

# NOF in Tibet, 2007:

**An at-a-glance list of 208 spp of birds & c21 spp of mammals recorded.**

*By Jesper Hornskov \* ALL RIGHTS RESERVED*

*[this draft 6 Aug 2007]*

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 O Campbell, S Dale, M Dellaseta, R Digernes, K A Jensen, K Johannessen (NOF), B Krogh, N J Moran, F Nikolaisen, A C Sjaastad, K Toska & myself in NE Tibet, China's Qinghai province, during 1-17 July 2007.

Thank you all for making this trip so enjoyable! Special thanks are due to Kjetil Johannessen.

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In the species list the concept "bird-days" is used - it is the avian equivalent of man-hours: for example, separate flocks of ten and 15 Henri's Snowfinches moving through score 25 bird-days, as would the same single individual seen daily for 25 days. The sum of day totals - a handy measure of relative abundance, nothing more.

The sequence of the bird list follows *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Dickinson 2003), in my opinion by far the most useful one-volume checklist to date. Taxonomic 'innovations' mostly follow *Birds of South Asia – The Ripley Guide* (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005), the recommended field guide for trips in Tibet.

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*

A pair – probably with chicks nearby – was seen well at Nangqian Forest Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup>.

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

17+ bird-days. Noted on two dates at Nangqian Forest Reserve. Better-than-nothing-views only for most of us, despite several groups responding to taping...

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

15+ bird-days. Up to ten birds noted on three dates. One memorable event was four flying overhead (did we miss a Snow Leopard??) after a sudden bout of cackling.

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

Two showing off at The Breakfast Spot on 4<sup>th</sup>.

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

4+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates.

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

30+ bird-days. Adults were noted on no less than five dates, with superb views on several occasions.

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

11 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor.

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

540+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

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

Two adults on 3<sup>rd</sup>, of which one was sitting on its nest...

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

186+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

Eight on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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

Ten on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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

3+ on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

One on 3<sup>rd</sup> [NM].

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

One on 3<sup>rd</sup> [NM, KJ *et al.*]

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – incl somewhat unexpectedly a drake near Gonghe on 5<sup>th</sup>.

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

55 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

50 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

Nine on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Superb views!

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

95+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

Two bird-days. Possibly the same summering singleton on two dates...

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Two bird-days. Singles on two dates at Koko Nor.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

50+ on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

20+ on 3<sup>rd</sup> incl five pulli.

**Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

One heard booming & seen in flight on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**\*\*\*Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus*

One in the Beijing mist pre-breakfast on 17<sup>th</sup> [KAJ *et al.*].

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*

Six bird-days. Summering strays were noted on three dates.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Two at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup> was the only record.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

Three at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

One at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup> [KAJ].

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

85 at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

13+ bird-days. Seen on at least six dates.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

Three bird-days. Noted N of Xining & at Nangqian Forest Reserve.

**Saker** *Falco cherrug*

15 bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl near Gonghe on 5<sup>th</sup>. One the following day perched on a post, then flew off and caught a pika, which it proceeded to eat as another – luckier – pika sat and watched. After the meal – which didn't last long – the falcon twice carefully wiped its bill on a tuft of grass...

**Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

One adult en route N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans lineatus*

5 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

17 bird-days. Seen on eight dates, often very well indeed (e.g. two adults in synchronized flight display on 11<sup>th</sup>, staying in view for what seemed a long time as they moved overhead & across the valley towards the jagged peaks on the far side) – one even treated us to a bone-drop.

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*

127+ bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. No less than 39 were soaring together near Koko Nor on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*

One on 15<sup>th</sup> [JH].

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Six bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Himalayan Buzzard** *Buteo burmanicus*

6+ bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

\*\*\*“Many individuals in the [Indian] region (immature *burmanicus*) are similar to resident nominate *japonicus* of Japan (with which *burmanicus* is often synonymised [including by Cheng 1987]). However, nominate *japonicus* shows little plumage variability, with no dark morph and virtually no rufous in plumage, and with slightly more extensive tarsal feathering; adult and juvenile *japonicus* differ only in minor details, while adult *burmanicus* are usually very different in plumage from *japonicus*. Himalayan breeders ('*refectus*') indistinguishable on plumage and size from widespread Chinese *burmanicus* and not recognised [...]. The name '*refectus*' Portenko 1929 is [...] considered a junior synonym of *burmanicus* Hume 1874. In DNA phylogenies (Riesing *et al.* 2003; Kruckenhauser *et al.* 2004) '*refectus*' (= *burmanicus*) clustered with *hemilasius* rather than *japonicus* as expected, and *burmanicus* clearly specifically distinct": Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.

**Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*

192+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*

Two bird-days. Single 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> c-y birds were noted on two dates.

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

21 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*

25+ at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup> included several pairs with tiny chicks.

**Black-necked Crane** *Grus nigricollis*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Ibisbill** *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

12 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

\*\*\*Somehow, Ibisbills seen in Tibet feeding on a flowered-over meadow or 'frozen' against a rushing, icy stream - yaks snorting in the background - are more *real* than the sad one or two pairs which cling on along the last stretch of acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor – main event eight adults and one downy chick on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

Three on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Six bird-days. Noted on four dates. One of the two seen at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup> was incubating [SD].

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*

11 bird-days. Noted on four dates, with display-flight seen a couple of times.

**Western Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

23 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

27 at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

Two at Koko Nor on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa tetanus*

55+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

One at Koko Nor on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Three bird-days. Singles noted on three dates.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

19 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

One on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

1+ at Koko Nor on 16<sup>th</sup> [OC, MD, NM].

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

c163 bird-days. Recorded only at Koko Nor. Main event – and among the many trip highlights – was 155 on 3<sup>rd</sup>...

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

32 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Little Gull** *Larus minutus*

Two 2<sup>nd</sup> c-y birds were present at Koko Nor on 3+16<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*'Local birding' at Golmud [JH in prep] yielded 13 bird-days, involving just three individuals, all in autumn: single 1<sup>st</sup> c-y birds on 1 September 1989, 9-26 September 1994, and 12 September 1994.

The only previous Tibetan records were from Ladakh (specimen collected on 21 September (Vaurie 1972); occasional sight records by Williams & Delany (1985)). The species is listed as a breeder in northeast Inner Mongolia by Cheng (1987) but was until recently recorded elsewhere in China only as a vagrant or very scarce migrant in Xinjiang (Cheng 1987, Dissing *et al.* 1990; now it is known to breed there: M Kilburn pers comm), at Beidaihe, Hebei (Williams 1992, JH pers. obs.), Jiangsu (Cheng 1987), and Hong Kong (P. R. Kennerley *in litt.*).

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

63 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

1+ at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tibetan Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes thibetana*

One male at Er La on 15<sup>th</sup> – Tingaling!

**Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

A pair on 3<sup>rd</sup> before a squall swept in, making a dash for the vehicles the only realistic option...

**Blue Hill Pigeon** *Columba rupestris*

244+ bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

**Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*

26 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates. Seeing these strikingly patterned birds effortlessly sail along the towering rock faces is a visual treat, the simple beauty of 'em enhancing the grandeur of the setting.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

Four bird-days. Noted only N of Xining...

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\***Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 16<sup>th</sup> [OC].

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

43 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

3+ bird-days. Noted on at least two dates...

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

32+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

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

c189 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Particularly nice views were had of four birds at the bridge over the silt-laden Yangtze.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

34 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Northern Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

One near Gonghe on 16<sup>th</sup> [SD, KAJ].

\*\*\*Prior to 2004 (when one adult at this site 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.].

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

Eight bird-days. Noted at Nangqian Forest reserve on two dates. Six on 10<sup>th</sup>, including the two seen the previous day.

\*\*\*"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*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates at Nangqian Forest Reserve.

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

Eight bird-days. Noted on five dates. One allowed 'scope views N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>...

**Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus*

A female-type bird was seen briefly on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*

An adult *lucionensis*-type bird was eventually seen well near Chaka on 5<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*The only published record for Tibet appear to be a specimen taken at Blagodatny (c39°23'N 95°05'E) in the Northern Plateau region (*vide* Vaurie 1972). Cheng (1987) listed *L. c. cristatus* as occurring on migration in Qinghai but gave no specific locality. 'Local birding' at Golmud (JH in prep) yielded just one Brown Shrike, on 15 June 1992, and the species appears to be genuinely rare even in E-most Qinghai though it may occasionally breed (e.g. two adults w/ one chick near Gonghe on 17 Aug 2000: JH & M Kall/AviFauna pers obs).

**Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus tsaidamensis*

4+ near Chaka on 4<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*The taxon is a look-alike for & belongs with the nominate, not with **Rufous Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides*. The latter appears to be only a vagrant to NE Tibet (JH pers obs).

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

75 bird-days. Noted on 11 days.

