Sichuan, Shaanxi and Yunnan China

18th May – 8th June 2013

Leader: James Eaton

Participants: Andy Bunting, Andy Deighton, Martin Kennewell, Ian Merrill, Volkert van der Wiligen and Barry Wright

This mammoth tour was designed to cover as many sites in and around Sichuan as possible within three weeks. We recorded 355 species but it was more memorable for the mega birds and views we had of a number of dream species. Working our way clockwise around Sichuan, then moving into Shaanxi province, and finishing up in north-west Yunnan we saw nearly every targeted species and a whole lot more. 12 species of parrotbill included finding a nest of the seldom-seen Przevalski’s and multiple sightings of Grey-hooded. Laughingthrushes were highlighted by outrageous views of the very rare Biet’s, 18 species of Phylloscopus, and 36 warblers overall, may not of got everyone’s pulses racing but we saw them all, 3 mega Luscinia for everyone – Blackthroat, Firethroat and Rufous-headed Robin and to top it all off, 16 species of galliform, with particularly noteworthy views of 19 Temminck’s Tragopan, Chinese Monal and a number of Golden Pheasants. To top it all off, it was a culinary feast, wonderful scenery and a host of exciting
mammals including Takin, Chinese Serow but the heard only Giant Panda will forever remain etched in our memories!

As Martin and James arrived the day before everyone else, we headed off for a mornings birding on the summit of Emei Shan. With the continued closure of Wawu Shan certain species would still be difficult to find on most regular tours so we opted for a visit here in the off chance of finding a Grey-hooded Parrotbill. After arriving on the summit two of the first birds we found were good ones – a female Golden Bush Robin, followed by two territorial Chestnut-crowned Bush Warblers vying for our attention. Eventually we found some suitable looking habitat and within seconds had point-blank views of a Grey-hooded Parrotbill, too close to even fit the whole bird in the camera. After having our fill of this, along with a rather curious Collared Grosbeak and the first of many Aberrant Bush Warbler, we spent a couple of hours birding in the general area picking up our first Philoscs of the trip, Dark-breasted Rosefinches, Lesser Cuckoos in song flight, several co-operative White-bellied Redstarts and a Grey-sided Bush Warbler that refused to shut up. As time was now pressing to meet up with the others we headed down, bumping into a motley crew of Tibetan Macaque on the way down up to mischief – they had even stolen a ladies handbag, along with several drinks and food items from terrified local tourists attempting to pass by them.

We met the rest of the group in the highway service station under the intense sun – little did we know that this rare event at this time of year would follow us round on a near daily basis for the rest of the trip! Our destination for the night was Pingshan, though a quiet, untrodden trail to our accommodation along a bamboo infested ridge was a difficult place to sell, having its own rustic charm could be the only positive thing to say about the place – the view of course, with Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons and Large Hawk Cuckoo regularly on view.

Breakfast was joined by an Ashy-throated Parrotbill feeding at the roadside and a Crested Goshawk displaying overhead before we weaved our way up the access road to Laojunshan, stopping for a brief Silver Pheasant and several Chinese Bamboo Partridges. The reserve at Laojunshan was setup for the endangered Sichuan Partridge, a species only now known from a handful of reserves, but since it has undergone a catastrophic decline, perhaps up to 85%, we were never likely to see one and so it proved! Heading up the difficult trail to our accommodation along a bamboo infested ridge-top we encountered three species we would see again – several White-spectacled Warblers were in song and both White-throated and Buffy Laughingthrushes showed exceptionally well. Further up, a male Chinese Blue Flycatcher was eventually coaxed out of the undergrowth, a couple of Grey-headed Parrotbills were in a feeding flock and our first White-backed Woodpecker also appeared. Once on the ridge, we soon had our first pair of Emei Liocichla pop out above the bamboo for us, and played with the first of many Red-winged Laughingthrush – it took a while but eventually good views all round, though I think we all had good views of different birds of this sneaky species over the next couple of days. In the bamboo under-storey, Golden-breasted and Grey-hooded Fulveta were both common, as were regular sightings of Golden Parrotbill, always in pairs though the commonest bird by far was Red-billed Leiothrix – perhaps a hundred of more were seen daily. Our accommodation up here would be a difficult place to sell, having its own rustic charm could be the only positive to say about the place – and the view of course, with Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons and Large Hawk Cuckoo regularly on view.

The birding up here was generally very tough, whether being too hot, birds already breeding, or just simply bad luck. We had plenty of good birds though, just at a low density – two female Temminck’s Tragopans were found in the trees during an early evening walk, Emei Liocichla showed themselves on a couple of occasions, though other Laughingthrushes were thin on the ground apart from numerous Red-winged warily
showing themselves. Feeding flocks were regularly encountered, usually containing the same 10 species – Blue-winged Siva, Stripe-throated and White-collared Yuhinas were the main components with the odd rarer species lurking around – White-tailed Robin, Blyth’s Shrike Babbler, Black-headed Sibia, Hodgson’s Hawk Cuckoo and one evening, even a female Amur Falcon flashing over – presumably a migrant. Woodpeckers were conspicuous, as well as White-backed, we also recorded Crimson-breasted, several unusually showy Bay, Grey-capped and a tiny Speckled Piculet.

After a couple of days here we moved on to Longcanggou National Nature Reserve, a little-visited reserve that though heavily logged in the past, still has a rich avifauna. Though this wasn’t our original destination, that was Wawu Shan, and as that closed for ‘redevelopment’ in 2012, we then opted for Labahe which closed for ‘redevelopment’ just a month before this tour! We had just a day and a half here, enough time for our targets though several more days here would no doubt yield a surprise or two such is the potential of this site. On our first day we birded the bamboo-carpeted highest reaches of the reserve, up to 2500m, whereas on our second morning we opted to bird the deciduous forest. This was to be our main site for Lady Amherst’s Pheasant and fortunately on our first drive up a female Lady Amherst’s Pheasant casually strolled across the road from the comforts of our bus – though one of us seemed to have their eyes closed at this point so it was a relief for him, and us, that we found an immature male on two occasions later on. Feeding flocks dominated proceedings, always containing a variety of warblers; Ashy-throated, Sichuan Leaf, Bianchi’s, Marten’s, Claudia’s, Chestnut-crowned, Large-billed Leaf – all species we would see almost daily for the rest of the tour. After a couple of days here we moved on to Longcanggou National Nature Reserve, a little-visited reserve that though heavily logged in the past, still has a rich avifauna. Though this wasn’t our original destination, that was Wawu Shan, and as that closed for ‘redevelopment’ in 2012, we then opted for Labahe which closed for ‘redevelopment’ just a month before this tour! We had just a day and a half here, enough time for our targets though several more days here would no doubt yield a surprise or two such is the potential of this site. On our first day we birded the bamboo-carpeted highest reaches of the reserve, up to 2500m, whereas on our second morning we opted to bird the deciduous forest. This was to be our main site for Lady Amherst’s Pheasant and fortunately on our first drive up a female Lady Amherst’s Pheasant casually strolled across the road from the comforts of our bus – though one of us seemed to have their eyes closed at this point so it was a relief for him, and us, that we found an immature male on two occasions later on. Feeding flocks dominated proceedings, always containing a variety of warblers; Ashy-throated, Sichuan Leaf, Bianchi’s, Marten’s, Claudia’s, Chestnut-crowned, Large-billed Leaf – all species we would see almost daily for the rest of the tour, Mrs Gould’s Sunbird, Rufous-vented, Coal and the Chinese endemic, Yellow-bellied Tits, more fulvetas and on three occasions, several Fire-capped Tits, with several more later in the day and the following morning. In this degraded habitat Lesser Cuckoo and Large Hawk Cuckoos were particularly easy to locate as they sang from exposed perches and in song-flight, and a distant Oriental Cuckoo was also found calling. Away from the feeding flocks was where we found most of the goodies; Emei Leaf Warbler was busy defending his territory, and a particularly nice comparison as both Claudia’s and Kloss’s Leaf Warbler sang from the same tree at times. Dark-sided and Ferruginous Flycatchers, Rufous-bellied Niltava, Hodgson’s Treecreepers, and Emei Liocichla were also seen, the latter being particularly conspicuous here.

