

Wildlife of the rooftop of the world

The glorious Changtang and delightful Sichuan

October 2nd – 28th 2018

A Greentours Trip Report

Led by Jesper Hornskov, Roland Ziedler & Phil Benstead

Daily report by Phil Benstead

Day 1 2nd October flight from home

Some of us started our journey to Chengdu and Xining but many were already in China!

Day 2 3rd October more flying, Chengdu and finally Xining

An interminable but thankfully time-zone truncated day saw most of us tackling the various queues in Chengdu airport. We all met up at the gate and flew to Xining. A bus whisked us to the hotel and we met up with Jesper and Erling (the final missing pieces) and had an enjoyable dinner and first briefing.

Day 3 4th October Huzhu area

We gathered together at 0530 for kick-off, wrapped up and ready for any weather and fairly champing at the bit to get at some wildlife. We loaded into the waiting vehicles and Phil introduced the rotation system to all...

We drove into the Huzhu area about two hours out of town. Dawn broke as we started attacking the route up to the pass and blue sky greeted us. It was going to be a lovely sunny morning. On the other side of the pass Jesper stopped us to look for Siberian roe deer. We climbed up to a scenic viewpoint, frost crunching underfoot. The sun soon warmed us up and lit the slopes around us. Erling was on the ball this morning and found the first of four Siberian roe deers and then a surprise and very entertaining alpine musk deer. Birds floated about and during breakfast memorably included some banana-loving Elliot's laughingthrushes.

After breakfast we drove quite a long way downhill and finding an access track into the forest. All in the name of acclimatisation/fitness we wandered up the valley hoping for a couple of species of pika that Jesper has seen in the past on this track. This year we checked the usual spot but unlike previous

years we found pikas. Phil could see mobile Tsingling pikas scampering on the slope but Peggy scored with a really close animal that let us take a series of photographs. Only Phil saw a brief, winter-coated Chinese red pika, grey with red ears as it headed for its burrow. We waited a long time for this to reappear but only saw another Tsingling.

The sun was blazing down, the day was warm and it was very difficult to stay awake. Birds made plenty of appearances though and we even had a few butterflies through. Warblers here hard to find this year with just a few Gansu leaf-warblers and a few goldcrests. Chinese nuthatches were often common here. Tits performed well here with grey crested tit and rufous-vented tit being notable. Sparrowhawks drifted through at regular intervals. Erling showed us a nice feeding olive-backed pipit and the gorgeous local race of Eurasian jay showed well. Eventually hunger got the better of us though and we headed back down to the road to find a restaurant for lunch.

After lunch we headed back up to just below our breakfast spot and walked into a small valley to look for birds and mammals in the spruce forest and associated clearings. Here the star organism was the marmot. The weather was deteriorating by now but the marmots still sun-bathed outside their burrows. Overhead our first Himalayan griffon vultures and Himalayan buzzards were spotted. Tired we headed down to Xining.

Jesper and Erling headed off to the airport to pick up lost luggage and the rest of us had dinner before getting a headstart on our packing, another early start in the morning...

Day 4 5th October Koko Nor and the South Koko Nor Range

Another early start saw us checking out and heading out of sleepy Xining well before dawn. Dawn revealed that we were out into decent habitat and climbing up onto the plateau. Jesper called a halt in a sand dune area and we climbed out of the cars to find a blue sky morning with a light breeze and frost in hollows on the ground.

From the road we were soon watching the first of a total of 41 Przewalski's gazelles – an incredibly rare and threatened species. Two nice adult males were present in the herd and the views though distant were a great start. Walking nearer and into the dunes failed to produce better views sadly. On the way back to the cars we kicked up our first woolly hare.

Driving further we pushed on to the eastern side of the huge and impressive Koko Nor lake and our first encounter with the seriously cute black-lipped pika, the haughty white-rumped snowfinch and the comical groundpecker. We breakfasted by a freshwater lagoon that was filled with waterfowl. Black-necked and great crested grebes bobbed about. Big rafts of red-crested pochard contained smaller numbers of diving and dabbling duck.

Eventually though most of the team went for a short walk alongside the nearby marsh. Trawling through the wildfowl produced some ferruginous ducks, some little grebes and we added a number of new waders to our trip-list. Sakers hunted out on the marsh. The sun was beating down and the place warmed up quickly. Song-fighting orthopterans were chased by some.

Driving through the incredible tourist attractions along the lake shore we came across numerous sand dune ATV concessions, fields full of flowers and gambolling Chinese armed with selfie-sticks, immaculately groomed white yaks offered photo opportunities (that we regretted not taking). We took lunch in a roadside restaurant, the roads still quite busy with bank holiday traffic. Taking the road over the South Koko Nor Range, Jesper led us to a fascinating area pock-marked by the activities of thousands of black-lipped pikas. The area was huge and it was rather hard to take in its scale and the sheer number of pikas that made the area its home. Everywhere you looked the pikas were basking in the afternoon sun. Unsurprisingly this great bounty was a huge magnet for predators and we found our first Tibetan foxes here and enjoyed watching them scent-marking and catching pikas. As the temperature dropped towards dusk we headed back to the cars and the short drive to the hotel in Gong He.

Day 5 6th October Gansu Gully and the Er La Pass

A pre-dawn start saw us heading for the Er La pass. En route we tried a dirt road side track into great mountain habitat. Here we searched for Pallas' cat and it only took Jenny 15 minutes to find a distant adult battling with a red fox. A great sighting.

After searching the area we went for a short walk down to the river to look for Gansu pika. Here we had views of lammergiers. As the morning warmed up birds became more obvious and we did well as we scoured the sides of the gullies for the tiny pika. It was not to be though and the pika eluded us this year.

We took lunch in a nearby town and afterwards we drove on to the Er La Pass (4499 metres and our highest point to date). Here we slowly climbed up to a saddle and then dropped a little way down to enjoy views into a rather beautiful mountain landscape. We searched high and low for the cat but just found other species. Snow leopard tracks tantalised. On the way to the hotel Jesper's car spotted our first Tibetan gazelles in the distance. Walking in for photos was a great idea as a nearer and concealed group became apparent. Walking back to the cars we headed for the nearby village of Wenquan and sorted ourselves out into our basic lodgings for the night.

Day 6 7th October Wenquan Pass and the river at Wenquan

Wishing to see Pallas' cat again we left the hotel at 0630 to tackle a high-altitude walk at the Wenquan Pass. Arriving at dawn we set up the breakfast and started scanning, no cats sadly in stark contrast to the amazing encounter during the trip in 2016.

After breakfast the team peeled off to do the planned walk, leaving 'Sick-note' scanning for a kitten den. The hiking team got the bit between their teeth and trudged off on a decent mountain walk. The scenery was stunning but a bit of sun would have been nice. Climbing steadily they stopped at suitable vantage points to search the huge amount of habitat available to them for snow leopard and other goodies on the surrounding hills. In the end they had to settle for smaller fare, chasing Blyth's

mountain voles for views. Those that got to the end of the walk managed to find Tibetan dwarf hamster. Phil meanwhile had seriously started to freeze so wandered down the road into a more sheltered and sunny spot to warm up. This paid off with good views of a pair of Mongolian finch and, even better, a distant view of another Pallas' cat. It was watched at great range, hunting, marking its territory and also being attacked by a fox. Two fox interactions with this species on the tour – fascinating. A kindly Tibetan old man took pity on him eventually and gave him a lift down to the hotel and a re-heat.

Phil went back up the hill to pick up the team. With a little time in hand before dinner some of us went for a short walk down by the hot springs. The bird team had a nice little walk with a single solitary snipe, a white wagtail and at least eight citrine wagtails. Close griffon vultures were a treat. Getting back just in time for dinner, we ate, checklisted and collapsed in a heap.

Day 7 8th October Huashixia and onto Maduo

We got a lie-in this morning, leaving at 0600 and heading over the pass again en route to the scrubby dunes at Huashixia. An hour down the road and we arrived at this exciting site, low dunes covered in willow scrub that hosts the fabled Przewalski's pinktail – all on its own in a monotypic family! If you have an interest in birds it does not get more exciting than this.

Parking up we found our first kiang. After a chilly breakfast we tramped off towards the habitat over pika warrens that were devoid of life. Birdwise things were very busy, no doubt due to the rather cooler weather and light snow. The pinktail surrendered quickly after we entered the dunes – a simply superb little bird. We found about five during the session and the supporting cast included a huge number of robin accentors, plenty of Stoliczka's tit-warbler, Tibetan grey shrike and white-browed tit. We tried really hard for the Gansu pika but only Cathy had the briefest of glimpses. I think the poor weather suppressed activity to a considerable degree. Kiang tracks were evident in the dunes and there were fresh wolf tracks and scat too at one point.

After a great yak soup lunch in a nearby restaurant we drove on slowly searching for kiang and other mammals. Mammals were surprisingly hard to come by but we got better views of kiang but not in the numbers we usually associate with this stretch of road. Black-necked cranes and roadside bar-headed geese were well received. Three Tibetan gazelles were spotted. One last stop up a dirt track gave us superb views of Blanford's snowfinch. Eventually though we headed the short distance to Maduo and a very welcome shower.

Day 8 9th October Bayankala pass and south to Yushu

Although comfortable, our hotel in Maduo was a little too high (4300m asl) for a complete night's sleep sadly. So rather bleary-eyed we assembled for the day's drive south to Yushu and set off. Most of us missed the first bridge over the Yellow River just outside town but cross it we did. The day dawned blue sky and it was cold before the sun got going (-14 degrees C at the cold point).

En route to the Bayankala pass (4824m asl) we passed yet more kiang and gazelles and marvelled at the density of upland buzzards in this neck of the woods. At the pass we set about breakfast, enjoying the single high altitude house sparrow that kept us company. Also here good looks at tame horned larks. There was too much snow up here this year to safely explore the pass area so after breakfast we walked the road downhill searching for stuff. We got views of Tibetan lark (2). Driving on we stopped and scanned quite a bit. At one stop Jesper found us a superb first wolf that was concentrating all its efforts on hunting out pikas in a huge warren. We watched this wolf for over half an hour before leaving it in peace.

