

NE Tibet 4 June – 1 July 2006.

an at-a-glance list of 252 bird species & 14-16 mammal species recorded.

By Jesper Hornskov

[this draft 5 July 2006]

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

This write-up covers a journey in NE Tibet undertaken by C-G Cederlund, S A Hultfeldt, K-L Nilsson, J W Martin, B J Stigh & myself.

Thank you for deciding to join, and for making this trip so enjoyable!

For want of what else to do with Beijing records for the 'pre-tour' day in the Chinese capital these are included. We were all pleased to have taken time to relaxedly walk off the effects of the international flight, rather than press on with a connecting flight out west: having combined with a bit of sightseeing the bagging of a number of species we knew we wouldn't see in NE Tibet we returned to our spotless hotel for a pre-dinner rest, and then enjoyed the first of a number of memorable meals in a private room at a local restaurant.

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 Asian Dowitchers 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 – 3rd Edition* (Dickinson 2003), in my opinion by far the most useful one-volume checklist to date.

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Species List:

Severtzov's Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes sewerzowi*

Five bird-days. Seen on three dates, with one individual seen on two days on the Sichuan border followed by three in a day in Nangqian forest reserve.

Verreaux's Monal Partridge *Tetraophasis obscurus*

12+ bird-days. At least four groups noted over two dates on the Sichuan border. Vigorous reaction – to say the least – to taping produced close-up views for all of us.

Szechenyi's Monal Partridge *Tetraophasis szechenyi*

20+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – 16+ (of which four were seen, one exceedingly well) on 22nd made the contouring worthwhile...

Tibetan Snowcock *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates... four calling birds on 22nd were picked up in flight but only with some difficulty again after they landed on the high slope opposite us; then, however, very acceptable scope views were had by all.

Przevalski's Partridge *Alectoris magna*

4+ bird-days. Noted on two dates. On 8th we arrived at our site early enough to catch them calling and were able to enjoy scope views while having coffee by the vehicles!

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Ten bird-days. Noted on three dates. Three pairs seen on our first afternoon near Xining was a promising start to our Tibetan adventure.

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*

40 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. It was pleasing to repeatedly see this attractively marked, vocal species so well.

Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*

18+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. Scope views for all, but maybe the one sprinting across the grass slope below the Golden Eagle's nest was the one we'll remember?

White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

12+ bird-days. Noted on three dates. Patience paid off when two birds were spotted at a new site on 20th while repeated sightings on 25th neatly rounded off our visit to SE Qinghai.

Blue Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon auritum*

13 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the Sichuan border. Memorable encounters included five birds scoped at c200m whilst moving unhurriedly up the hillside opposite our perch, feeding as they went and occasionally stopping to give their braying territorial call: a dream come true, especially for CGC who 19 years ago (i.e. back when they were far more common than now) visited Sichuan's Jiuzhaigou reserve without getting views... Tingaling!

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

35 bird-days. Noted on six dates, including at Beijing on 4th.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

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

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

411+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. Main event 295 on 27th, many of which were full-grown juveniles.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Five bird-days. Adults were noted on two dates at Koko Nor.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

220+ bird-days. Noted on 14 dates. The nasal honking flight call of this attractive species adds much to the atmosphere of the Tibetan plateau.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

14 bird-days. Noted on two days.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Two drakes and one female at Koko Nor on 7th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

41 bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th. Main event 30 at Koko Nor on 7th.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

Four at Koko Nor on 7th.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

c39 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A fine drake was at Koko Nor on 7th.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

14 bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl on the way back to Xining on 30th.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

c50 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

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

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

10+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates. Excellent views of eight on 7th...

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

145 bird-days. 135 at Koko Nor on 7th & ten en route back to Xining on 30th...

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Persistence paid off when one was finally spotted en route back to Xining on 30th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

29 adults in total, plus at least 29 chicks. Noted on ten dates.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Six bird-days. Two heard at Koko Nor on 30th in addition to those seen at close range in Beijing...

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

260+ bird-days. Noted on four dates. A colony of 80 nests on 27th...

