

# NE Tibet: OBC 8-27 Aug 2011:

*An at-a-glance list of 224 species of birds & 29 species of mammals.*

By Jesper Hornskov \*\*\*this draft 20 Sep 2011\*\*\* ALL RIGHTS RESERVED®

Please note that the following list is best considered a work in progress. It should not be quoted without consulting the author.

Based mostly on my own field notes, this brief write-up covers the birds & mammals noted by M Campbell, M Chalmers, T Ford, J Holmes, I Robinson, J Scott, G Sellappan, M Watelet, D White, K White & myself during the 2011 Oriental Bird Club Fundraiser visit to China's Qinghai province.

The birds, the mammals, the butterflies, the plants, the unbeatable scenery, a stimulating mix of local cultures, wonderful food, comfortable accommodations & (not least) the companionship all came together to produce a trip the more memorable for the region being so under-visited by bird- & mammal-watchers.

An additional six species were recorded in the grounds of our hotel in Beijing - these are mentioned in the list but are not included in the total species tally.

M Campbell, T Ford, J Holmes, I Robinson & I were joined by A Sun for a 'four-nights-away', unscheduled extension to Beidaihe, on the Hebei coast a mere three hours' drive from Beijing. Without any undue rushing about we recorded 129 species of birds, including Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*, a highly satisfying 37 spp of waders, Saunders' & Relict Gulls *Larus saundersi* & *L. relictus*, Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*, Pale-legged & Eastern Crowned Warblers *Phylloscopus coronatus* & *P. tenellipes*, Eastern Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola philippensis* & Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*. The full list is available at

[http://www.netfugl.dk/trip\\_reports/asia/China\\_Beidaihe\\_Aug2011\\_JesperHornskov.pdf](http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_Aug2011_JesperHornskov.pdf)

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Inquiries concerning future **Oriental Bird Club Fundraisers** - to NE Tibet, by and large following the itinerary used on the trip dealt with here, or Yunnan (our trips to China's biologically most diverse province have been very popular) - can be made to Michael Edgecombe, OBC's Promotion Officer, at [mail\(at\)orientalbirdclub.org](mailto:mail(at)orientalbirdclub.org) or directly to this author.

In the species list the concept "bird-days" is used - it is the avian equivalent of man-hours, the day totals added up - it indicates relative abundance but does not consider the "problem" of lingering birds or, important in a non-scientific context such as a birding holiday abroad, how satisfying the encounters were. 25 bird-days for e.g. Spoon-billed Sandpiper could be one distant flock of migrating birds, gone in a flash, or one bird lingering for 25 days, offering the observers point-blank views anytime in that period...



## **Species list:**

### **Szechenyi's Monal Partridge** *Tetraophasis szechenyi*

20+ bird-days. Noted on two dates – a family of five proved very cooperative on 19<sup>th</sup>, granting our team photographers plenty of chances to get it just right.

### **Tibetan Snowcock** *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

21 bird-days. Noted on three dates – a pair with three half-grown chicks allowed prolonged 'scoping as they fed unconcerned below towering cliffs at c4,500m on 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Przevalski's Partridge** *Alectoris magna*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

### **Daurian Partridge** *Perdix dauurica*

23+ on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Tibetan Partridge** *Perdix hodgsoniae*

47+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

### **Blood Pheasant** *Ithaginis cruentus*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates – a pair w/ three very small chicks on 17<sup>th</sup> were especially memorable.

### **White Eared Pheasant** *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

56+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – seeing seven adults w/ six tiny, dark brown chicks on 15<sup>th</sup> was a treat.

### **Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates – the genuine article!

### **Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

26 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

2,233+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

### **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

A pair w/ two f g 'ugly ducklings' were present at Koko Nor.

### **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

1,717+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

### **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Three on 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

37 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

### **Chinese Spotbill** *Anas zonorhyncha*

One in flight on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*  
c25 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*  
12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*  
24+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca*  
590 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 540 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*  
127+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – a female w/ six smallish ducklings at Koko Nor confirmed breeding there...

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*  
155+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – a female w/ five ducklings at Koko Nor confirmed breeding there...

