



**birdtour** **ASIA**  
specialists in asian birding tours

## South-east China

13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Leader: James Eaton

Participants: Mel & Heather Billington, Gail Mackiernan,  
Patty O'Neill, Gavin Peplow, William Peplow and Mark Welfare



**Reed Parrotbill, Chongming**

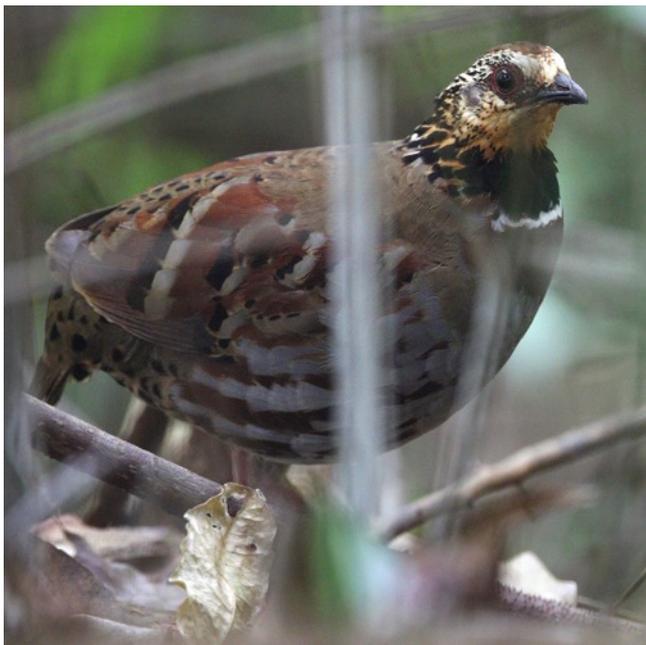
© James Eaton / Birdtour Asia

Following on from our Taiwan tour we spent a week birding south-east China in search of the specialities of the region. The 194 species we recorded included all of the main targets, starting with Chinese Crested Tern and then worked our way clockwise, inland then back to the coast. Rickett's Partridge views were outrageous as it sat metres away, throwing its head back, calling, then continuing the galliform theme we enjoyed several Cabot's Tragopan and Silver and Elliot's Pheasants before turning our attentions to small things, with a singing Moustached Laughingthrush, critically endangered Courtois's Laughingthrushes, Pied Falconet, Short-tailed Parrotbill, a wader-fest, before finishing off with feisty Reed Parrotbills.

Arriving in Fuzhou in the mid-morning was well-timed with high-tide here in the early afternoon. After excellent lunch at last (albeit very early!), it was time to get our feet muddy as we arrive at the Minjiang Estuary at low-tide, slowly watching the shorebirds get closer with the tide rising. 'Swinhoe's Plover', the little-known taxon currently subsumed within Kentish Plover that breeds here fed close-by, a single Chinese Egret in full breeding splendor fed vigorously along the tide line, a throng of immaculately plumaged shorebirds littered the tide-line, and eventually the odd Great Crested Tern started to appear. Unfortunately, this year the estuary has received way too many photographers visiting the site in order to get photos of the birds here, most specifically the Chinese Crested Tern, which just doesn't get the opportunity to have five minutes rest on the beach so it was with relief that we found a pair close inshore for a few minutes, sweeping back-then-forth being heading back

out to sea, returning an hour later for a shorter view. This Critically endangered species was feared extinct until it's rediscovery 10 years ago, with a small number breeding on the islets between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan.

Now it was time for the land-based endemics, and visiting Fuzhou Forest Park in the early morning played out just nicely, firstly enjoying our first Fork-tailed Sunbird before the noisy public arrived, but even as they littered the pathway a Rickett's Partridge appeared quietly, and without warning behind us – just sat motionless, peering down before throwing its head back and bursting into a lone chorus. The bird put in a wonderful performance, in almost continual view for 10 minutes before we left him to it. Further along the trail a party of Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler showed incredibly well, crashing around the open undergrowth below us though a Chinese Hwamei was rather more furtive. After this successful morning we headed inland until we reached the base of Emei Fang, a local reserve, in the late afternoon and just in time, as we disturbed a female Elliot's Pheasant by the roadside, and as we waited for her to reappear a male ran half way across the road, realized his mistake and took flight, away from us, tail spread in excitement. Predictably, the female soon followed moments later, though fortunately for us, preferring *terra firma*. As we drove up the long, winding road to our accommodation perched on top of the hill, Gavin found a roosting female Cabot's Tragopan by the roadside – it might not have been a male, but it wasn't a bad start!



