

NE Tibet, 18-30 Oct 2012:

An at-a-glance list of 159 species of birds & 23 species of mammals.

By Jesper Hornskov ***this draft 27 Dec 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 birds & mammals noted by P Benstead (Greentours), J Blincow, S Da Prato, A Hawkins, M & P Henriksson & myself during the 2012 Greentours (www.Greentours.co.uk) visit to China's Qinghai province.

The birds, the mammals, the unbeatable scenery, an intriguing mix of local cultures, wonderful food, mostly comfortable accommodations & (not least) the companionship all came together to produce a trip the more memorable for the region being so under-visited by naturalists.

Our trip was timed to maximize chances of seeing the unique mammals of the Tibetan highlands before pressing on to Sichuan in search of e.g. Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*. In the field there was no real conflict between mammal- and birdwatching, but the relatively late dates meant that some breeders had already departed for their winter quarters. Likewise, the bulk of the Siberian passage migrants, notably waders, had gone through already. No matter: all the key endemics are residents, and the lateness of the season clearly had its advantages – we saw some of the specialities better and/or in far greater numbers than we would have in summer, and as a bonus turned up quite a few surprises.

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Enquiries about the scheduled 2013 Greentours 'Mammals of the Roof of the World' trip to Tibet should be directed to enquiries@greentours.co.uk

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 natural history 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 mammal list follows “*A Guide to the Mammals of China*”, Smith & Xie (ed.) 2008, while in the list of bird highlights I have followed *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 a few single-observer sightings does not imply that I have doubts as to the correctness of the ID!

Species list:

Severtzov's Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes sewerzowi*

Four (a covey of three which cooperated reasonably well, and one heard wing-flapping) on 18th.

Przevalski's Partridge *Alectoris magna*

Three near Chaka on 30th.

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Nine [JB, JH] near Dulan on 29th.

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*

Two somewhat against the odds remained heard-onlies S of Yushu on 25th.

White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

39 offered 'as-long-as-we-could-be-bothered' 'scope views on 25th – no fewer than 33 in a covey emerging onto a hillside covered in a thin layer of snow, shaking their feathers, sitting up to sun themselves, and emitting the occasional sequence of braying calls was a sight never to be forgotten!

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Six together en route to Koko Nor on 19th.

***Cheng (1987) listed no fewer than 18 races for mainland China. Of these he listed just three for Qinghai: *vlangalii*, *strauchi* (for 'NE part') & *suehschanensis* as an accidental to Zekog in SE.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

220 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

c3,075 bird-days. Noted on five dates...seeing 2,390 on 24th (mostly packed together near the road, in beautiful light, the water steaming as energy was being sucked away into the bright morning, allowing the ice to advance imperceptibly in a process that would soon enough force the geese to flee) was a fine way to start the day.

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

One seen heading S on 24th – *NOT a Bar-headed but ID prevented by eyes watering...*

***Realistic possibilities include Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*... It certainly wasn't, say, a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* or a Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*!

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Two adults at Koko Nor on 19th.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

c2,975 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

32+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

320+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

Six at Koko Nor on 19th.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

30 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

359+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Baikal Teal *Anas formosa*

One seen reasonably well (and photographed) at Koko Nor on 19th.

***Possibly only the 4th record for Tibet.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

1,975+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

1,100 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

One at Koko Nor on 19th.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

c510 bird-days. Noted on four dates. It was amazing to see a concentration of no fewer than 485 on 26th.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

75 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

24 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

29 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

*****Duck sp**

500+ on 24th.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

c30 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

41 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One en route to Koko Nor on 19th.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

One adult w/ one 1st c-y arriving from W at Koko Nor on 19th.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One on 29th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Singletons on two dates.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

73+ bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

25 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Singles were seen on 22nd & 28th.

Saker *Falco cherrug*

50 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than nine dates - for most of us a most welcome opportunity to familiarize ourselves with a species which is declining globally: not many trips allow you to graduate to full Saker Expert status in a fortnight!

Black Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*

A 2nd+ c-y bird low overhead on 28th.

