

# **Limosa / Field Guides China & Tibetan Plateau tour.**

*By Jesper Hornskov*

*[this draft 21 Oct 2005]*

## ***An at-a-glance list of the 288 species identified***

This write-up covers the 17 September – 1 October 2005 Limosa/ Field Guides trip to Beidaihe, Happy Island & the Tibetan Plateau.

Group members were R Ertel, L Flint, H & W Keith, J & R Leppard, A Orme, R Smith, G Tapsell, P Tapsell, A Taylor, J Vandergaast (Field Guides), M Warburton & myself.

Thank you for making this trip so enjoyable!

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.

For information about tours in the area (and elsewhere in China) please contact the author at:

Bei Ling 3 Qu  
Building no. 1 Apartment 3-402  
Beidaihe 066100  
Hebei Province  
China

Tel/fax +86 335 403 4587 / mobile +86 135 1335 9831

E-mail [goodbird\(at\)heinfo.net](mailto:goodbird@heinfo.net) or [goodbird\(at\)vip.sina.com](mailto:goodbird@vip.sina.com)

### **Daurian Partridge** *Perdix dauurica*

13 out in a bare field near Xining on 25<sup>th</sup>.

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

At least one adult with four juveniles near Heimahe on 28<sup>th</sup>, and c10 (RE) in the same general area the next day.

### **Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*

28-29 bird-days. One at the Beidaihe reservoir on 20<sup>th</sup>, and 5-10 daily on Happy Island.

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

34 bird-days. Noted on five dates – the Genuine Article...

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis*

Two flew S over Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>, somewhat ahead of schedule.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*

Seven bird-days at Koko Nor: three on 26<sup>th</sup>, and four on 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

55+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on three dates.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Two adults on the shore of Koko Nor on 29<sup>th</sup>. Initially resting - white lumps with graceful, curvy necks draped over them – the birds finally woke up and allowed us to eliminate the much less likely Mute Swan *C. olor*.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*

c1,225+ bird-days. Noted on five dates, with 500-600 present in the Happy Island high tide roost an impressive sight. Farther W one was at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*

121+ bird-days. One on Happy Island on 22<sup>nd</sup> (AT) was about as early as one might hope to see one. At Koko Nor 50-70+ noted on two dates.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

36+ bird-days. One in with other ducks at Happy Island on 24<sup>th</sup>, and 15+ & c20 on two dates at Koko Nor.

**Falcated Duck** *Anas falcate*

82 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast. Main event 64 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup> – fly-bys first, then some landing close by and allowing us to get to grips with this subtly distinctive (in eclipse plumage), sought-after duck.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

189+ bird-days. Noted on five dates. Main event c100 at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

138 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

**Chinese Spotbill** *Anas zonorhyncha* 1)

1,300+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Up to 450+ daily on Happy Island provided quite a spectacle, while a few birds at Koko Nor on 26+28<sup>th</sup> took more finding.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

91+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. A quickly vanishing first en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup> was fortunately followed by many more... At Koko Nor there were even some drakes in (nearly!) full plumage.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

550+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates. 9-35 daily on Happy Island, and some 200 at Koko Nor on 28+29<sup>th</sup>.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula*

48+ bird-days. 1-15 birds noted on seven dates.

**Baikal Teal** *Anas formosa*

71 bird-days. Noted on four dates, with 11 en route to & 11-20 daily on Happy Island. Satisfying views of this near-mythical bird were had by all: first five came in with Pintails to <100m and *nearly* landed, showing the head- and wing-pattern very clearly in superb light; then two did land, allowing us extended scope views as they sat on the water with three Falcated Ducks. A Palearctic Mega-kick!

**Common Teal** *Anas crecca*

6,059+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates, with main events 1,850+ on Happy Island on 23rd & 1,500+ at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>. Flocks over Happy Island were particularly impressive but hard to keep track of as they attempted to keep away from one or two temporarily resident Peregrines, as well as from shrimp pond workers occasionally showing up in their three-wheeler to do whatever it is shrimp pond workers do in late September.

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

1,235+ bird-days. Noted on three dates at Koko Nor.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

25+ bird-days. 2+-15 noted on three dates at Koko Nor.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

19+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on three dates, with particularly nice views obtained on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

49+ bird-days. 3-c30 noted at Koko Nor on three dates.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

c36 bird-days. 1-30 noted at Koko Nor on three dates.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

16+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on three dates.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

One at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 2)

69 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

48+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. Main event a modest 20+ at Koko Nor on 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

29+ bird-days at Koko Nor. Just 5+ remained on 29<sup>th</sup> (JV *et al.*) but one was in summer plumage...

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*

One juvenile at Koko Nor on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

16 bird-days. 12 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>, and probably just two individuals (an adult and a juvenile) at Koko Nor on 26+29<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

79 bird-days: 37 heading off over Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>, and 42 the following day.

Birds heard over the huts after dark left one going to bed pondering if conservation money might not more usefully be spent on wetland conservation in Asia than in generating Bittern habitat in Britain. Be that as it may, the birds were clearly flying high and calling much less frequently than at the beginning of their flight (which on 21<sup>st</sup> started late in the afternoon rather than at dusk), and given that migratory parties of 2-5 birds seem to be the norm most likely 30 or more Bitterns passed within hearing distance during half an hour under those magnificent stars... Let your viewpoint imaginatively soar into space, Earth's curvature at the edge of your field of vision, and watch those countless radar screen blips appear quite suddenly at about the moment when a human eye can barely discern a silhouette against the darkening sky, each representing a secretive Bittern emerging from its daytime bed of reeds, emitting an occasional honk to call up travel companions, nothing more, and head south in a hidden, almost completely unrecorded flow.

**Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*

One S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup>, and 5+ heard migr over Happy Island in the early evening of 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

125 bird-days. Noted on the coast on seven dates. Main event a flock of 65 heading off over Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*

One near the Beidaihe reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup> (RE, JH).

**Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus*

25 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast, mostly at/near Beidaihe.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* 3)

42+ S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup>, and nine near the Happy Island ferry harbour on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

c212 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Main event 90 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

61+ bird-days. Noted on four dates. An obvious Grey Heron parked further along the same embankment, much more obvious than our first, blend-in cinnamon Purple, caused some raised eyebrows initially ("looks like a standard Grey to me, ahem!")... Later in the afternoon, flocks of 12, 13 & 15 heading off over Happy Island was a good count.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

62 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast, with up to 18 present in the Sandflats / Reservoir area, and 14 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup> being of note.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

c183 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Main event c85 in the Beidaihe Sandflats / Reservoir area on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

c326 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

No less than 14 in desert poplars W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup> amounted to a major surprise.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

56 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. Mostly scattered ones and twos, but notably also 17 in desert poplars W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis*

37 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. 28 birds on 18<sup>th</sup> on the drive from Beijing to Beidaihe was the main event, though a single female on a wire W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup> was more unusual.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

Three bird-days: a female at Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>, and two birds around desert shelterbelts W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

48-50 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. At least 14 birds on 19<sup>th</sup> included some 8-10 over the Great Wall zooming this way and that, and quite impossible to keep track of!

**Saker** *Falco cherrug*

Two bird-days. Singles on 27+29<sup>th</sup>.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Six bird-days. 1-2 noted daily on Happy Island, quite possibly involving no more than two individuals.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

One S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup> patiently put up with mobbing attention by gulls...

**Oriental Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

36 bird-days. Noted on five dates, with cracking views of a number of adult and juvenile birds both over Happy Island on 24<sup>th</sup> (when 18 were recorded) & near Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* 4)

Three bird-days. Singles on 20+26+27<sup>th</sup>.

**Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*

A juvenile was present at Koko Nor over 28-29<sup>th</sup>.

**Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

Noted on Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup> (four birds) & 29<sup>th</sup> (one bird).

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*

24 bird-days. Main event 21 over Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup> – many of which at point-blank range.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*

Three bird-days. Single juveniles identified at Koko Nor on three dates.

**Eastern Marsh Harrier** *Circus spilonotus*

55 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Main event 17 mostly migr over Happy Island on 24<sup>th</sup>, displaying a baffling range of plumages. Also two at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>, alongside a Western....

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Nine bird-days on the Plateau, where 1-4 noted daily.

**Pied Harrier** *Circus melanoleucos*

13 bird-days. 3-4 noted on four dates on the coast included a couple of fine, adult males at close range.

**Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis*

78 bird-days. 7-30 birds noted on five dates on the coast, allowing everyone to get to grips with its ID features.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

55 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. Main event 12 mostly migr over Happy Island on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**\*\*\*Sparrowhawk sp**

Five at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> & one S of Beidaihe the next day.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentiles*

Six bird-days: 1-2 daily on Happy Island, and one over desert shelterbelts W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup> (AT).

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo* 5)

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau, with main event 14 migr N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*

12 bird-days. 1-7 noted daily on the Plateau, the species being pretty much the 1<sup>st</sup> recorded on our post-arrival afternoon outing near Xining – an powerful, lumbering buzzard...

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

One juvenile over the barren mountains W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Nine bird-days. Seven dark morph birds migr N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>, and singles over Chaka town & over the desert shelterbelts on 27<sup>th</sup>, also dark morph birds.

**Ruddy-breasted Crake** *Porzana fusca*

One near the Beidaihe reservoir on 20<sup>th</sup> (GT).

**Watercock** *Gallicrex cinerea*

One on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup> got adrenaline flowing: rarely an easy bird to see, and out of place and out of season to boot, this one got written in with capital letters AND underlined!

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*

Ten bird-days. 1-4 noted on four dates on the coast.

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*

210+ bird-days. 100+ on two dates at Koko Nor, and 10+ en route to Xining airport.

**Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo*

c890 bird-days. Unusually seen on just one day – 27<sup>th</sup> – with a flock of c800 heading off at 10h55, and later a flock of 90 over the road directly above vehicle II which had stopped for photos...

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

Eight bird-days, involving five birds: a pair with one juvenile seen on two dates, and two adults. A Tibetan Plateau endemic breeder always great to see, and this year especially welcome as it completed the crane set for one of us.

**Yellow-legged Buttonquail** *Turnix tanki*

Three bird-days. Singles on three dates on the coast.

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Five over Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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

16 bird-days. 1-10 noted on four dates on the mainland.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirosta avocetta*

c348 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Main event c200 in the Happy Island high tide roost on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

43+ bird-days. 3-14+ noted on four dates.

**Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*

1,175+ bird-days. Noted on six dates on the coast – main event c705 migr on 20<sup>th</sup>, incl a flock of 140 in off the sea at Sandflats containing also three Falcated Ducks.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*

60 bird-days. Noted on six dates on the coast. Main event 28 over Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>, but five on our 1<sup>st</sup> afternoon on the Beidaihe Sandflats made a greater impression.

**Grey Plover** *Vanellus squatarola*

c312 bird-days. Single-digit numbers at Beidaihe Sandflats on each visit were eclipsed by up to 210 in the Happy Island wader roost.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*

Nine bird-days. 1-5 were noted on four dates on the coast.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

498+ bird-days. Noted daily on the coast – main events 200 at Sandflats on 20<sup>th</sup> & 150+ in the Happy Island wader roost on 22<sup>nd</sup>. On the Plateau one at Koko Nor on 28+29<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*

One en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Singles at Beidaihe reservoir on 19<sup>th</sup> & on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*

One over Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

20 bird-days. 1-6 noted on six dates on the coast, and one at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

13 bird-days at Koko Nor: 12 on 26<sup>th</sup> & one on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa melanuroides* 6)

24 bird-days. 3-11 noted on three dates on the coast.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*

16+ bird-days. Noted on three dates at Beidaihe, with 1+-9 birds on each visit to Sandflats.