***Rickett's Partridge and Cabot's Tragopan***

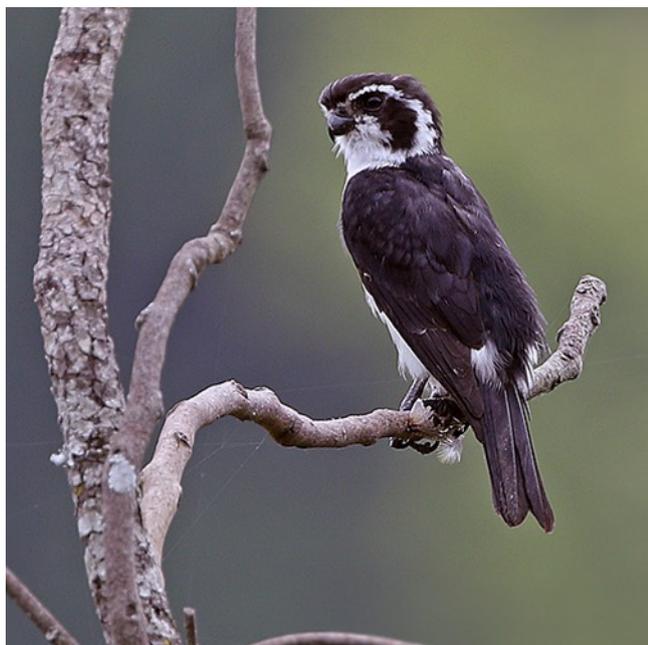
Obviously, each early morning was all about the chickens – driving back-and-forth in search of these most spectacular of creatures. We counted well into double figures of Silver Pheasants, predominantly made up of stunning, white males, culminating in two male jousting on the road. Cabot's Tragopan was also conspicuous with several females with chicks hanging out along the road, we found a pristine adult male sat munching leaves with his mate, above us, and a final male found just as we were about to leave, again feeding in the canopy. Breeding appeared to have started early this year, with several birds feeding young, including a pair of Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, though not a single *Phylloscopus* warbler was encountered in the forest with just Sulphur-breasted heard in the distance – amazing! *Seciercus* warblers were a little bit more conspicuous with Whitespectacled a common bird here, along with Chestnut-crowned. In general, the passerine birding was slow going, laughingthrushes were the highlight however, with groups of Greater Necklaced encountered and the occasional Buffy Laughingthrush whistling away it's wonderful 8-note tune, and a real star showing from a Moustached Laughingthrush – such a notoriously difficult bird, both rarely heard and rarely seen, we had one in full hwamei-like song, perching out at close range. Grey-headed Parrotbill were encountered twice – one big flock and a pair of extremely confiding individuals that fed just feet from us, Huet's Fulvetta were occasionally encountered, forketails were well represented as a Spotted was *always* on the same stream each time we went past, Little Forktail showed well, White-crowned less so, with Slaty-backed also encountered. In the lower elevations we had another encounter with a male Elliot's Pheasant, soaked to the skin as he pranced along the road in front of us, Chinese Hwamei were in full voice with several birds chasing each other at one point. As the weather had been so appalling the week before, the flooded fields contained several Mandarin Ducks, rather than pheasants! Above the treeline, our one and only *Phyllosc* appeared – Buff-throated Warbler, and walkaway views of a Brown Bush Warbler giving its perfect imitation of a sewing-machine clicking away.

The warmth of the humid lowlands was next, with a morning around the previously quaint town of Wuyuan – just ten years ago this soon-to-become city was just a village, in the rural heartlands of the countryside, where low-intensity farming has meant birdlife is still flourishing. We had a lot to attempt to cram in this morning, with little room for error, starting in a small, picturesque village, brimming with birdlife – Red-rumped Swallows were busy collecting mud from the puddles, noisy Grey-headed Lapwings were on the river, Masked Laughingthrushes, Red-billed Starlings were abundant, and a pair of responsive Swinhoe's Minivet were virtually landing on the end

of our noses, we walked along a track that within minutes had us peering into the scrub to watch a tiny Short-tailed Parrotbill bouncing around in the dwarf bamboo, occasionally stopping for precious seconds at a time to feed. One down, two to go!

