

Manchuria, Beijing & Shanxi: 27 Apr – 7 May 2012

An at-a-glance list of 187 species of birds recorded.

By Jesper Hornskov ***this draft 1 Aug 2012*** 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 noted on a visit by J Adamson, M Campbell, N Dymond, J Holmes, P Koken, I M Møller, D O'Mahoney, P Thompson & myself to Manchuria & E-most Inner Mongolia in search of waterfowl, cranes & Jankowski's Bunting, very likely E Asia's most endangered species.

Having allowed for 'interesting' weather and difficulties in locating Jankowski's Bunting the visit was – as in 2011 - a day longer than in 2010. For most of us, the trip presented an opportunity for a bit of extra birdwatching at what is frequently a very rewarding time in E/NE China: on the morning of our departure all but two of us covered Beijing's Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace, and after Manchuria three group members pushed on to Beidaihe for general migration while one covered Wulingshan near Beijing.

Four group members arrived in time to do a pre-tour, one-night-away excursion to Luliang Shan, Shanxi, for Brown Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon mantchuricum* & the soon-to-be-split *Iepidus* Long-tailed Rosefinch *Uragus sibiricus*.

The pre-tour outings added 31 species to the 156 recorded in Manchuria; of these, 14 were seen only in Shanxi – for want of what else to do with them, and to make it easier for future travellers to decide if it might be worth their while to arrive early and/or extend their visit by a day or two, these are included in the list.

Thank you all for making this trip so enjoyable!

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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...

The sequence of the bird list follows *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World – 3rd Edition* (Dickinson 2003), in my opinion by far the most useful one-volume checklist to date.

Initials in brackets after some 'non-leader' sightings does not imply that I have doubts as to the correctness of the ID.

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Species list:

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates – ND spotted two from the moving bus on 3rd, and we were all able to get a look at them after the bus stopped.

Japanese Quail *Coturnix japonica*

On 5th brief flight views of one was, the impressive view of the surrounding hills apart, pretty much the summiteers' only reward!

*****Brown Eared Pheasant** *Crossoptilon mantchuricum*

One seen very satisfactorily & two more heard in Shanxi on 28th.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

14 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***An additional 11 bird-days in Shanxi, and one heard at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*

36 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 22 on the Inner Mongolia border on 6th: a far sleeker & more graceful bird than anyone who has seen the domesticated variety would dare to hope...

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

1,565+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***The bulk of the staging birds had departed comparatively early: in 2010 we saw >3,000 birds in one day slightly later in the season, but we still obtained superb views of both sspp *serrirostris* & *middendorffii* – of those identified, 1,000+ were the former & 205+ the latter.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

19 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

2,555 bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 1,725 on 30th.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

450+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – main event 210 on 2nd. Repeated encounters (some close, some not so close) allowed us to thoroughly familiarize ourselves with this sought-after species.

*****Goose sp** *Anser sp*

2,400+ bird-days. Unidentified geese were noted on three dates...

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

83 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 72 on 4th.

***We came to the same conclusion as the 2009 group: eastern Bewick's has more yellow on the bill than those we like to consider ourselves more or less familiar with from N Europe / Britain although Eurasia (*vide* Dickinson 2003) is home to just one ssp, *bewickii*.

***BUT, BWP (Vol I, p385) states 'East Siberian population with larger bill, higher at base and wider near tip [compared with *bewickii*]; however, 'increase in bill size clinal, overlap large, and size extremes may occur in all populations; so no justification for recognizing *jankowskii* [from Siberia E from the Lena delta]'.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

69 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

Two males [ND] on 6th.

***In addition, a pair was present at Summer Palace on 29th.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

131 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Falcated Duck *Anas falcata*

149 bird-days. This superb duck was noted daily! Main event no fewer than 135 on 6th...

***In addition, a pair showed well at Summer Palace on 29th.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

146+ bird-days. Noted on six dates – main event 110+ on 6th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

43+ bird-days. Noted daily.

***In addition, four at Botanical Gardens & six at Summer Palace on 29th.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

17+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

218+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

1,200+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – single digit counts except for 1,200+ on 2nd (which were all gone when we visited the site again the following morning!).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

95+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*

107 bird-days. Noted on four dates – a trip highlight was outstanding views of 14 of these up on a bar, preening, on 2nd.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

1,770+ bird-days. Noted on daily – main event 940+ on 6th.