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

52+ bird-days. Noted on three dates, with 15 active nests counted at Koko Nor on 7th.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Seven bird-days at Koko Nor was a surprise: two heard booming (of which one seen) on 7th, and two adults scoped by a nest containing two nearly full-grown chicks & an additional bird heard booming on 30th.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

Two bird-days. One at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th was pleasing if not a great surprise, while one at our 'random' breakfast stop near the Sichuan border on 17th was a good record. The latter appeared only after we'd had a couple of cups of coffee, suddenly flying across to re-bury itself in another *Daphnia* (or *Daphnia* look-alike) bush on the other side of the river.

***Undoubtedly the first record of the species from this under-birded part of Qinghai.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

15 bird-days. 13 at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th, and one at Koko Nor on two dates.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Three at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates at Koko Nor, S of Maduo (seven birds on 18th) & near Gonghe.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

14 at Koko Nor on 30th.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Three bird-days. One at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th was considered a bonus: apparently the singles present S of Maduo on 27th (a 2nd c-y bird) and at Koko Nor on 30th were the first recorded in Tibet.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Five at Koko Nor on 30th.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Five at Heimahe on 7th.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

14 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

11 bird-days. Noted on eight dates – seen N of Xining (incl on 1st, when one perched at close range was one of the highlights of a relaxed morning), en route to the Sichuan border on 12th (one perched

on a wire at c4,400m was rather unexpected!), ON the Sichuan border (two on 15th: CGC), at Nangqian forest reserve (two birds, presumably a breeding pair – one evening they were getting lots of exercise taking turns trying to catch a Fork-tailed Swift above the river...) and at Koko Nor.

Saker *Falco cherrug*

41 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Seeing two adults with their three still-downy chicks on 17th was pretty special.

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Two adults – lost or delayed migrants – near Chaka on 7th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* 10B)

31 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Pallas's Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*

One S of Maduo on 27th – probably a 2nd c-y bird, seen well – was a great bonus.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

33-34 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. One of many memorable encounters concerned an adult several times dropping a shoulder bone on 19th.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

240 bird-days. Noted on 21 dates. 32 birds at a bloated pig carcass in a narrow river near Yushu on 18th made for some interesting close-up views...

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

One over mountains W of Chaka on 8th.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

6-7 bird-days. Noted on five dates. A pair in buckthorn forest, the male display-flying, on 20th was a bit unexpected.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo japonicus*

Singles N of Xining on 6+1st.

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*

7-8 bird-days. Noted on five dates, mainly on the Sichuan border.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

388 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Two 2nd/3rd c-y birds S of Maduo on 27th, following soon after the Pallas' Fish Eagle, had us wondering yet again at how well the clock-wising was working.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

15 bird-days. Noted on six dates. Remarkably, except for the smallish chick in the nest found on 16th all were adults.

Not that we needed further proof that stop-and-wait tactics make sense, but finding the nest of a pair of Golden Eagles really closed the case: after we'd been in place for a while, an adult flew "probably from the nest, perched [for a long while] in a tree hung with Old Man's Beard lichen, then flew along and circled back to land on nest [where its mate was already perched]. Bit of to-ing & fro-ing; brought in a couple of sticks [for nest maintainance]..." That Golden Eagle, seen with crystal clarity through the scope perched in that magnificent, age-old tree, with Blood Pheasants calling below from the safety of deep cover – a vision of a nowadays all too rare, biologically sound environment, vulnerable but

oblivious to the onslaught of humanity.

***Two pairs found at Nangqian forest reserve (CGC, SAH, BJS) were perhaps four kilometers apart. Adjacent pairs occasionally occupy eyries just 800m apart (BWP Vol II, p239)...

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

One dark morph bird soaring over the Xining hills on 5th, mobbed by a Red-billed Chough.

European Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

One at Koko Nor on 7th [CGC].

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

One S of Er La pass on 11th – out in the stream initially, then nearly eluding us as it skulked deep under the stream bank overhang.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Two at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th & one [CGC] at Koko Nor on 7th.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

90+ bird-days. Noted on at Koko Nor; main event c60 on 7th.