**Little Whimbrel** *Numenius minutus*

A distant bird flying with Pacific Golden Plovers on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

15 bird-days. Noted on five dates on the coast, mainly at Beidaihe Sandflats.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

1,825+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates on the coast, with up to 1,000+ in the Happy Island wader roost predictably eclipsing the ones and twos seen on the mainland.

**Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*

13 bird-days. Identified only on the mainland, with 1-6 birds on four dates, some of which showing beautifully...

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

218+ bird-days. Noted on five dates, with 170 en route on 21<sup>st</sup> as main event. At Koko Nor 30 on 26<sup>th</sup> & six on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

11+ bird-days at Koko Nor. Main event 10+ on 26<sup>th</sup>...

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*

c283 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast, with main events 160 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup> & c100 there on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

40 bird-days. Noted on eight dates, incl at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

Six bird-days. 1-3 noted on three dates on the coast.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

Seven bird-days. 1-2 noted on four dates.

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*

Two bird-days. Singles at Beidaihe Sandflats on 19<sup>th</sup> & on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates in the Beidaihe area.

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Heteroscelus brevipes* P

Three bird-days. One obliging bird at Beidaihe noted on 19+20<sup>th</sup>, and a different bird in flight S of the town on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*

42 bird-days. A juvenile seen very well on the Beidaihe Sandflats on the afternoon of our arrival did well in the competition for attention (also-rans were various gulls) – seeing up to 40 swirling away over the Happy Island wader roost just didn't make the same impression!

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

Two at Beidaihe Sandflats on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*

c12 bird-days. Noted on two dates, with two on the Beidaihe Sandflats on 20<sup>th</sup>, and great views of c10 en route to Happy Island the following day.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*

Five bird-days. 1-2 juvenile birds noted on 18+19+21<sup>st</sup>. Two en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup> showed particularly well.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

67 bird-days. 1-21 noted on six dates on the coast.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus*

One en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>. It was a bonus to see it so well.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

Two at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*

28 bird-days. 1-10 noted on five days on the coast, with instructive views of several individuals.

**Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris*

159 bird-days. Up to 60 birds were noted daily on the coast. Watching this piratical (and mean-eyed, piratical-looking!), distinctive and easily identified species was a welcome relief after becoming stickily entangled in "Great White-headed" Gull ID.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus* 7)

27 bird-days. Noted on each visit to the Beidaihe Sandflats, with numbers rising from three on 18<sup>th</sup> to 14 (all adults) on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Vega Gull** *Larus vegae* 8)

375 bird-days. Noted on seven dates on the coast, with main events 110 on 19<sup>th</sup> & 160 on 20<sup>th</sup> at Beidaihe Sandflats. Among the latter were, some two weeks ahead of schedule, two adults of the nominate form: other adults (the majority of those seen) showed the characters of ssp *birulae*.

**'Yellow-legged Gull'** *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus* 9)

Four bird-days. 1-2 birds noted on three dates on the coast were all in 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> calendar-year plumage.

**Heuglin's Gull** *Larus heuglini taimyrensis* 10)

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast. All but one were 1<sup>st</sup> calendar-year birds.

**\*\*\*"Great White-headed" Gull sp.**

On 19<sup>th</sup> a very dark-mantled adult gull on the Beidaihe Sandflats showed pale pink legs... maybe a hybrid?

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

55 bird-days. 10-25 birds were noted on three dates at Koko Nor. Another Palearctic Mega-kick was seeing pretty much the full range of plumages of this enigmatic species.

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

23 bird-days. 3-10 noted on three dates at Koko Nor.

**Common Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

2,000+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Main event 1,000+ en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>; also three in total for Koko Nor, where the species is relatively scarce.

**Saunders's Gull** *Larus saundersi*

19 bird-days. 4-9 noted on three dates around Happy Island.

\*\*\*With a world population of perhaps no more than 3,000 birds, this supremely graceful gull is reliably sighted on visits to Happy Island.

**Relict Gull** *Larus relictus*

77 bird-days. Six 1<sup>st</sup>-winter birds at Beidaihe on the afternoon of our arrival offered memorable views after we'd wandered across to follow up a report of Saunders' Gull! The Happy Island roost yielded 71 birds (seven 1<sup>st</sup>-winters, the rest older birds) the only time we tried. Wow!

**Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan*

An adult on the Beidaihe Sandflats on our first afternoon was a complete surprise, being only the 2<sup>nd</sup> ever for China.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*

50 bird-days. Noted on four dates on Happy Island.

**Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*

32+ bird-days. Noted on six dates on the coast, with 15 around the Happy Island high tide roost being the main event. The species' far-carrying calls, along with those of Chinese Grey Shrike's, can be heard throughout the island at the time of our visit.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

Five bird-days: three on Happy Island on 22<sup>nd</sup>, and singles at Koko Nor on 26+29<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

Six bird-days. 1-2 birds noted on the coast on three dates, and – unusually – one at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

40 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event 29 en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>. 1-2 on two dates at Koko Nor were not entirely unexpected...

**White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on five dates. Main event six, all juveniles, at Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Blue Hill Pigeon** *Columba rupestris*

66+ bird-days. Noted on the Plateau on four dates – main event 35+ on 29<sup>th</sup>, all parked up nicely on a bank <50m from our bus...

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

104 bird-days. Noted on seven days, incl with 9-24 daily on Happy Island frequently providing opportunities to scrutinize this vagrant to the Western Palearctic.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Seven bird-days. Three en route to Beidaihe on 18<sup>th</sup>, and four in desert shelterbelts on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

Two bird-days. A superb adult on a wire caused us to take a break on the drive to Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup>; later a juvenile in the desert shelterbelts were joined by a Collared Dove – except for the tail length they proved pretty similar!