Driving on we stopped briefly to check the Xiewu pass before dropping off the plateau. The drive down off the plateau took us down to trees and buckthorn scrub, a stark and very colourful contrast with the plateau. We stopped briefly for a pair of ibisbill near Yushu and succeeded in photographing them at range. Ignoring another pair of ibisbill we eventually hit marvelous Yushu and settled into our hotel.

Day 9 10th October south of Yushu to Nangqian

Another early start saw us checking out of the hotel in Yushu in the dark and heading south down the road to Nangqian. Climbing the pass we dropped down into the catchment of the Mekong and a nice limestone landscape that captivated us throughout the day. Taking a side road we headed for the suspension bridge that marks the trailhead for today's hike. Near the start of the walk we stopped to admire a number of passerine birds occupying a weedy field, which included our first Siberian stonechats and a single white-lipped deer. Jesper found us three distant MacNeill's red deer from here. A grumpy little owl stared at us from a close fenceline. Our first Tibetan magpies checked us out.

Breakfast was consumed by the river. The best part of the team then took the trail through a charming valley, past a small hamlet and into a small gorge. This took the best part of the day. They sadly failed in their aim of finding some more *macneilli* red deer, but they had great walk all the same.

Marmots were rather easily found here and they got some good photographs. Two or three flocks of white eared-pheasants were most welcome. This robust pheasant is quite a treat but Erling had turned back early... Would we see more later? Tibetan partridges surrendered on the track. Pretty Glover's pika scampered about. The small stream produced our white-bellied dipper and the nearby scrubby hillsides produced a comical encounter with a speedy mountain weasel. Erling had a brown shrike. Kessler's thrush appeared. Blue-fronted and Hodgson's redstart were photographed. A wallcreeper put on a show. Eventually everyone started to trickle back, most having got 6 km up the valley before returning. A tiring day but worth it for the scenery alone.

Meanwhile Phil had been slowly searching out a few things around the vehicles during the day with red-headed bunting, Japanese quail, a dozen ibisbill and seven more *macneilli* deer being notable.

Driving to Nangqian we stopped little. Arriving in town at dusk we settled into our quirky hotel for the luxury of a two-night stay and discovered the laundry lady was now a beauty salon. We needed work desperately but despite the competitive price of the facial/mani/pedi combo we just had no time!

Day 10

11th October

Baixha Forest Reserve

Another early start had us out the door well before dawn for the drive down to the Baixha Forest reserve. Driving into the heart of the reserve we stopped for a roadside gang of blue sheep, nice to see at eye-level for once. Eventually we pulled up for breakfast before commencing a downhill hike that lasted most of the day (on and off). It was a beautiful walk memorable for producing a number of new birds and the chance of a few mammals. We searched the open areas on the slopes above us for mammals as we followed the river downstream and picked up a few blue sheep feeding high above us and heard a close but invisible rhesus macaque.

Birding was good with special mention going to the Chinese fulvettas Jesper found us – a nice bird! Giant laughingthrush was relatively common but hard to connect with and we also found a few Kozlov's babax that responded well to Jesper's herding efforts. Drifting down the valley Jesper found us a pair of superb three-banded rosefinch, that were well-photographed. Erling found us a nice Camberwell beauty 'sunning' itself by the river.

We eventually took lunch at the far end of this attractive little valley. Driving out Jesper made Erling's day by finding a small flock of white eared-pheasants feeding on the side of the valley. White-lipped deer fed high above us too at one point and some climbed up for better views and were rewarded with our only blood pheasant of the trip. We reached Nangqian at dusk in time for a shower and another dinner with Susan (lazy as ever she was).

Day 11

12th October

The Kanda Shan

Today we once again headed south of Nangqian in the dark retracing part of yesterday's route before diving off towards the unbelievably beautiful Kanda Shan mountain range. Our breakfast stop produced tantalising glimpses of the snowcock for Phil before cloud masked the slope it was on. Despite excellent weather otherwise our search for alpine musk-deer and other mammals was rather fruitless. Jenny found us a nice flock of Szecheny's monal-partridge that showed at point-blank range with a little encouragement. Pikas were hard to find here this year though.

The healthy portion of the team went for a walk with Jesper. This produced more views of the monal-partridge and a few other birds. Meanwhile Phil's search for more snowcock or even a snow leopard was fruitless. We headed back to hotel, our time south of Yushu was over.

Day 12

13th October

drive to Qumalai

Another travel day interspersed with stops at likely-looking spots and known mammal locations. Blue skies continued to be a feature of the weather in the morning. We climbed the first of two high passes through rolling hills and plenty of evidence of over-grazing. Dropping down we came to a superb valley wetland (Longbaotan). We stopped twice along the northern shore, tallying at least 9 black-necked cranes and finding only small numbers of ferruginous ducks and common teal (in stark contrast to previous years).

Jesper found a spot with a good number of white-lipped deer. Herds including many fine stags in full rut. Phil had a brief wolf high in the snow and then we had a very close encounter with a panicky wolf. We all thought this wolf was intact it was so fast until Cathy pointed out later that it only had three legs! It does not take much imagination to think that the accident that befell this wolf was at the hands of man sadly...

Lunch was taken in a bustling Zhiduo, just afterwards we stopped to look at our first argali, a nice roadside herd. The next half hour netted 29 argali including some distant adult males on a slope across the river. Working the river and the islands of buckthorn scrub proved to be a great idea when Jenny spotted our third Pallas' cat. A close-range but brief view of a cat trapped in a small area of thorn that decided to make a break for it. Jesper gave chase and succeeded in seeing it cross the stream. A new site for this species for us. The scrub here was full of eastern great rosefinch and plenty of Guldenstadt's redstarts. A few white-lipped deer here were to be our last. As dusk approached we drove on to Qumalai.

Day 13 14th October drive to Budonquan

A nice late start saw us on the road out of Qumalai, light snow had fallen overnight. The new tarmac road was to be our constant companion as we drove yet again through some staggeringly desolate scenery on our way to the truck stop at Budonquan. Throughout the day we stayed mostly above 4200m asl, climbing a series of shallow passes at 4500+m during the morning.

Our morning drive was full of wildlife. Gazelle numbers were notable and we spotted a succession of foxes, mostly Tibetan. At one point we may have seen an Asian badger running for the hills...

Reaching the Chang Tang the landscape opened out considerably and we started to search for antelope. We did not have to wait too long for our first chiru (or Tibetan antelope) a gang of females and youngsters feeding beside the road. Out on the flats we found large numbers of kiang, loads of Tibetan gazelles and yet more (mostly female) chiru. A gang of males allowed us to walk in for photographs.

Close chiru and kiang appeared by the roadside as we approached Budonquan. Wild yak appeared on the tops of ridges and we vowed to chase them after a much-needed hot meal at the junction. Afterwards we drove down the road towards Beijing and soon found us a nice collection of wild yak. Four by the river were close and much-photographed. Then we walked in under the railway to enjoy a large herd in the evening light. As dusk fell we checked into our colourful truck-stop accommodation.

Day 14 15th October to Golmud via Yeniugou

Another early start saw us out the door of our simple accommodation and into the cars for the ride downhill to the start of the dirt track up Yeniugou (or Wild Yak valley). It was a big surprise to some that the awfully corrugated dirt road had been replaced with a lovely smooth tarmac ribbon winding through the valley. Our usual breakfast stop was reached with some alacrity. Whilst the drivers sorted

out breakfast we scanned away. Wild yak dotted the beautiful slopes. A small flock of 18 argali grazed high above us. Gazelle and kiang were dotted about.

Munching on our breakfast we were delighted to hear the howling of wolves. We searched the slopes across the river and eventually Erling found two adults, and he ended up with a lovely family pack of seven animals. We walked closer and watched these fantastic mammals loafing about in a sea of potential prey. Taking our usual promenade we noted a small flock of Tibetan sandgrouse flying high up the valley – a special bird. Almost immediately we had an excellent encounter with a mountain weasel. It hunted voles through a big colony, popping up just feet away from us on occasion. Then things went quiet, then it popped up again this time with a chubby vole clamped between its jaws. Superb. As we walked on hares spooked in front of us and a few passerines were spotted including white-browed tit-warbler.

Valley done we drove on to Golmud, through an increasingly arid, desert landscape. A coffee/snack stop by a small woodland failed to produce any migrant birds. As we neared Golmud we sensed the edge of the great Qaidam Basin, our hunting ground in the morning for a new suite of mammals and birds.

Day 15 16th October to Dulan, via the Qaidam and Nuomohong

The road out of Golmud was mostly an arrow-straight good paved road that led us through some exciting desert and mountain scenery, sadly viewed through a forest of pylons. Our breakfast stop produced our first views of a large number of goitered gazelles that we were to see during the morning session. Before breakfast we walked along the newly-paved road (another one!) and watched the gazelles pronging engagingly through the fascinating basin-edge vegetation that looked fantastic in the low-light post-dawn. Tarim hill babbler proved to be elusive this year but we all got views. A small group of Henderson's ground-jays perched up in the distance, we hoped for better views later in the day. A barbary falcon shot through in pursuit of a pigeon.

Eventually we left the site and headed for Dulan. Numerous stops occurred inevitably and one was for a roadside Henderson's ground jay – which behaved well for the photographers. The temperature today peaked at a dizzying 14 degrees C, a stark contrast to earlier days... We reached Dulan in time for a nice walk around the woods behind the town. This produced very few birds this year but was not without interest. Jesper found our first Przewalski's redstart (a female) and we all enjoyed the large flock of azure-winged magpies that drifted past our position at one point. Dusk fell far too quickly and we headed back to our pick-up spot and the hotel. Dinner was a particularly sumptuous affair this evening.