In the upper reaches, the bamboo was crawling with bush warblers, along with the usual Aberrant and Brownish-flanked we also enjoyed Yellowish-bellied, a particularly confiding Spotted and several Brown giving their sewing-machine song. The bamboo was also home to a singing White-bellied Redstart, plenty of Vinaceous Rosefinch and several Brown Parrotbills. Surprisingly our other parrotbills were largely away from bamboo – a pair of Great Parrotbill were feeding in trackside bushes, the endemic Three-toed was eventually found as it descended the bushes into the roadside bamboo to take an angry look at us, though perhaps most appreciated was when we found a pair of Grey-hooded Parrotbill – most unexpected here and a real bonus for the vast majority of us that didn’t visit Emei Shan – this pair went on to breed where we had found them after our visit. Even more unexpected was Andy D’s shout of “CAT”, but Martin and James got on it in time, casually moving through a gap in the bamboo and giving us a good enough view to confirm it as a Marbled Cat, quite incredible. Mammals generally were few and far between here, with just a couple Complex-toothed Flying Squirrels feeding then gliding to their tree-holes pre-dawn. Keeping our eyes to the skies, well Andy’s anyway, raptors were largely conspicuous by their absence until we had a little rush of Oriental Honey Buzzards and Crested Goshawks on the lower slopes. However, a real thrill was the White-throated Needletails cruising above us, as the odd considerably less-agile Speckled Wood Pigeon chugged by.

Around our accommodation, just as we went to leave, it was surprising just how much activity there was about, including our only Grey-faced Buzzard and Black-naped Oriole of the trip before it was time for another long drive. Though this was more slow than long as the road through Wolong is still under massive repair following the 2008 earthquake, we arrived late but excited by what was to follow……

Today was a big day, and it certainly didn’t disappoint. We spent all day birding along the famous Balang mountain inside Wolong National Nature Reserve. It was just one great bird after another – kicking off just as dawn was breaking with a distant displaying Wood Snipe wheeling up and down in the sky, then from the same position a Tibetan Snowcock came racing over, tail-pumping before sitting and staring down just 40 metres above us. With the sun starting to rise above the snow-clad distant ridge we headed to the next spot, where a pair of Chinese Monal were already feeding on the grassy slopes above us. Galliforms were indeed the order of the day, as two groups of White Eared Pheasants were particularly conspicuous and a further pair was found feeding just below us. A Verreaux’s Monal Partridge was then found, rather distantly, but this led us to a rather excited Chinese Goral that was trying, and eventually successfully, flushing out a Yellow-throated Marten. Keeping with the mammals, a distant group of Takin were out grazing – the first time we have seen this uniquely-shaped ungulate here. More snowcocks were then found on the higher slopes above all this other activity, while closer to us, the surrounding bushes held a roving flock of Spectacled Parrotbill, our first Greenish Warblers and Common Rosefinches. As the weather was holding strong we dropped in altitude towards the tree-line, finding yet another Phylloscopus, Yellow-streaked Warbler before Barry spotted our main target, Firethroat, and while that particular male soon departed it wasn’t long before we had found another, and this time he sat and sang and sang and sang, and at one point even being joined by his mate – a rare sighting indeed as Himalayan Griffons, Golden Eagles and Lammergerier lined the sky. Being lured inside the bushes by a calling Golden Pheasant, it was a different chicken we ended up finding – a male Temminck’s Tragopan, and though he soon ran off, after much patience and manoeuvring we had him, and his two female friends running back across the trail for us. A different Luscina then appeared, a male White-browed Bush Robin, followed by yet another Firethroat – it was pulsating stuff!
Flushed with success but wanting more, we headed up to the 4,500m pass as the weather started to deteriorate, though we were soon stopped in our tracks as a large swirling flock of Grandala soon surrounded our vehicle, along with both Brandt’s and Plain Mountain Finches. The Grandala’s impossibly iridescent shimmering plumes were starting even in this low light – after many taking a few hundred photos we ventured up and over the pass, where the weather had now closed so the higher altitude species would have to wait for the following day. Heading lower down we soon found singing Himalayan Rubythroats sat up in the short gorse. Not wanting to risk waiting till later on in the trip for yet another multi-coloured galliform we headed back down towards Wolong village and to the valley floor and after much waiting and scanning we eventually found a pair of Golden Pheasants casually strolling across a clearing opposite us. This mixed deciduous-conifer forest produced our third new Phyllosc of the day, a very active and vocal Chinese Leaf Warbler. Chinese Babax also made their first appearance of the trip, and after much searching we found two pairs of the very junco-like Slaty Bunting that eventually proved very cooperative, though perhaps most extraordinary was a flock of some 60 Yellow-bellied Tits! This very special day then came to a close but we slept safe in the knowledge we would repeat most of it the following day…

Though the Wood Snipe didn’t put in much of an effort pre-dawn back at the monal site we had another fabulous time, though the usual array of galliforms were on show it was the mammals that stole the show – after debating whether there was a badger or a deer on the hillside, peering through the scopes revealed the answer to the confusion with the ‘two-mammal theory’ as a Hog Badger was still out feeding, and a family of Chinese Serow, usually such a shy, reclusive goat were instead happily feeding out in the open. However, our views of these were rather short lived as we noticed a male monal feeding literally on the road further along, so off we went, and after some careful stalking we found the monal sitting out in glorious sunshine, without realising there was actually a much closer monal to us – unfortunately it decided to conceal itself, though rather unsuccessfully, behind a tiny bushes just 5 metres away before they took flight across the slopes and away. We were startled to hear the unmistakable sound of a Wood Snipe just as we were walking back from the monals, on the downslope, the bird sounded very close. Fortunately it kept on calling as the sound proved rather deceptive, 500m further on eventually we located the snipe calling from a small marsh and sat out on a rock, allowing the cameras to go into over drive – I’m not sure how many photos were taken, but you can hear the shutters whir on Martin’s exceptional video here. A real once in a lifetime event for us, and we were joined by several other birders once we had put in the hard-work!

As we still had unfinished business up top, we headed back to the pass (after finally getting round to finishing our breakfast which we had left pre-monal) and with a quick scan Andy B pulled it out the bag somehow finding a group of wonderfully well camouflaged Snow Partridge feeding beneath of group of Blue Sheep. Typically, stopping at the pass we found another very confiding group of Snow Partridge, and just over the other side our remaining missing high altitude species – Red-fronted Rosefinch near some Streaked Rosefinches. With time getting on we headed further down to the tree-line. Across the Balang Shan pass the avifauna also shifts slightly, now Hume’s Leaf Warblers were a common feature of the coniferous forests and after some effort we located a pair of Przevalski’s Nuthatch piping from the tree-tops for a short while before flying further than any of us have ever seen a nuthatch fly! We found little else here other than our first pair of White-throated Redstart – another common species for the next week or so, and a surprise pair of White-browed Fulvetta, here at its northernmost locality.

We then had to make a dash out of the park – Wolong enforces a strict control with no large vehicles allowed inside the park and as our minibus driver had skilfully got us inside the park two days back he was rather more nervous getting us out – as it was 1230 we knew the police would be on their lunch break so we made a break, only to see them returning to the checkpoint just at the crucial moment – no problem, we just agreed to have lunch at one of the policeman’s restaurants in town and we were on our way!
North of Wolong the landscape changes radically, as we enter old Tibet, still with traditional Tibetan houses lining the road in dramatic scenery in ‘gorge country’. It was here where we made a stop to see several henrici Long-tailed Rosefinches – a soon-to-be-split species from the very differently plumaged and sounding migratory forms. Eventually after a few short stops, most notably in the pouring rain for a colony of Hill Pigeon and our first male Crested Tit Warbler we arrived in the ‘Matlock Bath of Tibet’, Maerkang in the evening.