*****Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

One female at Summer Palace on 29th.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

c160 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

*****Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

One female at Summer Palace on 29th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

66+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***Of note was a solitary drake in dabbling^ mode on 4th – was it on its own on account of having been cast out by congeners over this deviant behaviour??

***^not entirely unheard of, since you ask: BWP (Vol 1, p581) notes that the species is 'omnivorous: generally stationary or slow-moving items collected mainly from bottom and chiefly by diving, less often from emergent plants and from on [i.e. by dabbling] and over water surface. Occasionally up-ends, and forages by wading in shallows, driftline, and ashore, especially for cereal grain.'

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

34 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Four females on 4th.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

23 bird-days. Noted on six dates – it was good to get views that allowed us to confirm that these birds had the white iris of ssp *poggei*, which also differs from the nominate in vocalizations...

***In addition, four at Botanical Gardens & eight at Summer Palace on 29th.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

One in summer plumage seen well on 6th – rarely recorded in China.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

47 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***In addition, five (incl a pair at their nest) at Summer Palace on 29th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

95+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event c70 on 4th.

***In addition, two at Summer Palace on 29th.

*****Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

Nice views of three soaring at Luliang Shan at 10h10 on 28th.

***Sadly, its rare congener Oriental White Stork *Ciconia boyciana* eluded us in Manchuria...

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

34 bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 22 on 6th.

***Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*, a species very unlikely to occur on the border of Inner Mongolia was duly eliminated...

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Ten bird-days. Noted on four dates – getting views of several out in the open was a real treat.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Three on 6th.

***In addition, five at both Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace on 29th.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Singletons on 4+6th.

***In addition, two 2nd c-y at Botanical Gardens & one 2nd c-y at Summer Palace on 29th.

*****Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*

One at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

130 bird-days. Noted daily – main event 100 on 6th.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

34 bird-days. Newly arrived birds were seen on five dates... an often under-appreciated species?

***In addition, one at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Five on 30th.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

30 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***In addition, three in total in Shanxi over 27-28th.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*

23 bird-days. Noted daily. WOW! views on a number of occasions...two migr birds in soft morning sunshine on 6th, passing at <20m from our vantage point, were particularly unforgettable.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

One on 4th & two on 6th...

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

One adult on 2nd.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One on 4th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Singles were noted on three dates.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Two seen reasonably well on 5th.

***The species was not listed for Inner Mongolia by Zheng *et al.* (2005).

Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*

18 bird-days. Noted on five dates... we learned the hard way that one colour morph can look deceptively similar to adult male Pied Harrier!

Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos*

Single males were seen on 2+4+6th.

Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis*

One migr on 3rd.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event seven on 5th, of which one adult male was photographed in flight by PK... 'amazing what you can do with these modern cameras!' is an often heard comment. True enough, but let's acknowledge that without the photographer's knack, skill - whatever-you-want-to-call-it - there wouldn't be many worthwhile photos to enjoy!

***In addition, singles were seen in Shanxi on 27th & en route to Summer Palace on 29th.

'Eastern' Buzzard *Buteo (buteo) japonicus*

Two 2nd c-y birds on 5th.

***"The racial group *vulpinus* is very close genetically to nominate *B. b. buteo* and is considered to hybridise regularly with the latter, although it is usually distinctive in appearance, and might also be vocally distinct. *B. [b.] japonicus* is genetically and morphologically more distant, seems to differ vocally as well, and is probably specifically distinct": Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

***In the recommended field guide for this trip - Brazil (2009) – *japonicus* is given full species status.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – we all enjoyed instructive views of this lumbering grassland specialist.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Nine on 1st - most were males, and at least three were doing the famous inside-out, fluff-of-feathers display!

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Two heard on 1st.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

19+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus*

We visited the key staging area three times – not only is Sibe Crane worth looking at more than once (obviously!), it's an important site for a number of species – and counted as many as 2900 birds in a day.