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

Two at Great Wall, Shanhaiguan, on 19<sup>th</sup>, and one in hotel gardens in Beijing on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Cuculus sparveroides*

Two bird-days. Singles on 19+24<sup>th</sup>. Briefish views of the Beidaihe reservoir bird was followed by an eye-feast after an excellent bit of re-finding by JV! Possibly no previous autumn records at Beidaihe and a hard bird to see well anywhere...

**Northern Hawk-Cuckoo** *Cuculus hyperythrus* 11)

An adult in flight on our first afternoon on Happy Island seemed a hard act to follow, but we were in sync with the flow of migrants...

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Six bird-days. 1-2 noted on five dates on the coast. A juvenile at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> stayed around for a while, allowing us good looks through the scopes.

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus*

Two bird-days. Singles on 19<sup>th</sup> (an adult at Great Wall) & 24<sup>th</sup>.

**\*\*\*Cuckoo sp.**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> a possible Lesser Cuckoo *C. poliocephalus* regrettably gave us the slip in Happy Island's Temple Woods.

**Oriental Scops Owl** *Otus sunia*

One heard singing near our hotel on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

Six bird-days. Singles on six dates. One on a roof S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup> allowed us all scope views.

**Brown Hawk-Owl** *Ninox scutulata*

One on Happy Island on our first afternoon – and think: the number of birds in the general area almost prevented us from getting into that small stand of trees!

**White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus*

23 over the Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> was a bonus.

**Dollarbird** *Eurystomus orientalis*

One over Happy Island on our 1<sup>st</sup> afternoon was a late straggler.

**Black-capped Kingfisher** *Halcyon pileata*

One at Beidaihe on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

Five bird-days. Singles on five dates included one living dangerously on Happy Island, letting itself be chased down a canal by a fast-flying Japanese Sparrowhawk each late afternoon.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

17+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

**Northern Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Singles on Happy Island on 23+24<sup>th</sup>, the latter sitting right out at <15m.

**Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** *Hypopicus hyperythrus*

One in the Beijing hotel's garden on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Five bird-days. Three at Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup> & in the Beijing hotel's garden on 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

Nine bird-days. Noted at Great Wall, at the Beidaihe reservoir, and in spruce forest N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>. Often a hard bird to see well, but for some reason – or no reason at all? – all three birds on our last field day sat out in treetops allowing great scope looks.

**Ashy Minivet** *Pericrocotus divaricatus*

Ten bird-days. 1-7 noted on three dates on the coast.

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*

20+ bird-days. Noted on six dates, incl 2-5+ daily on Happy Island.

**Chinese Grey Shrike** *Lanius sphenocercus* 12)

27-29 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Main event 10-11 on 21<sup>st</sup>, when fairly common en route to Happy Island. Also seven in total on the Plateau... A good bird made better by the near-certainty of not seeing any if you visit the coast in May or the Plateau in summer!

**Tibetan Grey Shrike** *Lanius (s.) giganteus* 13)

One on Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup>. The bird seen in the same area by the 2004 Limosa / Field Guides group was JH's 1<sup>st</sup> for that site – in terms of how difficult this low-density taxon can be to find even in the core of its range certainly one of the Most Special birds seen on the trip.

**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis*

15 bird-days. 1-7 noted on no less than five dates on the coast included scope views of at least one glowing male.

**\*\*\*Oriole sp.**

One on a fence en route to Koko Nor on 26<sup>th</sup> (GT).

\*\*\*Eurasian Golden Oriole *O. oriolus* would not be much less likely than Black-naped...

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus*

46 bird-days. Noted on six dates. Main event 28 on 21<sup>st</sup>, incl 24 on the drive to the Happy Island ferry.

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Six at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup>.

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

40+ bird-days. 10-20+ noted on three dates in/near Beijing.

**Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* 18)

15 bird-days. 12 at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> & three at Beidaihe Reservoir the next day.

**Common Magpie** *Pica pica*

Fairly common on the mainland but none seen on Happy Island – also a few at ‘low’ elevation in Qinghai.

**Henderson’s Ground Jay** *Podoces hendersoni*

Four in the desert W of Koko Nor. The species took some tracking down but eventually yielded good looks, and even posed for digiscoping.

**Hume’s Groundpecker** *Pseudopodoces humilis* 14)

37 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the Plateau. A very charismatic species always featuring on the Bird of the Trip shortlist.

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

35+ bird-days. Noted daily on the Plateau. Main event 24+ just outside Xining on our 1<sup>st</sup> afternoon.

**Daurian Jackdaw** *Corvus dauuricus*

Two seen briefly en route on 26<sup>th</sup> (AT).

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone* 15)

A flock of 31 heading down the valley N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* 16)

18 bird-days. Seen only at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> & around spruce forest on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Tit** *Parus major* 17)

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates, both on the coast & N of Xining.

**Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustulus*

30+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – on 22<sup>nd</sup> a migrating flock of ten seen only by AT suggested that this attractive species was going to be tough to see. Following parties of seven, two & six moving through the next morning, however, three were located by the accommodation and remained on show there pretty much for the rest of the day, treating us to memorable views as they went about their business of refuelling (= doing their best to rid a favoured tree of a serious infestation of caterpillars!). On our final morning there was even one in the grounds of our hotel in Beijing... Tingaling!

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

16 bird-days. Repeated great views on both days N of Xining.

**Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris*

Two in the hotel grounds on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Songar Tit** *Parus songarus* 18)

Ten bird-days. Noted on both days N of Xining.

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

23 bird-days. Rubber Mt yielded 18 on 28<sup>th</sup> & five on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* 19)

16 bird-days. 1-6 noted on six dates on (& en route to) the coast.

\*\*\*In addition, three birds at Koko Nor on 29<sup>th</sup> were either this species or, more likely, Pale Sand Martin *R. diluta*.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

“Widespread “ on the coast, main event 500+ (coulddabeen 2,000!) over Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Only Plateau record was one seen from the bus from the airport on 25<sup>th</sup>...