Mengbi Shan is one of the few mountains in the area that still retains a sizeable chunk of old-growth conifers, and is a key site for a near-Sichuan endemic, Sichuan Jay – a bird that roves around in small groups and can be a real pain to find sometimes! Fortunately we didn’t have that problem today during a gloriously day with the sunshine beating down on us for all but the first hour. During this hour, in the bitter, shadowed cold a Long-tailed Thrush, often such a shy Zoothera, was perched on top of the tallest conifers singing away. Maroon-backed Accentor was seen fleetingly, but rather well for some of us, amongst the busy Moupin Pika’s that were out in force in a small clearing as the sun started to peer through the ridge-top conifers. While scanning these distant trees, two familiar shapes glided and tree-hopped just below the ridge – Sichuan Jays! After a frantic few minutes of gathering everyone the jays were patient enough to allow scope views to the point that we took our eyes away from them and onto a pair of Verreaux’s Monal Partridges, including one that casually strolled across the road in front of us.

Though we came across few feeding flocks – most birds appeared to be breeding slightly earlier this year – we still found all our targets. Chinese White-browed and Pink-tailed Rosefinches were regular along the roadside and the diagnostic call of the much-wanted Three-banded Rosefinch was eventually heard, leading us to a couple of very fine, striking males. Giant Laughingthrushes were common here also, and their mimicry often leads birders to a dead-end as they can mimic the jay to perfection, and are often found in tow of the jays, which was proved true in the late morning as we found a pair of Sichuan Jay perched at the roadside with Laughingthrushes in tow – rather easier than last year! After lunching lower down we resumed birding higher up, though the sun was so harsh that we decided to go off-piste inside the forest, locating a large family of jays that seemingly had the same idea as us, giving wonderful close views as they fed on the ground, allo-preening and feeding each other with Laughingthrushes in tow once again. Back out outside once the heat had subsided slightly we found our remaining target here, Chinese Fulvetta – three of which proved remarkably tame as they fed just feet from us at the base of leaf-less bushes.

As we were not going to spending additional time up on the Tibetan Plateau on this tour, today had to be a big day as we would be driving up to the Tibetan town of Ruoergai and driving across the plateau mid-morning onwards. It was one of our favourite birding days as we had a clean-sweep of all we were hoping for. We had breakfast in the early morning at a Yak Farm with some delicious but very unhealthy yak yogurt, accompanied by Hoopoe, Hodgson’s Redstart and our first Pere David’s Laughingthrushes, then headed to a pass, finding our first White-browed Tit – which sang at arm’s length, Sichuan Tit, Dusky and Alpine Leaf Warblers and several wonderfully confiding Severtzov’s Tit Warblers, surely one of Asia’s finest birds, especially when they sit and call just a few feet away! Dropping down to the huge flat, over-grazed meadows and endless rolling hills, our first Black-necked Cranes were 100m from the road, and delightfully put on quite a performance, calling and dancing for a short while. This stop also produced our first Ground Tits – a terrestrial ‘tit’ with a longish, decurved bill that hops around the meadows and breeds in pika burrows – certainly not a classic tit but you can see the similarities with how they feed and behave. Covering a large distance we encountered all the expected species on numerous occasions – Daurian Jackdaw, Eurasian and Azure-winged Magpies, Kessler’s Thrush, Carrion Crows, Ravens, Upland Buzzards, striking
Tibetan Wagtails (a black-backed, very yellow split from Citrine), Horned Larks, ’proper’ Common Pheasants, hundreds of Oriental Skylarks, pairs of Ruddy Shelducks and the wires dotted with Eurasian Cuckoos and Grey-backed Shrikes. A family of Little Owls on a roadside post became very agitated with the sight of a Mountain Weasel that even went for one of the fledged youngsters, forcing the adult owl to pounce unsuccessfully on the weasel twice. A little further on, a Saker nest was found in a small quarry, home to four very healthy looking chicks (we later found out there were 5, and all fledged successfully!), it must have been quite a pika season, with an adult in close attendance and keeping us in check. 10 minutes further on another Saker was found perched right next to the road then circling around us, another 10 minutes further we found a field full of bulky Tibetan Larks – a big target but not a particularly attractive species.

As we were not birding north of Ruoergai we were not expecting to see any snowfinch, except perhaps Black-winged, a pair of which we found feeding chicks at our usual bend in the road so it was very exciting finding a mixed colony of Rufous-necked and White-rumped Snowfinches giving us yet another excuse to take a few hundred photos! As if all this wasn't enough, our final stop of the day was to see the pair of Tibetan Grey Shrikes just outside of town – the female on nest in the same bushes they’ve been using since we first found them in 2007 with the male bringing back a continual line of freshly plucked and shredded rodents. Phew, some day!

How to live up to the previous day? Well, a pair of Blue Eared Pheasant feeding in a valley below us was a good start!

Before we had even started our walk up a favoured valley we were greeted by a Chinese Song Thrush feeding on the ground, another Sichuan Tit and prolonged views of a male Crested Tit Warbler just above our heads. The usual array of species in small feeding flocks were sprinkled along the trail – various warblers, tits, fulvettas, rosefinches, Grey-headed Bullfinches and Slaty-backed Flycatchers before a whir of wings drew our attentions to a male Severtzov’s Grouse sat in a bush attempting to avoid detection. Only one bird could make this morning much better – Sukatchev’s Laughingthrush, and the next bird we encountered was exactly that! A pair of this very restricted-range bird skitted back-and-forth, living up to their elusive reputation before settling down to feed on a mossy bank. Back to the road for more of the same we also found a tame, vocal pair of Sichuan Tit before lunch.

Another long drive in the afternoon, heading east this time, produced little of particular note except for a stop for a Siberian Rubythroat singing from the thickets, his ruby-throat shimmering in the sunshine, before arriving outside at Jiuzhaigou town in preparation for yet another big day.

Jiuzhaigou World Biosphere Reserve – ‘the valley of Nine villages’ is surely one of the most scenic spots in all of Asia, the valleys contain several dramatic waterfalls, and clear, turquoise lakes amid a spectacular backdrop of snow-capped mountains formed by glacial, hydrological and tectonic activity a very long time ago! To the birder, Jiuzhaigou is better-known as the only known breeding site for one of the finest, and most elusive of all Luscinia’s, Rufous-headed Robin. Only single figures of singing birds are known, from just two areas in the park and with just one day on-site we would have our work cut out to get the views we all strived for. Unbelievably we awoke to thick, heavy snow – it was the 29th May! Arriving just below ‘robin valley’, the thick snow had pushed down big groups of Tibetan Sisken, Dark-breasted Rosefinches, Plain Mountain Finches and Rosy Pipits. Sooty Tits were incredibly confiding as they struggled to find food in the snow-laden foliage, a male Indian Blue Robin hung around the rubbish dump and a Chinese Nuthatch was so cold it seemed to actually try and land on James! Concerned, we reached the valley to be greeted by several inches of snow on the ground and the willows and birch all weeping across the trail, weighed down by the fall of snow. It was to be one of the slowest, most frustrating birding days any of us are likely to encounter –
for the whole day we literally heard nothing, not even a few high notes from a *Phyllosc* though we did find a pair of our last, and most important *Parus* - the central Chinese endemic Pere David’s Tit which were obviously breeding here. It was difficult to even walk around as the trails were impassable so we did a bit of casual birding and sight-seeing in the early afternoon before returning, rather somberly to the still snow-filled valley and to finish off the day we missed the last bus out of the park so ended up getting an ear-bashing (not that this particularly bothered us!) and a lift out of the park from the park staff! Outside, in the town the weather was ok so we salvaged a bit of the afternoon with a pair of Spectacled Fulvetta up a rather precarious track.