The critically endangered Courtois's Laughingthrush was considered a lost species until some excellent ornithological investigative work tracked down their breeding grounds to remnant patches of tall trees protected by local villages in this area of rural China as recently as 2000. With numbers still hovering around 200 in 4-5 colonies, this gregarious species has a precarious future. Fortunately, one village that has a colony on its land has really taken to the conservation of the birds, and the birds breed in the large remaining trees. During our visit, the birds were still nesting, so cameras had to be left at the gate due to previous years of harassment – the birds are not shy, and uniquely among laughingthrushes the birds are cooperative breeders, and we could enjoy at least 30 of them feeding around us. Also here were a pair of Chinese Sparrowhawk, Black Baza and a gorgeous male Tiger Shrike, presumably still on migration. Our third, and final stop of the morning was in another, more bustling town where a pair of Pied Falconets have been hanging out for many years – the boon in bird photography in the country was startling here, with four rooftops now converted to hides containing over 50 huge lens, overlooking favoured perches of the diminutive hunters. Prepared to give it an hour, we were delighted to find a falconet fly past, Japanese Tit in talons as the Barn Swallows mobbed it, before perching and devouring the poor tit, head first! After releasing the tit, presumably to its hungry chicks it came in and landed on a favoured perch, just 20 metres from us.

100% success during the morning meant it was now time for the very long drive into coastal Jiangsu province, eventually arriving on the coast in the evening.



***Pied Falconet and Saunderson's Gull***

Normally, blue skies and light wind is what you crave on a birding trip, however, this morning a bit of a change would have been appreciated as the hoped for passerine migration never materialized, bar brief Pale and Grey-backed Thrushes, two singing Pale-legged Leaf Warbler and a very approachable Manchurian Bush Warbler singing from an open perch. Large numbers of Chinese Grosbeak were busy displaying and nest building and Common Pheasants were feeding in the surrounding fields.

On the shoreline, a number of startlingly striking summer-plumaged Saunderson's Gull roamed the shoreline, regularly flying overhead to check us out, tern-like. Though the official high-tide time was set at 0910, even when we left, just shy of midday, the tide was still fast approaching! Thousands of shorebirds littered the area, nearly all of which were in full summer garb. Predominantly Grey Plover and Bar-tailed Godwits, we also had large numbers of Red-necked Stint, Great Knot, sandpipers and smaller numbers of Far Eastern Curlew, Sharp-tailed and Broad-billed Sandpipers, though we couldn't locate any Spoon-billed Sandpiper it was fortunate it wasn't a new bird for any of us! Black-tailed Gulls were also still present and a finely plumed Chinese Egret darted around with its distinctive frantic feeding action. A Eurasian Bittern was a surprise write-in, flying over the reeds.

In the late afternoon sunshine, we eventually reached a large area of untouched reeds (most of Chongming islands reeds appeared to have been mowed over!) and it wasn't long before we were enjoying some fabulous Reed Parrotbills calling below us, a real monster of a parrotbill, like a Bearded Reedling on steroids! A nice way to end our week here before the short drive to Shanghai to toast to our success.



***Cabot's Tragopan and Silver Pheasant***



***Brown Bush Warbler and Swinhoe's Minivet***



***Reed Parrotbills – awesome birds!***

## Systematic List

### **ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae**

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*  
Chinese Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*

### **GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae**

Rickett's Partridge *Arborophila gingica*  
Chinese Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola thoracicus*  
Cabot's Tragopan *Tragopan caboti*  
Silver Pheasant *Lophura nycthemera fokiensis*  
Elliot's Pheasant *Syrmaticus ellioti*  
Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus karpowi*

### **PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis poggei*  
Great-crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

### **COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae**

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis orientalis*  
Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*  
Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*  
Barred Cuckoo Dove *Macropygia unchall minor*