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*  
19 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*  
210+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 200+ on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*  
17+ bird-days. Noted on at least three dates.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*  
275+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*  
49+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*  
11 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
32 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
256+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
11+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Ten bird-days. Noted on five dates, this able flier treated us to a number of nice encounters – including one which also involved a Temminck's Stint!

**Saker** *Falco cherrug*

33 bird-days. Noted on no less than six dates – outstanding views on several occasions: we'd been feeling a bit jinxed but then came across an adult on a telegraph post. It flew off, but returned to a post further along with a pika it had caught with so little effort that we hadn't even noticed – we approached it slowly, and were able to watch from <20m away as it proceeded to pluck its prey, fluffs of wool drifting slowly to the ground, as the team photographers made the most of the opportunity (superb light enhanced by a backdrop of grey cloud).

**Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

One adult migr at 09h45 on 25<sup>th</sup> – we watched it literally disappear into the clouds!

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans lineatus*

15 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

34 bird-days. Noted on ten dates – there were plenty of chances to simply enjoy this charismatic species...on 17<sup>th</sup> we were first treated to views of a bone-dropping 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> c-y bird: it landed in view at reasonable range, and we were able to 'scope it as it dealt with what anatomically competent team members judged to be a rib - then another bird appeared as if on cue just as someone uttered the word 'Lammergeier': a fine adult which proceeded to circle directly overhead to the delight of the team photographers: a BINGO!

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*

296+ bird-days. Noted on 17 dates – on 18<sup>th</sup> we watched 68+ coming in ahead of a hail shower.

**Eastern Marsh Harrier** *Circus spilonotus*

On 26<sup>th</sup> a ragged individual, judged to be probably a 2<sup>nd</sup> c-y male, was disappointingly sluggish – we'd hoped for a more active bird stirring up things in the deep marsh vegetation.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

13 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

**Himalayan Buzzard** *Buteo burmanicus*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\*Formerly considered a race of Common Buzzard *B. buteo* but genetically closer to Upland Buzzard *B. hemilasius* (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005) from which it is ecologically separated & easily - well, fairly easily! - distinguished...

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*

An adult seen well on 22<sup>nd</sup> was somewhat surprising...

\*\*\*A scarce-to-rare migrant through NE Tibet – in the past recorded no earlier in autumn than 25 Sep (JH pers obs).

**Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*

165+ bird-days. Noted on 12 dates... a powerful, lumbering buzzard with a bewildering range of plumages.

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*  
Singletons were noted on two dates.

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*  
18 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**European Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*  
One heard at Koko Nor...

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*  
725+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo*  
Two at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup> was a bonus.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus*  
One associating w/ two Black-necked Cranes on 21<sup>st</sup> was a surprise.

**Black-necked Crane** *Grus nigricollis*  
72 bird-days. Noted on seven dates – this hardy yet vulnerable (and ‘Vulnerable’: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/143783/0>) Tibetan Plateau endemic breeder was one of the most hoped-for species, and it was cheering to see several pairs accompanied by thriving chicks.

**Ibisbill** *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*  
13 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

\*\*\*Somehow, Ibisbills seen in Tibet feeding on a flowered-over meadow or (as our 1<sup>st</sup> pair was) ‘frozen’ against a rushing, icy stream – with Red-billed Choughs cawing, Blue Hill Pigeons cooing, Pere David’s Laughingthrushes meowing & domestic yaks snorting in the background - are more *real* than the sad one or two which still attempt to cling on along the last stretch of barely acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*  
An adult w/ two 1<sup>st</sup> c-y on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*  
28 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*  
263+ bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 245 adults on a Koko Nor meadow on 25<sup>th</sup>!

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*  
One adult at Koko Nor on 11<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*A very scarce bird in Tibet...

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*  
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*  
35 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*  
94+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*  
Three bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor over 25-26<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*  
Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Western Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*  
24+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*  
One heard [JS *et al.*] on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*  
Singletons were noted on two dates.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*  
18 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*  
131+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*  
Single birds were logged on two dates.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*  
35 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 29 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*  
Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*  
67+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*  
Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*  
Three adults on 13<sup>th</sup> was somewhat against the odds, Little Stint *Calidris minuta* being a much more numerous passage migrant even in E Tibet (JH pers obs).

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*  
11 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*  
Single adults were noted on two dates.

**Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*

One on 11<sup>th</sup> – “overhead, calling... flew W & started hawking”.

**Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*

131+ bird-days. This attractive brute was noted on six dates.

**Brown-headed Gull** *Larus brunnicephalus*

62 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Common Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

Ten bird-days. Noted only at Koko Nor.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo thibetana*

163+ bird-days. Noted on 14 dates.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

A single 1<sup>st</sup> c-y bird was noted over 25-26<sup>th</sup>.

**Tibetan Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes thibetana*

A pair w/ three week-old chicks was seen and photographed on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Pallas' Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

35+ on 24<sup>th</sup> – ‘scope views of family parties on the ground!

**Blue Hill Pigeon** *Columba rupestris*

198+ bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

**Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*

20+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

16 bird-days. Noted N of Xining on two dates.

\*\*\*In addition, at least three were in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

37 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

\*\*\***Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

Early risers saw one in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 8<sup>th</sup>...

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Six bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Eurasian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo bubo*

One seen briefly [IR] on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates.



**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

67 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Fork-tailed Swift** *Apus pacificus*

Two on 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Salim Ali's Swift** *Apus salimali*

159+ bird-days. This 'new' species was identified on eight dates, incl W of Koko Nor on 25<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*In addition, unidentified 'Fork-tailed' Swifts N of Xining on 10<sup>th</sup> may also have been this taxon.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

One at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Apparently <10 previous records from the Tibetan Plateau – the species is, however, regular along the Yellow River SSE of Xining (JH pers obs).

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

182 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

**Northern Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Singletons were noted on two dates.

\*\*\*Prior to 2004 (when one adult seen near Gonghe on 23 June & two juveniles present on 11 July) no breeding season records although Cheng (1987) included E, SE & S Qinghai in the species' summer range.

At Golmud seen in autumn between 31 August and 3 October, with most records first half of September, including at least four birds on 2 September 1994. Remarkably, one was in the poplars next to the town hospital on 18 January 1991 [JH pers. obs.].

**Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** *Hypopicus hyperythrus*

One [JS] in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides tridactylus funebris*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – memorable 'scope views of a pair on territory near the treeline...

\*\*\*Taxonomy: needs re-evaluation. Nearctic and Palearctic races recently split into two species, *P. dorsalis* and *P. tridactylus*, without discussion of status of the very distinct *funebris*": Rasmussen & Anderton (2005). The latter is listed by Zheng (ed., 2005) for Gansu, NE Qinghai, E Xizang, NW Yunnan & Sichuan. The 'N Palearctic' species is represented in China by *tianshanicus* (Tian Shan & Altai: Cheng 1987), *tridactylus* (NE Inner Mongolia & N Manchuria: Cheng 1987) & *kurodai* (SE Manchuria: Dickinson 2003 – Cheng (1987) did not list *kurodai*, including birds in this area with *tridactylus*).

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius*

One on 19<sup>th</sup> – the bird was seen briefly as it flew in without calling... MC, carrying a camera, volunteered to investigate despite the risk of missing it if it flew off along the tree line. Which is, alas, exactly what it did.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*Early rising group members saw one in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on both 8+28<sup>th</sup>...

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*

Singles on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*In addition, singles were noted in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 8+28<sup>th</sup>.

**Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus tsaidamensis*

19 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Grey-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus*

55 bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

**Tibetan Grey Shrike** *Lanius giganteus*

Single birds were noted on four dates – on 17<sup>th</sup> the additional time granted to photograph one approachable individual proved a sound investment as camera-less group members spotted a family of Tibetan Snowcocks during the interlude.

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*

One [MW] on 18<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*In addition, four together flying over [JS] at our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>

**'Eastern' Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*

c80 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\*In addition, several in the gardens of our Beijing hotel on both 8<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Apparently (G Pettersson pers com) the Iberian taxon, *C. (c.) cooki*, has been shown to be sufficiently differentiated genetically to merit elevation to full species status. In addition to the ones we saw, *kansuensis* in NE Tibet & *interposita* at Beijing, the eastern species includes a further five taxa (Dickinson 2003)...

**Common Magpie** *Pica pica*

21 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

\*\*\*In addition, several in the gardens of our Beijing hotel on both 8<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Tibetan Magpie** *Pica (pica) bottanensis*

99 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

\*\*\*The two *Pica* taxa occupy mutually exclusive ranges and display a number of vocal, morphological & habitat differences.