**Tibetan Grey Shrike** *Lanius giganteus*

Rather unusually, one appeared on cue near Nangqian on 12<sup>th</sup> and allowed prolonged 'scope views for everyone present!

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Five bird-days. Summering strays were noted on four dates. Of particular interest was one heading NE high over the forest on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a 1<sup>st</sup> record for that area – later, nice views of one at a bridge where we stopped to enjoy Red-rumped Swallows...

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

12 N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup> (plus a few around our Beijing hotel on 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>!).

\*\*\*Apparently (G Pettersson pers comm) 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*

15 bird-days. Noted in Qinghai on four dates.

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

41 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

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

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

Ten bird-days. Noted W of Koko Nor on three dates.

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

154+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

\*\*\*Apparently most closely related to *Paridae* (Dickinson 2003; B King pers comm.) but please let us refrain from concocting a new English name such as Tibetan Ground-tit!

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

185 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

**Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

35 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates.

**Daurian Jackdaw** *Corvus dauuricus*

38+ bird-days. Noted on at least five dates.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

6+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

22 bird-days. Noted on two dates. Main event 20 N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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

14 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

Ten bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**'Great' (= 'Japanese') Tit** *Parus (major) minor*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates – ssp *minor* near Xining & ssp *tibetanus* S of Yushu.

\*\*\*Both taxa belong with *minor*, one on 3-4 'Great Tit' species in China. Keep your fingers crossed that the inappropriate name 'Japanese' Tit doesn't stick!



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

24 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Superb views on several occasions.

**Songar Tit** *Parus songarus*

14+ bird-days. Noted on four dates N of Xining (ssp *affinis*) & S of Yushu (ssp *weigoldicus*).

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

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Grey Crested Tit** *Parus dichrous*

27 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates.

**Pale Sand Martin** *Riparia diluta*

c50 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Singles noted on two dates.

**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

c33 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*

c77 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

46 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates. Several perched on a wire fence in subtle morning light on 13<sup>th</sup> was arguably a trip highlight...

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

17 bird-days. Noted on four dates. After perfectly acceptable encounters with females and immature males an adult male was finally spotted, blowing us all away...

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

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates. I have leafed through the dictionary & two Birdquest brochures to find a superlative which fully does this jewel justice – in vain!

**Mongolian Lark** *Melanocorypha mongolica*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Repeated close-up encounters on 3<sup>rd</sup>...

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

46 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

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

11 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

18 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*

Four bird-days. Noted near Gonghe on two dates.

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

**Spotted Bush Warbler** *Bradypterus thoracicus*

Two N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Frequently a hard-to-see species one of these was incredibly cooperative in response to taping, approaching to within a couple of meters and singing back fully exposed.

**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis*

47 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

40 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates up towards the tree line at Nangqian Forest Reserve – noticeably scarcer than other *Phylloscopus* warblers even in optimum habitat but the distinctive call, combined with the flash of white tail as it moves across into the next tree, is a give-away.

**Gansu Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

13 N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tingaling!

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

**Chinese Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

Two N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>. With patience (and the aid of a tape!), seen well by all.

**'Eastern' Lemon-rumped Warbler** *Phylloscopus (chloronotus) forresti*

32 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on five 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?*

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

33 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event 14 at Nangqian Forest Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

45 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**'Margelanica' Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia (minula) margelanica*

Three on 5<sup>th</sup> took some finding but finally showed very well indeed.

**Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*

21 bird-days. Noted on three dates. At least six pairs were involved, of which one was well away from the usual 'core' area, until 2006 the only known site in Qinghai (where first discovered in 2000: JH pers. obs.)

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

16 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

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

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

**Giant Laughingthrush** *Garrulax maximus*

56 bird-days. Noted on five 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 traveling through the pristine forest will mark their progress with sessions of loud calling.

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

136+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

\*\*\*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 lumped 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*

Ten 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 Kozlov's Babax – the key to finding this subtly attractive endemic.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Northern Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

18 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Watching a family party of four birds at close range – an adult coming in to feed the yellow-gaped juveniles – on 10<sup>th</sup> provided an opportunity to catch our breath...

**Chinese Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*

Four N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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

Ten bird-days. Noted on three dates – excellent views through the 'scope on a couple of occasions: Tingaling!

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*

15 bird-days. Noted on four dates – two active nests were located: superb views of the adults as they fed busily nearby and then 'wall-crept' up towards their nest.

**Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*

Two on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

\*\*\*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*

Nine bird-days. Noted on three 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).

