

Mammals of the Roof of the World

The glorious Changtang and delightful Sichuan

October 6th – November 1st 2019

A Greentours Trip Report

Led by Jesper Hornskov, Roland Zeidler & Phil Benstead

Daily report by Phil Benstead

Day 1 6th October flight from home

We all started our journey to Beijing and/or Xining by various routes destined to connect eventually with Jesper in Xining.

Day 2 7th October more flying, Beijing and finally Xining

An interminable but thankfully time-zone truncated day saw most of us tackling the various queues in Beijing airport before heading either to a hotel or the first class lounge to wile away the rather long wait for our flight to Xining. Eventually the gate number was announced and we did our first trek of the trip, to the far end of terminal 3. Here the European contingent finally connected up and chatted away as we waited for the gate to open. The flight left on time and the bags were out in no time flat. Impressive. A waiting bus whisked us to the hotel and there we met up with Jesper for a briefing about the next day and some of us had a bowl of noodles in a nearby restaurant before bed.

Day 3 8th October Huzhu area

We gathered together at 0530 in the lobby for kick-off, finally meeting up with Doug and Kathy. We were complete. Wrapped up and ready for any weather we were fairly champing at the bit to get at some wildlife after being stuck in transport for two days. We loaded bags 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 but low cloud greeted us. We breakfasted at a scenic outlook and then started to look for Siberian roe deer. The low cloud and lack of sun made this difficult and in the end we left empty-handed. A few birds were spotted during the process, the best being a nice close white-winged grosbeak.

Next we drove quite a long way downhill and found 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. We did not have to wait long at the stakeout before Patricia spotted a busy Tsingling pika. Occasionally it showed well in the open but spent a long time in its burrow system.

The sun eventually appeared and as jetlag kicked in it was very difficult to stay awake. Birds made plenty of appearances though and we even had a few butterflies. Raptor and stork migration was obvious overhead during the morning. Warblers here hard to find this year with just a few Gansu leaf-warblers and a single buff-barred. Chinese nuthatch was seen well. Those who accompanied Jesper a little higher up the track bagged good views of grey crested tit. Sparrowhawks drifted through at regular intervals. Occasionally the gorgeous local race of Eurasian jay showed up. Eventually hunger got the better of us though and we headed back down to the road to find a restaurant. During lunch we were treated to a large flock of azure-winged magpie.

After lunch we headed back up to our breakfast spot to search again for the Siberian roe deer. With drastically improved visibility it did not take Mervyn long to find us the first of two bucks. They were distant and some chose to accompany Jesper in trying to get a bit closer. Then it was time to drive back to town and a hotpot dinner.

Day 4 9th October Koko Nor and the South Koko Nor Range

Another early start saw us checking out and heading out of sleepy Xining well before first light. Dawn revealed that we were out into decent habitat and climbing up onto the plateau under a cloudy sky that was delivering a fair amount of rain but also a surprisingly warm morning. Jesper called a halt in a sand dune area and we climbed out of the cars during a lucky break in the rain.

From the road we were soon watching the first of a total of about 27 Przewalski's gazelles – an incredibly rare and threatened species. At least one nice adult male was present in the herd which drifted past us at reasonably close range in a long strung-out stream as they headed slowly out of the grassland and through the fence into the dunes to disappear. A nice sighting. Some managed to pick up their first woolly hare here too.

Driving further and with more rain threatening and then arriving we pushed on to the eastern side of the huge and impressive Koko Nor lake. Here we quickly pouched our late breakfast before huddling in the cars as the rain increased in intensity. Any small breaks in the rain saw the black-lipped pika colony here burst into life. We waited for the rain to stop and got lucky and enjoyed a break in the weather that allowed us to take a walk along the lakeshore.

This fantastic freshwater lagoon 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. As the rain stopped we were alerted by the bugling of our first black-necked cranes. We saw a total of eight here in the end. The reedbeds here were filled with noisy bearded reedlings. The wetland edge had

small flocks of feeding Tibetan larks, a very big lark. Over the reed and marsh both hen and western marsh harrier were hunting. Waders here included northern lapwing and ruff. At the far end of our short walk we found our first hoopoe, another Chinese grey shrike and our first brown accentor. Walking back we found a small earthstar species.

We took lunch in a roadside restaurant, outside which another hoopoe entertained. Moving on we took the road over the nearby 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 their home. Everywhere you looked the pikas were busy 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. Driving on we had a very close encounter with a roadside Tibetan fox that unusually stood its ground allowing for photography. Our last stop produced good looks at saker but we could not find any more mammals. With dusk approaching we headed back to the cars and the short drive to the hotel in Gong He. After dinner we had our introductory briefing and our first checklist session.

Day 5 10th October Gansu Gully, the Er La Pass and the river at Wenquan

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 this year it took sometime to secure our prize, light snow falling throughout the session. We had been scanning for hours and had eventually gone on a walk looking for Gansu pika when the ever-vigilant Merv piped up that he had the cat. It was high on a ridge, perched on a rock and surveying its domain. We all got great 'scope views and then the animal perked up and started stalking along the ridge. We then watched in disbelief as one of the locals we had just been talking to screamed up on his motorbike and gave chase to the animal on foot. A sad end to a great sighting. The cat dived into a jumble of rocks and did not reappear...

The short walk down to the river to look for Gansu pika ultimately failed in its objective but we saw some nice things. Overhead we had good numbers of Himalayan griffon vulture and a single golden eagle. As the morning warmed up birds became more obvious and we did well as we scoured the sides of the gullies in vain for the tiny pika. Driving on we quickly stopped to enjoy some roadside griffon vultures.