**Henderson's Ground Jay** *Podoces hendersoni*

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Hume's Groundpecker** *Pseudopodoces humilis*

249+ bird-days. This charming high-altitude specialist was noted on 16 dates.

\*\*\*Apparently most closely related to *Paridae* (Dickinson 2003; B King pers com.) but please let us do our bit to avoid a newly concocted English name – which the risk of keyboard distress prevents me typing here \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - from slipping into common usage!

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

202 bird-days. Noted on 18 dates.

**Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhocorax graculus*  
Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Daurian Jackdaw** *Corvus dauuricus*  
65+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*  
30+ N of Xining on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*  
Seven on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*  
47+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*  
66 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Eastern Great Tit** *Parus minor*  
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\*Kindly keep your fingers crossed that the inappropriate name 'Japanese Tit' doesn't stick!

**Rufous-vented Tit** *Parus rubidiventris*

53 bird-days. This supremely attractive & frequently absurdly confiding species was noted on four dates.

\*\*\***Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris*

Noted in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on both 8+28<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Given that 'each male [Marsh Tit] may have a repertoire of up to 19 song variants' (Harrap & Quinn 1996), differences in vocalizations between this taxon, the SE-most, and others will need to be shored up by DNA & behavioral studies before skeptics will even begin to consider elevating the morphologically only subtly different *hellmayri* to full species status...

**Songar Tit** *Parus songarus*

45 bird-days. Noted on six dates N of Xining (ssp *affinis*) & S of Yushu (ssp *weigoldicus*).

\*\*\*Note that of the several Songar Tit ssp maybe only *weigoldicus* merits full species status (the rest are now lumped back in with Willow Tit *Parus montanus* by e.g. IOC).

\*\*\*Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) noted that "the case for treating *weigoldicus* as a full species appears particularly strong on the basis of its unusually high genetic distances from other taxa, despite weak morphological differentiation". Actually – as we noticed (& see Collar & Pilgrim 2007) - *weigoldicus* does differ 'conspicuously' in many respects, incl vocalizations, from even *affinis*.

**White-browed Tit** *Parus superciliosus*

15 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

\*\*\*Getting repeated 'scope views of this subtly patterned beauty was *please tick as appropriate* [ ] great. [ ] fantastic. [ ] nothing to brag about.

**Grey Crested Tit** *Parus dichrous*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Pale Sand Martin** *Riparia diluta*

111+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

16+ bird-days. Noted only on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

53 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*

58 bird-days. Noted on seven dates – on 10<sup>th</sup> we were able to view an active nest at c3,900m.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*

88 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**White-browed Tit-Warbler** *Leptopoecile sophiae*

107 bird-days. Noted on no less than ten dates!

**Crested Tit-Warbler** *Leptopoecile elegans*

28+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Mongolian Lark** *Melanocorypha mongolica*

Six on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Long-billed Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha maxima*

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Hume's Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella acutirostris*

72+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Asian Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheleensis*

13 birds on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*

One seen well on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*

60+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

**\*\*\*Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*

Present in the gardens of our Beijing hotel on both 8+28<sup>th</sup>.

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus weigoldicus*

Two on 25<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Martens (2008) unconvincingly aligns this reasonably distinctive taxon with Smoky Warbler *P. fulgiventis*

[http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06\\_Martens.pdf](http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06_Martens.pdf)

**'Eastern' Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus (affinis) occisinensis*

84+ bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

\*\*\*Martens (2008) elevates part of this species to full species status as *P. occisinensis*  
[http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06\\_Martens.pdf](http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06_Martens.pdf)

**Yellow-streaked Warbler** *Phylloscopus armandii*

70 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Buff-barred Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus pulcher*

Eight bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

**Gansu Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

38 bird-days. Noted only N of Xining.

\*\*\*This attractive warbler has only recently been reaccepted as a valid species, and its winter quarters remain undiscovered...