Though we didn’t really have the time, and knowing it could all end in tears we opted for a few hours the next morning back inside Jiuzhaigou, hoping for a change in our fortunes – the signs were good as a Chinese Song Thrush was feeding on the lawn by the ticket gate. Pleasingly, the siskins, pipits and most importantly, snow had receded back to the mountain tops. Birds were noticeably more vocal, especially a Chinese Tawny Owl calling at 9am, which gave a couple of fly-bys when we got a call from a Chinese photographer that a robin was singing – we soon found out why he was being so generous with his information, it was calling the other side of a stream and it would mean getting very wet to search for it – so we ended up getting very wet and soggy though it was all worthwhile for Andy D as he was in the right place at the right time as the male robin hopped along a narrow trail at just the right time! We had to leave no later than 11, so when it was 1050, and feeling rather despondent as the robins were proving rather quiet we gave it one, very last try as we heard it (which we later found out was the photographers mp3!) in the distance – walking towards the sound we were stopped in our tracks as the rich, melodic notes of a robin emanated just metres from us – though it was in a really dense bamboo undergrowth and at one point it must have been two metres from us it started to sing further away and we thought our chances had gone when suddenly it popped up off the ground and sat on an open perch, not once, but twice for all but Volkert and Andy B – elation and frustrating for the group, but not wanting to give up, the three of us headed up the trail, following the robin (which covered c300m in 5 minutes, seemingly without taking flight) then the moment came when the robin finally flew up, filled our binoculars then melted once more into the undergrowth and we dashed out of the park and arrived rather late at Tang Jia He National Nature Reserve – tired, but exhilarated!

**Verreaux’s Monal Partridge and Blood Pheasant, Tang Jia He**

Up until 2008 Tang Jia He was more-or-less unknown to the birding world when a Chinese birder rediscovered Przevalki’s Parrotbill here, previously it had only been seen at Jiuzhaigou during the recent past until a mass die-off of bamboo there in the late 1980’s. To reach the area in which the parrotbill survives special permits are required as this is one of the remote yet accessible Giant Panda reserves – the rugged landscape is a picture of beauty; lush deep river gorges, deciduous forested slopes below a carpet of bamboo and alpine meadows dotted below the coniferous forested ridges. Once again it was to be a day, in fact two days to remember. Driving to the beginning of our trek a male Golden Pheasant waltzed off the road and flew across the river. Early morning gloom as we started our trek up the mountains was to be replaced for the rest of our stay by clear blue skies and fine birding. Several Baikal Bush Warbler were singing in the small clearings before we came across yet another singing *Locustella*, a Russet Bush Warbler, which was particularly noteworthy as though we had all seen it previously in the Himalaya, the birds in central China are of an undescribed taxon. Next up was a male Temminck’s Tragopan flushed off the track that thoughtfully decided to perch on an open branch for us all – wow! We were continually coming across small bird waves – Spectacled Parrotbills, an unfortunately brief Fulvous Parrotbill, another Three-toed Parrotbill, tits, warblers, fulvettas – all the usual, now very much expected species but in large numbers amid wonderful scenery. On the distant ridges we could make out the unmistakable dots of grazing Takin loads of them. A Verreaux’s Monal Partridge was perched up motionless in a trailside bush, then we came across a pair of Sichuan Treecreeper, worryingly missing from our lists until this point, before we reached
our rather rustic accommodation for the night – a two-storey wooden hut laid-bare apart from the numerous takin droppings. We hadn’t even tucked into the rather late lunch when our local guide came running up to tell us he had found a Przevalski’s Parrotbill in a small gulley just below – off we went! Several nail-biting minutes later the diagnostic chipping of a parrotbill across from us led us to the parrotbill, but not only that, the bird went straight to a mossy ball in the bamboo and out popped another one – a nest! The nest of Przevalski’s Parrotbill has never been described so finding this was particularly exciting. Martin even left his video-camera by the nest and left it rolling for over an hour while we had lunch so as to document the nest without causing disturbance – check out this footage here!

Relaxed, we spent the afternoon birding the bamboo carpet above our hut, getting closer to numerous takin and seeing a few of the usual suspects we were now familiar with, along with several fabulous Golden Bush Warblers and numerous Vinaceous Rosefinches, and a Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler for some. At night we headed out for some spotlighting, locating a Northern Chinese Giant Flying Squirrel and more Complex-toothed Flying Squirrels though the Tawny Owl remained a little too distant the whole time.

Heading towards the ridge the following morning the bamboo was littered with birds – several more Spectacled Parrotbill, Buff-throated and Alpine Leaf Warblers, Vinaceous Rosefinches while several Takin were relatively close by – we didn’t want them much closer anyway! A family of Blood Pheasant became rather anxious about our close proximity with one male perching on the lower limbs of a dwarf conifer to make sure we passed by without disturbance. As there was little else for us up here we decided to head down to search for additional species, in doing so we came across a call James had never heard before, and sure enough, playback revealed an unexpected additional pair of Przevalski’s Parrotbill, and though we were thrilled with the views of the nesting pair, it wasn’t a patch on these as at times we had them literally inches away from our faces – way too close to focus on, as we obtained the first ever sound recordings of its distinctive song, details of which will be published next year in Forktail. Once we reached the deciduous forest a Koklass Pheasant was flushed, as was a female tragopan and several recently hatched chicks some of which amazingly took to the air and dotted the surround mid-canopy for several minutes, very cute! Emei Leaf Warblers were particularly conspicuous today, among the throngs of species we were now extremely accustomed too! As it was only mid-afternoon we headed for a different area of the park, stopping for a Goral peering down from his prominent rocky ledge and birding along an old (or still to be completed?) road noting a male Slaty Bunting, a tree-loving male Golden Pheasant, Alstrom’s Warbler, two more Russet Bush Warbler and yet more Takin. Driving back at night we found 3 more Goral before we hit the sack.

Today we spent just an hour or so birding the main road, uncovering several more Slaty Bunting, a fine male Fujian Niltava and a White-crowned Forktail before taking to one of China’s impressive highways cutting straight through the Qinling mountain range with some highly skilled and impressive engineering including numerous tunnels and bridges stretching several kilometres for the long drive across the provincial border into Shaanxi (stopping for lunch and Red-billed Starlings). Just as the sun was setting, driving rather more slowly through a picturesque rural part of Shaanxi we came across our first two Crested Ibis feeding in the rice-fields.

Golden Bush Robin and Slaty Bunting, Tang Jia He

The main reason for our visit to Shaanxi was to attempt to see one of Asia’s least-known species, Blackthroat, another splendid Luscinia draped in mysticism as it went largely missing until its breeding grounds were discovered here, just two years ago. Last year we were the first group to visit them here on its breeding ground since the discovery, and were hoping for a repeat of that trip. To reach the isolated, remote valley where the birds live requires a 16km drive up along a forested road, which was livened up by several mainly immature, but occasionally some regal male Golden Pheasants, a particularly close Bamboo Partridge, a female tragopan with chicks, and a fine male Koklass Pheasants casually strolling off the road. We had two mornings in this bamboo valley. On our first morning we carefully searched for the prized
Luscinia, eventually hearing one close-by and with some careful planning perched exactly where James said it would, though some of us forgot where that exact spot was! No worries, we would find another one, as we ended up locating presumably the very same male as last year in the very same spot, and after plenty of patience and working out the birds routine we had it perched numerous times, including once for well over a minute in a dwarf conifer. Though it might not be the most colourful of robins it is certainly one of the most seldom-seen and completed the full set of Luscinia for us. This valley seems to generate intense heat quickly, and by the time we finished with the Blackthroat there was little other activity, other than the Chinese Leaf Warblers that were incessantly calling throughout the valley. A Brown Bush Warbler was found chacking as it fed by the trail and Sooty Tits were found again before it was time for a picnic in the shade, accompanied by a singing Indian Blue Robin and a White-crowned Forktail – one of several during our time here. In the afternoon we opted to bird a different area, though the local rangers promise of vast swathes of bamboo never really materialised – a dying Goral sat on a rock was the first of 4 during the afternoon, though an impressive feeding flock contained several more Fire-capped Tit, Sooty Tits and our only Eurasian Nuthatch. Cutting our losses we headed outside the reserve, though due to rather rigorous permit restrictions we were not allowed into very public areas, but were eventually allowed to see the thriving breeding colony of Crested Ibis situated in the middle of a village. Amazingly, this bird was thought extinct when 7 birds were found near here in 1981, and thanks to some marvellous conservation work over 1000 now exist, including several new populations elsewhere thanks to a reintroduction program – the Japanese bird lives on in China – the country must be very proud!