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 it was snowing nicely but nevertheless we slowly drove up to a saddle hoping for a mammal but knowing really that the weather was against us and all we were likely to gain was some valuable acclimatisation. High on the saddle were a number of birds including our first Henri's snowfinch and Brandt's mountain finch. Walking back to the cars we headed for the nearby village of Wenquan and sorted ourselves out into our basic lodgings for the night. This left enough time for a sortie down to the nearby hot springs and river. Those that made it this far on an already tiring day were rewarded with really close views of two Tibetan foxes, a distant herd of 25 blue sheep and a few

nice birds including our first raven, as well as single black-crowned night-heron and Chinese pond heron. A good end to an enjoyable day.

Day 6 11th October Huashixia and onto Maduo

We got a lie-in this morning, leaving at 0600, light snow fell as we loaded the bags and it had obviously been snowing plenty during the night. Because of the road conditions we elected to bypass the high pass and take the motorway tunnel instead. The road was pretty awful but we negotiated our way safely only to be stopped briefly by a lorry stuck on the exit ramp. The police kindly got us onto the right road and we drove the short distance to our morning site. We took breakfast in an underpass out of the snow, about four inches lay on the ground...

After breakfast most of us headed out towards this exciting site, low dunes covered in willow scrub that hosts the fabled Przvalski'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.

Birdwise things were rather quiet, but we eventually found a large flock of pinktails and other hangers-on. The pinktail is simply a superb little bird and this year there were perhaps as many as 20 present. Also here Stoliczka's tit-warbler, Tibetan grey shrike and white-browed tit. The deep snow ruled out connecting with the Gansu pika. The conditions underfoot reduced the amount of walking we did here but by searching from suitable vantage points we found our first kiang and even a lone wolf sleeping in the snow. Eventually it spotted us and ran off occasionally turning to inspect us. A nice start to our wolf sightings. Peter had a brief encounter with a steppe polecat which the rest of us searched for in vain, sadly. Eventually we trudged back over the pika flats to the road.

After a tasty lunch in a nearby restaurant we drove on slowly searching for kiang and other mammals. Car 3 connected with a lovely pair of wolf which we examined in the 'scope. Kiang and Tibetan gazelle were examined at length along this stretch. More black-necked cranes and roadside bar-headed geese were well received. One last stop up a dirt track was astonishing. Phil found the first of perhaps six wolves but then Jesper announced that he had found a lynx! It was fairly close and knew we were there. We all got 'scope views of it as it walked calmly away from us and into dead ground never to be seen again. It was huge and muscular and totally astonishing. We spent the rest of the time enjoying watching the young wolves playing whilst the adults wandered around seemingly aimlessly. An unbelievable end to a great day.

Day 7 12th October Bayankala pass and south to Yushu

Our overnight hotel in Maduo was a little too high (4300masl) for a complete night's sleep. 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 a lot less overcast than our previous mornings and it was chilly before the sun got going (- 8 degrees C at the cold point).

En route to the Bayankala pass (4824m asl) we passed a few kiang and gazelles but it seemed quiet this morning along the road. We stopped to photograph a picturesque monastery in a small village filled with monks, nuns and colourfully dressed locals. At the pass we set about breakfast, enjoying feeding the ravens that kept us company. There was too much ice up here this year to safely explore the pass area so after breakfast we drove on downhill searching for stuff. Jesper had us stop at a huge Blyth's mountain vole colony and we enjoyed watching them popping out to look at us.

Driving on we dropped over one last pass and off the plateau. Jesper had a lunch spot in mind and it proved to be a charming side valley. Here we parked by some small houses festooned with hay. We were greeted by a large flock of colourful Tibetan partridges and enjoyed a variety of birds in the small walled fields around the houses. Mervyn answered a call of nature and found a superb mountain weasel that was busy stashing often surprising large lumps of meat in a dry stone wall. We watched it for a long time as it dashed back-and-forth. The cameras were busy. Doug spotted a couple of wolves that gave us the slip and then Mervyn scored again with our first Himalayan marmot. Heinz showed us a lovely small group of the pale-blue gentian we last saw at Huzhu. A great lunch stop.

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 on the Yangtze crossing for photographs and then followed the road to Yushu which ran alongside a river. Arriving at another bridge we piled out to search for ibisbill. The first things we saw were at least five white-bellied dippers. It did not take long to find the first of ten ibisbills, epic birds. Later we also spotted a solitary snipe feeding quietly under our noses close to the bridge. A great end to the day.

Day 8 13th 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. Over the pass we dropped down into the catchment of the Mekong and a nice limestone landscape that captivated us throughout the day. A wallcreeper appeared for one of the vehicles as we headed for the bridge that marked the trailhead for today's hike. On the way in we noted a large flock of Daurian jackdaws. We took breakfast whilst watching five McNeill's deer feeding high above us. Our first Tibetan magpies checked us out.

Stocking our bags with lunch we set off through a charming valley, past a small hamlet and into a small gorge. This took the best part of the day. Near the start of the walk we stopped to check a rock-face streaked with pika urine. Sure enough Mervyn found us our first Glover's pika here. Overhead our first golden eagle, several lammergier and a large number of griffon vultures.

Next came a huge surprise when we found more lynx, a female and large cub, high above the valley floor. They stayed in view for about five minutes before disappearing into a belt of trees. We waited patiently for them to reappear and ate our lunch but they did not come out. Whilst we waited we watched two alpine musk deer on a faraway alpine meadow. What a place!

Later on when the sun came out marmots were rather easily found here. Two or three flocks of white eared-pheasants were most welcome. Tibetan partridges surrendered on the track. The small stream produced numerous white-bellied dipper and even a few ibisbill this year. Kessler's thrush called and a small flock flew high above the ridge. 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.

Driving to Nangqian in the dark we arrived in town rather late so we settled into our quirky hotel for the luxury of a three-night stay and headed straight to dinner.