**'Eastern' Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus 'forresti'*

22 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

\*\*\*Martens *et al.* 2004 (*vide* Rheindt 2006) elevated *forresti*, considered a synonym of *chloronotus* by Cheng (1987), to full species status, splitting it from *chloronotus* (of Nepal) which, with *simlaensis*, becomes Western Lemon-rumped Warbler. The two differ "dramatically in song and mitochondrial DNA (4.2% cytochrome-b divergence)": Rheindt (2006). Given that the type locality for *forresti* is Lijiang, in Yunnan (Cheng 1987) it is not obvious that "Sichuan Leaf Warbler" is preferable to 'Eastern Lemon-rumped Warbler'. "Presumably the hitherto unknown border between both species lies somewhere in Yunnan, Burma or north-eastern India.": Rheindt (2006). *Ahem?*

\*\*\***Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

At least one in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei mandellii*

67 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

\*\*\*Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) treats both ssp as full species, noting that "although the call of *mandellii* is markedly different from [nominant] *humei*, the whistled songs of both taxa are variable and often inseparable. While *mandellii* is genetically closer to *humei* than to *inornatus*, it is long-separated from either according to mtDNA (Irwin *et al.* 2001); its status as a full species thus remains equivocal."

\*\*\***Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*

One [JS] in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>...

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

106+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

\*\*\*In addition, two ssp *plumbeitarsus* birds was in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**'Margelanica' Whitethroat** *Sylvia 'margelanica'*

Three on 22<sup>nd</sup> – as so often, putting in a bit of mileage was the key...

**Kozlov's Babax** *Babax koslowi*

18+ bird-days. Noted on three dates. One of our main 'pretexts' for visiting an unbeatably pretty area on the remote Xizang border, this restricted-range species proved comparatively obliging.

**Pere David's Laughingthrush** *Garrulax davidi*

36 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Giant Laughingthrush** *Garrulax maximus*

28+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*This superb-looking species has an impressive range of calls, some subdued, some anything but, yet others direct or derived mimicry – duetting birds are often a striking component in the dawn chorus, and throughout the day groups travelling through the pristine forest will mark their progress with occasional sessions of loud calling.

**Elliot's Laughingthrush** *Garrulax elliotii*

148+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates... lots on the last morning, many seemingly determined to convince us that we were quite wrong to think we'd already had unsurpassable views!

\*\*\*Cheng (1987)'s range map seems to contradict his text here – according to the latter only the nominate ssp occurs in Qinghai, while the map indicates that birds in the Yangtze and Mekong watersheds are ssp *bonvaloti*. Dickinson (2003), on the other hand, does not accept *bonvaloti* but has southern birds belonging to the nominate, and northern birds to ssp *prjevalskii* (a taxon Cheng lumps with the nominate). Morphology and vocalizations suggest that birds N of Xining are indeed a different ssp from those in the SE, as per the Cheng range map & Dickinson, but what are the correct names?

**Chinese Fulvetta** *Alcippe striaticollis*

16 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*Knowing the call AND where to listen out for it is - even more so than in the case of the skulking Kozlov's Babax – the key to finding this subtly attractive endemic.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

16 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Northern Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Chinese Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*

21 bird-days. Noted only N of Xining.

**Przevalski's Nuthatch** *Sitta przewalskii*

Ten bird-days. Noted on four dates – on 9<sup>th</sup> an busy group of four birds was seen well, with one or two birds allowing 'scope views in soft, morning light... one even did a bit of flycatching!

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*

Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates N of Xining.

\*\*\*A species of N Eurasia & N China (see below) – Chinese taxa are *daurica*, *orientalis*, *tianshanica* & *bianchii*.

The last has been collected as far S as near Zhuoni in S Gansu, 165km from the nearest site for *khamensis* (see below). Birds in NE Qinghai are *bianchii* (Cheng 1987).

**Hodgson's Treecreeper** *Certhia hodgsoni*

2+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\*This newly elevated species “embraces the Sino-Himalayan [taxa] *hodgsoni* Brooks, 1874 (W Himalayas), *mandellii* Brooks, 1874 (E Himalayas) and *khamensis* Bianchi 1903 (SW & W China [N as far as the road between Jiuzhaigou & Sungpan in N Sichuan]”: D T Tietze *et al* 2006. Birds in SE Qinghai & E Xizang are this taxon: Cheng (1987).

**White-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*

Six on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Chestnut Thrush** *Turdus rubrocanus*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Kessler's Thrush** *Turdus kessleri*

128+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates – post-breeding gatherings of up to 70 birds were logged.