### **CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae**

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*  
Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparverioides*  
Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*  
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*  
Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus* heard only  
Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus*  
Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*

### **APODIFORMES: Apodidae**

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*  
House Swift *Apus [affinis] nipalensis*  
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

### **GRUIFORMES: Rallidae**

Brown Crake *Amaurornis akool*  
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*  
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*  
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae**

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*  
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae**

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*  
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*  
Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrinus nihonensis*  
Swinhoe's Plover *Anarhynchus [alexandrinus] dealbatus*  
'Siberian' Plover (=Lesser Sandplover) *Anarhynchus mongolus*  
Greater Sandplover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii*

### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae**

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa melanuroides*  
Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*  
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus variegatus*

Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Far Eastern Curlew	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Grey-tailed Tattler	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>

**CHARADRIIFORMES: Glareolidae**

Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>
---------------------	----------------------------

**CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae**

Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica affinis</i>
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo tibetana</i>
	<i>Sterna hirundo longipennis</i>
Great Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>
Chinese Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bernsteini</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>

**CICONIIFORMES: Ardeidae**

Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
'Eastern' Great Egret	<i>Ardea [alba] modesta</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia intermedia</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta garzetta</i>
Chinese Egret	<i>Egretta eulophotes</i>
Chinese Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>
'Eastern' Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea [ibis] coromandus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>
Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae**

Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
--------	--------------------------

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**

Black Baza	<i>Aviceda leuphotes</i>
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Black Kite	<i>Milvus [migrans] lineatus</i>
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela ricketti</i>
Crested Goshawk	<i>Lophospiza trivirgatus indicus</i>
Chinese Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza soloensis</i>
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis schvedowi</i>
Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>

**STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae**

Collared Owlet	<i>Glaucidium brodiei brodiei</i>	heard only
----------------	-----------------------------------	------------

Asian Barred Owllet

*Glaucidium cuculoides*

**PICIFORMES: Capitonidae**

Great Barbet

*Psilopogon virens*

**PICIFORMES: Picidae**

Grey-capped Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos canicapillus*

Great Spotted Woodpecker

*Dendrocopos major cabanisi*

Grey-faced Woodpecker

*Picus canus sobrinus*

Bay Woodpecker

*Blythipicus pyrrhotis sinensis*

**CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae**

Common Kingfisher

*Alcedo atthis bengalensis*

White-throated Kingfisher

*Halcyon smyrnensis*

Pied Kingfisher

*Ceryle rudis*

**CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae**

Dollarbird

*Eurystomus orientalis*

**CORACIIFORMES: Upupidae**

Eurasian Hoopoe

*Upupa epops*

**FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae**

Pied Falconet

*Microhierax melanoleucos*

Eurasian Kestrel

*Falco tinnunculus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Vireonidae**

Blyth's Shrike Babbler

*Pteruthius aeralatus*

Erpornis

*Erpornis zantholeuca griseiloris*

**PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae**

Black-winged Cuckooshrike

*Lalage melaschistos*

Swinhoe's Minivet

*Pericrocotus cantonensis*

Scarlet Minivet

*Pericrocotus speciosus fohkiensis*

Grey-chinned Minivet

*Pericrocotus solaris griseogularis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae**

Black Drongo

*Dicrurus macrocercus*

Ashy Drongo

*Dicrurus leucophaeus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae**

Tiger Shrike

*Lanius tigrinus*

Brown Shrike

*Lanius cristatus*

Long-tailed Shrike

*Lanius schach*

**PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae**

Eurasian Jay

*Garrulus glandarius sinensis*

Azure-winged Magpie

*Cyanopica cyanus*

Red-billed Blue Magpie

*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*

Grey Treepie

*Dendrocitta formosae*

Eurasian Magpie

*Pica pica sericea*

Large-billed Crow

*Corvus macrorhynchos colonorum*

**PASSERIFORMES: Paridae**

Japanese Tit

*Parus minor commixtus*

Yellow-cheeked Tit

*Parus spilonotus rex*

Sultan Tit

*Melanochlora sultanea*

**PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae**

Oriental Skylark

*Alauda gulgula*

**PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae**

Eurasian Sand Martin  
 Barn Swallow  
 Red-rumped Swallow

*Riparia riparia ijimae*  
*Hirundo rustica*  
*Cecropis daurica*

**PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae**

Collared Finchbill  
 Chinese Bulbul  
 Mountain Bulbul  
 Chestnut Bulbul  
 Himalayan Black Bulbul