Day 9 14th October Baixha Forest Reserve

Another early start had us out the door well before dawn for the drive down to the Baizha Forest reserve. Driving into the heart of the reserve we stopped for a some blue sheep. Eventually we pulled up for breakfast before commencing a downhill hike that lasted most of the day (on and off). It was a rather chilly walk memorable for producing a number of new birds and the promise of a few mammals. We searched the open areas on the slopes above us for mammals as we followed the river downstream but things were rather quiet on this visit. A brief spell of sun near a suitable rocky cliff produced a number of photogenic Glover's pika.

Birding too was quiet but the quality was there: we saw a number of nice Chinese fulvettas, Giant laughingthrush, relatively common but hard to get long looks at, and we also found a few Kozlov's babax. High overhead an invisible black woodpecker called in flight.

We eventually took lunch at the far end of this attractive little valley, the self-heating meals being well-appreciated in the damp cold. Eventually we turned back up the valley and stopped for some nice low blue sheep and then later some cliff-climbing individuals. Searching for white-lipped deer was stopped by snow so we turned for home. We reached Nangqian at dusk in time for a shower (not always hot) and another dinner with Susan (lazy as ever she was).

Day 10 15th October The Kanda Shan

Today we once again headed south of Nangqian in the dark and snow retracing part of yesterday's route before diving off towards the unbelievably beautiful Kanda Shan mountain range. Our snowy breakfast stop produced nothing to the scanners but a walk back up the road was more productive. Near the cars we bumped into a good thrush flock with many Kessler's and a few red-throated thrushes. A few white-winged grosbeaks and a nice grey-headed woodpecker were well-received. Jesper found us a nice flock of Szecheny's monal-partridge that showed at range.

Walking round the mountain to view a new face we suddenly found a huge number of blue sheep. In amongst them Jesper spotted the first of five Tibetan snowcocks. The weather effectively suppressed the activity of both pikas present here, regrettably. We scanned with increased vigour for cats but found

none. We took lunch here enjoying views of two surprise Alpine accentors and a huge flock of plain mountain finches.

After lunch we drove further up the road. We stopped and spent sometime scanning. Jesper found us a beautiful wolf in lovely light. This beast eventually led us uphill to two fine male white-lipped deer. The big stag was an impressive 10-point beast. A lammergier flew close and below our position at one point. At our last stop some scanned the crags whilst others joined Jesper for a walk in the valley. The scanners were rewarded when Brenda found a closer flock of monal-partridges. We headed back to hotel, tomorrow we would be driving back to Yushu.

Day 11 16th October drive to Yushu

Today was a free day gained when we side-stepped the Wenquan Pass due to bad weather last week. This allowed us to explore the back road to Yushu through some truly memorable scenery and some great wildlife. We left early as usual and chugged out of a sleepy Nangqian for the last time.

Dawn arrived and we were surrounded by mountains. We stopped for breakfast and started searching. It soon became apparent that we were parked up near a large white-lipped deer rut. The dyspeptic bellows and occasional higher-pitched almost ass-like calls echoed around the hills. We counted 98 in total, an astonishing number. As we munched our breakfast we used the array of 'scopes to watch the various activities involved in the rut. Small numbers of blue sheep were also available. Moving a little higher up the road we watched the rutting deer again and counted a total of 14 Tibetan snowcock.

Remembering that we were in transit we moved on a little further stopping again to scan but apart from a few blue sheep and some close Tibetan partridge we drew a blank. Driving on again we stopped near a huge cluster of water-powered prayer wheels for our lunch and a chance to photograph these religious machines. A walk here was very good, birds were plentiful and Neil spotted us four very close wolves in amongst the junipers. They were as surprised to see us as we were to see them, and they quickly melted back into the trees.

Driving on to Yushu was punctuated with a number of stops often inspired by the huge flocks of white eared-pheasants that we encountered in the late afternoon. These birds are impressive and they led us to other wildlife. Mervyn spotted three wild boar (an incredibly rare mammal in Qinghai) at one stop. Next we stopped for roadside white-lipped deer and the meadows here had a nice flock of blood pheasant too. Eventually we had to drive on but we still managed a few roadside sightings as we chugged along. A marmot sat outside its burrow. A Tibetan fox fled from the road and rivers yielded up a few ibisbill to the keen observer. Finally we reached our hotel in Yushu, where this time the staff were very keen to demonstrate the availability of hot water as we settled into our rooms...

Day 12 17th October drive to Qumalai

Another travel day interspersed with stops at known mammal locations and likely-looking spots. Blue skies dominated the weather during the day. It is always difficult to pick a favourite day on this tour but this one should stay in all our memories for a long time. We climbed the first of two high passes through rolling hills and plenty of evidence of over-grazing. We tried to locate a site for Pallas' cat that Jesper had been tipped-off about, but unfortunately it was not possible to make sense of the directions... Nevertheless we breakfasted in the general area, hoping, and as dawn broke we became aware of four Tibetan gazelles and just above them five Tibetan wolves. Thrillingly the wolves gave chase but eventually the gazelles powered uphill and away from the flagging wolf pack. A great way to start the day.

Driving on we passed a dozen black-necked cranes, and then three more. Close roadside Tibetan foxes appeared occasionally. A delicious dumpling soup lunch was taken in a bustling Zhiduo, and then we made an extended stop to look at our first argali, a nice roadside herd of 23 females and youngsters. Moving on past small herds of white-lipped deer we drove on.