***One does get close-up views of the Siberian Cranes on their staging grounds in NE China - seeing some of them close, enjoying the spectacle of them as they feed intensely in bright spring sunshine - refuelling for the next stage of their epic journey N to the tundra - and engage in show-off 'test flights' (testing the breeze, testing their fitness). They also do plenty of displaying: dancing & bugling, tossing bits of mud-sticky vegetation. Seeing Siberian Cranes on their staging grounds is in my opinion a far better experience than visiting their winter haunts where they - in no small part due to wariness caused by human disturbance - tend to be distant, and where attempts at seeing them are always in danger of being wrong-footed by frequent settled, foggy weather.

***On our 2009 trip, our 'going with the flow' – more specifically, a *Force Majeure* adjustment to our itinerary had presented us with the option of potentially revisiting the Sibe Cranes, something we might do to enjoy the unique spectacle but without knowingly improving our chances of locating remaining 'realistic' targets – bagged us five Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri*, all at reasonable range and even doing some displaying. Feeling we needed no excuse we went back – no votes against! – and had what would even without the Baer's Pochards have been a very rewarding morning.

White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*

One on 6th.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

One immature bird on 30th.

Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*

15 bird-days – a singleton on 30th & 14 on 2nd.

Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis*

Nine bird-days. Five different individuals noted over three dates.

***As a water dispute has now apparently been resolved, resulting in a renewed flow of water onto the Xianghai reserve hopefully we'll see what will amount to a recolonization of the drought-stricken land by a broad range of species.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

750+ bird-days. Noted daily.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

110+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

115+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***One was seen 'mobbing a Common Magpie as the magpie was mobbing a Common Tern'...

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*

41 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

31 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

24+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

420+ bird-days. Noted daily – main event 260+ (perhaps as many as 400?) on 2nd.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

One summer-plumaged adult scrutinized and photographed on 4th.

***Possibly only the 2nd record for Manchuria – one was ringed at Donggang, near Dandong, Liaoning ‘around 1st May 2010’ (Bai Qingquan pers. com.)

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

One summer-plumaged adult scrutinized and photographed on 2nd.

Western Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

One on 3rd.

Eastern Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa (limosa) melanuroides*

10,760+ bird-days. Noted on five dates – main events 5,700+ on 30th & 4,000+ on 2nd... this was a considerable improvement on numbers recorded on the 2011 trip when we saw just 24 birds in total!

***Eastern Black-tailed Godwit is “a small and dark version of ‘Western’, with a similarly patterned but slimmer, shorter bill, a small but more prominent whitish supercilium between darker crown and eye-stripe.[...] Much less sexually dimorphic than ‘Western’. Breeding male has darker chestnut head, neck, breast and sides, with closer-spaced, finer blackish barring on underparts, including vent, than breeding male ‘Western’, and more heavily black-blotched upperparts with broader golden or rufous edgings. Breeding female usually somewhat duller. Non-breeding adult is essentially dark grey with white lower underparts; darker grey than non-breeding ‘Western’[...]. Juvenile is shorter-billed than adult; has weaker cinnamon tinge than juvenile ‘Western’, finely notched dark-and-golden scapular- and tertial-edges, barring not streaking on flanks, and looks all-dark above as tertials and mantle feathers wear. [...] distinct white wing-stripe and rump somewhat narrower than than in ‘Western’”: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

Siberian Whimbrel *Numenius variegatus*[^]

Three on 30th – plus an unidentified Whimbrel on 2nd.

***[^]vide Inskipp *et al* (2011) split into three species, incl Siberian Whimbrel *N. variegatus* & European Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*.

***“True *variegatus* has darker brown hindneck and mantle, and heavy cross-bars on breast, bars on sides and vent, and only a little pale on belly. In flight, lower back, rump and uppertail coverts are barred, contrasting little with mantle or dark, weakly banded tail. From below, wing-lining and axillaries are completely barred”: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

****variegatus* was listed for ‘all [of China] except Xinjiang, Yunnan, Guizhou & Hubei’ while *phaeopus* was listed only for Xizang and Xinjiang by Zheng *et al* (2005).

*****?European Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

One ‘w/ white back’ on 6th... ‘further work needed’.