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

109+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

11 birds N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>. One perching out allowed prolonged looks through the 'scope – just the sort of views we'd been hoping for...

**Himalayan Rubythroat** *Luscinia pectoralis*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates – seen especially well near Koko Nor on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger rufilatus*

50 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Main event 23 at Nangqian Forest Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*The split (accepted by e.g. Rasmussen & Anderton 2005) from the Siberian taxon is based mainly on morphological and vocal differences. While I have no real problem with the split it may be worth bearing in mind that there seem to be consistent differences in song between birds in NE Qinghai and those in the SE, as well as a range of 'dialects' across the species vast range in Siberia.

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

Four (three males & one female) in mountains W of Koko Nor: we hadn't got far before the 1<sup>st</sup> superb male appeared, and throughout a beautiful morning we were treated to close-up encounters with this sought-after, and very, very pretty species. Two of the males were still singing & no family parties... breeding must have been delayed!

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

115+ bird-days. Noted on at least nine dates.

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

40 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

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

19 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

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

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

46 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates. We were treated to unobscured views of a singing male on 12<sup>th</sup> – otherwise mostly a very skulking species.

**River Chat** *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

33 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus*

Four birds – a pair with two fledglings – near Heimahe on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*

A female sitting out on a wire near Xining on 16<sup>th</sup>...

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

13+ bird-days. Noted on three dates W of Koko Nor.

**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica rothschildi*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*Work on vocalizations may well lead to suggestions that this distinctive taxon should be elevated to full species status...

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

52 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus*

11+ bird-days. Noted on at least six dates. At least two cases of brown- & white-throated birds breeding together...

**Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans*

Two males (one in a – nest? - hole!) & one female S of Yushu on 8<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Prior to 2006 (when 1<sup>st</sup> recorded for Qinghai: JH *et al.* pers obs) nearest known site for the species was c150kms away, in Xizang “Autonomous” Region (JH unpublished) – the species appears to be undergoing a range expansion in E China (JH pers obs).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Fairly common – not systematically recorded.

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*

37 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Henri's Snowfinch** *Montifringilla henrici*

31 bird-days. Noted on three dates. A pair nesting in road gutter at just 3,900m on 6<sup>th</sup> were confusingly low...

**Himalayan Snowfinch** *Montifringilla adamsi*

28 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**White-rumped Snowfinch** *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*

44 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Pere David's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda davidiana*

22+ on 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had to put in a bit of mileage but eventually had views that satisfied even OC ;-)!

**Rufous-necked Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

122+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Blanford's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Diligence yet again paid off on 4<sup>th</sup> when a final diversion en route back to the hotel yielded a cooperative pair with three juveniles – with drops of rain starting to fall we then decided not to risk carrying diligence too far...

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates. Main event four S of Yushu on 7<sup>th</sup> – one of them feeding amongst flowers below us at <15m.

**Robin Accentor** *Prunella rubeculoides*

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Rufous-browed Accentor** *Prunella strophciata*

32 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Brown Accentor** *Prunella fulvescens*  
37+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Maroon-backed Accentor** *Prunella immaculate*  
29 bird-days. Noted on two dates at Nangqian Forest Reserve.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*  
27 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba leucopsis* & *M. a. alboides*  
65+ bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

\*\*\*Dickinson (2003) evidently consider without merit the idea that *lugens* is a valid species. Alstrom & Mild (2003) also concludes that various factors "suggest that the White Wagtail is best treated as a single species under the BSC".

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*  
Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*  
17 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseus*  
Two on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*  
20 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*  
103+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Main event was four semi-cooperative birds in a patch of weeds outside our noodle place on 3<sup>rd</sup> which delayed our departure by their teasing of our team photographers!

**Plain Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola*  
76+ bird-days. Noted on five dates. Interesting, no juveniles were seen.

**Brandt's Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte brandti*  
23+ bird-days. Noted on four dates. Particularly memorable views of this extreme-altitude specialist were had at Er La.

**Mongolian Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus*  
13 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Desert Finch** *Rhodospiza obsoleta*  
15 near Chaka on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Przevalski's Rosefinch** *Urocynchramus pylzowi*  
Smashing views of two males & one female near Heimahe on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
63+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** *Carpodacus davidianus*  
29 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Pink-rumped Rosefinch** *Carpodacus eos*

102 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on six dates.

**Sinai Rosefinch** *Carpodacus synoicus*

Six (incl two lovely males at point-blank range) on 16<sup>th</sup>. A rather brilliant bit of catch-up for those of us who had been let down by Finnair!