Another stop to walk along working the river and the islands of buckthorn scrub proved to be a great idea when 75 metres into the walk Jesper spotted a snow leopard on a ridge high above us. All hell broke loose as we tried to get everyone on the animal. Panic over we watched this animal for about an hour off-and-on. It walked around, occasionally ran, stalked things we could not see and rolled onto its back with its feet in the air like a kitten. A fantastic sighting. 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. We attempted to walk up a side valley in pursuit of the leopard but could not relocate it. Instead we were rewarded with a bachelor group of seven argali. A nice end to an excellent day looking for mammals. As dusk approached we drove on to Qumalai.

Day 13 18th October drive to Budonquan

A nice late start saw us on the road out of Qumalai, the sun shone down from a blue sky. 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 Budongquan. 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 Tibetan foxes. 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 mixture of males, females and youngsters feeding in the distance. Out on the flats we found over 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 Budongquan. Wary wild yak appeared on the tops of nearby ridges. A viewpoint near town yielded yet more wild yak and herds of chiru, and we enjoyed watching a hunting Tibetan fox. As dusk fell we checked into our colourful truck-stop accommodation.

Day 14 19th 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 road into Yeniugou (or Wild Yak Valley). Our usual breakfast stop was reached just after dawn. Whilst the drivers sorted out breakfast we scanned away. Low cloud hung over a warm morning and definitely affected results during the morning. Wild yak fed on the riverine meadows at dawn before moving uphill. Gazelle and kiang were dotted about. We never saw enough slope to be sure whether argali were present or not and unusually we missed Tibetan sandgrouse this year.

After breakfast Jesper lead us out on a long looping walk through the riverine scrub. We found evidence of voles but no activity. As we walked on hares spooked in front of us and things were quite lively with passerines, including white-browed tit-warbler, brown accentor and many Guldenstadt's redstarts.

Valley done we drove on to Golmud, through an increasingly arid, desert landscape. A coffee/snack stop by a small woodland produced some largely Siberian migrant birds. We found at least three red-flanked bluetails, a taiga flycatcher, a yellow-browed warbler (scarce in Qinghai) and at least one little bunting. 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 20th October to Dulan, via the Qaidam and Xidangride

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 and wind turbines. Our breakfast stop produced our first views of goitered gazelles, we were to see many during the early part of the morning session before they melted into the landscape.

After breakfast we walked along the road before heading along dirt tracks that led to farms and hidden springs. Tarim hill babbler proved worthy adversaries this year but we all got views in the end. Occasional Henderson's ground-jays perched up in the distance. Small parties of bearded tits were frequent and Phil spotted a large-billed reed bunting. We stopped at one spring that had been harbouring a hoopoe and watched at least two species of fish drifting in and out of the spring into the shallow pool. Phil saw one species of *Sympetrum* dragonfly. Jesper spotted a flock of ten common cranes moving through.

Eventually, running out of time, we left the site and headed for Dulan. The temperature today peaked at a dizzying 14 degrees C, a stark contrast to earlier days... Just before Dulan we stopped to stretch our legs in a small plantation area. This produced our only Przvalski's redstarts (a gang of four). Sadly the goji berry farm here was using netting against birds and we saw hundreds of tree sparrows hanging in the netting and the occasional hoopoe... Driving on we headed to the hotel. Dinner was a particularly sumptuous affair this evening.

Day 16 21st October Dulan Mountains and the Chaka desert

A 0700 start saw us heading up the road towards the Dulan Mountains trailhead and the start of what was to be a healthy 6-hour walk. During breakfast Jesper located the first *kansuensis* red deer, our target species this morning. Rutting male calls all around echoed around us, the rut was clearly in full swing this year.

We walked off. Walking up, we searched a rocky gully really hard hoping for a Chinese red pika but nothing was afoot. Birds were evident and included a good number of pine bunting. Part of the team elected to stay here on high alert leaving the others to go on up with Jesper. From our viewpoint we watched the team tackling the slope until they disappeared, and then enjoyed the antics of the small group of hinds and their attendant lord-and-master, an impressive stag. Birds started to appear and we got views of Kessler's thrush and brown accentor. Overhead we watched a number of raptors including a mint-condition first-year golden eagle.

Those that made it to Jesper's ridgetop vantage point had a great view and connected with more deer. The scenery was some of the best seen so far on the tour and they drank in the atmosphere. Dropping back down we headed for the waiting vehicles. Our sojourn in the Dulan Mountains had ended.

Motoring on to Chaka we hardly stopped. Despite searching the desert west of Chaka in the hours before dusk for midday gerbils we came away empty-handed. We found little of evidence of their presence this year and only a few obviously active burrows, but diligent scanning produced a nice group of 80 Przvalski's gazelle, some close enough to the road for decent photographs. That left only the short drive into Chaka and our hotel.

Day 17 22nd 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 close to the lake outside Chaka. After our simple meal we walked through the grassy desert landscape to our favourite location, wooly hares scattering in front of us. Unusually, the small spring-fed stream was rather quiet for birds but we all enjoyed the arrival from the fringing mountains of small and very quick flocks of rock sparrow. The new owner of the small hut here was greatly surprised to wake up amongst a group of western spotters. Turning to leave we were just in time for Jesper to spot a rapid flock of about 45 Pallas' sandgrouse – an exciting bird if you like that sort of thing. Walking back up to the road

we had our first Mongolian larks and Mervyn and Brenda coralled a Koko Nor toad-headed agama for us to look at.

Relocating we moved the short distance to check the roadside poplar stands, buckthorn hedges and associated farmland. Huge numbers of tree sparrow were evident and in amongst them a large number of eastern great rosefinches. An imperial eagle slipped past. Azure-winged magpies entertained but the easy highlight was the discovery of a huge, orange-eyed Eurasian eagle-owl. A monster. Some had good views of red fox here too.