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*

33 bird-days. In total, 22 adults were seen, including three pairs with two tiny-to-small chicks each. Two chicks at c3,200m / latitude c37°N were considered to have hatched c20 June. A further two singletons were considered to be incubating.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

29 bird-days. Noted on eight dates. A real 'random stop' bird... but frequently not that easy to spot. We came away from each encounter feeling really privileged, and it was appropriate that the last birds seen on the trip were a pair of adults with two small chicks running free in a flowered-over patch of meadow.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Four at Koko Nor on 7th.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirosta avosetta*

Two at Koko Nor on 7th.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Noted only at Koko Nor with four on 7th & 14 on 30th.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Ten at Koko Nor on 7th.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Four bird-days. Singles noted on four dates.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

21+ bird-days. Noted on five dates. Max count 15+ on 27th, but Main Event clearly the two at c4,600m on 18th, the first seen properly by all of us: initially at the edge of a cold stream, then after a short bout of display-flying alighting in the snow.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

An adult female seen superbly at Koko Nor on 7th looked badly displaced with yaks in the background...

***Apparently the 1st record for China's Qinghai province and – maybe – only the 2nd for Tibet...

"Wollaston (1922) observed this species at close range in 1921 in the Kharta Valley, at an elevation of 17,000 feet, north of Mount Everest, southern Tibet": Vaurie (1972).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

One heard at Koko Nor on 7th.

Western Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

One at Koko Nor on 7th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

98+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One at Koko Nor on 30th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Noted only at Koko Nor, with one on 7th & three on 30th.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Noted only at Heimahe, with ten on 7th & four on 9th.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

One 2nd c-y bird at Koko Nor on 7th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo thibetana*

c87 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

One at Koko Nor on 7th.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

22 at Koko Nor on 7th.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Noted only at Koko Nor with one on 7th & three on 30th.

Tibetan Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes thibetana*

Three birds – a lone female & a pair on 11th. Both sexes were scoped at <50m...if the digital images obtained was of somewhat variable quality it must be down to the relative incompatibility of the group members' cameras with JH's scope rather than the opportunity the birds offered!

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

34 bird-days. Noted on two dates in the Chaka desert: 1st five shooting by in ones and twos at the end of a long day (close enough and in reasonable light, but a woosh-gone sort of encounter), then 28 in about three flocks coming in to land the next day, and finally one right overhead, feather-by-feather in superb light and calling repeatedly!

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*

c884 bird-days. Noted on 21 dates. Main event c550 along Koko Nor on 9th.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*

57 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Plenty of close-up sightings, and a memorable flock of 32 landing in grass by a pretty stream...

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

28+ bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

14 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

One on the Sichuan border on 15th [CGC].

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

At least two in the Beijing area.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparveroides*

One in poplars near Chaka on 7th was a better record than one heard at Beijing's botanical garden on 4th.

***In addition, intermittent calls – both song-type & Nutcracker-call type - heard poorly N of Xining on 1st were thought to be this species rather than its frequent imitator, Pere David's Laughingthrush.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

One heard N of Xining on 6th constituted a 1st for the area (though not for Qinghai province: it may be a regular visitor to the Huang He valley near the Gansu border: JH unpublished). Also noted at Beijing around the hotel, in the botanical gardens & at Summer Palace.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

94 bird-days in Qinghai (and five at Beijing's Summer Palace). Noted on 23 dates. Main event 21 mainly on wires along a fairly short stretch of road near the Sichuan border on 12th.

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo*

One at high altitude on 11th – accidentally flushed, then relocated after some searching thanks to the mobbing attentions of some Eastern Great Rosefinches.

Pere David's Owl *Strix davidi*

One heard at Nangqian forest reserve at c02h10 on 24th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

16 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Lots at Koko Nor on 7th (800+ first heading W in a Weather Evasion Movement; then feeding) & 1-c15 on seven other days (plus some at Beijing where the species is a common breeder).

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*

90 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. One outflow two Hobbies on 20th & c20 glittered in a shaft of sunlight near their colony on 25th...

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

39 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

Northern Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

One near Gonghe on 9th.

***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.].

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker *Hypopicus hyperythrus*

One along the Sichuan border road on 15th [CGC].