Day 16 17th October Dulan Mountains and the Chaka desert

A 0700 start saw us heading down the road towards the Dulan Mountains. Climbing up we headed off the road and up to the start of what was to be a rather strenuous 6-hour walk. Whilst breakfasting at

the trailhead, Jesper located the first *kansuensis* red deer, our target species this morning. Rutting male calls echoed around us, the rut was clearly in full swing this year.

We walked off, climbing up, we searched a rocky gully really hard hoping for a Chinese red pika but nothing was afoot. We did get a nice contact with our first Przewalski's partridge here. We left Cathy here to observe life and climbed on. We intermittently watched a large herd of blue sheep. It eventually became apparent that they were concerned by a predator off-stage and then they stampeded over a ridge and away. We did not have to wait long for a pale, lone wolf to appear high above us, running full pelt and arrow-straight towards the point where the sheep had disappeared. Superb! Birds started to appear and we got views of Kessler's thrush and white-winged grosbeak.

We all made it to Jesper's ridgetop vantage point and here we watched (and listened to) the incredible red deer rut. The sun blazed down throughout and we watched dust devils swirling across the incredible plain below us. The scenery was some of the best we had seen so far on the tour and we drank in the atmosphere. Occasionally we picked out roaring male deer as they picked their way through the scattered junipers on the distant slopes. We even watched a bit of argy-bargy between two big males this year. Dropping down carefully we stopped occasionally to photograph stray butterflies and best of all a pair of pine buntings. So ended our sojourn in the Dulan Mountains this year.

Motoring on to Chaka we hardly stopped but bagged numerous roadside Przewalski's partridge flocks. Much more fun was had in the desert west of Chaka where we stopped to search great habitat for midday gerbil. We found plenty of evidence of their presence and several burrows had very active individuals. Getting good photos was a challenge though, as they favoured sandy hillocks covered in thorny scrub, but we all got views. A nice way to end a tiring day.

Day 17 18th October Chaka desert, gulag and to Xining

Our last morning of the Tibetan leg of the journey dawned and found us breakfasting in the grassland surrounding the lake outside Chaka. On arrival we were greeted briefly by three flying Pallas' sandgrouse which was an excellent way to start the day but were to be our first and last encounter with this species sadly. We walked through ridiculously high grass this year to our favourite location. This spring-fed stream was superb for birds as usual and we all caught up with great views of Tibetan lark and bagged our first water pipits here and were also treated to extended visits by our two excellent snowfinch species; Blanford's and Pere David's (the latter our only record of the trip). Some of us had rosy pipit here too.

Reluctantly relocating we moved the short distance to Chaka gulag and here we quickly found Chinese pied woodpecker and had had a delightful encounter with a flock of four Przewalski's redstarts, that included at least two mint males. Lunch was taken very nearby and was marshalled by a tiny woman with a huge voice, and that just left the road back past Koko Nor into Xining. Going this way proved great for birds. We stopped at a birdy spot by the lake edge for common cranes and other waterfowl. Another stop netted at least three steppe eagles.

We said our heartfelt thanks to our drivers on arrival in Xining and waved them off. Our final meal of the Qinghai leg saw us thanking Jesper for his hard work and organisation of a great tour. Sichuan beckoned...

Day 18 19th October to Sichuan and Laba He

Breakfast in the hotel was a novelty affair and then Jesper was amongst us for his last official act, getting us on board the bus that whisked us to the airport in good time to meet all requirements. We all said our heart-felt thanks. The rain fell and when we got to the airport we noted that the flight to Yushu had been cancelled due to bad weather. The flight passed quietly with the occasional lump.

Arriving groundside in Chengdu we met up with Roland and Hobbo and we were shepherded to the waiting bus. Setting off we anticipated a 6-hour journey with a stop for an early dinner halfway and it just about worked out this way. A few birds appeared along the way including our first spotted doves and crested mynas. Dinner in Ya'an was our first chance to experience Sichuan cuisine – very good.

Driving the last few kilometres to the gate we bumped into our first mammals; a poorly seen masked palm civet and a rapid Confucian niviventer crossed the road. After the gate we got our heads down and drove up to the hotel. After checking in some of us headed uphill for a walk and a bit of a spotlight session. This proved to be an inspired choice. Despite mizzling rain throughout we had a great time. The easy highlight was the double leader tick that came about when Roland found us a ruminating forest musk deer on a nearby scree slope. We also had great views of red-and-white giant flying squirrel and our first goral. Sambar deer and the introduced wapiti caused confusion as they scrambled around.

Day 19 20th October Laba He

A early start saw us hand-cranking the gate mechanism as we stole uphill into the reserve in the pre-dawn. The panda zone was not as we had left it two years ago, some unnecessary touristic development occupied part of the best area. Fruiting trees that we found seemed rather sparsely-fruited, which was worrying. With no sign of any red pandas in our core area we tackled the nearby loop walk up the hillside. The highlight of this walk was a superb but rather shy forest musk deer. Another great sighting came in the form of a phantom flock of maroon-backed accentors that flitted about us in the dense tangle.

We walked on up the road searching hard. It took an age (at least four hours) before Phil spotted a red panda feeding in a fruiting tree. This animal was soaking wet and far from appealing, it was also in a rather difficult location to get close to. Nevertheless our account was open and ready for business and we looked forward to future, improved sightings of this engaging mammal. We continued downhill and bumped into our first flocks, highlights included some nice brown parrotbills and the endearing grey-hooded fulvetta. We walked a trail up on to the slopes of the hill during the afternoon but we

were rewarded rather poorly, although some of us saw our first alpine leaf warblers. Walking down to meet the bus we enjoyed the riparian bird species, which included a splendid little forktail.

After dinner we went for a night-drive along the access road. This was rather busy, the highlight being a single small complex-toothed flying-squirrel sitting in a tree. Goral were frequently encountered, as were red-and-white giant flying squirrel.

Day 20 **21st October** **Laba He**

An hour of spotlighting before a hotel breakfast was useful, with more views of goral and red-and-white giant flying squirrel. Stars were evident overhead and it proved to be a beautiful day, blue sky with occasional clouds and superb views of the surrounding mountains. Mountains that had been looming unseen hitherto.

This morning we were denied gate privileges for some reason and so we had to abandon our bus and go up in the service buses. This proved to be good for Lady Amherst's pheasants, with several males spotted bathing in the sun as we climbed uphill in a bus full of Chinese tourists all noisily enjoying the autumn colours. Sadly not all of us saw a pheasant.

Climbing down we walked down the road, birding and searching hard for panda. Thrushes were good again with plenty of chances to look at dusky, red-throated and chestnut. Eventually Hobbo found us a splendid red panda, snoozing in plain sight with minimal vegetation screening it. Probably an old individual and lacking half a right ear, which made it distinctive. We watched him for 50 minutes as he snoozed, occasionally cleaned himself and then wandered to the nearest fruiting tree and started to feed. Absolutely superb.

Job done we headed down for lunch or a snack at the hotel and a bit of free time. Roland took a bird walk out on a nearby trail in the late afternoon. After checklists and dinner, we headed out again for some more spotlighting. Toads and Confucian niviventers were spotted at regular intervals on the road. Spotlighting a high goral's eyeshine we were amazed to find a flying owl in the spotlight beam high on the cliff. We followed it and to our amazement it proved to be a Sichuan owl, a species rarely recorded at Laba He. After the turn Roland found us a good close red-and-white giant flying squirrel and we chased a series of masked palm civets until Marc finally had some decent images.

Day 21 **22nd October** **Laba He**

We woke to reasonable weather but the day got cooler and more overcast as it progressed. We took breakfast in the lobby before we got through the gate early. We drove up and down through the Lady Amherst's pheasant zone without seeing our target. The driver got a spotter's badge though when he found a rather shy red panda up by the cable car station. We chased this one around as it climbed up trees and looked at us before running through the thick bamboo and popping up somewhere else. Eventually and unsurprisingly we lost this individual.

We walked down the hill. Phil found the second red panda of the day and we all watched this, the half-eared individual found by Hobbo the previous day for a short time before it too took to the forest floor. We walked down birding sporadically and eventually we took the zipwire road. At the start we all got good views of a gray-headed woodpecker. The road was very quiet but Cathy found us our best forest musk deer at one point, which made it all worthwhile. A superbly-toothed individual that would have been very useful if you were casting a vampire killer kangaroo B-movie. At the end we turned back for a quick lunch at the scenic platform but not before enjoying our first crimson-breasted woodpecker.

After lunch some elected to walk down to the hotel. Others came with the rest downhill to the Deer Pool trailhead and walked back from there. A small team accompanied the leaders on a walk along the Deer Pool trail and this was quite productive. First up was a surprise immature keelback snake on the road. We took our photographs and then moved it to safety. Sitting in an ornate pagoda Roland conjured up a superb close Sichuan treecreeper, fantastic views. Next was a mystery immature shrike, that confused us all (long-tailed seems likely though on the features noted).

We dropped downhill with the bus, picked up Cathy and headed for the bat cave. This smelt very unbatty and we did not linger long. Walking back up to the parked bus we bumped into more of the introduced deer.

Day 22 23rd October Laba He to Tangjiahe

We left Laba He at 0700 and thanks to the new expressway we were dropping Erling at his airport hotel at 1100. Saying our goodbyes we headed on. We took lunch en route at a motorway restaurant. Cathy had Chinese grosbeak here. Birds en route were rather scarce but included our first little egret and black-crowned night-heron. We were still travelling at dusk when we stopped for fresh noodles and a spot of supply shopping just before the gate.

The drive up from the gate was at a slow pace and the spotlights were put into action. It was early so we did not see any badgers but we enjoyed our first encounters with the splendid golden takin and our first diminutive Reeve's muntjac. After check-in and dinner some elected to join Roland on a walk high up the slope behind the hotel. We got close to several Asian barred owlets without seeing them. We did better with goral and our first and much-wanted hog badger. Exhausted we collapsed into bed.