A tasty lunch was taken next at a nearby restaurant and that just left the road back past Koko Nor into Xining. Going this way proved to be a good idea. We stopped first for a roadside demoiselle crane. A lingering bird from the massive migrations through the region last month, unfortunately due to a badly damaged wing. We also stopped at a roadside enclosure with a small herd of presumed captive Przewalski's gazelles, which allowed for photography in a natural setting. Driving downhill to Xining the traffic got more intense and we were treated to typically Chinese scenes. At one point we passed a lorry carrying three small combine harvesters, each glass-encased cab containing the driver nested in duvets travelling to the next job, like hibernating dormice.

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 and saying goodbye to Peter and Neil. Sichuan beckoned...

Day 18 23rd October to Sichuan and Laba He

A leisurely start saw us taking breakfast in the hotel which was a novelty affair and then we all met up in the lobby to board the bus that whisked us to the airport in good time to meet all requirements of check-in and security. The flight was on time and passed quickly.

Arriving groundside in Chengdu we met up with Roland and we were shepherded to the waiting bus. Setting off we anticipated a 5-hour journey but the first thing to do was to have lunch in a nearby noodle restaurant. The drive was largely uneventful but passing a convoy of lorries carrying wind turbine blades was hair-raising. Negotiating the various rules relating to buses on the new expressway occupied the driver and Roland but by 1930 we were sorting out rooms for the luxury of a four-night stay.

After checking in and having dinner we all returned to the bus for a bit of a spotlighting session. This proved to be an gentle introduction to the game. First up was a superb close goral browsing cliff vegetation. Next we looked at a gang of red-and-white giant flying-squirrel and even saw one gliding down the cliff face. Further on Reeve's muntjac and sambar added themselves our list. Despite mizzling rain throughout we had a great time and the highlight came when we found a very close complex-toothed flying-squirrel on a roadside cliff-face. Tired we retired to bed and dreamt of red pandas.

Day 19

24th October

Laba He

A early start saw us taking our bus to the gate and transferring to a park bus for the ride uphill to the cable car station. Rain had been falling all night and did not stop for the remainder of the day...

We took lunch in the shelter of the building site surrounding the cable car station and then potted downhill all morning. We very quickly connected with both our first red panda (thanks to Roland's thermal imager) – a very damp and bedraggled individual and a nice pair of great parrotbill. The low cloud and rain made photography almost impossible and greatly reduced viewing conditions but the panda left before things could improve and we moved on.

We walked on down the road searching hard and bumped into our first flocks of birds, highlights included some nice brown parrotbills and the endearing grey-hooded fulvetta. Eventually after missing a skittish red panda on the ground we connected with another feeding individual. The weather was still appalling, the panda was very wet but we got better views of this individual. Scampering about in the trees we found a small number of Swinhoe's striped squirrel. Birds were few and far between on the walk but Mervyn found us a nice Darjeeling woodpecker. Eventually as bedraggled as the mammals we had been watching we headed for an early lunch down at the hotel, we were soaked and all our optics dripped.

After lunch a small group, Mervyn, Brenda and Roland, headed downhill in the bus to try and escape the rain. It did not work but they saw a few goral, a dead snake and a nice selection of riparian bird species. The rest of us caught up on essential chores, like laundry, waxing boots and writing diaries and reports.

After dinner we went for a night-drive along the access road. Again goral and sambar were frequently encountered, as were red-and-white giant flying squirrel. A few Reeve's muntjacs were seen again. Only Phil saw the leopard cat sitting quietly beside the road. The easy highlight was an excellent encounter with a complex-toothed flying-squirrel clinging to a roadside rockface.

Day 20

25th October

Laba He

This morning we elected to have a hotel breakfast and head up the hill slightly later. Refuelled we again took to the park bus and driving up the driver pointed out the first red panda and we stopped there and walked uphill all morning. The first panda was fast asleep in a fruiting tree and we watched him for sometime before he tired of us, woke up, stretched and headed down the tree and off to another more secluded tree further away.

We walked up further, Roland chased an elusive heat signature and called us up a dry riverbed to watch an enchanting red panda feeding in a tree. We watched this animal for some time. Fantastic. The viewing conditions had improved incredibly on yesterday and we were starting to get some decent images.

Moving on again Roland found us a splendid red panda, feeding in plain sight with minimal vegetation screening it and at close range. Here we started to get very good photographs and walked away happy after the red panda slipped away. Absolutely superb. Brenda and Mervyn connected with our only Lady Amherst's pheasant of the trip – a female...

We spent the rest of the walk searching the bamboo thickets on the now-revealed slopes above us for giant panda, this search was fruitless but took us to the cable car carpark. We did not last long here despite the wide panorama and eventually boarded a bus to take us down to our waiting bus. Roland took us above the hotel away from the fall-colours throng and we had a quiet picnic by a river. Five collared finchbill joined us.

After lunch Roland took us away from the crowds on a drive downhill searching for mammals with the thermal imager. We did not get good views of goral this time but a perched mountain hawk-eagle was a nice bonus. Riparian birds featured and we all got looks at plumbeous redstart and brown dipper. Heinz pointed out a number of common European garden plants, here growing in the wild. Eventually we had to turn back to the hotel to prepare for the evening's activities.

After checklists and dinner, we headed out again for some more spotlighting. The highlight of this session was a long but distant look at our first Chinese serow on a sloping meadow high above us.

Day 21 26th October Laba He

Eager to leave the crowds along the road behind we headed uphill again to tackle the Azalea Lake trail. Rain again fell and dampened our enthusiasm slightly. Walking up many steps we were eventually treated to head and shoulders views of a forest musk deer (thanks to the thermal scope). Birds were good here too and included maroon-backed accentor, chestnut thrush and more brown parrotbill. Male Lady Amherst's pheasant called but refused to show.