***An exceptionally late bird – previous latest autumn date for Qinghai was 6 Oct (JH pers. obs.)

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Four bird-days. Noted on the high plateau on three dates: a single adult seen both on 22+23rd & two (an adult & an unaged bird) on 24th.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

23 bird-days. Noted on eight dates... a top Dreambird, this emblematic species was not at all devalued by several superb encounters (which included seven together on 25th - three adults, three immatures & one mint condition 1st c-y - all giving superb views as they flew by and/or landed at a carcass across the valley a bit upstream from where we were enjoying an afternoon cup of coffee next to the cars).

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

175 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

14+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Six bird-days. Noted on five dates – only one was an adult male.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Singles were noted on two dates.

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*

Two on 18th.

***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...

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

200 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

One distantly N of Xining on 18th...

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

41 bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 25 on 26th, of which no fewer than 15 at one stop!

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates – there were three at the 15-Steppe-Eagles-stop on 26th!

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Eight bird-days. Noted on six dates.

*****Eagle sp** *Aquila sp*

Seven bird-days. Main event five mostly on the ground on 27th... *to be on the safe side, some eagles which were almost certainly Steppe were recorded as unidentified.*

Little Crane *Porzana parva*

One heard calling & seen poorly [JH] at Golmud on 28th.

***Apparently a 1st for Tibet: the species was listed only for W & N Xinjiang by Zheng *et al.* (2005).

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

1,075+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 1,050+ at Koko Nor on 19th.

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*

99 bird-days. Noted on four dates – outstanding views of a pair w/ two juveniles on a snow-covered bit of marshy ground on 24th...

***This hardy yet Vulnerable (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/143783/0>) Tibetan Plateau endemic breeder was one of the most hoped-for species!

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates – eight together 'at the last moment' on 25th was a superb find by Car Two!

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Ten at Koko Nor on 19th.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Seven 1st c-y birds on 19th, 'skidding on ice, something birdwatchers don't often see as a) the species tends to be gone by the time lakes ice over, and b) birdwatchers tend not to bother visiting iced-over lakes'.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

one [AH – white trailing edge to wing seen, eliminating the also-possible Solitary Snipe *G. solitaria*] on 19th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

30 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

One at Koko Nor on 19th.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Two at Koko Nor on 19th.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Two [PB *et al.*] at Koko Nor on 19th.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
184+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
126 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*
20 at Koko Nor on 19th.

Tibetan Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes thibetana*
A flock of 13 flew upstream along the far side of the river on 28th – for most of us, at best: BVD!

Pallas' Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*
76 on the windy morning of 21st, incl a flock of 55 scrutinized on the ground... AND photographed!
***Essentially a bird of the steppes of Central Asia east to Mongolia, its occasional irruptions – during which it has reached and reared young in both Britain & Scandinavia – adds considerably to its charisma, ensuring it a place near the top of the Must-see Palearctic Dreambird priority list.

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*
c95 bird-days. Noted on five dates – on 30th, a flock of 18 flying alongside the car in early morning light was a sight to remember...

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
One 1st c-y *meena* seen well on 29th.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
c52 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*
One hunting @ rocks at c4500m, landing a couple of times, on 22nd.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*
One on 19th.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
One [JB, PB] on 29th – a very scarce species in Tibet!

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
A late migrant on 25th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*
One flying around across the valley on 18th, picked up by chance when scanning the hillsides for mammals.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*
One heard on 18th.

Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*

Singles noted on three dates.

Tibetan Grey Shrike *Lanius (s.) giganteus*

One 'scoped as it sat up singing on 19th: TINGALING!

*** A low-density species, wide-ranging and often inconspicuous even when present (and thus easily missed), we were fortunate to see this individual so well!

*****Chinese / Tibetan Grey Shrike** *Lanius sphenocercus* / *L. (s.) giganteus*

One on 19th.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Nine N of Xining on 18th.

*** *vide* Zheng *et al.* (2005) the distinctive ssp *kansuensis* is restricted to NW & SW Gansu and 'Qinghai'.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

One on 18th.

*** 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 one we saw, *kansuensis*, the eastern species includes a further six taxa (Dickinson 2003)...

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

16 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Tibetan Magpie *Pica (pica) bottanensis*

87 bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

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

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates - a couple of the birds encountered were in look-at-me mode, sitting out allowing everyone in the group to enjoy long 'scope views...

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*

107 bird-days. Noted on ten 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*

c425 bird-days. Noted on nine dates – main event an impressive flock of c300 S of Yushu on 25th.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

c105 on 25th – incl six adults at <10m on a wire at eye level, positively *demanding* to be photographed!