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Singles seen on three dates near the Sichuan border. Also three in the Beijing area.

Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus*

One in Nangqian forest reserve on 22nd.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*

18 bird-days. Noted N of Xining on 6th (a 1st for the area despite reasonable coverage) & on seven dates on the Sichuan border and in Nangqian forest reserve.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

Nine bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*

Ten bird-days. 1-3 noted on four dates on the Sichuan border.

Tiger Shrike *Lanius tigrinus*

One present on the Sichuan border on 14+16th.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

Three near Chaka on 8th.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

111 bird-days. Noted on 21 dates. One flying along carrying an obviously too-heavy rodent on 16th...

Tibetan Grey Shrike *Lanius (sphenocercus) giganteus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates, with a pair with two nearly full-grown fledglings at c3,850m near Yushu being a noteworthy record – and all the more appreciated in view of our 'regular' pair having failed to be present...

***An odd rolled, nuthatch-ey twitter was heard from two interacting adults.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*

Two in poplar shelterbelts on 7th – the washed-out nape band on the one seen well suggested it was a 2nd c-y bird. In addition, singles at Beijing on 4th.

***Possibly the 1st record for Tibet (and China's Qinghai province): the only *Oriolus* included by Vaurie (1974) for Tibet was Eurasian Golden Oriole *O. oriolus*. Cheng (1987) recorded Black-naped Oriole for Lanzhou, Gansu.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Four bird-days in Qinghai. Noted on three dates, in addition to one at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th.

Sichuan Jay *Perisoreus internigrans*

20 bird-days. 2-12 birds were noted on three dates on the Sichuan border. Being another much-delayed lifer for at least one group member it was gratifying that a flock was scoped early on on our first full day (one which skipped along from highlight to highlight); as memorable - and perhaps producing a longer-lasting ornithological high – was the family party of four, the juveniles black-billed, encountered deep in the forest on our last morning in the area.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

One immaculately plumaged bird came down to drink from a puddle in front of us at Gonghe on 29th, apparently a 1st for the area. Also a few in the Beijing area...

Common Magpie *Pica pica*

13 bird-days. Noted on six dates in Qinghai.

Tibetan Magpie *Pica (pica) bottanensis*

47 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates near Chaka... we even found a nest!

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*

200 bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

330 bird-days. Noted on 25 dates.

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 14 on Kanda Shan on 24th.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

126 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates. Repeated encounters with this attractive little corvid...

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

21 bird-days. Seen near Xining on 30+1st.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

c20 bird-days. Noted on seven dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

c43 bird-days. Noted on ten dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

26 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Great Tit *Parus (major) minor* & *P. (major) tibetanus*

22 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates at Beijing, N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

***Both taxa belong with *P. minor*, one of 3-4 'Great Tit' species in China.

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*

39 bird-days. Noted on nine dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris hellmayri*

One at Beijing botanical gardens on 4th.

Songar Tit *Parus songarus*

36 bird-days. Noted on ten dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*

24 bird-days. Noted on six dates. Two birds carrying food seen next to the road during our breakfast stop on 26th were even sitting up on wires in their efforts to divert our attention from the also-present Tibetan Partridges & Snow Pigeons!

Grey Crested Tit *Parus dichrous*

32+ bird-days. Noted on seven days on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta*

c146 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Ten bird-days. Strays were noted on four dates at Koko Nor, Rubber Mt & near the Sichuan border.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

63 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. A noteworthy and spectacular display by two birds cartwheeling with fanned tails, butterfly-like, and apparently attempting aerial copulation was witnessed on 25th...

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

190 bird-days. Up to 35 birds noted on 15 dates. Several nest sites were seen.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

42 bird-days in Qinghai: noted on six dates. In addition, at least ten were over Beijing botanical garden on 4th.

White-browed Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*

12 bird-days. Noted on six dates. Encounters included a nest-building pair <50m from where an active nest was video'd by group members in 2005. A real Dreambird!

Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve. I have leafed through the dictionary to find a superlative which fully does this jewel justice – in vain!