After lunch some of us headed down hill to the Ranger Danger trail in light rain. This trail is always great for bird flocks for some reason and today was no different. We watched a big gang of yuhinas feeding in fruiting bushes and in amongst them other exciting birds like the tiny speckled piculet and the green shrike-babbler. Later another flock drifted through the trees and we had good looks at gorals on the cliffs.

After dinner we headed out spotlighting and drove up the road to the other hotel. The lightshow was shocking as usual. On the way down we connected with the first of two masked palm civets.

Day 22 27th October Laba He to Tangjiahe

We left Laba He at 0800 and thanks to the new expressway we were past Chengdu at 1200. Leaving the expressway the road narrowed and we entered a very rural valley. Persimmon trees popped. Maize

hung drying from every farmhouse. We stopped briefly to check a reservoir and stretch our legs. We were rewarded with our only little grebe of the tour, plus coot, mallard, teal and a fine male Daurian redstart. Eventually we climbed a couple of passes and dropped over the other side. We were getting close. 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 the diminutive Reeve's muntjac. After check-in and dinner some elected to join Roland and the Swiss team on a walk around the hotel. Takin were evident in the garden and we connected with the much-wanted hog badger. Confucian niviventers were watched in the amongst the boulders in the riverbed. Exhausted we collapsed into bed.

Day 23 28th October Tangjiahe

We worked the road, often in tandem with the Swiss team. Searching hard for bear and snubnose we worked various areas. Walking up the Defence Pass took us some time but was largely quiet for mammals. On arrival back at the bus the driver informed us he had seen yellow-throated marten. Further work along the road produced our first Pere David's rock-squirrel.

In the afternoon we returned to the road and whilst Roland checked out the Defence Pass again the rest of us waited for a return of the yellow-throated marten. No joy on that front but more rock-squirrels and flyby crested kingfisher.

Our first proper Tangjiahe spotlighting session was rather good if a little cold. 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. Hog badger was a huge favourite. Another tawny fish-owl put in an appearance. Two porcupines appeared close to the road and allowed a close approach for photography. A good first session.

Day 24 29th October Tangjiahe

Our pre-breakfast session aimed at finding cats failed in its objective but produced excellent close views of takin.

After breakfast we took a bus uphill on the red leaf road. Walking down was not very productive sadly but we enjoyed a number of large wild boar and multiple Tibetan macaque sightings as well as superb scenery. The number of black bear sleeping nests we encountered was staggering but we could not find a bear today sadly. Overhead a number of raptors appeared. Invertebrates were on the wing and included a number of butterfly species as well as day-flying moths (including *Callidula attentuata*). The

tufted deer at the ranger station had sadly died during the winter. Kathy and Doug made it all the way back to the hotel (17km) but the rest of us jumped on a bus for the last stretch.

We had a quick dusk session hoping for a cat or two but came back empty-handed for dinner and checklists. A nearby calling collared scops-owl did not respond to tape playback.

After dinner the evening spotlighting session was rather good in warm and overcast conditions. We managed to find a nice selection of mammals including another pair of porcupine and had good looks at hog badger and masked palm civet. The easy highlights though were the two encounters we had with serow during the session. The second of a mother and kid was prolonged and superb. The animals browsed unconcerned in the spotlight beam on the other side of the river. A good session.

Day 25 30th October Tangjiahe (Motainling)

Our pre-breakfast drive produced the usual stuff plus Phil found a fleeting yellow-throated marten at dawn that only Roland connected with before it was off slope and out of view. Disappointing.

After breakfast we took the bus down to the Motainling bus station and transferred to the park bus for walk down road. This was rather quiet although various birds popped up. The thermal scope picked up a distant heat signature and Roland persevered until a snubnose monkey popped out of the trees. There followed a frustrating period of some length where we all tried to get views of this animal as it sat quietly out of view. Occasional limbs popped out or a tail or face was spotted. Not good views by any stretch of the imagination and most left disappointed.

Lunch and a chance to rest before a late afternoon and dusk session before dinner that produced little of note. The night drive after dinner was very different again. Tonight it was time for the leopard cats to pop out and be seen. First Roland found us a hunting cat on the other side of the river that toyed with a rodent in the light of the spotlight for 4-5 minutes. A delightful encounter. Eventually the rodent was dispatched and cat moved a short distance to eat it. Ten minutes later another crossed the road in front of us! This one sat by the road and stared at us until we drove away very happy. A good session.

Day 26 31st October Tangjiahe and transfer to Chengdu

The pre-breakfast drive produced no novel sightings this morning. Packed to travel we said goodbye to Tangjiahe and drove out down the hill. Numerous stops produced little until we had to stop for a large troupe of rhesus macaques – our last new mammal of the tour. The drive was punctuated by occasional wildlife moments including an encounter with three collared crows.

Mid-afternoon saw us at the riverside comfort stop we always stop at. Starlings milled around. The river had a few waders including 13 long-billed plovers. Grey wagtail was spotted and sand martins zoomed

about. After a short break we were off again into the bustle of Chengdu. We continued on to our modest accommodation and an enjoyable last dinner (Korean BBQ) in town with Roland.

Day 27 1st November Chengdu and flight home

There was no time for birding the park this morning as most of us were on early flights out of Chengdu and off home. The end of a tiring but extremely productive 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.