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

26 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

101 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*

One on 18th.

Songar Tit *Parus songarus*

11 bird-days. Noted on two dates: nine *affinis* N of Xining on 18th & two *weigoldicus* S of Yushu on 25th.

***Note that of the several Songar Tit spp 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 couldn’t help noticing (& see Collar & Pilgrim 2007) - *weigoldicus* does differ ‘conspicuously’ in many respects, incl vocalizations, from even *affinis*.

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*

11 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Grey Crested Tit *Parus dichrous*

One on 18th.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

One [PB, JB] on 25th.

Stoliczka’s (= White-browed) Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*

62 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than nine dates, allowing everyone to enjoy to the full this colourful high altitude species.

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

Four at Koko Nor on 19th.

Long-billed Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*

c124 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

31 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

210+ bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Common – not systematically recorded.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Five on 29th.

‘Eastern’ Tickell’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus (affinis) occisinensis*

One S of Yushu on 25th.

***Martens (2008) elevates part of Tickell’s Warbler to full species status as *P. occisinensis*

http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06_Martens.pdf

Pallas’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Singles seen well on 19+29th.

Hume’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei humei*

One heard on 28th & one seen well 29th.

***Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) treats both spp as full species, noting that “although the call of

mandellii is markedly different from [nominate] *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.”

Kozlov's Babax *Babax koslowi*

Two flew across the river & were 'scoped sitting up S of Yushu on 25th...(another three individuals were seen only by PB!).

***Knowing the often subdued call is the key to finding this frequently extremely skulking, restricted-range species.

Pere David's Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

One heard N of Xining on 18th.

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*

18 bird-days. Noted on two dates – excellent views of this colourful endemic at our very first stop helped getting our trip off to a fine start.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Three on 18th.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

Five on 18th.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

One in flight on 30th.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Four on 18th.

Eurasian Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Four flew by as we stood outside the cafe post-brunch, waiting for our drivers to finish their cigarettes, on 27th.

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

Two on 18th.

Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*

12 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*

One on 29th.

Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*

21 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***In addition, a flock of 25 Black- / Red-throated Thrushes on 19th...

Northern Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

Four bird-days. Three N of Xining on 18th may have been *albocoeruleus*, while one in a poplar grove W of Koko Nor on 19th was most likely *cyanurus*, the Siberian breeding form.

***Apparently (L Svensson pers com; H Jannes) birds breeding in NE Qinghai – with a white brow in adult males – are *albocoeruleus*, a 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*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates – especially memorable were two males & one female in a patch of buckthorn on 19th, sitting up & offering great photo ops... at one point all three perched in one field-of-view! This localized endemic is 'arguably the prettiest in the genus'.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

One 1st c-y in a poplar grove on 29th.

***'Seemed very dark'. Ssp *phoenicuroides*, which Zheng *et al.* (2005) lists for Xinjiang & W Xizang, was, 'pending further research', included with *rufiventris* by Svensson (1992) although in the latter the adult male is 'on average blacker above and larger in size, but much overlap'. Ssp *xerophilus* was listed by Zheng *et al.* (2005) for Qinghai & S Xinjiang, and by BWP (Vol V, p683) for 'Astin Tagh (Sinkiang) to Western Kansu and Tsinghai' but this ssp not recognized by e g Dickinson (2003), and BWP (Vol V, p694-695) notes that its position requires confirmation, it having been described 'as being pale like *phoenicuroides* and large like *rufiventris*'.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***This species is arguably not far behind Przevalski's in terms of prettiness...

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

143+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates! Main event 114 on 26th – incl an astonishing 68+ (65+ males & just three females) in one patch of buckthorn: WOW!

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

Ten bird-days. Noted on two dates – perhaps not quite as many as expected but seen very well indeed, and photographed!

River Chat *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

Two on 18th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

A 1st c-y 'scoped & photographed in a poplar grove on 29th.

***Apparently a 1st for Tibet though in reality possibly a regular if rare passage migrant, overlooked in the past when considered conspecific with *F. albicilla*.