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

16 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Long-billed Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*

50 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*

20 bird-days. Noted on five dates. Satisfying views were had of this subtly plumaged speciality... One S of Yushu on 20th was a surprise.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

One near Gonghe on 9th.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Common on the Plateau – not systematically recorded.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Common on the Plateau – not systematically recorded.

Chinese Bush Warbler *Bradypterus tacsanowskii*

Four singing N of Xining on 6th were all in new locations. Two were taped into view, the 1st one with considerable difficulty – but well worth the effort!

Oriental Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*

14 at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th. Hard-to-beat views...

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

Five at Beijing on 4th.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates. One heard singing en route to the Sichuan border on 12th was in an unusual location.

Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*

81 bird-days. Noted on 11 days.

Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*

127 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

Buff-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*

114+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve. Main event 43 on 22nd.

Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

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

Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

One scoped singing N of Xining on 6th, allowing us all to personally clinch the ID field mark by field mark. It was going full tilt even before we got the tape-recorder out and then obliged – with really only very little 'urging' - by singing on and on from a spruce right in front of us... being slightly outside the species' regular breeding range the bird may have been delighted to at last have a rival to repel?

Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*

157+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

154+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates N of Xining (main event 58 on 1st), at Koko Nor, near the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

Two at Beijing on 4th.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

265 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates N of Xining (main event 29 on 1st), at Koko Nor, near the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

Desert Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia minula margelanica*

A pair seen very well bringing food to their nest on 29th.

Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates at Nangqian forest reserve – 4-5 pairs present. Good views of this charismatic species were had by all group members.

***1st records for Qinghai apparently in 2000: JH *et al.*

Kozlov's Babax *Babax koslowi*

11+ bird-days. Noted on two dates S of Yushu.

Knowing the often subdued call is the key to finding this frequently extremely skulking, localized species: this time, noises heard from the moving vehicle on 20th had us seeing a pair sitting out singing in a new site (which also yielded White Eared Pheasant!) at the very edge of the species' range.

Pere David's Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

Eight bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax maximus*

116 bird-days. Noted on ten dates on the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

A species with 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*

341+ bird-days. Noted on 13 dates N of Xining, near the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

Chinese Fulvetta *Alcippe striaticollis*

Five bird-days. Noted on four dates on the Sichuan border and S of Yushu.

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.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*

Four at Beijing's botanical garden on 4th afforded excellent views: one pair was carrying nest material.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

42 bird-days. Noted on nine dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

26 bird-days. Noted on six dates on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates N of Xining. On 6th we'd barely finished the proverbial coffee-by-the-roadside before one was posing for the scope...

Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*

20 bird-days (involving at least 17 different individuals). Noted on seven dates. Another TINGALING!-species.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

Six bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Two breeding pairs found – a not-so-random coffee stop on 28th had us watching two birds at their nest: for some reason, the male did a cartwheeling look-at-me display, tail fanned and wings spread to maximise surface area, before parachuting down to land 3-5m from the nest and then taking time to approach it, stopping to feed (or mock feed) in rock cracks on the way. The female flew in and remained in the nest during a couple of visits by the male, reemerging only after we'd begun to wonder,

despite the obvious impossibility of it, if she might have exited by a back door.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Ten bird-days. Noted on five dates on the Sichuan border, S of Yushu & N of Xining.

*****Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristellatus*

One at Beijing's botanical gardens on 4th. Presumed feral.

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*

14 yielded fine views at Beijing's Summer Palace on 4th.

Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*

Nine bird-days (involving seven individuals noted on five dates). Excellent scope views of a singing bird on 14th...

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

20 bird-days. Noted on seven dates N of Xining & on the Sichuan border.

Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*

171 bird-days. Noted on 14 dates.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

44 bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining and – unexpectedly – near Koko Nor (where a singing male obliged by sitting out repeatedly).

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*

15 bird-days. Noted on three dates. It was a surprise to find the species absent from a regular site near Koko Nor, but the 'miss' made 13 birds in an hour later on all the sweeter.

Himalayan Red-flanked Blotail *Tarsiger rufilatus*

98 bird-days. Noted on nine dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve. It was a real privilege to watch a pair at their nest on 21st.

***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 are consistent differences in song between birds in NE Qinghai and those in the SE.