Tibetan macaque	<i>Macaca thibetana</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers daily at Laba He and Tangjiahe begging around the hotel complexes but troupes with more dignity in the woods occasionally.
Rhesus macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	A huge group on the last morning at Tangjiahe.
Golden snub-nosed monkey	<i>Rhinopithecus roxellana</i>	Roland found us two animals on the Motainling Road (Tangjiahe) but they were very disobliging and most of us walked away disappointed.
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>Trogopterus xanthipes</i>	One very close clinging to a rockface at Laba He.
Swinhoe’s striped squirrel	<i>Tamias swinhoi</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers daily at Laba He.
Père David’s rock squirrel	<i>Sciurotamias davidianus</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers daily at Tangjiahe.
Perny’s long-nosed squirrel	<i>Dremomys pernyi</i>	Doug photographed one at Tangjiahe.
Himalayan marmot	<i>Marmota himalayana</i>	First seen at the lunch stop side valley on the way down to Yushu. Small numbers on two further days south of Yushu.
Malayan porcupine	<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>	Pairs on consecutive nights at Tangjiahe. The first pair allowed a close approach.
[Chinese zokor]	<i>Eospalax fontanierii</i>	Mounds in the South Koko Nor Range, Huashixia and elsewhere on the plateau.
Confucian niviventer	<i>Niviventer confucianus</i>	Sichuan only. Seen most nights at Laba He and Tangjiahe. The thermal scope showed how common this species was in the rocky riverside habitat at night.
Blyth’s mountain vole	<i>Phaiomys leucurus</i>	We spent half an hour in an active colony on Day 5.
[Midday gerbil]	<i>Meriones meridionalis</i>	We found very few active burrows this year outside Chaka. Sadly none seen.
[Moupin pika]	<i>Ochotona thibetana</i>	Middens found at Baixha. None seen this year.
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).
Glover’s pika	<i>Ochotona gloveri</i>	Small numbers encountered daily on the two days south of Yushu.
Tsingling pika	<i>Ochotona huangensis</i>	Several at Huzhu, including one seen very well by all.
Wooly 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 (twelve further dates).
Pallas’ cat	<i>Felis manul</i>	One found by Mervyn at range at the Gansu Gully site.
Lynx	<i>Lynx lynx</i>	One big male between Huashixia and Maduo was set to be a fantastic trip highlight. Unbelievably though we found a female and large cub up Greentours valley south of Yushu. Hitherto unrecorded on this tour.

Leopard cat	<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>	One at Laba He for Phil only. Our last night spotlighting at Tangjiahe netted two superb encounters with this species for the dedicated members of the team. One was watched for five minutes chasing a rodent in the torchlight and eventually dispatching it after minutes of fun. The other sat unconcernedly by the road. A trip highlight.
Snow leopard	<i>Uncia uncia</i>	Jesper found us one near Zhiduo. A superb but distant encounter. Not seen on the tour before.
Tibetan wolf	<i>Canis (lupus) chanco</i>	We found a lone sleeping wolf in the snow at Huashixia. Two more were watched the otherside of town by some and then we had 5 or 6 on the side track later on in the afternoon. A superb day with this species. The next day Doug saw two high above the Xiewu side valley. We watched a single wolf in the Kanda Shan for some time at long range. The next day we returned to Yushu, hearing two wolves howling and then having a very close encounter with 3 or 4 animals at our lunch stop. Our final encounter was a pack of five outside Qumalai trying to catch a Tibetan antelope. At least 22 animals involved and a record year for the tour.
Tibetan fox	<i>Vulpes ferrlata</i>	Qinghai only. Frequently encountered in suitable high-altitude habitat infested with pikas (8 dates). A joy to watch and a challenge to photograph.
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Qinghai only. Rather scarce this year, the first being on the drive into the Kanda Shan (seen on just four dates).
[Asian black bear]	<i>Ursus thibetanus</i>	Abundant sign at Tangjiahe in the form of sleeping platforms scattered through the canopy, especially in the main valley.
Red panda	<i>Ailurus fulgens</i>	Six good sightings at Laba He in the first two days before the levels of disturbance along the road drove us to search other parts of the reserve.
[Asian badger]	<i>Meles leucurus</i>	Signs in the Qaidam Basin and in the desert west of Chaka.
Hog badger	<i>Arctonyx collaris</i>	One to three nightly on nocturnal excursions at Tangjiahe.
Yellow-throated marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>	One on a dawn drive at Tangjiahe [leaders only]. The driver saw this species whilst waiting for us one day there too...
Masked palm civet	<i>Paguma larvata</i>	Occasionally encountered at night at Laba He and Tangjiahe. Scarcer this year.
Steppe polecat	<i>Mustela eversmannii</i>	One for Peter at Huashixia. A dead individual by the road as we crossed the Chang Tang.
Mountain weasel	<i>Mustela altaica</i>	One watched at length cacheing food at the side valley lunch stop en route to Yushu.
Kiang	<i>Equus kiang</i>	Qinghai only. Noted on four dates up on the plateau.

Wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Mervyn spotted a female and two half-grown piglets on the back road to Yushu. A rare mammal in Qinghai. We also saw small numbers on three days at Tangjiahe.
Reeve's muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>	Only in Sichuan. A few at Laba He this year. Abundant at Tangjiahe.
Forest musk deer	<i>Moschus berezovskii</i>	Only in Sichuan. One at Laba He.
Alpine musk deer	<i>Moschus chrysogaster</i>	Two feeding on the high alpine grasslands at range in Greentours Valley (south of Yushu).
Siberian roe deer	<i>Capreolus pygargus</i>	Two bucks in the Huzhu area on Day 1.
[Altai wapiti]	<i>Cervus canadensis sibiricus</i>	Introduced and very tame individuals wandering around at Laba He. 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.
Gansu wapiti	<i>Cervus canadensis kansuensis</i>	A total of 40 <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 nine <i>macneilli</i> deer on our first day south of Yushu.
White-lipped deer	<i>Przewalskium albirostris</i>	Qinghai only. Two males in the Kanda Shan were our first. The next day we found a rut of nearly 100 en route to Yushu. Recorded on the next couple of days. A fantastic showing this year.
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	Recorded nightly at Laba He and occasionally during the day.
Goitered gazelle	<i>Gazella subguttorsa</i>	Great views early in the morning in the grasslands around the Qaidam Basin. A few more along the road later that day.
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. Seven dates.
Przewalski's gazelle	<i>Procapra przewalskii</i>	A good total of about 27 individuals 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>	One at Laba He on an open slope. On one night at Tangjiahe we had three good encounters. A good set of sightings.
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 30 including some very distant 'big' males en route to Qumalai. A trip highlight.
Blue sheep	<i>Pseudois nayaur</i>	A small herd from Wenquan village again this year. Thereafter noted in mostly small numbers on days south of Yushu and in the Dulan Mountains. A day total of 500 on the Kanda Shan day was stupendous however.
Tibetan antelope	<i>Pantholops hodgsonii</i>	A staggering total of over 800 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!