***Birds with white rump wedge are sometimes seen at Beidaihe: of 57 there on 27 Aug 2005 ‘at least the 41 flying together had white rump wedge’: JH pers obs.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
27 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
21 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
42 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
1,625+ bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 1,250+ [ND] on 6th.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
16 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
700+ bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 380+ on 6th when migration was obviously in progress over a broad front, with 130 migr over the Xianghai hotel area pre-breakfast & 250+ grounded nearby [ND] slightly later in the morning.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.
***In addition, singles were noted at both Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace on 29th.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Two [ND] on 6th.

***? **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
A distant stint on 6th was 'almost certainly' this species [ND].

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
92+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event c80 [ND] on 6th.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*
Two on 6th.

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*
c170 bird-days. Birds on passage and local breeders returning to colonies were noted daily – main event 90 on 6th.

Common Gull *Larus canus ssp*
One 2nd c-y on 3rd.
***We were not able to determine to which of the two possible subspecies, *heinei* & *kamtschatschensis*, this bird belonged: both occur – on 11 May 2006 we were pleasantly surprised to see a 2nd c-y *kamtschatschensis* migr w/ one adult & one 2nd c-y *heinei*.

'Yellow-legged' Gull *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*
Three on 4th.

Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini taimyrensis*

Singles on three dates.

****taimyrensis* was considered a synonym (of *heuglini*) by Dickinson (2003) who did not follow the trend of elevating Heuglin's Gull to full species status.

******"Large White-headed Gull"** *L. cachinnans* / *L. heuglini* / *L. vegae*

c40 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

335+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

One seen well on 6th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

34 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons sinensis*

12+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***The local subspecies is strikingly long-tailed...

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Seven bird-days. Adults in full breeding plumage were noted on three dates.

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*

Four were present throughout the morning on 5th.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

27 bird-days. Noted daily.

***In addition, one in Shanxi on 27th.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

One near the hotel on 3rd.

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

Fairly common in Shanxi & Beijing – main event nine at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Oriental Scops Owl** *Otus sunia*

Two heard in Shanxi on 27th & two seen at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Singles on 4th [ND] & 6th.

***Ssp *plumiceps* may merit full species status: R Klim pers. com.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Two on 3rd – one 'scoped in a line of gnarled trees as it took time out from migrating...

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

One on 5th, flying around & then 'scoped on the ground as it devoured a small mammal.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

Three migr on 5th.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

One on 6th.

***In addition, c5 'in town' in Shanxi on both 27+28th, and 20-25 at both Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace on 29th... It was pleasing to obtain superb views of the distinctive *pekinensis*.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*

Three headed N high over the hotel at Xianghai on 6th.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***In addition, two at Botanical Gardens & one at Summer Palace on 29th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

21 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***In addition, one singing in Luliang Shan, Shanxi, on 28th.

Northern Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Three bird-days. Migrants were noted on just two dates...

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***In addition, two in Shanxi on 28th & two at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

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

14 bird-days pre-trip over 27-29th.

Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

*****Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*

25+ seen in Beijing on 29th.

*****Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*

Quite common in Shanxi, with 11 on 27th & 7+ on 28th – also one heard at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

91+ bird-days. Seen daily – main event 45 gathering at a reedbed on 1st.

***In addition, the species was fairly common in Shanxi, and Botanical Gardens yielded at least one on 29th.

*****Eurasian Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

7-8 daily in Luliang Shan over 27-28th – several obligingly landed close to us in good light, and we were rather surprised to see several performing flycatching sallies @ noon on 28th...

***Local breeders are ssp *interdicta*, very different-looking from Siberian *macrorhynchos*.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

44 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***On 4th we were intrigued by the behaviour of two all dark 2nd c-y birds: they were plucking 'wool' off the back of a resting yearling cow!

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

118 bird-days. Noted daily.

***ssp *pastinator* differs from the nominate in lacking 'bare chalky white facial skin [...] and has a more sharply pointed bill': Brazil (2009).

Carriion Crow *Corvus corone*

Three bird-days. Identified on just two dates (but it is conceivable that we overlooked the occasional one among Rooks)... on 6th one was on a nest-robbing raid, hotly pursued by Black-winged Stilts.

*****Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Two at Summer Palace on 29th.

*****'Eastern' Great Tit** *Parus minor*

Seven bird-days in Shanxi over 27-28th.

