan, but unresponsive/ (H)

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus* Heard often, some great looks at Huben. See taxonomic notes in report.



*We were happy to nab this Northern Boobook during the day, which meant we didn't need to go spotlighting after dinner!*

**Mountain Scops Owl** ♦ *Otus spilocephalus* At least 20 heard, one eventually found at eye-level for the persistent!

**Collared Scops Owl** *Otus lettia* Two spotted near Firefly for great views.

**Ryukyu Scops Owl** ♦ (Lanyu Scops O) *Otus [elegans] botelensis* Dozens heard, one spotted on a nice branch.

**Himalayan Owl** ♦ (H Wood O) *Strix nivicolum* Fortuitously found on a roost at Alishan! A big highlight.

**Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei* Seen on three occasions, once at a photographic stakeout with local attendants!

**Northern Boobook** ♦ *Ninox japonica* The Ryukyu subspecies was found at a roost on Lanyu.

**Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis* Commonly heard in the evenings near our hotels, seen roosting at Taroko.

**Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* Small numbers on Lanyu, a big flock overhead at Alishan.

**House Swift** *Apus nipalensis* Common throughout.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* A few noted on the west coast at Aogu and Hsinchu.

**Taiwan Barbet** ♦ (Gould's B) *Psilopogon nuchalis* Regularly heard, but great looks on the first morning in Taipei.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Yungipicus canicapillus* Tracked down near Taitung, and at Huben.

**White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos* Two at Dasyueshan.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* One heard, and another seen on our last day at Dasyueshan.

**Fairy Pitta** ♦ *Pitta nympha* One spotted at Firefly, another perched up calling at Huben.

**Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris* Regular in the highlands.

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* Commonly noted in the lowlands.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Regularly noted in the lowlands.

**White-bellied Erpornis** *Erpornis zantholeuca* Two of the endemic subspecies near Firefly one afternoon.

**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* A lovely male dropped by near Taitung.

**Maroon Oriole** ♦ (Red O, Claret O) *Oriolus [traillii] ardens* Distinct endemic form, enjoyed at Nantou and Huben.

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus* Common throughout the lowlands.

**Bronzed Drongo** *Dicrurus aeneus* Some at Nantou, more at Huben.

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* Regular in patches of forest throughout.

**Japanese Paradise Flycatcher** ♦ *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* Three seen on Lanyu, including a well-plumaged male.



*Gorgeous Taiwan Blue Magpie can be quite tame in certain parks throughout central Taiwan!*

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* One seen well feeding on bugs attracted to a lamp at Dasyueshan.

**Taiwan Blue Magpie** ♦ (Formosan B M) *Urocissa caerulea* Lovely views near Nantou on the way to Wushe.

**Grey Treepie** *Dendrocitta formosae* Regularly noted in scrubby habitat in the lowlands.

**Oriental Magpie** *Pica serica* Mostly in the north around Taipei and Hsinchu.

**Spotted Nutcracker** ♦ (Owston's N) *Nucifraga [caryocatactes] owstoni* One tame bird at an Alishan carpark.

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* Regular in the hills throughout.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* Just a handful of observations at Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Chestnut-bellied Tit** ♦ (Taiwan Varied T) *Sittiparus castaneiventris* Absolutely superb views near Nantou!

**Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* Common in the mountains.

**Yellow Tit** ♦ (Taiwan Y T) *Machlolophus holsti* Sometimes tricky, but we saw at least ten different birds this tour!

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Quite regular in the coastal dunes.

**Collared Finchbill** ♦ *Spizixos semitorques* Commonly observed on wires in the hills.





The grey-winged form of Black Bulbul is common throughout the lower hills of Taiwan.