Day 23 24th October Tangjiahe

Roland took a team out pre-dawn and they had great encounters with masked palm civet and hog badger. The latter behaving perfectly and being well photographed.

After a hotel breakfast, we reported to the bus area outside reception and waited for the bus. We never caught the bus though because PEGGY FOUND AN ASIAN BLACK BEAR feeding just across the river high in a fruiting tree. We walked over the bridge and enjoyed views of this fantastic animal. Eventually it noticed us too and after grabbing some photos we left it in peace.

Finally back at the bus station we took the next bus to the last stop high in the very pretty autumnal valley, en route we bagged a troupe of Tibetan macaques. Climbing out we wandered downhill searching hard for the snub-nosed monkeys. Birds entertained in the interim and included several snazzy fulvettas and Roland had a number of barred laughingthrushes. Pere David's rock squirrels scampered

Phil had a brief glimpse of two golden monkeys bouncing away on a distant ridge. After half an hour the apparently fruiting tree here had pulled in some macaques but there was no further sign. Roland took a team high up behind the ridge but they only recorded macaques... We picked up a bus and scooped up team members en route to lunch back at the hotel.

After lunch we took the bus back uphill to the nearby ranger station. Here we hoped for the habituated tufted deer and it was not long before Peggy (again) spotted it lurking in the undergrowth. It eventually wandered in looking for scraps of food left for it by the rangers. The cameras went into overdrive. Wandering on we continued our hunt for the monkeys and photographed some interesting day-flying moths (*Callidula attentuata*).

Our first proper Tangjiahe spotlighting session was rather good. Takin is a huge attraction and one of the reasons to come to this park and we did not have to wait too long before we were enjoying our first individuals on open slopes above the road. This is a hugely impressive mammal. We got some great close views of adults and youngsters during the drive. Roland found us our only serow of the tour and we saw many of the more obliging goral. Hog badger was a huge favourite and the palm civet was present in small numbers and showed well at times. The smallest mammal found was the tiny pipistrelle, hanging on a rock overhang by the road and munching on a large invertebrate. A good first session.

Day 24 25th October Tangjiahe (Motainling trail)

After breakfast we took our bus down to the bus-stop for the park bus uphill to the start of the taxing Motainling trail. This was our big chance to get in amongst some of the pheasants found in the mountains here. Sure enough high up the trail, just below the ridgetop view point where we had lunch, we found a small group of Temminck's tragopans. Phil also spotted at least three golden pheasants here. A lone Swinhoe's striped squirrel (our only individual at this site) was the easy highlight of a rather quiet session for mammals.

After lunch we headed back down the trail and picked up Cathy (who had seen more birds than us including our only great parrotbill of the tour). Working the road on the way back we searched for daylight takin close to the road without success. The level of disturbance today was quite acute, thanks largely to the red-leaf opening ceremony and associated press photographers...

The evening spotlighting session was rather quiet. We managed photos of the niviventer though so all was not lost. Other highlights included Roland finding us our first porcupine.

Day 25

26th October

Tangjiahe

Operation golden snub-nosed monkey commenced after breakfast and we dawdled through the hotel clearing scanning the slopes above us with bins and 'scopes. We eventually walked 7.5 km up the red-leaf road before calling it a morning and grabbing a bus back to the hotel and lunch.

In the afternoon we went for a walk up the Defence Pass trail, hoping for a sighting of a lone male snub-nosed monkey that had been reported the day before. This proved to be a great idea (but not for the monkey) because JENNY FOUND THREE ASIAN BLACK BEARS. A big adult female was located first, feeding in trees and vines but then Jenny found her two cubs when their mother called them in to her and they emerged from a bushy hiding place. A stunning encounter.

The night drive after dinner was rather quiet and cold, but we did see a glorious galloping porcupine by the road below the hotel.

Day 26

27th October

Tangjiahe and transfer to Chengdu

The pre-breakfast team reported very little this morning. Phil searched the slopes above the hotel after breakfast whilst everyone packed but failed to find the snub-nosed monkeys. Sightings during our stay were limited to just one ancient outcast male down by the lower ranger station so it seems likely that the Tangjiahe troupes were still high above us and had not moved down for the winter yet.

We drove out, stopping at the Defence Pass trail, up we climbed again. Here we found some very happy Americans. Incredibly they had found five individual bears, including the female and cubs we had seen the day before. Sadly the bears had all drifted off uphill into the trees just before we arrived. Highlights here though included our only white-throated laughingthrushes and chestnut-bellied rock thrushes of the tour.

Dropping lower down we searched hard for the tawny fish-owl, again without success. At the gate we discovered that the gift shop had been moved into the ranger station we had passed halfway down... Those by the bus recorded the only stripe-throated yuhinas of the tour. Roland called a stop just before Qingxi to look for Pallas' squirrel but we only succeeded in adding brown-breasted bulbul to the trip list. We took an early and rather large lunch in town before heading on our way.

Mid-afternoon saw us at the riverside comfort stop we always stop at. Starlings milled around. The river had a few waders including a few long-billed plovers. Butterflies were very evident this year and Phil and John set about photographing them. After a decent break we were off again into the bustle of Chengdu. We dropped Rob and Jenny at their hotel and then continued on to our more modest accommodation and an enjoyable last dinner in town with Roland.

Day 27

28th October

Chengdu and flight home

With everyone gone, Phil, Cathy and Roland had a leisurely breakfast and then headed into the nearby park for some last minute birding. The park was packed with exercising Chinese pensioners. Standard tai chi was the favourite but we also saw some good sabre and staff work and even some people who preferred to use tennis balls on strings...

Despite this high level of use we managed to see some great birds. High on the target list was a decent sighting of the *mandarinus* race of blackbird and this was accomplished. Light-vented bulbul was everywhere. White-browed laughingthrushes showed well occasionally. High in the trees we recorded our first fire-breasted flowerpeckers, a single adult red-throated thrush and a lost-looking ashy-throated parrotbill was a great bonus lower down. Two Chinese grosbeaks perched in the treetops for our delectation. Red-eared sliders (a by-product of the pet trade) occupied the ponds and a common kingfisher gave us a brief aerial display. Cathy got to grips with red-billed starling when we emerged from the park's crazy alley of food and souvenir shops. A great closing session.

We had all gone our separate ways but for a while there we had formed an extraordinary team. Our results speak for themselves and you all played a part in putting together an exceptional list of mammal species during the tour.

Systematic List No. 1 Mammals

Order and nomenclature largely follow Smith & Xie (2008) *A guide to the mammals of China*. ‘Red deer’ taxonomy has been changed to reflect current thinking though. Species in square brackets [] were recorded by sign only or are introduced.

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| Tibetan macaque | <i>Macaca thibetana</i> | Only in Sichuan. Small numbers daily at Laba He and Tangjiahe around the hotel complexes and even in the woods occasionally. |
| [Rhesus macaque] | <i>Macaca mulatta</i> | Heard only at Baixha this year. |
| Golden snub-nosed monkey | <i>Rhinopithecus roxellana</i> | Phil had a very brief sighting of two adults high on the ridge near the former feeding station. Despite all our efforts we could not relocate the troupe involved. |
| Red-and-white giant flying squirrel | <i>Petaurista alborufus</i> | Up to 12 nightly at Laba He – with some very good close views this year. |
| Complex-toothed flying squirrel | <i>Troglodytes xanthipes</i> | One fairly close at Laba He. |
| Swinhoe’s striped squirrel | <i>Tamiops swinhoei</i> | Only in Sichuan. Singles daily at Laba He. Just one at Tangjiahe. |
| Père David’s rock squirrel | <i>Sciurotamias davidianus</i> | Only in Sichuan. A few daily at Tangjiahe. |
| Himalayan marmot | <i>Marmota himalayana</i> | The warm weather on day 1 brought out a few at Hu Zhu. Small numbers thereafter in the unseasonably warm weather on a unbelievable seven further days on the Tibetan leg of the tour. |
| Malayan porcupine | <i>Hystrix brachyura</i> | Singles on consecutive nights at Tangjiahe. The second individual giving superb views. |
| [Chinese zokor] | <i>Eospalax fontanierii</i> | Mounds at Huashixia and elsewhere on the plateau. |
| Chinese birch mouse | <i>Sicista concolor</i> | One at night in Tangjiahe for Phil only. |
| Confucian niviventer | <i>Niviventer confucianus</i> | Sichuan only. Seen most nights at Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Blyth’s mountain vole | <i>Phaiomys leucurus</i> | All the diurnal, colonial voles noted at high altitude were assigned to this species (four dates). |
| Tibetan dwarf hamster | <i>Cricetulus tibetanus</i> | One high above the Wenquan Pass. |
| Midday gerbil | <i>Meriones meridionalis</i> | We had an excellent late afternoon session with this species in the desert west of Chaka, all of us saw this species and most of us got photographs. At least six individuals involved. |
| Moupin pika | <i>Ochotona thibetana</i> | Marc and Peggy had a brief glimpse at Baixha – our only record. |
| Black-lipped pika | <i>Ochotona curzoniae</i> | First seen around the edge of Koko Nor and frequently encountered thereafter (on some days we must have seen thousands). |
| Chinese red pika | <i>Ochotona erythrotis</i> | One very briefly for Phil at Huzhu. |
| Glover’s pika | <i>Ochotona gloveri</i> | A few encountered daily on the three days south of Yushu. |
| Tsingling pika | <i>Ochotona huangensis</i> | Several at Huzhu, including one seen very well by all. |
| Gansu pika | <i>Ochotona cansus</i> | 3-4 at Huashixia, not seen by all sadly. |