Yellow-bellied Tit *Parus venustulus*

One flew W high over the hotel at sunrise on 6th.

***Neither Harrap & Quinn (1996) nor Zheng *et al.* (2005) included the species for Manchuria, but there are at least two previous May records (in 2005 & 2011: JH *et al.* pers obs). Nearest 'known' site is N Hebei (where it is a regular migrant in good numbers: JH pers. obs.).

***In addition, 4+ in Shanxi on 28th & 13 at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

In Luliang Shan the local breeders were very active, with two on 27th & five on 28th.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

3+ on 5th were heard-onlies for most of us.

***In addition, 1-2 daily in Shanxi over 27-28th, and four (incl two at their nest) in Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Songar Tit** *Parus songarus stotzneri*

In Shanxi two on 27th & three on 28th.

***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).

'Chinese' Penduline Tit *Remiz consobrinus*

20+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

c44 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

c125 bird-days. Noted almost daily.

***In addition, three at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

1+ in a distant flock of hirundines on 6th.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

70+ bird-days. Noted almost daily – it was a bonus to get such great views of the 15-20 birds nesting around the hotel.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*

Five on 5th was a bonus.

*****'Silver-throated' Tit** *Aegithalos glaucocularis*[^] *vinaceus*

Excellent views were enjoyed by all in Shanxi – two on 27th & four on 28th.

***^IOC, following HBW, elevates the taxa *vinaceus* & *glaucogularis* to full species status as 'Silver-throated Bushtit' *Aegithalos glaucogularis* - as recently as 2008, however, the notion of *vinaceus* as a possible split was firmly booh'd by group members.

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

11 on 1st.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

66+ bird-days. Noted daily.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

25+ on 1st.

Fan-tailed Warbler *Cisticola juncidis*

One at Xianghai reserve on 4th.

***The species was listed for neither Manchuria (Jilin, Liaoning & Heilongjiang) nor adjacent Inner Mongolia by Zheng *et al.* (2005).

***Recent recorded in Liaoning: @ Donggang, near Dandong, since 2008 (Bai Qingquan, pers. com.), and a bit further S it is 'a common breeder in suitable areas of Dalian and has been for the last few years; [the species] can also be seen heading south through Laotieshan in autumn' (T Beeke, pers. com.).

Chinese Hill Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – great views was eventually had by all on 6th.

***In addition, Shanxi yielded one on 27th & four on 28th...

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

In Shanxi 'heard along the main road' on 28th; 12 at Botanical Gardens on 29th...

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

16 bird-days. Noted daily from 2nd.

***In addition, one at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

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

Five in Shanxi on 28th.

*****Chinese Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

One heard in Shanxi on 27th.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

17 bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event 16 on 5th.

***In addition, Shanxi yielded two on 27th & seven on 28th, and we saw & (especially) heard 13 at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

48 Bird-days. Noted daily from 1st.

***In addition, two in Shanxi on 28th (where things had definitely been happening overnight) & 25 at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

Five in Shanxi on 28th.

Claudia's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus claudiae*

No less than six singing & showing superbly at Luliang Shan on 28th 'when things had been happening overnight'.

Pere David's Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

Three (heard-onlies for most of us) on 5th.

***In addition, 6-7 daily in Shanxi over 27-28th & one at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*

5-7 daily in Shanxi & 17 at Botanical gardens on 29th.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

Five (incl one 'scoped!) at Botanical Gardens on 29th – TINGALING!

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristellatus*

Five at Botanical Gardens & one at Summer Palace on 29th.

***A presumed feral but now well established population.

Red-billed Starling *Sturnus sericeus*

Two at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

***Zheng *et al.* (2005) listed the species for nowhere closer than S Henan, but the species is now a scarce breeder as far N as Beijing.

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*

16 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***In addition, two at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea*

Singles on 4+5th [ND].

Chinese Blackbird *Turdus mandarinus*

Three – incl a nest-building pair – at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

Single adult males were seen on both 3+6th – WOW!

Northern Red-flanked Bluetail *Luscinia cyanura*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – one on 6th was a fine adult male: WOW (again)!!

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*

Four males on 5th.