- Light-vented Bulbul ◇ (Chinese B) *Pycnonotus sinensis* Abundant on the west coast.
- Styan's Bulbul ◇ (Taiwan B) *Pycnonotus taivanus* Pure birds were abundant around Taitung.
- Black Bulbul (Himalayan B B) *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Common throughout.
- Brown-eared Bulbul ◇ *Hypsipetes amaurotis* Some nice looks at this endemic subspecies on Lanyu.
- Grey-throated Martin (G-t Sand M) *Riparia chinensis* Good numbers at a few estuaries.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common throughout.
- Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* This endemic subspecies was also common throughout.
- Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus* Nice views of a breeding colony under the bridge at Dasyueshan.
- Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata* We checked many, but all striped birds we saw appeared to be of this species.
- Taiwan Cupwing ◇ (T Wren-Babbler) *Pnoepyga formosana* Outrageous views of a confiding bird at Dasyueshan.
- Rufous-faced Warbler ◇ *Abroscopus albogularis* Abundant in the mountains with their insect-like call.
- Brown-flanked Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis fortipes* An endemic subspecies, seen well at Wushe.
- Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis acanthizoides* Another endemic subspecies, seen well at Hehuanshan.
- Black-throated Bushtit (Red-headed Tit) *Aegithalos concinnus* Abundant in the mountains.
- Taiwan Bush Warbler ◇ (Alishan B W) *Locustella alishanensis* A pair all but hopped along the road at Dasyueshan!
- Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Heard regularly, a few observations in the lowlands.
- Golden-headed Cisticola (Bright-capped C) *Cisticola exilis* One bird displaying near Taroko.
- Striated Prinia ◇ *Prinia crinigera* Seen on the lower slopes of Dasyueshan, and near Alishan.
- Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Common in lowland scrubby habitat.
- Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Abundant in scrubby habitat throughout the lowlands.
- Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis* Great looks at Wushe, heard at Huben.
- Taiwan Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus musicus* First seen near Nantou, many at Huben.
- Rufous-capped Babbler ◇ *Stachyridopsis ruficeps* Quite common, seen well at Wushe.
- Dusky Fulvetta ◇ (Brown-capped F) *Alcippe brunnea* Always a little tricky, but two tracked down at Firefly.
- Grey-cheeked Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe morrisonia* Common by voice in the hills, seen well by all eventually.
- Taiwan Hwamei ◇ *Garrulax taewanus* We waited until Wushe to be out of the hybrid zone to tick this species.
- Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush ◇ (R- capped L) *Garrulax ruficeps* Good numbers around Dasyueshan.
- Rusty Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax poecilorhynchus* Four different groups over our time at Dasyueshan.



*The very pretty Taiwan Scimitar Babbler is a regular companion in hill forest!*

**White-whiskered Laughingthrush** ♦ *Trochalopteron morrisonianum* Abundant and tame in higher parts.

**Steere's Liocichla** ♦ *Liocichla steerii* A beautiful bird throughout the mountains, but very difficult to photograph!

**Taiwan Barwing** ♦ (Formosan B) *Actinodura morrisoniana* Two encounters, one perched at length for good views.

**White-eared Sibia** ♦ (Taiwan S) *Heterophasia auricularis* Abundant in the mountains, heard almost continuously!

**Taiwan Fulvetta** ♦ *Fulvetta formosana* Commonly found in the high bamboo thickets.

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill** ♦ *Sinosuthora webbiana* Some in grassy flats near Wushe, more near Huben.

**Golden Parrotbill** ♦ *Suthora verreauxi* The endemic Taiwan form found at the top of Alishan.



*Endemic White-whiskered Laughingthrush are ridiculously bold at tourist carparks in the mountains of Taiwan!*



Taiwan Yuhina ◇ (Formosan Y) *Yuhina brunneiceps* Abundant in the mountains – a lovely bird.  
 Swinhoe's White-eye *Zosterops simplex* Common throughout the lowlands. Used to be Japanese White-eye.  
 Lowland White-eye ◇ *Zosterops meyeri* Common on Lanyu, but it took us some time to see well!  
 Flamecrest ◇ *Regulus goodfellowi* Small numbers in the high pine forest, but lovely views of some individuals!  
 Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Just two in the highest parts of Hehuanshan Pass!  
 Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Noted on two occasions at Dasyueshan.  
 Asian Glossy Starling (introduced) *Aplonis panayensis* One solitary bird in Taipei.  
 Crested Myna ◇ *Acridotheres cristatellus* Two brief birds on driving days at the end of the tour.  
 Javan Myna ◇ (introduced) *Acridotheres javanicus* Abundant throughout Taiwan.  
 Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* Common throughout Taiwan.  
 White-cheeked Starling ◇ (Grey S) *Spodiopsar cineraceus* Two on a wire in windy conditions were seen by some.  
 Black-collared Starling (introduced) *Gracupica nigricollis* Good numbers in the north around Taipei.  
 White-shouldered Starling ◇ *Sturnia sinensis* Two migrating birds found near Taitung.  
 Chestnut-tailed Starling (introduced) *Sturnia malabarica* Small numbers up the west coast.