Birding the bushland was interesting – the Seicercus warblers in the degraded habitat being Grey-crowned, our final taxa of what used to be ‘Golden-spectacled’ Warbler. Vinous-throated Parrotbill, the commonest of the family was finally found as was a Hwamei in fine fettle belting his heart out, what a fabulous vocalist! Finally a fine Yellow-rumped Flycatcher next door completed the day.

Returning to the Blackthroat valley on our second morning proved both exhilarating and frustrating – as we clumsily walked up a dry stream-bed a rustle followed by a loud grunt emanated just metres from us in the incredibly dense bamboo – PANDA! Despite it being within 10 metres of us (there was a stream beyond that), and hearing the bamboo crack this great big black-and-white beast could not be seen despite 10 pairs of eyes peering in! To cut a long story relatively short, James attempted to cut off the panda from crossing the stream by running in a large circle around the panda, and noticing it never crossed the stream. He then back-tracked to find the panda must have sat tight then stumbled through the bamboo after James had walked past as we found its tracks, and not only that but also its sleeping spot, moving all the leaf-litter and leaving loads of wet, fresh green droppings – and this was exactly 3 metres from the stream-bed we had just walked-up – we had all walked that close past a sleeping panda, concentrating on our feet rather than the massive pied bear that must have still been snoozing!

Anyway, at least this thrill resulted in us finding an inquisitive pair of Fulvous Parrotbill, followed by another pair of Great Parrotbills. Strolling around the area produced much of the same, along with a male Firethroat, almost mimicking Blackthroat to perfection though giving away a few tell-tale notes that drew our suspicions.

In the afternoon we still had one obvious omission from the tour, Barred Laughingthrush, frustratingly James glimpsed a bird but then it vanished as quickly as it arrived. Still, the afternoon in this mixed bamboo habitat lower down was quite birdy – better views of Spectacled Fulvetta, Alstrom's Warbler and a nice comparison of Grey-crowned and Marten's Warblers almost side-by-side, just the sudden change in habitat separating them, I wonder what happened to them before logging?! Another male Fujian Niltava perched up for prolonged views and a pair of Yellow-throated Buntings were particularly approachable.
Today would be a full days travel with little birding expected but the early morning proved exceptional – starting off with Ian rather skilfully remaining awake shortly after dawn to notice a potential primate sat on the opposite side of the river – TAWNY FISH OWL! Not one, but three being located – parents with a fully-fledged and very tawny juvenile, sat totally unobscured. Once the excitement had quelled slightly we turned our attentions to another important though considerably less exciting singer behind us – Sulphur-breasted Warbler. Our belated picnic breakfast was also particularly well located. The regenerating scrub holding singing Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, several Black-streaked Scimitar Babblers, Dusky Fulvetta, Willow Tit, loads of Brown-breasted Bulbul, Collared Finchbill and Vinous-throated Parrotbills, and yet another new Phyllosc – Eastern Crowned Warblers in full song. A further stop held more Yellow-throated Buntings and a particularly cooperative Chinese Blue Flycatcher sat in full view singing for several minutes at eye-level. By now it really was time to get going, well, after a stop for Long-billed Plover that flew straight towards us, landing by the vehicle just as we began to scan a river for them - we had 500km to drive, back to Chengdu to catch an evening flight to Lijiang, in north-westernmost Yunnan, arriving at our hotel in the early hours.

Early bird catches the worm – no time for a nice, long sleep we had yet more new birds to find now we were in a different region. Lijiang has little native habitat remaining and is well-known for its historical, and very pleasant ‘old town’, which was seemingly largely rebuilt 20 years ago to attract tourism to admire its narrow, red lantern-lined streets, waterways and tiny shops and multiple eateries. Obviously this is not why we were here, so by dawn we were away from town and birding the rhododendrons and shrubs in search of one of the rarest, and least-known laughingthrushes in the world – Biet’s Laughingthrush. The bird is so rare due to two factors – its need for a lush, largely un-altered undergrowth and capture for the bird-trade. At breakfast Chinese Babax was conspicuous and numerous, though after that we saw little despite much effort before we reached the very spot James saw the laughingthrush three years previous, and what would you know, one flew straight in, perching in the very same tree he photographed it in! For some time after this initial showing we were treated to excellent views as the bird called from relatively open perches (by Laughingthrush standards!) on multiple occasions. Once we’d had our fill we left the lone bird in peace and soon found a small, initially shy, group of Rusty-capped Fulvetta that were soon to be joined by both White-browed and Spectacled Fulvettas. The latter was particularly good to see as they sound and appear quite different from the birds we had seen in Shaanxi and northern Sichuan just a few days previous.

With the number one target out the way we concentrated on the other potential lifers – the next feeding flock containing two more, with a pair of Black-bibbed Tits and Black-browed Tits both showing up, and as we returned we found a flock of Black-headed Greenfinches feeding in and around the crops.

Not wanting to take our foot off the gas, we moved further afield to our next site, via lunch and ice-cream along the banks of the Yangtze River. Our first bird was an obliging singing male Black-breasted Thrush, shortly followed by Barry finding our 12th parrotbill of the tour – Brown-winged, though it took us a couple more attempts before we all secured excellent views of this near-Yunnan endemic not just buzzing past us but also finding a couple of birds, with more greenfinches bathing in a rather smelly canal. A pair of Rosy Minivets presumably breeding here was an added bonus and several Grey-throated Martins took time out on the riverside wires. Feeling our luck was in today, we headed to an area of pines, firs, Minivets presumably breeding here was an added bonus and several Grey-throated Martins took time out on the riverside wires. Feeling our luck was in today, we headed to an area of pines, firs and short rocky outcrops filled with what we hoped were TAWNY FISH OWL! Not one, but three being located – parents with a fully-fledged and very tawny juvenile, sat totally unobscured. Once the excitement had quelled slightly we turned our attentions to another important though considerably less exciting singer behind us – Sulphur-breasted Warbler. Our belated picnic breakfast was also particularly well located. The regenerating scrub holding singing Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, several Black-streaked Scimitar Babblers, Dusky Fulvetta, Willow Tit, loads of Brown-breasted Bulbul, Collared Finchbill and Vinous-throated Parrotbills, and yet another new Phyllosc – Eastern Crowned Warblers in full song. A further stop held more Yellow-throated Buntings and a particularly cooperative Chinese Blue Flycatcher sat in full view singing for several minutes at eye-level. By now it really was time to get going, well, after a stop for Long-billed Plover that flew straight towards us, landing by the vehicle just as we began to scan a river for them - we had 500km to drive, back to Chengdu to catch an evening flight to Lijiang, in north-westernmost Yunnan, arriving at our hotel in the early hours.

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On our last full day we spent the first half birding the rhododendron scrub for our last remaining target, which took much less time than expected as within 15 minutes we had a Moupinia rapidly circling us literally by our toes. This Chinese endemic, restricted largely to northern Yunnan and southern-western Sichuan is a rather robust, long-tailed babbler that is more akin to a prinia in many respects, and is equally as nondescript! After we and the bird began to tire of each other we enjoyed the general birding here, the same 3 fulvetta species were knocking around, as were several tits, sunbirds and warblers, including our final new *Phyllosc* of the trip, number 18 – Blyth’s Leaf Warbler, and a Speckled Piculet also showed along with several groups of Chinese Babax and several Black-streaked Scimitar Babblers. In the open fields plenty of *pzwalskii* Siberian Stonechat were perched prominently before we headed back to Lijiang. A road accident held us up for half an hour but this gave us the opportunity to spend some time with a flock of inquisitive Black-browed Tits at the roadside and Grey-crowned Warblers were commonly heard.

After a short time spent admiring the old town of Lijiang over lunch we birded a nearby recreational park, a site that has held Giant Nuthatch in the past, and although we didn’t locate any, it’s always fun walking around in the public eye in China – we had as much fun watching the tourists as they had watching us! Birding-wise we located a pair of *Cyornis* that proved to be Hill Blue Flycatchers, a very northern locality for the species, more Spectacled Fulvetta, Black-breasted Thrush and Black-streaked Scimitar Babblers. Still with some time before our evening flight we headed to Lashi Hai Lake, just west of town to see what was present. We could see why the lake is better known for its huge numbers of wintering waterbirds including Black-necked Cranes as the lake held little other than huge numbers of Little Grebe, a few Common Tern and a sprinkling of other waterbirds, though the car park area had plenty of singing Black-faced Bunting and our only Plain Prinia of the trip. It seems that the lake is better known to the locals as THE place to come to take your wedding photos, with double figures of couples out there, in all manner of wedding costumes and unlikely poses...