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates – superb views of a pair carrying food on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Himalayan Rubythroat** *Luscinia pectoralis*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Himalayan Red-flanked Blotail** *Tarsiger rufilatus*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Northern Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Five on 9<sup>th</sup> included an adult male seen very well.

\*\*\*Apparently (L Svensson pers com) birds breeding in NE Qinghai – with a white brow in adult males – are *albocoeruleus*, a long neglected taxon hitherto considered of doubtful validity, but with a song distinct from both *cyanurus*' & *rufilatus*'. It is genetically closer to *cyanurus*, but has legs as long as *rufilatus*'.

**Przevalski's Redstart** *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

Five on 23<sup>rd</sup> – an adult male obliged our team photographers by sitting out in a patch of sunshine... 'arguably the prettiest in the genus'? Oh yes!!

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

101 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

**Hodgson's Redstart** *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

21 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**White-throated Redstart** *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

58 bird-days. Noted on seven dates – no less than 16 (incl a couple of lovely adult males) on the last morning was unexpected...

**Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus*

Two males on 27<sup>th</sup> – one was a comparatively obliging juvenile.

**Guldenstadt's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

32 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis*

65 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**White-bellied Redstart** *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*

A male on 17<sup>th</sup> – but for most of us... BVD!

**River Chat** *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

25 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Grandala** *Grandala coelicolor*

Two 1<sup>st</sup> c-y birds was photographed (& generally enjoyed!) at <10m along a ridge at c3,950m.

**'Siberian' Stonechat** *Saxicola 'torquatus'*

Ten bird-days. Noted on four dates.

\*\*\*Ssp *maurus*, *przewalskii* & *stejnegeri* occur in China / Tibet. Dickinson (2003): "proposed splits of this complex species seem unsatisfactory if only in how the forms are ascribed to species".

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

52 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

One female-type on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

\*\*\***Grey-streaked Flycatcher** *Muscicapa griseisticta*

One [IR *et al.*] in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica*

One 1<sup>st</sup> c-y 'scoped on 15<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Work on vocalizations may well lead to suggestions that the distinctive *rothschildi* be elevated to full species status...

**Slaty-backed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hodgsonii*

Four – incl a female feeding a juvenile - on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-throated Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*

One N of Xining on 27<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Previously recorded no earlier in autumn than 30 Aug (JH pers obs).



**White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*  
Three bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*  
Widespread – not systematically recorded.

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*  
59+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Henri's Snowfinch** *Montifringilla henrici*  
Five on 14<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*DNA work has shown this taxon to be more closely related to Tibetan Snowfinch than to Eurasian (with which it was lumped in the past).

**Tibetan (= Himalayan) Snowfinch** *Montifringilla adamsi*  
Ten bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*Rather unspectacular on the ground but truly striking in flight, this species is blessed with no less than four English names...

**White-rumped Snowfinch** *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*  
124+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Pere David's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda davidiana*  
Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Rufous-necked Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*  
291+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Blanford's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*  
36 bird-days. Noted on four dates – this emblematic species proved incredibly obliging.

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris*  
Four on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Robin Accentor** *Prunella rubeculoides*  
75 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Rufous-browed Accentor** *Prunella strophiate*  
20 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Brown Accentor** *Prunella fulvescens*  
34 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis*  
Two on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
108 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates – of those seen well some were adult males: just one was ssp *calcarata* while four were ssp *citreola*.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Three on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

90 bird-days. Noted on 19 dates.

\*\*\*Ssp involved were *leucopsis* in the N, and *alboides* in the Yushu/Nangqian area.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

Nine bird-days. Noted on five dates – we were able to admire that long hind claw through the 'scope...

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*

Singletons on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> – flight views only but instructive nonetheless as both birds called repeatedly and allowed us to appreciate the different jizz.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

25 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseus*

40 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

15 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Oriental Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

58 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

**Plain Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola*

310 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Brandt's Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte brandti*

54 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 44 on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Mongolian Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus*

Two – including an adult male 'scoped! - on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Przevalski's Rosefinch** *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

10+ bird-days. This enigmatic species was seen on two dates – superb views!