***The species breeds E to c65°E in Siberia (BWP VolVII, p26) and has turned up in Japan, Korea & E China.

Red-throated (= Taiga) Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*

Two on 30th.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Singles noted on two dates.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common – not systematically recorded.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

4,150+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – main event a very impressive c4,000 swarming into a stubble field on 30th.

Henri's Snowfinch *Montifringilla henrici*

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates – on 23rd it was a bonus to get superb views of a singleton at Breezy Corner, feeding at the edge of a braided river.

***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 Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event two at Breezy Corner on 23rd, feeding low on a cliff next to the road.

***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*

294+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

***This the most charismatic of the snowfinches can be relied on to put on a good show, doing its hunchback display, dive-bombing intruders (feathered as well as furred), or simply inviting birders to enjoy prolonged looks, as on 23rd when 'we watched one run across the snow, sinking in, then working exposed clump of grass'.

Pere David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana*

c175 bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event c170, mostly in groups of up to 40 birds heading W, on the windy morning of 21st.

***It is misleading to call this 'one of the most localized snowfinch species': its range is vast, covering SE Russian Altai, Mongolia & SE Transbaikalia S to E Qinghai and W & C Inner Mongolia (Dickinson, 2003)! The only Snowfinch of which it could be reasonably said that it is 'localized' is Afghan Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda theresae* of 'C Afghanistan & S Tadjikistan >> S Turkmenistan' (Dickinson, 2003)...

Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

c1,125 bird-days. Noted on nine dates – largest flock seen was a very impressive c300 at Breezy Corner on 23rd.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

11 - incl several dropping in to feed next to where we'd positioned ourselves - on 21st.

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*

53 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Rufous-browed Accentor *Prunella strophiatea*

One [PB *et al.*] on 25th.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*

46 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

One at Koko Nor on 19th.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba ssp*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

An exceptionally late bird flew by on 29th.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Singletons were noted on 18+24+25th.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

26 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

6+ in a poplar grove on 30th.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates, incl on 30th when one fine-looking male was found in a barren gully 'perching on tufts of grass for lack of trees'!

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

116 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

c375 bird-days. Noted on just two dates – main event a swirling flock of c350 'scoped on sunlit ridge above the plain on 25th.

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

One [JH] at Breezy Corner on 23rd 'landed by the river but somehow vanished'.

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

One heard on 21st.

***This sought-after species has been recorded in NE Tibet in good numbers into mid-Nov (JH pers obs) but is somewhat erratic...

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Ten on 23rd, incl several showing well: TINGALING!

***'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.'

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Pink-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus eos*

11 S of Yushu on 25th.

Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus*

A pair seen feeding on buckthorn berries on 29th was a seriously good find...

***There may only be five previous records for Tibet, all from N of Xining and none earlier than 22 Nov (JH pers obs).

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*

14 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Eastern Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

20+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – repeated 'scope views of adult males!

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates – 'scope views of an adult male when we stopped the car upon hearing the distinctive call through the open window!

Roborovski's Rosefinch *Kozlowia roborowskii*
Three female-types on 22nd was all we managed...

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*
Five N of Xining on 18th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
One in flight on 28th.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*
Five bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event three on 20th, incl 'a 1st c-y photographed at c3800m as it crept up gully below us'.

Eastern Rock Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*
13 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*
One [JH] briefly on 19th.

Mammals:

Tibetan Dwarf Hamster *Cricetulus tibetanus*
One was seen very well on 22nd.

Mid-Day Gerbil *Meriones meridianus*
Three animal-days. Noted on two dates but not exactly easy to get on...
***'The most desert-adapted of all gerbils. It occupies sandy terrain with different degrees of soil stabilization, preferring brushy habitat characterized by thorn scrub under which it constructs its burrows. Primarily nocturnal (in contrast with *M. unguiculatus*); it is only active during the day during winter. It is unclear how it was given the common name.' : Smith & Xie (2008).

Gansu Pika *Ochotona cansus*
Just one seen [AH] on 23rd.

Plateau Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*
Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Glover's Pika *Ochotona gloveri*
8+ animal-days. Noted on two dates – one on 25th 'up on massive boulder across the river somehow spotted by AH as it sat silhouetted against the far-off sky, in the absence of fiercer creatures absolute ruler of that piece of hard-to-get-to real estate'..

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*
9+ animal-days. Seen on at least five dates – main event 4+ on 23rd, when numerous tracks crisscrossing the fresh snow suggested that at least twice that number were present.