***In addition, 5-7 daily in Luliang Shan over 27-28th.

'Siberian' Stonechat *Saxicola 'torquatus'*

c78 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

One pair seen rather well on 5th.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*

15+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***In addition, 2-3 daily in Shanxi over 27-28th, and four at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*

Two in Luliang Shan on 28th.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common – not systematically recorded.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis*

135+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***This species consists of *tschutschensis* (includes *simillima*), *taivana* & *macronyx* – we saw all three forms.

***As R Klim pointed out on the 2011 trip, since *macronyx* & *thunbergi* 'can only be reliably separated by molecular markers' (Alstrom & Mild (2003), p288), with *thunbergi* breeding E to the Kolyma River ((Alstrom & Mild (2003), p275) we can't be sure we didn't see Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* as well!

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Six bird-days. Noted near the Xianghai hotel on three dates – at least one of the males allowed close approach and feather-by-feather scrutiny.

***That ssp *calcarata* has occurred is an additional reason – not that anyone should feel under pressure to feel one is needed! - to look long and hard at any Citrine Wagtail encountered: Zheng *et al.* (2005) listed *calcarata* only for Qinghai, W Xinjiang, S Gansu, Xizang, E & S Yunnan & Sichuan, but we saw one at Xianghai reserve on 10 May 2005.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***In addition, two in Shanxi on both 27+28th, and one at Botanical Gardens & two at Summer Palace on 29th.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

22 bird-days. Noted on six dates. Only ssp *ocularis* was identified, incl 14 @ the hotel on 3rd.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

12 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

45+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***In addition, nine in Luliang Shan on 28th & seven at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

4+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

Nine bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

One near our hotel on 4th.

***In addition, one at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*

Eight on 5th.

***In addition, two on 27th & eight on 28th in Shanxi, and five at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Uragus sibiricus lepidus*

In Luliang Shan 12 on 27th & no fewer than 19 on 28th.

*****Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

In Shanxi two males on 27th & 13 on 28th, and at Botanical Gardens seven (two males & five females sitting out nicely) on 29th.

*****Chinese Grosbeak** *Eophona migratoria*

Three – including a nest-building pair – at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

*****Eastern Rock Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii*

Four in Shanxi on 28th.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*

26 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Jankowski's Bunting *Emberiza jankowskii*

Seven males & three females on 1st.

***We were dismayed to discover that additional habitat destruction had occurred since 2011: they'd shaved off another 30m (accurate measure: we paced it!) ring inside the fence, and there were harvester and car tracks criss-crossing area of remaining habitat.

***In 2011 we had been relieved to find that no further habitat destruction had occurred since 2010 but considered that even cautious optimism could be premature – mainly on account of the known world population being down to so few pairs, with little hope of discovering viable populations anywhere.

***One of the problems in working to save it is that even on the very brink of extinction it remained low-profile (and up until May 2010 listed as only 'Vulnerable', ensuring it attracted much less conservation interest than its real plight merited) compared to the wetland species, notably cranes, for which many of the reserves in this little-visited part of Asia were created.

None of this is very surprising, if still terribly sad: broadly speaking Jankowski's Bunting's slip towards extinction started with the opening up of Ussuriland and Manchuria to ever-more intense grazing and agriculture in the 1800s.

Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*

Three birds – incl two fine adult males – on 2nd.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

375+ bird-days. Noted daily – main event 127+ on 5th.

Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys*

25+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – main events 8+ on 2nd & 13 on 3rd: a real Dreambird for most of us, and what views!!

Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans*

15 bird-days. Noted on five dates – close encounters on several occasions: another of the classic NE Asia Dreambirds.

***In addition, four at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

40 bird-days. Noted six dates.

***In addition, one at Botanical Gardens on 29th.

Pallas's Reed Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*

34 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Japanese Reed Bunting *Emberiza yessoensis*

Seven (!) on 1st – as is often the case, patience & persistence was needed to get satisfactory views of this skulky species.

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

One female near the hotel on 6th.

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## Mammals

\*\*\*Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

One at Botanical Gardens on 29<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\***Pere David's Rock Squirrel** *Sciurotamias davidianus*

Six in Shanxi on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Daurian Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus dauuricus*

Singles noted on two dates.

\*\*\*Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus*

One at Luliang Shan on 27<sup>th</sup>.