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* 20)

Eight bird-days. Six over Beidaihe Sandflats on 19<sup>th</sup> & two at Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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

17 bird-days. 2-6 noted on four dates. Splendid views on several occasions were appreciated by all, and particularly by those in the group who had suffered subsatisfactory looks only in Kazakhstan...

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

Three N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>. An often active species, feeding in spruce after the fashion of Goldcrest – tricky to scope but most of us got acceptable, or better, looks in the end.

**Mongolian Lark** *Melanocorypha mongolica*

21 bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor. Not quite the looks one had dreamed of, perhaps, but at least we all caught up...

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

19 bird-days. 8-10 noted on two dates at Koko Nor. This endemic is typically an easier bird to see than its congener. This time was no exception: we'd hardly gotten off our bus at the designated spot before the gurgling calls of these hardy birds triggered "what's that?" exclamations.

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

120 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates. Ideally, better views would have been had by all...

**Asian Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheleensis* 21)

11 bird-days. Ten en route to Happy Island on 21<sup>st</sup>, and one in the desert W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* 22)

Five bird-days. The first migrants of the autumn were over Happy Island on 22+23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula*

55+ bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau where it is a common resident breeder.

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*

20+ bird-days on the Plateau. Probably somewhat underrecorded: a common resident breeder often found alongside the preceding species.

**Fan-tailed Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*

Ten bird-days. 2-5 noted on Happy Island on three dates.

**Chinese Hill Warbler** *Rhopophilus pekinensis* 23)

16 at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup>. Not all were seen well (or at all), but some were. What a bird!

**Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*

31+ bird-days. 5+-c20 noted on three dates on Happy Island. Though not strictly a migrant numbers present on Happy Island do vary considerably from day to day...

**Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*

39 bird-days. 4-15 birds noted on five dates on the coast. It is probably no exaggeration to state that the views obtained of one on 23<sup>rd</sup> could hardly be bettered: just as that mythic one-in-ten birds that would perform nicely were emphatically failing to appear it *did*, sitting up at 3.5m above the forest floor, totally unobscured for minutes and offering simply incredible digiscoping opportunities to those of us equipped with a scope capable of focussing at <10m: documentary evidence of those streaked undertail coverts? No problem!

**Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola* 24)

Four bird-days. Noted on two days on Happy Island.

**Thick-billed Warbler** *Phragmaticola aedon* 25)

15-16 bird-days. Up to seven birds noted on three dates included several seen well.

**Oriental Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis*

Seven bird-days. 1-3 noted on four dates on the coast.

**Black-browed Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

31 bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 22 on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

120+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Main event 50+ on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tickell's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus affinis* 26)

Nine bird-days. Noted on the Plateau on three dates, incl N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

Ten bird-days. N of Xining nine on 26<sup>th</sup> & one on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

51+ bird-days. Noted on the coast on six dates. Main event 20+ on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Gansu Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

24 bird-days. Noted on both dates N of Xining.

**Chinese Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* 27)

One present N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup> (JH).

**Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Five bird-days. On Happy Island one on 21<sup>st</sup> & four on 24<sup>th</sup> – about as early in the season as one can hope to get one...

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

164+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates on the coast & in Beijing. Main event 75+ on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* 28)

11 bird-days. 5-6 noted on two dates N of Xining.

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis* 29)

Six bird-days. 1-2 noted on four dates on the coast. Excellent views of this lumbering warbler were had by everyone in the group.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* 30)

12 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Except for the two N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup> all were *plumbeitarsus*, a taxon now – mostly – re-lumped with *trochiloides*.

**Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes*

Eight bird-days. 1-3 noted daily on Happy Island, with one or two repeatedly showing well during our Ditch Watch.

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

18 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Main event ten at Great Wall, Shanhaiguan; 3-5 birds mostly heard on both days N of Xining.

**\*\*\*Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus* 31)

One at the Beidaihe Reservoir on 20<sup>th</sup> enlivened a relatively slow afternoon.

\*\*\*Not native to this part of China but a favourite cage bird... This individual did well to get itself a vote in the Bird of The Trip vote.

**Elliot's Laughingthrush** *Garrulax elliotii* 32)

15+ N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>. An attractive endemic which we all saw well.

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus* 32)

46+ bird-days. One heard at Beidaihe on 18<sup>th</sup>, and a flock of 45+ at Great Wall the next day.

**Chestnut-flanked White-eye** *Zosterops erythropleurus*

413+ bird-days. Noted on six dates on the coast. Main events 150+ on 19<sup>th</sup> (of which 130 buzzed past the Great Wall, mostly not stopping) & 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

22 bird-days. Seen on both dates N of Xining, max 17 birds on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*

Seven in forest N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>. The species was, in effect, both the first and the last of the day, with one performing absurdly well in front of JV's digiscope set-up.

**Przevalski's Nuthatch** *Sitta przewalskii* 33)

Three in forest N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>. Less common than its more widespread congener, but even more of a stunner – or at least it seemed so to us, after having had to put in a bit of mileage to get it!

**Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria*

Six bird-days. 1-2 noted on four dates. After hard-to-beat views of a female on our 1<sup>st</sup> afternoon in Qinghai the species seemed to pop up everywhere.

**Daurian Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*

One on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**White-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*

241+ bird-days. Noted on five dates. Main event 155 over Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Eurasian Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

A stray juvenile in desert poplars on 27<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Autumn records at Golmud, Qinghai, fell between 12 September and 17 November, with an exceptional daily maximum of 48 on 7 October 1992 (JH pers. obs.)

**White's Thrush** *Zoothera aurea* 34)

23 bird-days. 3-9 birds recorded daily on Happy Island. Patience at The Ditch paid off when superb views of this often flighty species were had by everyone.

**Grey-backed Thrush** *Turdus hortulorum*

A freshly dead bird by the chalets on 22<sup>nd</sup> were followed by wary individuals in The Ditch on 23+24<sup>th</sup>.