*The non-migratory local form of White's Thrush is undescribed, and quite possibly represents yet another Taiwanese endemic!*

White's Thrush ◇ *Zoothera aurea* This form does not migrate, unlike all other White's Thrush. Seen at Dasyueshan.  
 Island Thrush ◇ (Taiwan T) *Turdus [poliocephalus] niveiceps* One at Dasyueshan disappeared far too quickly. (LO)  
 Eyebrowed Thrush (Eye-browed T) *Turdus obscurus* Some nice looks at a male in a fruiting tree at Wushe.  
 Brown-headed Thrush ◇ *Turdus chrysolaus* Best observed at a park in Taipei, one or two more at Wushe.  
 Oriental Magpie-Robin (introduced) *Copsychus saularis* Some in the lowlands, best seen in Taipei.  
 White-rumped Shama (introduced) *Copsychus malabaricus* Some in Taipei.  
 Ferruginous Flycatcher ◇ *Muscicapa ferruginea* Lovely looks at this pretty bird at Dasyueshan.  
 Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida* Quite common in the mountains, this is another good split to Taiwan Niltava.  
 Taiwan Shortwing ◇ (White-browed S) *Brachypteryx goodfellowi* Recent split, seen at Dasyueshan and Alishan.  
 White-tailed Robin ◇ *Myiomela leucura* Very commonly heard, some nice views at Dasyueshan in particular.  
 White-browed Bush Robin ◇ (Taiwan B R, Sombre B R) *Tarsiger [indicus] formosanus* Seen a few times high up.  
 Collared Bush Robin ◇ *Tarsiger johnstoniae* Some fantastic looks at Dasyueshan and Hehuanshan Pass.  
 Little Forktail ◇ *Enicurus scouleri* One bird sat perfectly still for us beside the road at Dasyueshan.  
 Taiwan Whistling Thrush ◇ *Myophonus insularis* Commonly heard, but it took a while before everybody saw one!  
 Snowy-browed Flycatcher ◇ *Ficedula hyperythra* Single male near Wushe was the only one for the tour.  
 Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* One in the lower part of Dasyueshan, another near Firefly.  
 Blue Rock Thrush (Eastern B R T) *Monticola [solitarius] philippensis* Some near Taitung, others on Lanyu.  
 Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* Just the one in the lower part of Dasyueshan at a small bridge.  
 Plain Flowerpecker *Dicaeum minullum* One feeding in mistletoe near Nantou.

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (Buff-bellied F)** *Dicaeum ignipectus* A pair feeding in the same mistletoe near Nantou.

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer cinnamomeus* One male tracked down near Wushe.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Abundant throughout.

**White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata* A few seen at various points, first at Dasyueshan.

**Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* Small numbers on the west coast.

**Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura atricapilla* Surprisingly common this year on the east coast. Another endemic form.

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis* Both *tschutschensis* and *taivana* subspecies seen.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Two beautiful breeding plumage birds – one on Lanyu, the other at Dasyueshan.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* Both *ocularis* and *leucopsis* subspecies seen.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* Two at Taroko.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Two at Wushe.

**Brown Bullfinch** *Pyrhula nipalensis* This endemic subspecies seen at Dasyueshan and near Firefly.

**Grey-headed Bullfinch** ♦ (Owston's B, Taiwan B) *Pyrhula [erythaca] owstoni* One male at Hehuanshan Pass.

**Taiwan Rosefinch** ♦ *Carpodacus formosanus* Abundant at Hehuanshan, more at Alishan.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* Small numbers at Hsinchu on our first day.

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala* Some at Hsinchu, another at Taroko. All of the *sordida* subspecies.



*Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrels were common at Dasyueshan during our nocturnal forays!*

## MAMMALS

**Total number of mammal species recorded: 11**

**Formosan Rock Macaque** *Macaca cyclopis* Some at Dasyueshan, grabby at Alishan.

**Brown Rat (introduced)** *Rattus norvegicus* One on Lanyu Island.

**Pallas's Squirrel (Red-bellied S)** *Callosciurus erythraeus* Common in the lowlands.

**Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel** *Dremomys pernyi* Small numbers in the hills.

**Red And White Giant Flying Squirrel (White-faced F S)** *Petaurista alborufus* Common at Dasyueshan.

**Large Brown Flying Squirrel** *Petaurista philippensis* One at Firefly.

**Maritime Striped Squirrel (Formosan S S)** *Tamiops maritimus* Regularly noted in the mountains.

**Yellow-throated Marten** *Martes flavigula* Two by the side of the road below Hehuanshan.

**Small-toothed Ferret-badger** *Melogale moschata* One crossing the road at night at Dasyuehsan.

**Reeves' Muntjac** *Muntiacus reevesi* Regularly seen during night drives at Dasyueshan.

**Formosan Serow** *Capricornis swinhoi* A few of these at Dasyueshan.