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| Woolly hare | <i>Lepus oiostolus</i> | First seen at the first stop on Koko Nor on Day 2. Thereafter seen in small numbers in suitable habitat (ten further dates). |
| pipistrelle sp. | <i>Hypsugo/Pipistrellus</i> | The bat hanging at Tangjiahe on two nights was either Japanese or Chinese pipistrelle... |
| Pallas' cat | <i>Felis manul</i> | One found by Jenny at range at the Gansu Gully site was watched fighting with a fox. Phil had another at range the next day below the Wenquan Pass, whilst the rest of the team were on their montane hike, this individual was also seen interacting violently with a fox. Finally Jenny found some of us another very close individual in the riverine buckthorn scrub en route to Qumalai. A new site for this species, for us at least. A great showing but we lacked the killer close views we were all hoping for. |
| Leopard cat | <i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i> | Hobbo found us the same cat twice at Laba He on consecutive nights. The second time some of us saw it too. Nice pre-breakfast encounter at Tangjiahe for the dedicated members of the team. |
| [Snow leopard] | <i>Uncia uncia</i> | Tracks on the Er La pass (Qinghai). |
| Tibetan wolf | <i>Canis (lupus) chanco</i> | Although data is limited it seems that this species is now more likely to be found singly and that singles encountered are obviously much less-relaxed about close human presence. Persecution would appear to be the likely cause of this I suspect. We found signs of this species at Huashixia. The next day Jesper found us a very watchable first individual as it hunted a pika warren on the road to Yushu. Phil had a high altitude snow wolf briefly on the drive to Qumalai and half an hour later we were all marvelling at a very close encounter with another very fast individual [which proved to be three-legged on examination of photographs]. Another individual was seen on the drive over the Chang Tang by Erling. Our best encounter came in Wild Yak Valley when our breakfast was interrupted by a pack in full howl. Erling tracked down the first of seven individuals and we all enjoyed watching the social interaction between the group members as they lounged about. Finally we had a superb encounter in the Dulan Hills, a lone wolf testing a large flock of blue sheep for weakness. |
| Tibetan fox | <i>Vulpes ferrlata</i> | Frequently encountered in suitable high-altitude habitat infested with pikas (9 dates). A joy to watch and a challenge to photograph. |
| Red fox | <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> | One dead at Hu Zhu. Live individuals in small numbers encountered occasionally thereafter (seven dates). |

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| Asian black bear | <i>Ursus thibetanus</i> | One on the first morning at Tangjiahe, thanks to Peggy. Jenny went two further on the last day when she found us a mother and two cubs. An almost unbelievable result. The first time this species has been seen on the tour and a huge trip highlight. |
| Red panda | <i>Ailurus fulgens</i> | One very wet individual at Laba He on the first day was well-photographed but looked horrible. Next day Hobbo found us the individual with the chunk out of it's right ear which showed really well. Next day we had 3 but none well. A reasonable showing but disturbance must be taking a toll at this classic location. It certainly took a toll on us! |
| [Asian badger] | <i>Meles leucurus</i> | We possibly saw this species on the drive to Budonquan in the early morning... Impressive sett found in the desert west of Chaka. |
| Hog badger | <i>Arctonyx collaris</i> | One to three nightly on nocturnal excursions at Tangjiahe. |
| Masked palm civet | <i>Paguma larvata</i> | Frequently encountered at night in Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Mountain weasel | <i>Mustela altaica</i> | One seen very well in Wild Yak Valley. Watched hunting furiously and then looking triumphant with a Blyth's mountain vole trophy. One seen by the team in 'Greentours valley' on our first day south of Yushu . One at Laba He too. |
| Kiang | <i>Equus kiang</i> | Noted on four dates up on the plateau. No large numbers though this year. |
| Wild boar | <i>Sus scrofa</i> | Feeding sign at Huzhu and throughout in Sichuan. We saw small numbers on two days at Tangjiahe. |
| Reeve's muntjac | <i>Muntiacus reevesi</i> | Only in Sichuan. Abundant at Tangjiahe. |
| Forest musk deer | <i>Moschus berezovski</i> | Astonishingly we had four individuals (five sightings) at Laba He. Is the population making a come-back? A new mammal for both leaders (and by extension the tour), which give you an idea of the rarity value. Amazing. |
| Alpine musk deer | <i>Moschus chrysogaster</i> | One seen well albeit distantly in the Huzhu area on Day 1. A trip highlight. |
| Siberian roe deer | <i>Capreolus pygargus</i> | At least four in the Huzhu area on Day 1. |
| Tufted deer | <i>Elaphodus cephalophus</i> | One very tame individual at the ranger station at Tangjiahe. Marc had another more secretive individual there. |
| [Altai wapiti] | <i>Cervus canadensis sibiricus</i> | Introduced and very tame individuals wandering around at Laba. Part of the Eastern group of the wapiti complex and therefore not included in the Central Asian group which contains the following two sub-species. |

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| Gansu wapiti | <i>Cervus canadensis kansuensis</i> | A huge total of 60 <i>kansuensis</i> deer in the Dulan Mountains this year. Central Asian red deer are now included in the wapiti but some authorities include this sub-species and the next (<i>macneilli</i>) in <i>Cervus wallichii</i> . DNA work has shown no mitochondrial DNA differences between the sub-species of the Central Asian deer group, suggesting that they are actually invalid... Clearly still a work in progress. |
| MacNeill's wapiti | <i>Cervus canadensis macneilli</i> | We looked for and found ten <i>macneilli</i> deer on our first day south of Yushu, although the best seven were seen by Phil only... He tried to make amends by finding four more on the drive back to Yushu later on in the trip but these views were very distant. |
| White-lipped deer | <i>Przewalskium albirostris</i> | Noted on four dates on the plateau, including at least 20 en route to Qumalai, with some fine stags noted. |
| Sambar | <i>Rusa unicolor</i> | Recorded nightly at Laba He and occasionally during the day. |
| Goitered gazelle | <i>Gazella subguttorsa</i> | Good numbers this year. A good total of 60+ in the grasslands around the Qaidam Basin. At least 11 the next day from the Dulan Mountains breakfast watchpoint. |
| Tibetan gazelle | <i>Procapra picticaudata</i> | Frequently encountered on the high plateau in both the flat valley bottoms and the mountains. Largest number on the Chang Tang day when we all got our best photos. Eight dates. Marc's photo of boxing males was excellent. |
| Przwalski's gazelle | <i>Procapra przewalskii</i> | A good total of 41 near Koko Nor on day 2. An endangered mammal and one of the trip highlights. |
| Wild yak | <i>Bos grunniens</i> | Good numbers this year but as always discerning genuine wild ones from their domestic cousins was difficult at long-range. We got excellent close views though of some on the Chang Tang day and more (distantly) in Wild Yak Valley (Yeniugou) the next day. |
| Golden takin | <i>Budorcas taxicolor</i> | Only in Sichuan. The days of seeing this species at Laba He seem to be over, we looked hard without success. But amazingly easy to find at Tangjiahe. Close-up and often unasked-for encounters available around the hotel buildings too. |
| Chinese serow | <i>Capricornis milneedwardsii</i> | Only at Tangjiahe and difficult to find this year. We had one great, albeit brief, view from the bus one night. |
| Chinese goral | <i>Naemorhedus griseus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Often encountered when spotlighting at both sites visited and occasionally found during the day. |
| Argali | <i>Ovis ammon</i> | At least 29 including some very distant 'big' males en route to Qumalai. A trip highlight. Also 18 in Wild Yak Valley (Yeniugou) a few days later. |

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| Blue sheep | Pseudois nayaur | A small herd in the Wenquan Pass and even some from Wenquan village this year. Thereafter noted in mostly small numbers on days south of Yushu and in the Dulan Mountains. A day total of 260 on the Kanda Shan day was notable. |
| Tibetan antelope | Pantholops hodgsonii | A total of over 400 on the day we crossed the Chang Tang. A trip highlight. |

Systematic List Number 2 Birds

The systematic order is taken from the 'Birds of China' by Mackinnon and Phillips (2000), nomenclature and taxonomy invariably is not. Deviations are marked with a † and are totally justified!

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| Tibetan snowcock | <i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i> | Phil had poor views before cloud rolled in at the breakfast stop on the Kanda Shan day. Jesper heard one in the Dulan Hills. |
| Tibetan partridge | <i>Perdix hodgsoniae</i> | Recorded only in 'Greentours valley' (south of Yushu). |
| †Przewalski's partridge | <i>Alectoris magna</i> | Seen well in the Dulan Mountains on our red deer hike. Three more flocks on the afternoon drive later that day. |
| Chinese bamboo partridge | <i>Bambuscicola thoracica</i> | Phil had three one day at Tangjiahe. |
| Blood pheasant | <i>Ithaginus cruentus</i> | Ten in the Baixha valley for those that climbed higher for the white-lipped deer. |
| Temminck's tragopan | <i>Tragopan temminckii</i> | Two males and a female at Tangjiahe. |
| Szecheny's monal-partridge | <i>Tetraophasis szechenyii</i> | Fantastic close views in the Kanda Shan this year, thanks to Jenny. |
| Chinese Grouse | <i>Tetrastes sewerzowii</i> | Erling saw 2 HuZhu Mountains |
| †White eared-pheasant | <i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i> | Seen in reasonable numbers on two days south of Yushu. A trip highlight for many of us. |
| Common pheasant | <i>Phasianus colchisus</i> | One male encountered en route to Xining on the last day of the Qinghai leg. Also (Erling) 2 males roadside HuZhu Mountains |
| Golden pheasant | <i>Chrysolophus pictus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Phil had 3 at Tangjiahe, others heard. |
| Lady Amherst's pheasant | <i>Chrysolophus amherstiae</i> | Occasional sightings for some at Laba He, mostly from the bus. The new road here has made finding this species more difficult. |
| Japanese quail | <i>Coturnix japonicus</i> | One for 'Sick Note' as he waited quietly outside 'Greentours valley' (south of Yushu). |
| Greylag goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor. |
| Bar-headed goose | <i>Anser indicus</i> | A few on plateau wetlands (six dates). |
| Ruddy shelduck | <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> | Frequently encountered on plateau wetlands. |
| Mallard | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | Small numbers on both dates at Koko Nor. Noted in very small numbers on two dates in Sichuan. |
| Wigeon | <i>Anas penelope</i> | A few at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| †Chinese spot-billed duck | <i>Anas zonorhyncha</i> | Good numbers on the river we stopped at en route to Chengdu on the last day. |
| Northern pintail | <i>Anas acuta</i> | Recorded at Koko Nor only this year (both dates). |
| Shoveler | <i>Anas clypeata</i> | A few on the first visit to Koko Nor. |
| Common teal | <i>Anas crecca</i> | Recorded at Koko Nor and one other plateau wetland. |
| Red-crested pochard | <i>Rhodonessa rufina</i> | Large numbers on the freshwater lagoon at Koko Nor only (both dates). Marc saw some en route to Chengdu on the last day. |
| Ferruginous duck | <i>Aythya nyroca</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor on the first visit. Very small numbers at Longbaotan this year. |
| Tufted duck | <i>Aythya fuligula</i> | A few at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Common pochard | <i>Aythya ferina</i> | A few at Koko Nor on the first visit. |