**Chestnut Thrush** *Turdus rubrocanus*

18-19 bird-days. N of Xining three on 26<sup>th</sup> & 15-16 on 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

11 bird-days. N of Xining five on 26<sup>th</sup> & six (of which one male sat up to allow prolonged scope viewing) on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*

15 bird-days. Noted on six dates, incl up to 4+ daily on Happy Island & two amongst the desert poplars on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-throated Thrush** *Turdus ruficollis* 35)

c327 bird-days. Noted on six dates. 1-2 seen on three dates on Happy Island was not bad, especially considering the time of year, but 315 swarming over the mountain N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup> was better!

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

Seven bird-days. 2-3 noted on three dates on the coast.

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

31 bird-days. Noted on six dates on the coast. On 20<sup>th</sup> one sat up in a willow for most of us before mysteriously vanishing...then up to ten daily on Happy Island, including 1-3 in the hollow by our morning watchpoint. On 22<sup>nd</sup> everyone was dismayed to see the ease with which fast-flying Japanese Sparrowhawks were able to catch Siberian Rubythroats – we even got to watch one being plucked, the bright throat patch a too easily extinguished beacon of colour on an overcast late afternoon.

**Siberian Blue Robin** *Luscinia cyane*

Six bird-days. Four en route (including a female sitting out on the lee side of a bank of weeds – the also-present fully adult male was less obliging, but it was nonetheless pleasing to repeatedly see its zipping flashes of bright blue) on 21<sup>st</sup>, and two on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Rufous-tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*

Five bird-days. 1-2 noted daily over 22-24<sup>th</sup> on Happy Island. The species proved unusually cooperative, with a couple of birds coming down to feed & bathe in The Ditch.

**Himalayan Red-flanked Blotail** *Tarsiger rufilatus* 36)

Seven bird-days N of Xining.

**Northern Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*

15 bird-days. Seen only on Happy Island, where a retiring singleton on 21<sup>st</sup> left us unprepared for ten on 23<sup>rd</sup> (after which four the next day, though seen equally well, seemed a let-down!).

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

Five bird-days. Seen N of Xining, with four on 26<sup>th</sup> & one on 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

13 bird-days. N of Xining four on 26<sup>th</sup> & nine on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus*

Three bird-days. One at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup> & two N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>.

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

Two superb males of this species justified our return to Rubber Mt on 29<sup>th</sup> - and that was before we'd even gotten off the bus!

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

24 bird-days. 5-14 noted on three dates on the Plateau.

**White-bellied Redstart** *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides* 37)

One heard singing on 26<sup>th</sup> (JH) did not give us any opportunity for pursuit.

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* 38)

156+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates. Main event 50+ on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*

Singles on two dates on the Plateau.

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti*

Five bird-days. Four males in the desert on 27<sup>th</sup> & one on Rubbet Mt on 29<sup>th</sup> (AT, PT).

**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* 39)

A juvenile was scoped repeatedly at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**White-throated Rock Thrush** *Monticola gularis*

A male in The Ditch on 22<sup>nd</sup> took breaths away.

**Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*

Four bird-days. Singletons at Great Wall, S of Beidaihe & on Happy Island...

**Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** *Ficedula zanthopygia*

One on 26<sup>th</sup> (AT, JH) was probably only the 3<sup>rd</sup> for Tibet.

\*\*\*Both previous records were in early September (JH pers. obs.)

**Red-throated Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla* 40)

33 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. Main event 14 on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Common to fairly common. Not systematically recorded, but 1,000+ en route to Koko Nor nevertheless deserves mention...

**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia*

117+ bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau. Main event 100+ en route on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Tibetan Snowfinch** *Montifringilla adamsi* 41)

Three performed to within 5m of us on Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**White-rumped Snowfinch** *Onychostruthus taczanowskii* 56)

Two on Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

100 bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau – a barely ID-able flock of 65 on 27<sup>th</sup> was mercifully followed by scope-able birds on 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

30+ bird-days. Noted on two dates, with point-blank views on Rubber Mt on 28th.

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

Three in the desert on 27<sup>th</sup> took some tracking down.

**Robin Accentor** *Prunella rubeculoides*

26 bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau. Main event 18 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

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

31 bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau. 14 on 26<sup>th</sup> included several seen very well.

**Brown Accentor** *Prunella fulvescens*

22+ bird-days. Seen only on Rubber Mt, with 15+ on 28<sup>th</sup> being of note.

**Western Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* 42)

Two at the lunch stop settlement on 29<sup>th</sup> (JH).

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis* 43)

102 bird-days. Noted on five dates on the coast. Main event 47 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

24+ bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Eight bird-days. 1-2 daily on Happy Island included two scoped briefly. Also one in the desert W of Koko Nor on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* 44)

347 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. Main event 135 on migration S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup>, many of which stopped to feed on a patch of mud close to us.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* 45)

101 bird-days. Noted on seven dates on the coast. Main event 37 over Happy Island on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii*

Three bird-days. Singletons on three dates, two of which were heard-onlies... Better luck next time!

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

164 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. Main event 40 on Happy Island on 23<sup>rd</sup>. The species endeared itself to the whole group by yielding actually perched-up, viewable birds (unlike any other *Anthus* species recorded on the trip).

**Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*

Three bird-days. Single fly-overs on three dates.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

33 bird-days. 1-10 birds noted on the coast on seven dates.

**Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseus*

38 bird-days. Noted on three dates on the Plateau. Main event, such as it was, 30 flying over on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta* 46)

One flying over on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

27 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Excellent scope views were had on Rubber Mt on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Plain Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola*

11 on Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Mongolian Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus*

30 in the desert on 27<sup>th</sup>. A number of birds flying over, then patience paid off with 2-3 birds scoped...