\*\*\*The taxonomically challenged Przevalski's Rosefinch is nowadays considered to represent a monotypic family - is it a "Rosefinch"? or is it a "Bunting"?... good question, seeing that in the field it does not appear obviously close to either, with its graduated, blindingly pink tail, absurdly thin lower mandible, and a summertime habit of doing 'parachute' type songflights.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

42 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** *Carpodacus davidianus*

27 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.



## **Mammals:**

**Himalayan Marmot** *Marmota himalayana*  
44+ animal-days. Noted on at least six dates.

**Tibetan Dwarf Hamster** *Cricetulus tibetanus*  
10+ animal-days. Noted on three dates.

**Gansu Pika** *Ochotona cansus*  
At least six were seen...

**Black-lipped (= Plateau) Pika** *Ochotona curzoniae*  
Widespread – not systematically recorded.

**Chinese Red Pika** *Ochotona erythrotis*  
Five animal-days. Seen well on two dates.

**Glover's Pika** *Ochotona gloveri*  
13+ animal-days. Noted on four dates.

**Large-eared Pika** *Ochotona macrotis*  
One amongst rocks at c4,900m on 14<sup>th</sup>.  
\*\*\*ID based on different habitat & lack of black lips...

**Woolly Hare** *Lepus oiostolus*  
27 animal-days. Noted on at least ten dates.

**Tolai Hare** *Lepus tolai*  
Two seen well near Xining on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**?Pearson's Horseshoe Bat** *Rhinolophus pearsoni*  
Several 'large' bats seen above the Yangtze in the afternoon of 14<sup>th</sup> may have been this species.

**?Little Tubenosed Bat** *Murina aurata*  
This species' small size & wide distribution (specimens from up to 4,000m) makes it a strong possibility for a bat seen over the Mekong on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Lynx** *Lynx lynx*  
An adult w/ a juvenile high up on a hillside on 15<sup>th</sup>... Bingo!

**Wolf** *Canis lupus*  
Eight animal-days. Noted on two dates – prolonged views of three on the prowl on 13<sup>th</sup>...

**Tibetan Fox** *Vulpes ferrilata*  
22 animal-days. Noted on five dates – 'scoping five playful cubs on 13<sup>th</sup> was a highlight!

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*  
Singletons were noted on three dates.

**Asian Badger** *Meles leucurus*

Two seen well on 17<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*In addition, a freshly dead female on a road near Koko Nor on 11<sup>th</sup>...

**Mountain Weasel** *Mustela altaica*

Six animal-days. Noted on four dates.

**Steppe Polecat** *Mustela eversmanii*

One on 15<sup>th</sup> – photographed (MW *et al.*)!

**Kiang** *Equus kiang*

126 animal-days. Noted on three dates.

**Alpine Musk Deer** *Moschus chrysogaster*

One seen well on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus*

Three animal-days.

**White-lipped Deer** *Przewalskium albirostris*

20 on 20<sup>th</sup> – 19 up on a hillside & one attempting to cross the river.

**Wild Yak** *Bos grunniens*

There can be little doubt that 11 yaks on 21<sup>st</sup> – at >4,500m & well away from any shepherds' encampment – were the genuine article...

**Goitred Gazelle** *Gazella subgutturosa*

53 on 23<sup>rd</sup> – most of them seen well in the dawn light...

**Tibetan Gazelle** *Procapra picticaudata*

414 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Przewalski's Gazelle** *Procapra przewalskii*

No less than 47 were seen & photographed on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

\*\*\*The species has recently be 'downgraded' to 'merely' Endangered (following the discovery of additional herds in 2003) although the world population may be no more than 350-400 mature individuals. See <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/18230/0>

\*\*\*Our animals appear represent an additional 'undiscovered' population.

**Chinese Serow** *Capricornis milneedwardsii*

One 'scoped and photographed as it took its time coming down a ravine at c3,750m on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Tibetan Antelope** *Pantholops hodgsonii*

113 bird-days. Noted only along the remotest Roof of the World stretch of road.

\*\*\*See <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/15967/0>

**Blue Sheep** *Pseudois nayaur*

271+ animal-days. Noted on seven dates. A number of memorable encounters – headbutting males, and a mixed-age herd of no less than 67 unconcerned individuals allowing us prolonged 'scope views (AND photo ops!) at c4,900m...