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| Goosander | <i>Mergus merganser</i> | Noted on 5 dates on rivers and wetlands on the plateau. |
| Crimson-breasted Woodpecker | <i>Dryobates pernyi</i> | Erling had one in Laba He |
| Great spotted woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopus major</i> | At least two at Chaka gulag. |
| Grey-capped pygmy woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopus canicapillus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Seen on one day at Tangjiahe. |

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| [Black woodpecker] | <i>Dryocopus martius</i> | Singles heard in the Huzhu valley and at Baixha. |
| Grey-headed woodpecker | <i>Picus canus</i> | Single seen by Jesper in the Kanda Shan. Phil had one in the Dulan Hills. Small numbers at Laba He. |
| Hoopoe | <i>Upupa epops</i> | Noted on three days in Qinghai, with max of 4 in and outside 'Greentours Valley'. |
| Common kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> | One in the park in Chengdu. |
| Crested kingfisher | <i>Megaceryle lugubris</i> | Only in Sichuan. Tangjiahe – small numbers daily at that site. |
| Himalayan swiftlet | <i>Aerodramus brevirostris</i> | A high-flying flock over the park in Chengdu. |
| House swift | <i>Apus nipalensis</i> | At least one over the park in Chengdu. |
| [Asian barred owl] | <i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i> | Two heard on the first night at Tangjiahe. |
| Tawny fish owl | <i>Ketupa flaviceps</i> | An entire busload of clients nabbed one flying upstream whilst the leaders backs were turned one night at Tangjiahe. |
| Himalayan owl | <i>Strix nivicolium</i> | One high on a cliff at Laba He, gave us some identification concerns but Marc's photograph was conclusive despite the huge distance. |
| Little owl | <i>Athene noctua</i> | A few ones and twos noted on four dates on the Tibetan leg of the tour. |
| Rock pigeon | <i>Columba livia</i> | Scarce in towns. |
| Hill pigeon | <i>Columba rupestris</i> | Recorded on eight dates on the plateau. |
| Snow pigeon | <i>Columba leuconota</i> | Small numbers on two days south of Yushu. |
| Speckled wood pigeon | <i>Columba hodgsonii</i> | Small flocks flying over at Laba He on a couple of days. |
| Oriental turtle dove | <i>Streptopelia orinetalis</i> | Just one record along the Koko Nor edge on the last day in the field in Qinghai. |
| Spotted dove | <i>Streptopelia chinensis</i> | Only in Sichuan. Noted in the lowlands on transit days and in the park at Chengdu. |
| Collared dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | Small numbers on two dates up on the plateau. |
| Black-necked crane | <i>Grus nigricollis</i> | A trip highlight. Noted on five dates on the plateau (total of just 50 birds). |
| Common crane | <i>Grus grus</i> | Six on the edge of Koko Nor on the return journey. |
| Common coot | <i>Fulica atra</i> | Recorded on just two dates on the plateau (Koko Nor only). |
| Tibetan sandgrouse | <i>Syrrhaptes tibetanus</i> | Just seven birds flew through Wild Yak Valley. A trip highlight. |
| Pallas' sandgrouse | <i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i> | Just three at the site outside Chaka – only in flight. A poor showing but better than nothing. |
| Woodcock | <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> | One at Laba He at dawn. |
| Solitary snipe | <i>Gallinago solitaria</i> | One elusive individual at Wenquan. |
| Common snipe | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> | One at Jiang You on the way to Chengdu on the last day. |
| Ruff | <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> | Small numbers distantly at Koko Nor. |
| Spotted redshank | <i>Tringa erythropus</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor only this year. |
| Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | A few at Koko Nor. |
| Green sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | Odd singles at Koko Nor, north of Yushu and Chaka. Two along the river at Jiang You en route to Chengdu on the last day |
| Common sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | Only in Sichuan. One or two noted along the river at Jiang You en route to Chengdu on the last day. |

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| Black-tailed godwit | <i>Limosa limosa</i> | A few at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Ibisbill | <i>Ibidorhynchus struthersii</i> | At least four individuals north of Yushu this year. A total of 12 together at the trailhead to 'Greentours Valley' (south of Yushu). |
| Northern lapwing | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Asiatic golden plover | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Long-billed plover | <i>Charadrius placidus</i> | At least three on the river at Jiang You on the last day of the tour. |
| Pallas' gull | <i>Larus ichthyaetus</i> | Small numbers on seven dates on the plateau. |
| Yellow-legged gull | <i>Larus cachinnans</i> | One at Koko Nor and another near Nangqian. |
| Brown-headed gull | <i>Larus brunnicephalus</i> | Occasionally encountered on plateau wetlands (seven dates). |
| Whiskered tern | <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> | A few at Longbaotan (Qinghai). |
| Lammergier | <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> | Records on 11 days on the plateau. One of the highlights of the tour was the frequently excellent observations of this fantastic species. |
| Himalayan griffon vulture | <i>Gyps himalayensis</i> | Recorded almost daily on the plateau, often in large numbers. |
| Black vulture | <i>Aegypius monachus</i> | A few birds on just two dates on the plateau. A bad show. |
| Hen harrier | <i>Circus cyaneus</i> | Migrating birds recorded on three dates on the plateau this year. |
| Western marsh harrier | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> | One at Koko Nor. |
| Crested goshawk | <i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i> | One at Tangjiahe (Sichuan). |
| Eurasian sparrowhawk | <i>Accipiter nisus</i> | Scattered records (seven dates on the plateau and daily at Tangjiahe (Sichuan)). |
| Common buzzard | <i>Buteo buteo</i> | Birds on the plateau leg of the tour were Himalayan buzzards, subsp. <i>burmanicus</i> , sometimes split. We also recorded a single <i>japonicus</i> on Day 15 on the way to Xining. The few birds noted in Sichuan were all <i>japonicus</i> , which is also sometimes split as Eastern buzzard. |
| Upland buzzard | <i>Buteo hemilasius</i> | Large numbers daily on the plateau. |
| Steppe eagle | <i>Aquila nipalensis</i> | Small numbers noted on six days on the plateau. |
| Golden eagle | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> | One or two birds on eight dates on the plateau. A pair hunting at Tangjiahe. |
| Mountain hawk-eagle | <i>Spizaetus nipalensis</i> | Singles on two dates at Tangjiahe. |
| Common kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | Scattered, almost daily, records throughout the Tibetan leg of our journey. |
| Saker | <i>Falco cherrug</i> | One of the delightful aspects of the Tibetan leg of the tour was the frequent encounters, often at close range, with this fantastic species. |
| Barbary falcon | <i>Falco peregrinoides</i> | One hunting a pigeon in the Qaidam basin. |
| Little grebe | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> | Two on the reservoir en route to Tangjiahe. |
| Great crested grebe | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | Recorded in small numbers at Koko Nor and one other plateau wetland. |
| Black-necked grebe | <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor. |
| Great cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor & another plateau wetland. |

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| Cattle egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | Recorded by the team at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Little egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | Only in the Sichuan Basin, where reasonably common, even turning up in the middle of towns. |
| Chinese pond-heron | <i>Ardeola bacchus</i> | One migrating beside one of the vans on the way up Er La pass in Qinghai. One or two at Laba He (Sichuan). |
| Great egret | <i>Casmerodius albus</i> | Recorded on 3 dates on large wetlands on the plateau. |
| Grey heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | Small numbers at Koko Nor and Longbaotan on the plateau leg. |
| Black-crowned night-heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | Sichuan – odd birds seen in transit. |
| Brown shrike | <i>Lanius cristatus</i> | Erling had one in Greentours Valley (south of Yushu). |
| Long-tailed shrike | <i>Lanius schach</i> | One first-year bird at Laba He. |
| Chinese grey shrike | <i>Lanius sphenocercus</i> | One on the second day. Only on two dates thereafter – a poor showing. |
| Tibetan grey shrike | <i>Lanius giganteus</i> | Recorded on three dates on the plateau. |
| Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | Small numbers in the woods on the first day (Huzhu). Recorded daily in Tangjiahe. |
| Red-billed blue magpie | <i>Urocissus erythrorhyncha</i> | Only in Sichuan. Frequently encountered at both sites we visited. |
| Azure-winged magpie | <i>Cyanopica cyanus</i> | A large flock in Dulan and a massive 110 at Chaka gulag. |
| Magpie | <i>Pica pica</i> | 'Lowland' birds were of little interest to us but the Tibetan race <i>bottanensis</i> was quite different and was recorded on four dates. |
| Henderson's ground-jay | <i>Podoces hendersoni</i> | At least three at the goitered gazelle site on the Qaidam. More birds noted whilst driving the edge of the Qaidam Basin and we stopped to photograph one obliging individual. |
| Hume's groundpecker | <i>Pseudopodoces humilis</i> | This frequently encountered clown was the jewel in the crown of the plateau's avifauna. Now placed with the tits but maintained here for now! (12 dates). |
| Spotted nutcracker | <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i> | Only in Sichuan. Small numbers at both sites visited. |
| Red-billed chough | <i>Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i> | Recorded on 14 dates on the plateau. |
| Daurian jackdaw | <i>Corvus dauuricus</i> | Only seen on the three days south of Yushu on the Tibetan leg of the tour where pleasingly numerous. |
| Large-billed crow | <i>Corvus macrorhynchus</i> | Small numbers on the first day, thereafter only noted low down south of Yushu and at both sites in Sichuan. |
| Raven | <i>Corvus corax</i> | Only on the high plateau, where recorded daily. |
| Long-tailed minivet | <i>Pericotus ethologus</i> | A few seen on two dates at Laba He this year. Heard at Tangjiahe. |
| White-throated dipper | <i>Cinclus cinclus</i> | Recorded in small numbers on three dates around Yushu. |
| Brown dipper | <i>Cinclus pallasii</i> | Only in Sichuan. Common around Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Chestnut-bellied rock thrush | <i>Monticola rufiventris</i> | Pair on the last morning at Tangjiahe. |
| Dusky thrush | <i>Turdus eunomus</i> | Small numbers daily at Laba He. |
| Red-throated thrush | <i>Turdus ruficollis</i> | Occasional in small numbers on the plateau (four dates in total). Small numbers daily at Laba He and one in the park at Chengdu |