Pallas' Cat *Felis manul*
One allowed extended 'scope views as it sat out on a sunny knoll on 22nd.

*****Snow Leopard** *Uncia uncia*
Tracks in the snow...

Wolf *Canis lupus*

11 animal-days. Noted on four dates – a long session with two individuals at c4,800m on 24th: one of them was seen trying to punch through a patch of frozen snow, then carried on tentatively while the other animal was lying down. All of a sudden that one was making off in a different direction carrying a Tibetan Fox (!), seemingly trying to take advantage of the lay of the land to get away and not share the meal with its companion... nice plan, but as they disappeared from view the more active individual was firmly on the trail of the meal-carrying one.

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

48 animal-days. Noted on no fewer than seven dates, with any number of satisfying encounters and several photo opportunities: what an animal!

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Singles were noted on four dates.

Mountain Weasel *Mustela altaica*

We were pleased to get extended views (and repeated photo ops!) when JB spotted one darting about on 27th.

Kiang *Equus kiang*

788 animal-days. Noted on five dates. It was a real pleasure to watch these dignified 'donkeys' - in the absence of hunters they (and other large mammals on the Plateau) are fairly confiding, and in a couple of cases we were able to get good-to-decent photos even without the help of long lenses!

Siberian Roe *Capreolus pygargus*

5+ on 18th got our trip off the ground in style.

MacNeil's Deer *Cervus macneilli*

Seven S of Yushu on 25th.

****macneilli* is 'the pale red-grey deer of the eastern margins of the Tibetan plateau': Groves (2005).

Gansu Red Deer *Cervus kansuensis*

No fewer than 55 animals in a morning! Memorable 'scope views of several magnificent stags – the crisp air was vibrating with their rutting-time roars, which were audible even from our breakfast spot.

****vide* Groves (2005), *kansuensis* is 'quite distinct, the winter pelage being especially different: *macneilli* stags are very light, creamy grey, while *kansuensis* stags are deep steely grey. The black on the croup [...] is much more conspicuous in *kansuensis*.'

***Subsequently (Groves & Grubb: *Ungulate Taxonomy* (2011)) it was felt that *kansuensis* is probably NOT a valid taxon. There are specimens from S Koko Nor Range 37°N 100°E (where sightings by birders have resulted in claims of White-lipped Deer!) & from Tatung Shan 37°15'N 100°E, and there are sight records from Qilian Shan.

***If *kansuensis* ends up being considered invalid the animals we saw were still not 'Red' Deer *Cervus 'elaphus'* but *Cervus canadensis alashanicus*.

White-lipped Deer *Przewalskium albirostris*

39 animals in a single day. A herd of 29 included five huge-antlered stags & a full mix of juveniles, females, and 'lesser' stags – at x60 magnification we could see the senior stag roaring repeatedly as it stood silhouetted against the sky, allowing undistorted looks in crisp afternoon air, but what with the distance & the flowing river we were unable to hear it.

Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

31 animal-days. Noted on two dates – 28 in a day was pretty good, especially as the magnificent dawn air allowed undistorted 'scope viewing on x60 magnification.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

808+ animal-days. Noted on seven dates – as is the case with Kiang, in the absence of human hunters these nimble creatures are fairly confiding (if still jumpily high-strung, no doubt on account of the healthy population of wolves roaming the hills: in August 2005 we were even privileged to witness four particularly mean-looking wolves undertake a successful hunt, killing and ripping apart a Tibetan Gazelle) - we were able to get frame-filling photos even without the help of heavy artillery lenses.

Przevalski's Gazelle *Procapra przewalskii*

76 on 20th – all were female/juveniles.

***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 to represent an as far as the IUCN is concerned 'undiscovered' population.

Wild Yak *Bos grunniensis*

111 animal-days. These impressive animals were seen in two separate areas... WOW! views were had by all.

Argali *Ovis ammon*

24 animal-days. Noted on two dates – watching a herd of 14 (incl at least three good-sized males) for a couple of hours was just the sort of relaxed, in-depth experience we'd hoped for.

Tibetan Antelope *Panthalops hodgsonii*

Seeing 80 along the remotest Roof of the World stretch of road was truly something to remember.

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

Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur*

c158 animal-days. Noted on three dates.