*Spizixos semitorques*  
*Pycnonotus sinensis sinensis*  
*Ixos maclellandii holtii*  
*Hemixos castanonotus*  
*Hypsipetes leucocephalus leucocephalus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Timaliidae**

Rufous-capped Babbler  
 Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler  
 Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler

*Cyanoderma ruficeps davidi*  
*Pomatorhinus swinhoei*  
*Pomatorhinus ruficollis stridulus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae**

Huet's Fulvetta  
 Masked Laughingthrush  
 Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush  
 Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush  
 Chinese Hwamei  
 Buffy Laughingthrush  
 Courtois's Laughingthrush  
 Moustached Laughingthrush  
 White-browed Laughingthrush  
 Red-billed Leiothrix

*Alcippe hueti*  
*Garrulax perspicillatus*  
*Garrulax monileger melli*  
*Garrulax pectoralis picticollis*  
*Garrulax canorum*  
*Ianthocincla berthemyi*  
*Ianthocincla courtoisi*  
*Ianthocincla cineracea cinereiceps*  
*Ianthocincla sannio*  
*Leiothrix lutea*

**PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae**

Grey-headed Parrotbill  
 Vinous-throated Parrotbill  
 Short-tailed Parrotbill  
 Reed Parrotbill

*Psittiparus gularis*  
*Sinornis webbiana*  
*Neosuthora davidianus*  
*Paradoxornis heudei*

**PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae**

Indochinese Yuhina  
 Black-chinned Yuhina  
 Japanese White-eye

*Yuhina torqueola*  
*Yuhina nigrimenta*  
*Zosterops japonicus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae**

Buff-throated Warbler  
 Arctic Warbler  
 Pale-legged Leaf Warbler  
 Sulphur-breasted Warbler  
 White-spectacled Warbler  
 Chestnut-crowned Warbler

*Phylloscopus subaffinis*  
*Phylloscopus borealis*  
*Phylloscopus tenellipes*  
*Phylloscopus ricketti*  
*Seicercus affinis intermedius*  
*Seicercus castaniceps sinensis*

heard only

**PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae**

Black-throated Bushtit

*Aegithalos concinnus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Cettidae**

Manchurian Bush Warbler  
 Rufous-faced Warbler

*Horornis canturians*  
*Abroscopus albogularis fulvifacies*

**PASSERIFORMES: Pnoepyidae**

Pygmy Cupwing

*Pnoepyga pusilla*

heard only

**PASSERIFORMES: Acrocephalidae**

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*  
Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Locustellidae**

Brown Bush Warbler *Locustella luteoventris*

**PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae**

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*  
Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata extensicauda*  
Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris sonitans*

**PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae**

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*  
Black-collared Starling *Gracupica nigricollis*  
White-cheeked Starling *Spodiopsar cineraceus*  
White-shouldered Starling *Sturnus sinensis*  
Red-billed Starling *Sturnus sericeus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

Chinese Blackbird *Turdus mandarinus*  
Pale Thrush *Turdus pallidus*  
Grey-backed Thrush *Turdus hortulorum*

**PASSERIFORMES: Muscipidae**

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*  
Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae*  
Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*  
Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*  
White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus leschenaulti sinensis*  
Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*  
Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*  
Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*  
Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*  
Plumbeous Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosa*  
Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*  
Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*  
Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferreus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae**

Fork-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga christinae*

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae**

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

**PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae**

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*  
Chinese Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*

**PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae**

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*  
White Wagtail *Motacilla alba leucopsis*  
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis tschutschensis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae**

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

## MAMMALS

Red Giant Flying Squirrel

*Petaurista petaurista*

Pallas's Squirrel

*Callosciurus erythraeus*

Maritime Striped Squirrel

*Tamiops maritimus*

Chinese Hare

*Lepus sinensis*

Crab-eating Mongoose

*Herpestes urva*

**194 species recorded including four heard only**