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| Black-throated thrush | <i>Turdus atrogularis</i> | A few in the Kanda Shan thrush flocks (Qinghai). |
| Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | Only in Sichuan. One en route to Chengdu on the transfer to Tangjiahe. A few in the park at Chengdu. The <i>mandarinus</i> race of blackbird, sometimes split as Chinese blackbird. |
| Chestnut thrush | <i>Turdus rubrocanus</i> | Good numbers at Laba He this year. Odd singles at Tangjiahe. |
| Kessler's thrush | <i>Turdus kessleri</i> | Only recorded on the plateau on three dates this year, mostly in small numbers although a large flock was noted on the Kanda Shan day. |
| Scaly thrush | <i>Zoothera dauma</i> | One in the woods on Day 1 (Hu Zhu). |
| Northern red-flanked bluetail | <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i> | A few on the first day where of the race <i>albocaeruleus</i> . A lot of <i>Tarsiger</i> at Tangjiahe, but none assigned to species. |
| Golden bush robin | <i>Tarsiger chrysaeus</i> | One female or immature seen quite well on the first day at Laba He. Two or three more seen poorly there. |
| †Przewalski's redstart | <i>Phoenicurus alashanicus</i> | One in the Dulan plantation and at least five at the Chaka gulag. |
| White-throated redstart | <i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i> | Small numbers on the first day around Huzhu and thereafter on four additional dates on the plateau. |
| Daurian redstart | <i>Phoenicurus auroreus</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Small numbers at each site visited and also seen in transit. |
| Hodgson's redstart | <i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i> | Noted in 'Greentours valley' this year. Small numbers at Laba He and Tangjiahe (Sichuan). |
| †Guldenstadt's redstart | <i>Phoenicurus erythrogaster</i> | Frequently encountered, often in large concentrations, on the plateau leg of the tour. |
| Blue-fronted redstart | <i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i> | Frequently encountered on the first day. Noted on four further dates on the plateau. Large flocks encountered occasionally at Laba He and smaller numbers at Tangjiahe. |
| White-capped redstart | <i>Chaimarornis leucocephalus</i> | A few in the Huzhu area on the first day and on one date south of Yushu. Common in Sichuan. |
| Plumbeous redstart | <i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa</i> | Common along rivers and streams in Sichuan. |
| Asian brown flycatcher | <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i> | One photographed by Marc at Dulan (Qinghai). |
| Rufous-gorgetted flycatcher | <i>Ficedula strophiate</i> | Sichuan only. Single at Laba He. |
| Taiga flycatcher | <i>Ficedula albicilla</i> | Single at Laba He. |
| Siberian stonechat | <i>Saxicola maurus</i> | Good numbers south of Yushu on two dates. |
| Little forktail | <i>Enicurus scouleri</i> | Only in Sichuan. Small numbers noted at Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| White-crowned forktail | <i>Enicurus leschenaultii</i> | Only in Sichuan. Recorded on two dates at Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Oriental magpie robin | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> | Common in the park in Chengdu and en route to the airport on the last morning. |
| Red-billed starling | <i>Spodiopsar sericeus</i> | Small numbers en route to Chengdu on the last day. One from the park in Chengdu the next day. |
| White-cheeked starling | <i>Sturnus cineraceus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Small numbers en route to Tangjiahe and on the way back to Chengdu from there. Also noted in the middle of Chengdu. |

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| Crested myna | <i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i> | Only in Sichuan – a few noted in transit in the lowlands. |
| Eurasian nuthatch | <i>Sitta europaea</i> | Only in Sichuan. Small numbers encountered in flocks at Tangjiahe. |
| Chestnut-vented nuthatch | <i>Sitta nagaensis</i> | Recorded on four dates in Sichuan, this species and the previous are difficult to diagnose apparently... |
| Chinese nuthatch | <i>Sitta villosa</i> | One of the highlights of the first day acclimatising was connecting with good numbers of these little beauties in the Huzhu area. |
| Przewalsky's nuthatch | <i>Sitta przewalski</i> | Recorded at Huzhu but not seen well this year. |
| Wallcreeper | <i>Tichodroma muraria</i> | Just one in 'Greentours valley' this year. Birds had obviously not dropped downhill yet. |
| Hodgson's treecreeper | <i>Certhia hodgsoni</i> | Single seen well at Laba He. |
| Sichuan treecreeper | <i>Certhia tianquanensis</i> | One by the Deer Pool at Laba He. A few at Tangjiahe. |
| Wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | A few encountered on the first day in Qinghai (Huzhu). |
| Willow tit | <i>Parus montanus</i> | Common on the first day. Formerly Songar tit which is now lumped with this species. |
| Sichuan tit | <i>Parus weigoldicus</i> | Noted on all three dates south of Yushu. A recent split. |
| White-browed tit | <i>Parus superciliosus</i> | Small numbers of this smart little bird on three days on the plateau. |
| Coal tit | <i>Parus ater</i> | Roland and the team recorded this on two dates at Laba He. |
| Yellow-bellied tit | <i>Parus venustulus</i> | Two on one date at Tangjiahe. |
| Rusty-breasted tit | <i>Parus davidi</i> | At least two encounters at Laba He. |
| Rufous-vented tit | <i>Parus rubidiventris</i> | A few on the first day and on two dates south of Yushu. Also at Laba He. |
| Grey-crested tit | <i>Parus dichrous</i> | A few on the first day were seen well, recorded on one further date on the plateau and small numbers at Laba He in Sichuan. |
| Grey tit | <i>Parus minor</i> | Seen on the first day out to Huzhu (Qinghai). Recorded on one date at Laba He (Sichuan). |
| Green-backed tit | <i>Parus monticolus</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Recorded in small numbers, almost daily, at Tangjiahe. |
| Pere David's tit | <i>Parus davidi</i> | A nice flock on one date at Laba He (Sichuan). |
| Black-throated tit | <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Seen on the last morning at Tangjiahe and also seen in the park in Chengdu. |
| Sooty tit | <i>Aegithalos fuliginosus</i> | Encountered every day at Tangjiahe. |
| Black-browed tit | <i>Aegithalos bonvaloti</i> | Only in Sichuan. A few encountered at Laba He. |
| Yellow-browed tit | <i>Sylviparus modestus</i> | Only in Sichuan. Recorded in two flocks at Laba He. |
| Eurasian crag martin | <i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i> | Recorded on two dates south of Yushu. Small flock high up in Tangjiahe on one date. |
| Red-rumped swallow | <i>Cecropis daurica</i> | Seen en route to Laba He (Sichuan). |
| Asian house martin | <i>Delichon dasypus</i> | Recorded on two dates south of Yushu. A few on one day at Laba He and along the river at Jiang You (Sichuan). |
| Collared finchbill | <i>Spizixos semitorques</i> | Only in Sichuan. A few high up in Tangjiahe. |
| Mountain bulbul | <i>Ixos mcclllandii</i> | Small numbers at Tangjiahe. |
| Brown-breasted bulbul | <i>Pycnotus xanthorrhous</i> | A few below the gate on the way out of Tangjiahe. |
| Light-vented bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Noted in Chengdu. |