After such a resounding success in and around Lijiang we flew back to Chengdu, arriving rather too late for a final celebratory beer, but we managed to wake early one final time and head to the nearby city parks for a final tick, which took some time but eventually a family of Chinese Grosbeaks, including recently fledged youngsters were found in their usual area. We had hoped to see the rather amusing ‘Do not feed the fish with your private’ sign, one of the many amusing ‘Chinglish’ signs in Sichuan but the local government appear to have a new translator in town as it had been replaced by a perfectly acceptable sign – oh well!

For information regarding our scheduled tours to Sichuan please click [here](#). Alternatively please contact us via [e-mail](#) regarding organising a custom tour to Sichuan.

**Bird-of-the-tour**

1. Przevalski’s Parrotbill
2. Wood Snipe
3. Temminck’s Tragopan
4. Rufous-headed Robin
5. Blue Eared Pheasant
5. Firethroat
Sevetzov’s Tit Warbler and Saker Falcon, Tibetan plateau (top)
Blue Eared Pheasant and Siberian Rubythroat, Tibetan plateau (middle)
Sooty Tit and Chinese Nuthatch, Jiuzhaigou (bottom)  

all © Ian Merrill
Chinese Song Thrush and Pere David’s Tit (top)
Maroon-backed Accentor and Crested Tit Warbler © Andy Bunting (middle)
Baikal Bush Warbler and Crested Kingfisher (bottom)
Fire-capped Tit and White-backed Woodpecker, Tang Jia He (top)
Takin and Spectacled Parrotbill, Tang Jia He (middle)
Emei Leaf Warbler and Buff-throated Warbler, Tang Jia He (bottom)
Temminck’s Tragopan, Tang Jia He and Sichuan Tit, Baxi © Andy Bunting (top)
Golden Pheasant and Long-billed Plover, Shaanxi (middle)
Fire-capped Tit and Fujian Niltava, Shaanxi (bottom)
Yellow-bellied Tit and Yellow-throated Bunting (top)
Crested Ibis and juv Tawny Fish Owl, Shaanxi (middle)
Chinese Blue Flycatcher and Collared Finchbill, Shaanxi (bottom)
Black-breasted Thrush, Lijiang and Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Shaanxi (top)
Black-bibbed Tit and Black-browed Tit, Lijiang (middle)
Amur Falcon © Ian Merrill, and Moupinia, Lijiang (bottom)
Black-headed Greenfinch and Rosy Minivet, Lijiang (top)
Chinese Grosbeak © Ian Merrill, and Vinous-throated Parrotbill © Andy Bunting (middle)
Buffy Laughingthrush and Giant Laughingthrush © Barry Wright (bottom)
### Systematic List

**PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little Grebe</td>
<td>Tachybaptus ruficollis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Crested Grebe</td>
<td>Podiceps cristatus</td>
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**CICONIIFORMES: Ardeidae**

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<tr>
<td>Grey Heron</td>
<td>Ardea cinerea</td>
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<td>Intermediate Egret</td>
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<td>Little Egret</td>
<td>Egretta garzetta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Pond Heron</td>
<td>Ardeola bacchus</td>
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<td>Eastern Cattle Egret</td>
<td>Bubulcus coromandus</td>
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<td>Black-crowned Night Heron</td>
<td>Nycticorax nycticorax</td>
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**CICONIIFORMES: Threskiornithidae**

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<tr>
<td>Crested Ibis</td>
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**ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae**

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<td>Gadwall</td>
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<td>Mallerd</td>
<td>Anas platyrhynchos</td>
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<td>Red-crested Pochard</td>
<td>Netta rufina</td>
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<td>Tufted Duck</td>
<td>Aythya fuligula</td>
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<td>Goosander</td>
<td>Mergus merganser</td>
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**FALCONIFORMES: Accipitridae**

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<th>Species</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oriental Honey Buzzard</td>
<td>Pernis [ptilorhynchus] orientalis</td>
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<td>Black-shouldered Kite</td>
<td>Elanus axillaris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-eared Kite</td>
<td>Milvus [milgrans] lineatus</td>
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<td>Lammergeier</td>
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<td>Himalayan Griffon</td>
<td>Gyps himalayensis</td>
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<td>Monk Vulture</td>
<td>Aegypius monachus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crested Goshawk</td>
<td>Accipiter trivirgatus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chinese Goshawk: Accipiter soloensis
Besra: Accipiter virgatus
Eurasian Sparrowhawk: Accipiter nisus
Northern Goshawk: Accipiter gentilis
Grey-faced Buzzard: Butastur indicus
Himalayan Buzzard: Buteo burmanicus
Upland Buzzard: Buteo hemilasius
Golden Eagle: Aquila chrysaetos
Mountain Hawk Eagle: Nisaetus nipalensis

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae
Eurasian Kestrel: Falco tinnunculus
Eurasian Hobby: Falco subbuteo
Amur Falcon: Falco amurensis
Saker Falcon: Falco cherrug
Peregrine Falcon: Falco peregrinus

GALLIFORMES: Tetraonidae
Severtzov's Grouse: Bonasa sewerzoi

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae
Snow Partridge: Tetraophasus obscurus
Verreaux's Monal Partridge: Tetraogallus tibetanus
Chinese Bamboo Partridge: Bambusicola thoracica
Sichuan Partridge: Ithaginis cruentus berezowski
Blood Pheasant: Lophorus rhynchotis
Temminck's Tragopan: Phasianus colchicus suehschanensis
Koklass Pheasant: Lophura nycthemera omeiensis
Chinese Monal: Lophophorus lhuysii
White Eared Pheasant: Crossoptilon auritum
Blue Eared Pheasant: Crossoptilon pictus
Common Pheasant: Chrysolophus pictus
Silver Pheasant: Chrysolophus amherstiae

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae
Black-necked Crane: Grus nigricollis

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae
White-breasted Waterhen: Amaurornis phoenicurus
Common Moorhen: Gallinula chloropus
Eurasian Coot: Fulica atra

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae
Black-winged Stilt: Himantopus himantopus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae
Long-billed Plover: Charadrius placidus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae
Wood Snipe: Gallinago nemoricola
Common Redshank: Tringa totanus
Common Greenshank: Tringa nebularia

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae
Brown-headed Gull: Larus brunnicephalus

CHARADRIIFORMES: Sternae
Common Tern: Sterna hirundo tibetana
Whiskered Tern: Chlidonias hybridus
COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae
Hill Pigeon Columba rupestris
Snow Pigeon Columba leuconota
Speckled Wood Pigeon Columba hodgsonii
Oriental Turtle Dove Streptopelia orientalis orientalis
Spotted Dove Streptopelia chinensis
Red Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto
Eurasian Collared Dove Streptopelia decaocto
Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon Treron sphenura sphenura

CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae
Large Hawk Cuckoo Cuculus sparverioides
Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo Cuculus nisicolor
Common Cuckoo Cuculus canorus
Oriental Cuckoo Cuculus saturatus
Lesser Cuckoo Cuculus poliocephalus
Chestnut-winged Cuckoo Clamator coromandus
Asian Koel Eudynamys scolopacea

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae
Little Owl Athene noctua inpasta
Collared Scops Owl Otus lettia Heard only
Oriental Scops Owl Otus sunia stictonotus Heard only
Tawny Fish Owl Bubo flavipes
Chinese Tawny Owl Strix nivicola
Collared Owlet Glaucidium brodiei Heard only
Asian Barred Owlet Glaucidium cuculoides

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae
Grey Nightjar Caprimulgus jotaka

APODIFORMES: Apodidae
Himalayan Swiftlet Aerodramus brevirostris
White-throated Needletail Hirundapus caudacutus
Pacific Swift Apus pacificus pacificus
Salim Ali's Swift Apus salimali
House Swift Apus nipalensis