Przevalski's Redstart *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

Three – two males and one female – were enjoyed by all on 8th.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

210+ bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

70 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

84 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates - main event 22 on 15th.

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

18+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. Of particular note was the pair in the hotel yard...

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

18 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*

14 bird-days. Noted on six dates. A male scoped singing fully exposed for 20 minutes on 25th was a reversal of our luck with the species.

Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa*

Good views of three N of Xining on 6th was a bonus.

River Chat *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

82 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates N of Xining, on the Sichuan border (main event 29 on 12th) & S of Yushu.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

One male on 9th.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

19 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Three males near Xining on 5th.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Eight bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica rothschildi*

14 bird-days. Noted on five dates on the Sichuan border (main event five en route on 12th) & at Nangqian forest reserve (main event five on 22nd).

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

Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*

Eight – seven males & one female – at Beijing's botanical garden on 4th. Wow!

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*

c109 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates N of Xining (main event three on 1st), on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

18 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Several all-brown morph birds were seen, including one with a 'normal' bird doing the penguin-type display on 26th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus bactrianus*

A flock of 32 in poplar shelterbelts on 7th.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*

One male seen well in buckthorn forest on 20th was apparently the first recorded for Qinghai.

***Nearest previously known site for the species is c150kms away, in Xizang "Autonomous" Region (JH pers obs) – the species appears to be undergoing a range expansion in E China (JH pers obs).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Common – not systematically recorded.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

42 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. Prolonged scope views on several occasions...

Henri's Snowfinch *Montifringilla henrici*

56 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Himalayan Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*

58 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. Rather plain on the ground but spectacular in flight, this species is blessed with no less four English names...

White-rumped Snowfinch *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*

74 bird-days. Noted on eight dates. Five chicks popped out of a Pika burrow, one after another, to welcome the parent pair arriving with food on 28th [CGC]...

Pere David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana*

Five bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates. Having had satisfying encounters already we prioritized putting a dusty stretch of road behind us rather than go for a walk to boost the count...

Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

204+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates S of Yushu.

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*

44 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. A nest containing three turquoise eggs was found near Er La [CGC].

Rufous-browed Accentor *Prunella strophia*

25 bird-days. Noted on five dates N of Xining (where a pair performed an interesting mating display on 6th), near Koko Nor & at the Nangqian forest reserve.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*

29 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*

Three bird-days near Koko Nor (two on 7th & one - of the same, probably - on 9th) in addition to one heard at Beijing's botanical garden on 4th.

***Probably no more than five previous records for Tibet.

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

One male showing breeding behaviour near Gonghe on 29th most closely resembled ssp *thunbergi*.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

26 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Birds near Gonghe on 29th put on a particularly good show.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

One near Yushu on 18th [SAH].

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

147 bird-days (68 *leucopsis* & 79 *alboides*). Noted on 21 dates.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

12 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

25 bird-days. Noted on ten dates N of Xining, near Koko Nor, on the Sichuan border & S of Yushu.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseus*

Four bird-days: one on Rubber Mt & three N of Yushu (on 18th).

Tibetan Siskin *Serinus thibetanus*

Seven bird-days. Noted only on the Sichuan border with one heard on 14th & six (including song-fighting birds – the song brings to mind Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* & Plain Mountain Finch) on 16th. Finding a couple of obliging individuals near the bottom of the hill we'd just climbed brought a pleasant morning to a satisfying conclusion.

***Cheng (1987) did not list the species for Qinghai though it is regular on the Sichuan border (JH pers obs).

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*

25 bird-days. Noted on eight dates, incl at Beijing's botanical garden (eight birds). One at Wenquan on 10th was a surprise.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Five N of Xining on 6th.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

324+ bird-days. Noted on 14 dates.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

33 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

189+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Main event 168+ on 17th.

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

c20 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event c15 coming down to drink in groups of up to five birds near Chaka on 8th.

Desert Finch *Rhodospiza obsoleta*

A nest-building pair near Koko Nor on 7th: the female kept bringing in strands of wool while the male sat out for us to enjoy. The pair was not present during a brief check two days later.