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| †Tarim hill warbler | <i>Rhopophilus albosuperciliaris</i> | At least two of this recently-split species in the Qaidam Basin. |
| Chestnut-headed tesia | <i>Tesia castaneocoronata</i> | Seen twice at Laba He, heard frequently. |
| Brownish-flanked bush-warbler | <i>Cettia fortipes</i> | One in a flock at Laba He. |
| Yellowish-bellied bush-warbler | <i>Cettia acanthizoides</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Singles at Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Aberrant bush-warbler | <i>Cettia flavolivacea</i> | A few seen at Laba He (almost daily). |
| †Stolitzcka's tit-warbler | <i>Leptopoeile sophiae</i> | Widespread and frequently encountered on the plateau. |
| Crested tit-warbler | <i>Leptopoeile elegans</i> | Jesper had one of these gorgeous birds at Baixha (south of Yushu). |
| Pallas' leaf warbler | <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i> | A few at Tangjiahe. |
| Buff-barred warbler | <i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i> | Noted in small numbers at both sites visited in Sichuan. |
| Gansu leaf warbler | <i>Phylloscopus kansuensis</i> | Recorded on the first day (Huzhu). |
| †Sichuan leaf warbler | <i>Phylloscopus forresti</i> | Small numbers south of Yushu on the plateau leg. Small numbers occasionally in Sichuan. A recent split from pale-rumped leaf warbler <i>P. chloronotus</i> . |
| Yellow-browed warbler | <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i> | A few heard and glimpsed in Sichuan. |
| †Alpine leaf warbler | <i>Phylloscopus occisinensis</i> | Recorded south of Yushu. Small numbers on two dates at Laba He. This race of Tickell's leaf warbler has been split by Clements. |
| Yellow-streaked warbler | <i>Phylloscopus armandii</i> | Recorded on two dates south of Yushu. One at Jiang You in riverside vegetation on the last day. |
| Dusky warbler | <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i> | Roland recorded this species at Laba He on one day. |
| Goldcrest | <i>Regulus regulus</i> | Huzhu and Baixha on the plateau leg. Seen one day at Laba He (Sichuan). |
| White-throated laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax albogularis</i> | A large flock on the last morning at Tangjiahe. |
| Giant laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax maximus</i> | Seen well a number of times at Baixha and heard the next day in the Kanda Shan. |
| Barred laughingthrush [Hwamei] | <i>Garrulax lunulatus</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Small numbers at Tangjiahe. |
| White-browed laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax canorus</i> | Heard around Tangjiahe. |
| Elliott's laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax sannio</i> | Heard en route to Tangjiahe. Seen well in the park in Chengdu on the last morning. |
| [Plain laughingthrush] | <i>Garrulax ellioti</i> | Vocal and seen well on the first day. Thereafter frequently encountered in lowland areas, eg south of Yushu and at forested sites in Sichuan. |
| Black-faced laughingthrush | <i>Garrulax davidi</i> | Heard on the Huzhu day. |
| [Black-streaked scimitar-babbler] | <i>Garrulax affinis</i> | Only in Sichuan. Seen well on occasion at Laba He and Tangjiahe. |
| Streak-breasted scimitar-babbler | <i>Pomatorhinus gravivox</i> | Heard en route to Tangjiahe. |
| | <i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. One for Roland at Tangjiahe. |

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| Kozlov's babax | <i>Babax koslowi</i> | Three birds seen on the first day south of Yushu. Also at Baixha the next day and heard the day after that in the Kanda Shan. |
| Red-billed leiothrix | <i>Leiothrix lutea</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Frequently encountered at Tangjiahe. |
| Golden-breasted fulvetta | <i>Lioparus chrysotis</i> | Small numbers at Tangjiahe (Motainling trail only). |
| Chinese fulvetta | <i>Alcippe striaticollis</i> | Perhaps six in total at Baixha (south of Yushu). |
| Spectacled fulvetta | <i>Alcippe ruficapilla</i> | Noted on three dates at Tangjiahe. |
| Grey-hooded fulvetta | <i>Alcippe cinereiceps</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Small numbers almost daily at Laba He. Formerly part of the streak-throated fulvetta complex. |
| David's fulvetta | <i>Alcippe davidi</i> | Noted on at least two dates at Tangjiahe. |
| Stripe-throated yuhina | <i>Yuhina gularis</i> | Small flock at the visitor centre at Tangjiahe on the way out. |
| White-collared yuhina | <i>Yuhina diademata</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. Small flocks of this species encountered occasionally at Tangjiahe. |
| Bearded parrotbill | <i>Panurus biarmicus</i> | A few seen very well at Koko Nor on the first visit. |
| Great parrotbill | <i>Conostoma oemodium</i> | Only in Sichuan. Pair seen well by Cathy at Tangjiahe. |
| Brown parrotbill | <i>Cholornis unicolor</i> | A single flock encountered at Laba He. |
| Ashy-throated parrotbill | <i>Paradoxornis alphonsiana</i> | Only in Sichuan. One in the park at Chengdu was a surprise. |
| Tibetan lark | <i>Melanocorypha maxima</i> | Seen well first on the Koko Nor day and also in the desert at Chaka on the last day Heard and seen elsewhere on the plateau in wetter areas on two dates. |
| Mongolian lark | <i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i> | Only seen by some on the Koko Nor walk on Day 2. |
| Hume's short-toed lark | <i>Calandrella acutirostris</i> | Heard on Day 4 and two in the desert at Chaka. |
| Asian short-toed lark | <i>Calandrella cheleensis</i> | Noted in the Qaidam Basin and in the Chaka area. |
| Oriental skylark | <i>Alauda gulgula</i> | Often common in the lower-lying areas of the plateau (four dates). |
| Horned lark | <i>Eremophila alpestris</i> | Frequently encountered often in good numbers on the plateau. |
| Fire-breasted flowerpecker | <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i> | Small numbers in the park at Chengdu on the last morning. |
| House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | One female at the Bayankala. A few at Tangjiahe. |
| Tree sparrow | <i>Passer montanus</i> | Almost ubiquitous. |
| Rock sparrow | <i>Petronia petronia</i> | Noted on three days on the plateau. Best views in the desert at Chaka on the last day in Qinghai. |
| Henri's snowfinch | <i>Montifringilla henrici</i> | First seen on the Er La pass. Elsewhere recorded on just one other day on the plateau. |
| Tibetan snowfinch | <i>Montifringilla adamsi</i> | Seen on the plateau on just three dates and in small numbers. |
| White-rumped snowfinch | <i>Pyrgilauda taczanowski</i> | A bruiser! Frequently encountered in the vicinity of black-lipped pika colonies on the plateau. |
| Père David's snowfinch | <i>Pyrgilauda davidiana</i> | Some drinking at the spring in the Chaka desert. |
| Rufous-necked snowfinch | <i>Pyrgilauda ruficollis</i> | Only on the higher plateau where recorded, often in large flocks, on ten dates. |
| Blanford's snowfinch | <i>Pyrgilauda blanfordi</i> | Recorded on three dates on the plateau. Good views of five in the desert outside Chaka. |

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| White wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | Small numbers this year of late birds lingering on the plateau (six dates). Frequently encountered in Sichuan on the extension. |
| Citrine wagtail | <i>Motacilla citreola</i> | Heard at Koko Nor. At least eight on the hot springs at Wenquan. A few on six further dates on the plateau. |
| Rosy pipit | <i>Anthus roseatus</i> | One at the spring near Chaka. |
| Olive-backed pipit | <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> | A few birds at Huzhu. Also small numbers at Laba He on three dates. |

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| Water pipit | <i>Anthus spinoletta</i> | Recorded only at the spring near Chaka this year. |
| Robin accentor | <i>Prunella rubeculoides</i> | Frequently encountered in suitable habitat on the plateau leg of the tour (eight dates). |
| Rufous-breasted accentor | <i>Prunella strophhiata</i> | Small numbers on three dates on the plateau leg of the tour. Seen in small numbers on three dates at Laba He (Sichuan). |
| Brown accentor | <i>Prunella fulvescens</i> | Small numbers on seven dates on the plateau leg of the tour. |
| Maroon-backed accentor | <i>Prunella immaculata</i> | A flock of five or so encountered at Laba He. |
| Brandt's mountain finch | <i>Leucosticte brandti</i> | A few at Wenquan village and en route to Qumalai. |
| Plain mountain finch | <i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i> | Recorded en route to Maduo. |
| Siskin | <i>Carduelis spinus</i> | A single at Tangjiahe. |
| Twite | <i>Carduelis flavirostris</i> | Recorded on nine dates on the plateau leg of the tour. |
| Brambling | <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> | A few flocks of 30-40 birds encountered at Tangjiahe on one day. A single the day we left there. |
| Mongolian finch | <i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i> | Phil had a pair below the Wenquan Pass. Flyovers heard on two further dates on the plateau. |
| †Chinese beautiful rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus davidianus</i> | Recorded on the first day (Huzhu). Recorded on two further dates in Qinghai. |
| Common rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i> | Phil had some in the oat field outside 'Greentours valley' (south of Yushu). |
| Dark-rumped rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus edwardsii</i> | Roland and the team recorded one at Laba He. |
| Pink-rumped rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus eos</i> | Recorded in small numbers on all three dates south of Yushu. |
| Three banded rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus trifasciatus</i> | A good look at a pair at Baixha (south of Yushu). |
| †Chinese white-browed rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus dubius</i> | Small numbers on three days (south of Yushu) and finally in the Dulan Mountains. |
| †Eastern great rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus rubicilloides</i> | Noted on 5 dates in high altitude scrub and woodland. |
| †Caucasian great rosefinch | <i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i> | Recorded on one date on the plateau in arid areas. |
| †Przwal'ski's pinktail | <i>Urocynchramus pylzowi</i> | At least five at Jesper's site for this fantastic species on the plateau near Huashixia. |
| Grey-headed bullfinch | <i>Pyrrhula erythaca</i> | Only in Sichuan this year. Small numbers on two days at Laba He. |
| Red crossbill | <i>Loxia curvirostra</i> | Small numbers on the first day at Huzhu. |
| Chinese grosbeak | <i>Eophonia migratoria</i> | Cathy had one at the lunch stop en route to Tangjiahe. We also had two in the park in Chengdu. |
| White-winged grosbeak | <i>Mycerobas carnipes</i> | A few at Huzhu and Baixha and seen well in the Dulan Mountains too. |
| Slaty bunting | <i>Latoucheornis siemsseni</i> | Only seen in Sichuan. A female seen well at Laba He. Poor views next day there too. |
| Red-headed bunting | <i>Emberiza bruniceps</i> | A single first-year bird outside 'Greentours valley' was well off course, this species is very scarce in Qinghai. |
| Pine bunting | <i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i> | A pair in the Dulan Hills. |
| Godlewski's bunting | <i>Emberiza godlewski</i> | Scattered records on the plateau (four dates). |
| Little bunting | <i>Emberiza pusilla</i> | Two poorly at Chaka (Qinghai). Recorded at Laba He and en route to Tangjiahe. Two seen well at Tangjiahe (Sichuan). |