

Species list:

Tibetan Snowcock *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

One below us, showing beautifully as it dashed across the hillside, on 26th.

Przevalski's Partridge *Alectoris magna*

Four on 27th.

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*

A cooperative female on 29th.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

41 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

550+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

145 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

12 bird-days. Noted near Xining on two dates.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Three on 27th.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

One immature male on 28th – a real bonus, considering the time of year.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

14 on 27th.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Four on 25th.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

75+ on 25th.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Singles en route on two dates.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

One over the South Koko Nor range on 28th.

Saker *Falco cherrug*

Five bird-days. Great views on three dates...

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates – seeing an adult mobbed by a Saker on 29th was *please tick as appropriate* [] great. [] fantastic. [] nothing to brag about.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

30 bird-days. Noted on five dates – two on 28th were so close we could hear the whistling of air through their primaries as they passed overhead!

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

One female seen off by a Kessler's Thrush W of Koko Nor on 26th.

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*

Two adults on 1st – 'scope views at c150m...

***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*

21 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Singles noted on two dates.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

One on 26th was a serious bonus.

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*

Five bird-days. Noted on no less than three dates.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

One on 2nd.

***Why deny it? - 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 living on borrowed time along the last stretch of barely acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Four W of Koko Nor on 27th.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Two W of Koko Nor on 26th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Two on 27th.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

14 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
One on 27th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
36 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
One on 1st.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Two on 30th.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
A gathering of 200+ on 25th – WOW!

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
8+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Tibetan Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes thibetana*
One approachable male – a day ahead of schedule - was enjoyed on 29th.

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*
Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*
79 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
11 bird-days. Noted on two dates N of Xining.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
45 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
22 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*
One on a wire on 1st.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*
Three juveniles on 2nd.

Common Swift *Apus apus*
40 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus* / **Salim Ali's Swift** *Apus salimali*

19 bird-days. Noted on four dates, incl 14 at a colony on 30th.

***Leader (2011) concluded that the *Apus pacificus* complex should be treated as four species, at least three of which occur in China/Tibet:

'Pacific' Swift *Apus pacificus* - Siberia E to Kamchatka, Japan & S to Taiwan & E Guangdong (and possibly E at least to Guangxi – one mid-May specimen from Yaoshan examined, 'perhaps a local breeder') migrating to Indonesia, Melanesia & Australia/Tasmania. On passage reaches NE Tibet (JH et al. pers obs Aug 2011) & presumably Yunnan.

Salim Ali's Swift *Apus salimali* 'restricted to E Tibetan Plateau and adjacent high-altitude W Sichuan' breeding at 'very high altitudes (above 3,400m)' – presumably 'Fork-tailed Swifts' breeding near Xining, Qinghai, at c2,500m are also this form. 'Its winter distribution is apparently unknown but, at the very least, it must be an altitudinal migrant'.

The species is longer-tailed with a proportionately shallower tail fork, has different throat pattern ('narrow pale strip on the center of the throat and is narrowest at the base of the bill, where it tapers to a neat point', 'less than half the width of the other taxa'), 'the rump patch is consistently narrow', 'the crown and nape are mid-brown, contrasting conspicuously' with the glossy black mantle, and the pale tips to the underparts are much reduced compared to *pacificus* (more comparable to *leuconyx* in this character).

Cook's Swift *Apus cooki* 'restricted to lowland [Burma], N Thailand, Vietnam & Guangxi' breeding only in limestone caves (the only member of the complex to do so). It is 'a short-distance migrant or near-resident', with winter specimens from Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, N Shan States & Thailand. Unsurprisingly (Leader, pers com 2010) *cooki* in addition occurs in SW Yunnan.

The rump patch is narrow, the upperparts and underparts are black (dark brown upper- and underparts in *pacificus*, or black on mantle only in *leuconyx* & *salimali*), underparts with broad, well-defined white fringes approaching those of Dark-rumped Swift *A. acuticauda*, off-white throat patch extending to upper breast, extensive green iridescence on upperparts, and contrasting black underwing coverts (no contrast in other taxa).

Blyth's Swift *Apus leuconyx* 'is a mid to high-altitude breeder, occurring at 1,300-3,800m in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan & NE India' wintering in the lowlands & in peninsular India. Could well occur in S Tibet on the Nepal border & in SE Tibet.

In plumage most similar to *salimali*, with narrow rump patch contrast between mid-brown crown/nape and glossy black mantle, but with throat patch covering entire throat & typically extending to upper breast (lower border ill defined), and with upper breast paler than in other taxa.

Both Cheng (1987) & Zheng (2005 listed only *pacificus* & *kanoi* for China – Leader concludes that *kanoi* (of which *salimali* is currently considered a synonym) is not valid, but should be considered a junior synonym of *kurodae*, which is extremely similar to *pacificus*. Apparently Vaurie's conclusion that *salimali* is a synonym of '*kanoi*' is plainly in error.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Six bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

Singles on two dates – heard only...

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus tsaidamensis*

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

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

12 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Tibetan Grey Shrike *Lanius giganteus*

Two on 26th – we detoured and eventually had prolonged views at close range.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

One on 25th.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

26+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

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

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Tibetan Magpie *Pica bottanensis*

Five on 26th.

***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 on two dates.

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*

83 bird-days. This enigmatic high-altitude specialist was noted on six dates.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

c75 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

Two adults on 30th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

One perched by the highway on 1st...