Long-tailed Rosefinch *Uragus sibiricus*

Three bird-days on the Sichuan border: a pair on 13th & the female seen again on 15th.

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

19 bird-days. Noted on three days. Main event 12 birds (six pairs – song-fighting, calling, nest-building!) on 9th, but perhaps equally exciting that the two other sites were new...

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

68 bird-days. Noted on 14 dates.

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

33 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Pink-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus eos*

136+ bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

Sinai Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus*

Three near Xining on 5th. A locally decreasing species but we had barely got out of the cars before a splendid male appeared!

Three-banded Rosefinch *Carpodacus trifasciatus*

10-11 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the Sichuan border & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*

119 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. Many subsequent encounters with this fairly common and often obliging species failed to erase the memory of a lovely male coming down to drink from a small artificial pool intended for some shepherd's goats...

Eastern Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

33 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

***A male song-flighting on 28th – at the very least highly unusual behavior.

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates. Of particular interest was a superb male which tried to pass itself off as a Tree Sparrow on 18th, hopping along the main street and actually nearly entering one of the hole-in-the-wall shops: unbeatable views but the circumstances left a lot to be desired!

Red-fronted Rosefinch *Pyrrhospiza punicea*

27 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 19 on 26th.

Roborovski's Rosefinch *Kozlowia roborowskii*

16-17 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Superb sightings included a pair with two juveniles & a female with two juveniles on 11th (which with nine birds was the best for the species, at least in terms of numbers), and two nest-building pairs on 28th.

Crimson-browed Finch *Pinicola subhimachala*

Seven bird-days. Five birds recorded over three dates...

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

6+ bird-days. Noted on three dates at Nangqian forest reserve & N of Xining.

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

58 bird-days. Noted on N of Xining, on the Sichuan border (main event 15 on 13th) & at Nangqian forest reserve.

Chinese Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*

Four seen at close range at Beijing's botanical garden on 4th was a bonus.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carniceps*

72 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. Main event 26 on 8th.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

15 on 8th included several fine males at close range.

Eastern Rock Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*

117 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*

Three near Xining on 5th. One in a field across the valley was identifiable – indeed discernible – only thanks to recently updated optical equipment; later, much better views were obtained...

Kozlov's Bunting *Emberiza koslowi*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates – four males & one female: both sexes seen extremely well!
Tingaling!

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

11 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event eight males N of Xining on 6th; also recorded near Koko Nor on 7+9th (probably the same male on both dates) & at Gonghe.

Mammals:

Wolf *Canis lupus*

Three seen. One on 9th offered extended views at <200m – hopped over a fence with no effort, then stopped a couple of times to snoop and investigate – while two at their kill (a yak) scoped on a hillside on 12th eventually surrendered to the gathering vultures, which were subsequently chased off by a couple of Tibetan herders.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Singles at Koko Nor on 7+30th.

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

Nine animal-days. Noted on four dates.

*****Alpine Weasel** *Mustela altaica*

A *Mustela* seen on 24th [CGC] was most likely this species.

*****Chinese Ferret-Badger** *Melogale moschata*

An animal seen on 13th may have been this species.

Kiang *Equus kiang*

62 animal-days. Noted on four dates – one of 35 counted on 27th was at <200m from the road, offering extended viewing.

Alpine Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster*

One on 13th was scoped by the whole group.

Tufted Deer *Elaphodus cephalophus*

A deer seen well on 15th was tentatively identified as this species. The image on <http://www.worlddeer.org/tufteddeer.html> seems to fully support this ID of a species which is listed for the area by Zhang *et al.* (1997).

***In addition, a deer seen briefly on 13th was initially assumed to be Alpine Musk Deer but could have been Tufted Deer.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

Four near Koko Nor on 9th.

Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

Three on 8th.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

319 animal-days. This graceful browser was noted on seven dates. Three S of Yushu on 19th was somewhat unexpected.

Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur*

113 animal-days. Noted on four dates.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

Common in some areas – not systematically recorded.

Black-lipped Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*

Common in certain areas.

Cape Hare *Lepus capensis*

One near Xining on 5th.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*

Fairly common in certain areas.