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae
Common Kingfisher Alcedo atthis
Black-capped Kingfisher Halcyon pileata
Crested Kingfisher Megaceryle lugubris

CORACIIFORMES: Upupidae
Hoopoe Upupa epops

PICIFORMES: Capitonidae
Great Barbet Megalaima virens heard only

PICIFORMES: Picidae
Eurasian Wryneck Jynx torquilla heard only
Speckled Piculet Picumnus innominatus
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker Dendrocopos hyperythrus
Darjeeling Woodpecker Dendrocopos darjeellensis
Crimson-breasted Woodpecker Dendrocopos cathpharius
White-backed Woodpecker Dendrocopos leucotos tangi
Great Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos major
Grey-capped Woodpecker Dendrocopos canicapiilis
Black Woodpecker Dryocopus martius
Grey-faced Woodpecker Picus canus sordidor heard only
Bay Woodpecker Blythipicus pyrrhotis

PASSE RIFORMES: Alaudidae
Tibetan Lark Melanocorypha maxima
Oriental Skylark  
Horned Lark  

**PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae**

- Pale Martin  
- Grey-throated Martin  
- Eurasian Crag Martin  
- Barn Swallow  
- Red-rumped Swallow  
- Asian House Martin

- Riparia diluta tibetana  
- Riparia chinensis  
- Ptyonoprogne rupestris  
- Hirundo rustica  
- Cecropis daurica  
- Delichon dasypus

**PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae**

- Forest Wagtail  
- White Wagtail  
- Amur Wagtail  
- Tibetan Wagtail  
- Grey Wagtail  
- Olive-backed Pipit  
- Rosy Pipit

- Dendronanthus indicus  
- Motacilla alba alboides  
- Motacilla alba leucopsis  
- Motacilla [citreola] calcarata  
- Motacilla cinerea  
- Anthus hodgsoni hodsoni  
- Anthus roseatus

**PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae**

- Rosy Minivet  
- Long-tailed Minivet

- Pericrocotus roseus  
- Pericrocotus ethologus

**PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae**

- Collared Finchbill  
- Crested Finchbill  
- Brown-breasted Bulbul  
- Chinese Bulbul  
- Sooty-capped Bulbul  
- Mountain Bulbul  
- Black Bulbul

- Spizixos semitorques  
- Spizixos canifrons  
- Pycnonotus xanthorrhous  
- Pycnonotus sinensis  
- Pycnonotus aurigaster  
- Ixos mcclellandii  
- Hypsipetes leucocephalus leucothorax

**PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae**

- Goldcrest

- Regulus regulus yunnanensis

**PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae**

- White-throated Dipper  
- Brown Dipper

- Cinclus cinclus przewalskii  
- Cinclus pallasi

**PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae**

- Winter Wren

- Troglodytes troglodytes szetschuanus

**PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae**

- Alpine Accentor  
- Rufous-breasted Accentor  
- Maroon-backed Accentor

- Prunella collaris  
- Prunella strophiata  
- Prunella immaculata

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

- Blue Rock Thrush  
- Blue Whistling Thrush  
- Long-tailed Thrush  
- Grey-winged Blackbird  
- Chinese Blackbird  
- Chestnut Thrush  
- Kessler's Thrush  
- Chinese Thrush  
- Black-breasted Thrush  
- White-browed Shortwing

- Monticola solitarius pandoo  
- Myophonus caeruleus caeruleus  
- Zoothera dixoni  
- Turdus boulboul  
- Turdus mandarinus  
- Turdus rubrocanus gouldi  
- Turdus kessleri  
- Turdus mupinensis  
- Turdus dissimilis  
- Brachypteryx montana cruralis  

**PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae**

- Plain Prinia

- Prinia inornata extensicauda
### PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler</td>
<td>Horornis fortipes davidiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aberrant Bush Warbler</td>
<td>Horornis flavolivacea intricata</td>
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<td>Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler</td>
<td>Horornis acanthizoides acanthizoides</td>
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<td>Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler</td>
<td>Cettia major major</td>
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<td>Grey-sided Bush Warbler</td>
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<td>Spotted Bush Warbler</td>
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<td>Baikal Bush Warbler</td>
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<td>Russet Bush Warbler</td>
<td>Locustella mandelli mandelli</td>
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<td>Brown Bush Warbler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crested Tit Warbler</td>
<td>Leptopoecile elegans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dusky Warbler</td>
<td>Phylloscopus fusatus robustus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpine (Tickell’s) Leaf Warbler</td>
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<td>Buff-throated Warbler</td>
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<td>Yellow-streaked Warbler</td>
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<td>Buff-barred Warbler</td>
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<td>Ashy-throated Warbler</td>
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<td>Phylloscopus [choronotus] forresti</td>
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<td>Pallis’s Warbler</td>
<td>Phylloscopus prorogulus</td>
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<td>Chinese Leaf Warbler</td>
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<td>Hume’s Leaf Warbler</td>
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<td>Phylloscopus reguloides</td>
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<td>Eastern Crowned Warbler</td>
<td>Phylloscopus coronatus</td>
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<td>Sulphur-breasted Warbler</td>
<td>Phylloscopus ricketti</td>
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<td>Grey-crowned Warbler</td>
<td>Seicercus tephrocephalus</td>
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<td>Alstrom’s Warbler</td>
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<td>Marten’s Warbler</td>
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<td>White-spectacled Warbler</td>
<td>Seicercus affinis intermedius</td>
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<td>Chestnut-crowned Warbler</td>
<td>Seicercus castaniceps sinensis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rufous-faced Warbler</td>
<td>Abroscopus albogularis fulvifacies</td>
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### PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferruginous Flycatcher</td>
<td>Muscicapa ferruginea</td>
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<td>Dark-sided Flycatcher</td>
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<td>Yellow-rumped Flycatcher</td>
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<td>Slaty-backed Flycatcher</td>
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<td>Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher</td>
<td>Ficedula strophiata</td>
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<td>Snowy-browed Flycatcher</td>
<td>Ficedula hypertyrha</td>
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<td>Silty-blue Flycatcher</td>
<td>Ficedula tricolor diversa</td>
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<td>Verditer Flycatcher</td>
<td>Eumyias thalassina</td>
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<td>Fujian Niltava</td>
<td>Niltava davidi</td>
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<td>Rufous-bellied Niltava</td>
<td>Niltava sundara denotata</td>
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<td>Chinese Blue Flycatcher</td>
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<td>Hill Blue Flycatcher</td>
<td>Cyornis banyumas whitei</td>
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<td>Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher</td>
<td>Culicicapra ceylonensis</td>
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<td>Siberian Rubythroat</td>
<td>Luscinia calliope</td>
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<td>White-tailed Rubythroat</td>
<td>Luscinia pectoralis tschebaiewi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rufous-headed Robin</td>
<td>Luscinia ruficeps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firethroat</td>
<td>Luscinia pectardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackthroat</td>
<td>Luscinia obscura</td>
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<td>Indian Blue Robin</td>
<td>Luscinia brunnea</td>
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<td>Himalayan Bluetail</td>
<td>Tarsiger rufilatus</td>
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<td>Golden Bush Robin</td>
<td>Tarsiger chrysaeus</td>
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<td>White-browed Bush Robin</td>
<td>Tarsiger indicus yunnanensis</td>
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<td>Oriental Magpie Robin</td>
<td>Capsychus saularis</td>
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<td>Black Redstart</td>
<td>Phoenicurus ochruros rufiventris</td>
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<td>Hodgson’s Redstart</td>
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<td>Plumbeous Redstart</td>
<td>Rhychornis fuliginosus</td>
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<td>White-bellied Redstart</td>
<td>Hodgsonius phaenicuroides</td>
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<tr>
<td>White-tailed Robin</td>
<td>Cincclidium leucurum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Siberian Stonechat  
Grandala  
Little Forktail  
Slaty-backed Forktail  
White-crowned Forktail  
Grey Bushchat  

**PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae**

Asian Paradise Flycatcher  

**PASSERIFORMES: Timaliidae**

Buffy Laughingthrush  
White-throated Laughingthrush  
Chinese Babax  
Chinese Hwamei  
White-browed Laughingthrush  
Pere David’s Laughingthrush  
Sukatshev’s Laughingthrush  
Barred Laughingthrush  
Biet’s Laughingthrush  
Spotted Laughingthrush  
Giants Laughingthrush  
Elliot’s Laughingthrush  
Black-faced Laughingthrush  
Red-winged Laughingthrush  
Emei Lioicichla  
Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler  
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler  
Scaly-breasted Cupwing  
Pygmy Cupwing  
Rufous-capped Babbler  
Moupinia  
Red-billed Leiothrix  
Golden-breasted Fulvetta  
Chinese Fulvetta  
Spectacled Fulvetta  
Grey-hooded Fulvetta  
White-browed Fulvetta  
Rusty-capped Fulvetta  
Blue-winged Siva  
Chestnut-tailed Minla  
Red-tailed Minla  
Rufous-vented Yuhina  
Stripe-throated Yuhina  
White-collared Yuhina  

**PASSERIFORMES: Paradoxornithidae**

Great Parrotbill  
Three-toed Parrotbill  
Brown Parrotbill  
Grey-headed Parrotbill  
Grey-hooded Parrotbill  
Spectacled Parrotbill  
Vinous-throated Parrotbill  
Ashy-throated Parrotbill  
Brown-winged Parrotbill  
Fulvous Parrotbill  
Golden Parrotbill  
Przewalski’s Parrotbill  

**PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae**

Red-crowned (Black-throated) Tit  
Black-browed Tit  
Sooty Tit  

**PASSERIFORMES: Paridae**

Sichuan Tit  
White-browed Tit  

**PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae**

Terpsiphone paradisi incei
Pere David's Tit  | Poecile davidi
---|---
Black-bibbed Tit | Poecile hypermelanenus
Willow Tit | Poecile montanus affinis
Coal Tit | Periparus ater aemodius
Rufous-vented Tit | Periparus rubidiventris
Yellow-bellied Tit | Pardaliparus venustulus
Grey-crested Tit | Lophophanes dichrous
Japanese Tit | Parus minor minor
Green-backed Tit | Parus minor tibetanus
Yellow-browed Tit | Sylviparus modestus
Ground Tit | Pseudopodoces humilis

PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae
Chestnut-vented Nuthatch | Sitta nagaensis montium
Chinese Nuthatch | Sitta villosa bangsi
Przewalski’s Nuthatch | Sitta przewalskii
Eurasian Nuthatch | Sitta europaea
Yunnan Nuthatch | Sitta yunnanensis

PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae
Hodgson’s Treecreeper | Certhia hodgsoni
Sichuan Treecreeper | Certhia tianquanensis

PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae
Fire-capped Tit | Cephalopyrus flammiceps

PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae
Mrs Gould’s Sunbird | Aethopyga gouldiae dabryii

PASSERIFORMES: Dicaeidae
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker | Dicaeum ignipectus

PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae
Chestnut-flanked White-eye | Zosterops erythropleurus
Japanese White-eye | Zosterops japonicus simplex

PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae
Brown Shrike | Lanius cristatus lucionensis
Long-tailed Shrike | Lanius schach schah
Grey-backed Shrike | Lanius tephronotus
Tibetan Grey Shrike | Lanius [sphenocercus] giganteus

PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae
Black Drongo | Dicrurus macrocercus
Ashy Drongo | Dicrurus leucophaeus salangensis
Hair-crested Drongo | Dicrurus hottentottus brevirostris
Bronzed Drongo | Dicrurus aeneus

PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae
Black-naped Oriole | Oriolus chinensis chinensis

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae
Sichuan Jay | Perisoreus internigrans
Eurasian Jay | Garrulus glandarius sinensis
Azure-winged Magpie | Cyanopica cyana kansuensis
Red-billed Blue Magpie | Urocissa erythrorhyncha
Eurasian Magpie | Pica pica bottanensis
Spotted Nutcracker | Nucifraga caryocatactes macella
Red-billed Chough | Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax himalayanus
Yellow-billed Chough | Pyrrhocorax graculus digitatus
Daurian Jackdaw | Corvus dauricus insolens
Oriental [Carrion] Crow | Corvus [corone] orientalis
Large-billed Crow | Corvus japonensis tibetosinensis
**PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae**

- Crested Myna
  - *Acridotheres cristatellus*
- Red-billed Starling
  - *Sturnus sericeus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae**

- Scaly-breasted Munia
  - *Lonchura punctulata*
- White-rumped Munia
  - *Lonchura striata*

**PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae**

- Slaty Bunting
  - *Emberiza siemsseni*
- Godlewski's Bunting
  - *Emberiza godlewskii*
- Yellow-throated Bunting
  - *Emberiza elegans*
- Black-faced Bunting
  - *Emberiza spodocephala*

**PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae**

- Plain Mountain Finch
  - *Leucosticte nemoricola*
- Brandt's Mountain Finch
  - *Leucosticte brandti*
- Long-tailed Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus nipalensis*
- Dark-breasted Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus davidianus*
- Common Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus vinaceus*
- Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus eos*
- Pink-rumped Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus flavirostris*
- Vinaceous Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus flavirostris miniakensis*
- Three-banded Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus trifasciatus*
- Chinese White-browed Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus dubius*
- Streaked Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus rubicilloides*
- Red-fronted Rosefinch
  - *Carpodacus punicicus*
- Oriental Greenfinch
  - *Carduelis sinica*
- Black-headed Greenfinch
  - *Carduelis flavirostris miniakensis*
- Twite
  - *Serinus thibetanus*
- Tibetan Siskin
  - *Pyrrhula nipalensis*
- Brown Bullfinch
  - *Pyrrhula erythaca*
- Grey-headed Bullfinch
  - *Pyrrhula erythaca*
- Collared Grosbeak
  - *Mycerobas affinis*
- White-winged Grosbeak
  - *Mycerobas carnipes*

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

- Russet Sparrow
  - *Passer rutilans*
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow
  - *Passer montanus*
- Rock Sparrow
  - *Petronia petronia brevirostris*
- Black-winged Snowfinch
  - *Montifringilla adamsi*
- White-rumped Snowfinch
  - *Montifringilla taczanowskii*
- Rufous-necked Snowfinch
  - *Montifringilla ruficollis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

- Blyth's Shrike Babbler
  - *Pteruthius aeralatus ricketti*

**MAMMALS**

- Tibetan Macaque
  - *Macaca thibetana*
- North Chinese Flying Squirrel
  - *Aeretes melanopterus*
- Complex-toothed Flying Squirrel
  - *Troglodytes xanthipes*
- Pallas's Squirrel
  - *Callosciurus erythraeus*
- Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel
  - *Dremomys pernyi*
- Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel
  - *Tamiops swinhoei*
- Himalayan Marmot
  - *Marmota himalayana*
- Pere David's Rock Squirrel
  - *Sciurotamias davidianus*
- Siberian Chipmunk
  - *Tamias sibiricus*
- Plateau Pika
  - *Ochotona curzoniae*
- Moupin Pika
  - *Ochotona thibetana*
- Large-eared Pika
  - *Ochotona macrotis*
- Woolly Hare
  - *Lepus oiolostolus*
- Tolai Hare
  - *Lepus tolai*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marbled Cat</td>
<td>Pardofelis marmorata</td>
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<td>Giant Panda</td>
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<td>Mountain Weasel</td>
<td>Mustela altaica</td>
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<td>Hog Badger</td>
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<td>Domestic Yak</td>
<td>Bos grunniens</td>
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<td>Takin</td>
<td>Budorcas taxicolor</td>
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<td>Chinese Serow</td>
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<td>Chinese Goral</td>
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<td>Blue Sheep</td>
<td>Pseudois nayaur</td>
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**355 species recorded including 12 heard only**

For information regarding our scheduled tours to Sichuan please click [here](#). Alternatively please contact us via [e-mail](#) regarding organising a custom tour to Sichuan.