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

1+ on 1st.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

25+ bird-days. Noted on two days.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Four dates.

Eastern Great Tit *Parus minor*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

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

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubiventris*

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

Songar Tit *Parus songarus affinis*

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***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).

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*

9+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta*

17 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Two on 27th.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

11+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

White-browed Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*

24 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*

Two – including an obliging male – on 1st.

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Long-billed Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*

6+ bird-days. Noted on two dates – three on cue by the side of the road on 30th.

Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*

11 bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

25 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

35+ bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*

Singles on 1st & 2nd – glimpses only...

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus weigoldi*

Three on 28th – incl a singing bird 'scoped!

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

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

'Chinese' Tickell's Warbler *Phylloscopus occisinensis*

52 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***Martens (2008) elevates part of this species to full species status as *P. occisinensis*

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

Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*

28 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

65 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

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

Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

No less than five individuals – we 'scoped one at <10m on 1st.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei mandellii*

89+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) treats both ssp as full species, noting that "although the call of *mandellii* is markedly different from [n 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."

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

47+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Pere David's Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

19 bird-days. Noted on two dates – on 2nd one was heard mimicking the song of Large Hawk Cuckoo.

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*

31 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

16 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates – it proved remarkably difficult to obtain views... in fact it wasn't until we'd with great reluctance thrown in the towel that one appeared!

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates – a pair seen feeding & carrying off food on 27th was a trip highlight: one flew across – yielded views as it did flycatching, spiraling down pursuing a moth round a craggy, grass-tufty rock at a distance of 15-20m in and out of patches of sunlight!

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates – on 2nd an adult was seen feeding a juvenile.
***A species of N Eurasia & N China (see below) – Chinese taxa are *daurica*, *orientalis*, *tianshanica* & *bianchii*.

Daurian Starling *Sturnus sturninus*

One on 25th.

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

14 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*

21 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

19 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*

A determined effort bagged us two males in the South Koko Nor range on 28th.

Siberian Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

32 bird-days. Noted on 'only' two dates – but what views of that singing male!!
***Apparently (L Svensson pers com) birds breeding in NE Qinghai – with a white brow in adult males – are *albocoeruleus*, a long neglected taxon hitherto considered of doubtful validity, but with a song distinct from both *cyanurus*' & *rufilatus*'. It is genetically closer to *cyanurus*, but has legs as long as *rufilatus*'.

Przevalski's Redstart *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

No less than five males & three females on 26th...'arguably the prettiest in the genus'? Oh yes!!

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

69 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

Seven bird-days. This outrageously beautiful species was noted on no less than three dates.

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates – superb views of several males of this sought-after species.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates.

White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates – we spent a loooong time luring a singing male into view only to discover it was an immature in female-type plumage...

River Chat *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

Three bird-days.

Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*

One female on 2nd.

'Siberian' Stonechat *Saxicola 'torquatus'*

Seven - five males & two females - on 28th.

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

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

16 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Nine bird-days.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

One pair showing well on 27th.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*

Three on 1st – we managed to 'scope a singing male!

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates – seeing a 'mixed morph' pair at their nest on 29th was nice...

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

55+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Henri's Snowfinch *Montifringilla henrici*

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

Tibetan (= Himalayan) Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

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

White-rumped Snowfinch *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*

52+ bird-days. Noted on the high plateau on three dates.

Pere David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates – four together, displaying & song-flighting, on 28th...WOW!

Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

48 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

18 bird-days. Noted on two dates - tiny birds in a vast landscape, but with a distinctive call which in the pure Tibetan air carries a surprising distance.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*

36 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Rufous-browed Accentor *Prunella strophiatea*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 15 on 1st...

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*

34 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

One heard on 27th.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba leucopsis*

42 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

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

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Four on 26th.

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

53 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

24 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

Four on 27th.

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Three (a pair + one heard singing) on 28th.

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

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

One heard singing on 2nd...

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

21 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*

44 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Eastern Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

13 bird-days. Noted on two dates – no less than ten on 29th, incl three adult males: great 'scope views. A BINGO!

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Red-fronted Rosefinch *Pyrrhospiza punicea*

Three males & a female on 2nd – TINGALING!

Roborovski's Rosefinch *Kozlowia roborowskii*

11 bird-days. Superb views on two dates – on 29th an adult male was seen offering a female tiny twigs (anything larger being in very short supply at c4,700m!) as part of their display.

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

Five on 1st.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carniceps*

Singles on three dates.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

11 W of Koko Nor on 26th... what a way to put a bogey bird to rest!

Eastern Rock Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

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

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Mammals:

Sequence and taxonomy follows "A Guide to the Mammals of China", Smith & Xie (ed.) 2008.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

12 animal-days. Noted on three dates.

Tibetan Dwarf Hamster *Cricetulus tibetanus*

One [MK] on 29th.

Gansu Pika *Ochotona cansus*

At least four were seen.

Black-lipped (= Plateau) Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*

Widespread on the high plateau – not systematically recorded.

Chinese Red Pika *Ochotona erythrotis*

One on 26th.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*

Eight animal-days. Noted on just two dates.

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

Seven animal-days. Noted on two dates – six together below 'Saker Hill' on 29th was a surprise!

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Singles were seen on three dates.

Kiang *Equus kiang*

Six on 30th.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

Seven animal-days. Noted on two dates.

Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

Seven on 26th.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

59 animal-days. Noted on two dates.

Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur*

36 animal-days. Noted on two dates.