**Przevalski's Rosefinch** *Urocynchramus pylzowi* 47)

Five birds – two males and three female/immatures – on Rubber Mt on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

91+ bird-days. Noted on five dates, with 5-40 daily on Happy Island & five N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** *Carpodacus davidianus* 48)

12 bird-days. Six noted on both visits to Rubber Mt. A male scoped at <25m was but one of the rewards for returning to the site...

**Sinai Rosefinch** *Carpodacus synoicus* 49)

17 on the outskirts of Xining on 25<sup>th</sup>. Two males scoped by a cluster of orange flowers was exactly what we'd come for...

**Chinese White-browed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus dubius* 50)

20 in forest N of Xining on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

18 bird-days. Up to 12 seen on both visits to Rubber Mt.

**Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra* P

Ten on 30<sup>th</sup> initially gave us the usual distant fly-by treatment, but then landed close by as we finished off with a cup of coffee by the bus.

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

11 N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup>. A lovely species: for one of us Bird of the Trip...

**Chinese Grosbeak** *Eophona migratoria*

Foot-dragging on the way to breakfast paid off for AT, JV & MW on 22<sup>nd</sup> when three of these mega-finches showed themselves, feeding in path-side trees...

**Japanese Grosbeak** *Eophona personata*

Two on/over Happy Island on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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

Nine N of Xining on 26<sup>th</sup> included two males sitting up nicely after we'd had repeated brief, distant views of females and juveniles. The nasal call of this species made at least one of us initially suspect that one of our two at that stage unseen nuthatches was about to reveal itself.

**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*

A female flying over at Rubber Mt on 28<sup>th</sup> was the best we managed this year.

**Eastern Rock Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii*

Six bird-days. 1-3 noted on four dates. A juvenile at sea level S of Beidaihe on 20<sup>th</sup> was a surprise.

**Meadow Bunting** *Emberiza cioides*

One at Great Wall on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Tristram's Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*

Two bird-days. Singles on two dates.

**Chestnut-eared Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*

Eight bird-days. 1-3 birds noted on four dates on the coast.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

12 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Yellow-browed Bunting** *Emberiza chrysophrys*

Ten bird-days. 2-5 noted on three dates. This classic vagrant (to the Western Palearctic) treated us to fine scope views.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*

13 bird-days. 4-5 noted on three dates on Happy Island, with 2-3 birds sitting up for us.

**Chestnut Bunting** *Emberiza rutila*

Two on Happy Island on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*

45 bird-days. Noted on four dates on the coast. Main event 24 birds on 24<sup>th</sup>.

Xxxxxxxxxxxxx

*Systematic notes*

- 1) included with *A. poecilorhyncha* by Dickinson (2003).
- 2) *T. r. poggei* (replaced by ssp *capensis* in Xinjiang (& Tibet?)) differ from nominate in iris colour & vocalizations.
- 3) "Consistent differences between *B. ibis* and *B. coromandus* in breeding plumage, proportions and vocalisations indicate they are better treated as two species": Rasmussen & Anderton, 2005.
- 4) Ssp. *lineatus* may merit species rank – "many individuals are easily recognised but others (perhaps hybrids) seem intermediate": Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.
- 5) "The racial group *vulpinus* is very close genetically to nominate *B. b. buteo* and is considered to hybridise regularly with the latter, although it is usually distinctive in appearance, and might also be vocally distinct. *B. [b.] japonicus* is genetically and morphologically more distant, seems to differ vocally as well, and is probably specifically

- distinct": Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.
- 6) "Well-differentiated from 'Western' Black-tailed in plumage, degree of sexual dimorphism, and size, but at least some vocalisations rather similar. 'Western' Black-tailed is largest in the east of its range rather than grading into 'Eastern', despite close geographical approach of breeding grounds (Engelmoer & Roselaar 1998). Winters mostly or exclusively coastally, unlike 'Western'. Probably better considered a distinct species, but further study required, and analyses should include closely related Hudsonian Godwit *L. haemasticta* of the Nearctic": Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.
  - 7) sspp *heinei* & *kamtschatschensis*.
  - 8) ssp *birulae* was provisionally NOT recognised by Dickinson (2003).
  - 9) Species provisionally including the taxa *cachinnans*, *barabensis* & *mongolicus*.
  - 10) *taimyrensis* was considered a synonym (of *heuglini*) by Dickinson (2003) who did not follow the trend of elevating Heuglin's Gull to full species status.
  - 11) split from Hodgson's H. C. - see KING B. F., 2002. *The Hierococcyx fugax*, Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo, complex. Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl., 122 (1) : 74-80.
  - 12) Dickinson (2003), in error, omitted N Tibet from the range of this taxon.
  - 13) Dickinson (2003), apparently in error, indicated that this taxon migrates to E China.
  - 14) Apparently most closely related to *Paridae* (Dickinson (2003); B King pers comm.) but let us refrain from concocting a new English name such as Tibetan Ground-tit!
  - 15) *sharpii* in W Xinjiang in winter; *orientalis* elsewhere.
  - 16) *intermedius*, *tibetosinensis*, *mandschuricus* & *colonorum*.. "There is little doubt that there are two species or more here [in *C. macrorhynchos*]" : Dickinson (2003).
  - 17) Dickinson (2003): Three species may be involved – *P. major* (ssp *major* (incl. *kapustini*) in Xinjiang), *P. cinereus* (ssp *commixtus* in S+E China & *hainanus* in Hainan), and *P. minor* (ssp *tibetanus* (apparently incl. Cheng's *subtibetanus* & *artatus*) in SE Tibet – W Sichuan & *minor* in NC+NE China).
  - 18) sspp *songarus*, *affinis*, *stoetzneri* & *weigoldicus*. Ranges from SE Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan E to N Hebei. Chinese records of Siberian Tit *P. cinctus* likely to concern misidentified Songar Tits: Harrap (1996).  
Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) notes that "the case for treating *weigoldicus* as a full species appears particularly strong on the basis of its unusually high genetic distances from other taxa, despite weak morphological differentiation".
  - 19) sspp *taczanowskii* & *ijimae*
  - 20) one on 31 May 2001 between Ili and Qingshuihe, Xinjiang (JH pers obs) was probably ssp *rufula*, a form not included for China by Cheng (1987). Elsewhere sspp *aurica*, *japonica* & *nipalensis*.
  - 21) "Probably, but not certainly, separate from *C. rufescens*": Dickinson (2003). Five sspp in China. *C. rufescens heinei* could occur in W Xinjiang – it occurs E to N Kazakhstan & W Altai: Dickinson.
  - 22) The view that the extralimital *japonica* should be treated as a separate species (or as a race of *A. gulgula*) has not gained wide acceptance: Dickinson (2003).
  - 23) DNA studies may reveal this species to be closer to babblers than to warblers.
  - 24) Dickinson (2003) recognizes sspp *certhiola*, *sparsimstriata*, *centralasiae* & *rubescens*.
  - 25) Moved from *Acrocephalus* following Helbig & Seibold (1999): Dickinson (2003).  
Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) kept the species in *Acrocephalus*, without comment.
  - 26) Dickinson (2003) appears to ignore the assertion by Beaman (1994) that "the original spelling (*Motacilla offinis*) [has not been] validly amended and under current ICZN rules must stand" – *P. offinis*.
  - 27) The "newly described" "*Phylloscopus sichuanensis*" in fact dates back to 1922: Dickinson (2003). It remains to be seen if the German name should be changed from Alstromlaubsanger to Latouchelaubsanger?
  - 28) Sspp *humei* & *mandellii*. Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) treats both as full species, noting that "although the call of *mandellii* is markedly different from [nominate] *humei*, the