**Three-banded Rosefinch** *Carpodacus trifasciatus*

32+ bird-days. Noted on two dates. Close-up males were part of a flock of 15 birds at c4,100m on 10<sup>th</sup>... Very nice, except that this flock 'blocked our way' towards a very agitated group of Szechenyi's Monal Partridges: by the time we reached the area where these had been calling, after enjoying feather-by-feather views of the rosefinches, the gamebirds had calmed down & did not respond to further taping!

**Chinese White-browed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus dubius*

106 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

**Eastern Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

12 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Spotted Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Two bird-days. Single males were seen on two dates.

\*\*\*Split from *C. rubicilla* (of the Caucasus) following Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

**Red-fronted Rosefinch** *Pyrrhospiza punicea*

18 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Roborovski's Rosefinch** *Kozlowia roborowskii*

11+ bird-days. Noted on three dates. We were treated to views of a displaying male as well as a family party...

**Crimson-browed Finch** *Pinicola subhimachala*

Five at Nangqian Forest Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup> – superviews of three of 'em, one of which was a red male!

**Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

79+ bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event 55+ on 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey-headed Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula erythaca*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates – nice views of a pair N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**White-winged Grosbeak** *Mycerobas carniceps*

23 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*

14 in mountains W of Koko Nor on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Rock Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii*

65 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Meadow Bunting** *Emberiza cioides*

Seven near Xining on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Kozlov's Bunting** *Emberiza koslowi*

Nine birds (three pairs & three singing males) on 11<sup>th</sup>. Unsurpassable views were had – and we'd earned 'em!

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*  
Five N of Xining on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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## **Mammals:**

**Tibetan Stump-tailed Macaque** *Macaca thibetana*  
4+ on 9<sup>th</sup>. Unusually cooperative, positively posing for our photographers...

**Wolf** *Canis lupus*  
Four singletons, the 1<sup>st</sup> of which – at c100m in fine light, yawning repeatedly as it kept stopping to look back – was also the best.

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*  
One at Koko Nor on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tibetan Fox** *Vulpes ferrilata*  
12 animal-days. Noted on three dates. On 6<sup>th</sup> one ran across the road and continued away up the hill towards the skyline at top speed, seen off by half a dozen small birds; another offered a more prolonged encounter starting at 50-100m distance on the edge of the road, scent-marking and stopping to allow our photographers time to go to work.

**Alpine Weasel** *Mustela altaica*  
At least one...

**[Eurasian Badger** *Meles meles*  
Sadly, the only individual seen was a traffic casualty S of Gonghe. ]

**Kiang** *Equus kiang*  
24 animal-days. Noted on two dates on the high plateau.

**Alpine Musk Deer** *Moschus chrysogaster*  
One of the 1-2 seen at Nangqian Forest Reserve on 9<sup>th</sup> was photographed by NM.

**Red Deer** *Cervus elaphus*  
One W of Koko Nor on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**White-lipped Deer** *Cervus albirostris*  
Satisfying views of three S of Yushu on 13<sup>th</sup>: the animals were lying up on a ridge while those of us not preoccupied with photographing an Ibisbill and its chick had breakfast – later they got up to graze, and eventually walked off out of sight.

**Goitred Gazelle** *Gazella subgutturosa*  
Seven on 4<sup>th</sup>... excellent views.

**Tibetan Gazelle** *Procapra picticaudata*  
243+ animal-days. Noted on three dates. One female licking a tottering calf born a few minutes previously...

**Blue Sheep** *Pseudois nayaur*  
162+ animal-days. Noted on four dates.



**Himalayan Marmot** *Marmota himalayana*

Locally common – seen most days.

**Black-lipped Pika** *Ochotona curzoniae*

The common Pika on the high plateau S at least as far as the Yangtze.

**\*\*\*Pika spp**

At least three additional, as yet unidentified, species were seen. Candidates include

**Gansu Pika** *Ochotona cansus*, **Thomas' Pika** *Ochotona thomasi*, **Tibetan Pika** *Ochotona thibetana* & **Western Sichuan Pika** *Ochotona gloveri*. It was highly unusual to see two species of pika within 50m of each other along a cliff in forest on 9<sup>th</sup>...

**Woolly Hare** *Lepus oiostolus*

Locally fairly common.

**Stoliczka's Mountain Vole** *Alticola stoliczkanus*

6+ animal-days. Seen on at least two days.