- whistled songs of both taxa are variable and often inseparable. While *mandellii* is genetically closer to *humei* than to *inornatus*, it is long-separated from either according to mtDNA (Irwin *et al.* 2001); its status as a full species thus remains equivocal.”
- 29) Dickinson (2003) accepts only three sspp: *borealis*, *xanthodryas* & *kennicotti*.
  - 30) Dickinson (2003) retains *plumbeitarsus* as a full species.
  - 31) Melodious Laughingthrush, the English name Dickinson (2003) favours for this species, is worth serious consideration.
  - 32) Placed in *Trochalopteron* by Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).
  - 32) The species includes Ashy-throated Parrotbill. This arrangement “[which retains Brown-winged Parrotbill *P. brunneus* as a separate species] follows a large, careful study of Han (1991), and maps in earlier publications were corrected by Cheng (1993), who endorsed Han’s findings”.
  - 33) “Major morphological and vocal differences clearly indicate that *leucopsis* and *przewalskii* are separate species.”: Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.
  - 34) Sspp *aurea* & *toratugumi* – the northern forms split from *dauma* on size and voice: Dickinson (2003).
  - 35) “Separated from [*atrogularis*] based on Russian work”: Dickinson (2003).
  - 36) “Sino-Himalayan *rufilatus* and N Asian *cyanurus* are widely disjunct in breeding ranges. Consistent differences in morphology and song-types over wide areas indicate they are better treated as separate species.”: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).
  - 37) Specific name usually spelt *phoenicuroides*.
  - 38) Sspp *maurus*, *przewalskii* & *stejnegeri*. Dickinson (2003): “proposed splits of this complex species seem unsatisfactory if only in how the forms are ascribed to species”.
  - 39) Sspp *longirostris*, *pandoo* & *philippensis*.
  - 40) Dickinson (2003): “for the present we continue to treat this as conspecific [with *parva*]”.
  - 41) “The distinctness of this species has been discussed by Gebauer (1999)”: Dickinson – Roselaar (in Cramp *et al.* 1994) argued in favour of treatment as a subspecies of *M. nivalis*, a line of argument which would be hard to sustain in the face of field experience of the taxon.
  - 42) Alstrom & Mild (2003) conclude that “[...] the Yellow Wagtail complex is probably most appropriately classified as two species also under the BSC” (p34). Retained in *M. flava* are *flavissima*, *flava*, *beema*, *thunbergi* (incl. *plexa*), *iberiae*, *cinereocapilla*, *pygmaea*, *feldegg*, *lutea* & *leucocephala*.
  - 43) this species consists of *tschutschensis* (includes *simillima*), *taivana* & *macronyx*.
  - 44) 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”.
  - 45) Sspp *dauricus*, *centralasiae*, *ussuriensis* & *sinensis*.
  - 46) ssp *blakistoni*.
  - 47) Dickinson (2003) refers to Groth, J.G. (2000) Molecular evidence for the systematic position of *Urocynchramus pylzowi*. – *Auk*, 117: 787-791.
  - 48) *C. pulcherrimus* and *Carpodacus d. waltoni* are “evidently sympatric [...] in SE Tibet: the BMNH specimens from that region that have been considered intergrades show pure *pulcherrimus* phenotypes (PCR)”: Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.  
*C. pulcherrimus* is “noticeably slimmer [...], with a relatively longer, distinctly forked tail, and a smaller bill [...and] appear[ing] drab, despite the large amount of pink below, since the underparts contrast little in tone with the upperparts, and the flanks are heavily, crisply streaked.”
  - 49) Dickinson (2003)’s preferred English name is Pale Rosefinch.
  - 50) Elsewhere in Tibet & China. “Marked plumage, structural and vocal differences between Chinese *dubius* and Himalayan *thura* (including *blythi*) are consistent with their specific separation.” : Rasmussen & Anderton 2005. Male “has the pink of the cheek extending well behind the eye, so there is a dark streak only through the rear cheek [= broken eyestripe], and the upper edge of the supercilium is mostly white”; the female

“has no trace of brownish background colour on her underparts, which instead appear boldly black-streaked on a white background” – Rasmussen & Anderton 2005.

*References:*

Dickinson, E. C. (Editor) (2003) *The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. London: Christopher Helm.

Rasmussen, P & Anderton, J (2005) *Birds of S Asia*.