Tibetan snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>	A flock of five in amongst feeding blue sheep in the Kanda Shan. A total of 14 at one site on the back road to Yushu. A remarkable showing this year.
Tibetan partridge	<i>Perdix hodgsoniae</i>	A large flock seen in the side valley en route to Yushu. Also flocks in 'Greentours valley' (south of Yushu) and on the back road to Yushu.
[Daurian partridge]	<i>Perdix dauurica</i>	Heard in the Dulan Mountains.
†Przewalski's partridge	<i>Alectoris magna</i>	Jesper had one in the Dulan Mountains on the wapiti hike.
[Chinese bamboo partridge]	<i>Bambuscicola thoracica</i>	Heard at the reservoir en route to Tangjiahe.
Blood pheasant	<i>Ithaginus cruentus</i>	A large flock of 24 birds on the back road to Yushu.
Szecheny's monal-partridge	<i>Tetraophasis szechenyii</i>	Fantastic close views in the Kanda Shan again this year. Two flocks of five birds involved. Heard in Greentours Valley and on the back road to Yushu too.
Svertzov's grouse	<i>Tetrastes sewerzowi</i>	One at Hu Zhu.
†White eared-pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i>	Seen in reasonable numbers on three days south of Yushu. An incredible total of 355 birds on the back road to Yushu. A trip highlight for many of us.
Blue eared-pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon auritum</i>	Mervyn found us a lovely flock of about 15 birds on Day 1 at Huzhu.
Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	At least two birds on the drive to Huzhu on Day 1.
Golden pheasant	<i>Chrysolophus pictus</i>	Only in Sichuan. Two sightings at Tangjiahe.
Lady Amherst's pheasant	<i>Chrysolophus amherstiae</i>	Mervyn and Brenda had a single female at Laba He. This species is seemingly no longer available as a casual observation at Laba He and requires work.
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor and on the Chang Tang.
Bar-headed goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>	A few on plateau wetlands (five dates).
Ruddy shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Frequently encountered on plateau wetlands.
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Good numbers at Koko Nor on both visits. Noted in very small numbers on two dates in Sichuan.
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Two at Koko Nor for Mervyn.
†Chinese spot-billed duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	Two males at Koko Nor. 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.
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	A few at Koko Nor.
Common teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	In Qinghai, recorded at Koko Nor only this year. We also had a pair on the reservoir en route to Tangjiahe.
Red-crested pochard	<i>Rhodonessa rufina</i>	Large numbers on the freshwater lagoon at Koko Nor (both dates).
Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	A few at Koko Nor.
Common pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	A few at Koko Nor.
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Noted on eight dates on rivers and wetlands on the plateau.

Speckled piculet	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>	Recorded in small numbers in flocks at both Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	One in woodland near Koko Nor.
Darjeeling woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos darjellensis</i>	One at Laba He on the first day there.
Grey-capped pygmy woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	Only in Sichuan. Recorded in very small numbers at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Black woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>	Two heard, one seen at Baixha. Another in the Kanda Shan.
Grey-headed woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	Single seen by Jesper at Hu Zhu. Two in the Kanda Shan and another single on the back road to Yushu. Small numbers at Laba He.
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Singles noted on four days in Qinghai.
Crested kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>	Only in Sichuan. Tangjiahe – small numbers daily at that site.
[Collared scops-owl]	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	One male heard at Tangjiahe.
Tawny fish owl	<i>Ketupa flaviceps</i>	Two at night at Tangjiahe.
Eurasian eagle owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	A fine individual at the Chaka gulag on our last day in Qinghai.
Little owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	Singles noted on just two dates on the Tibetan leg of the tour.
Grey nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	One in the dark driving out of Nangqian on the back road to Yushu.
Rock pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Scarce in towns.
Hill pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>	Recorded on ten dates on the plateau.
Snow pigeon	<i>Columba leuconota</i>	Small numbers on three days south of Yushu.
Speckled wood pigeon	<i>Columba hodgsonii</i>	One large flock at Laba He on one day. A smaller flock also encountered on another day.
Oriental turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia orinetalis</i>	One en route to Chengdu on the last day.
Spotted dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Only in Sichuan. Noted in the lowlands on transit days.
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Small numbers on two dates up on the plateau.
Demoiselle crane	<i>Grus virgo</i>	Single damaged (broken wing) migratory casualty in the fields on our second drive past Koko Nor.
Black-necked crane	<i>Grus nigricollis</i>	A trip highlight. Noted on seven dates on the plateau (total of just 56 birds).
Common crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Ten migrating through the Qaidam Basin.
[Water rail]	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Heard at Koko Nor.
Common coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Recorded at Koko Nor. One on the reservoir en route to Tangjiahe.
Pallas' sandgrouse	<i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i>	A flock of 38 outside Chaka – only in flight.
Eurasian woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	One on the Huzhu day.
Solitary snipe	<i>Gallinago solitaria</i>	One near Yushu.
Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor this year.
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	One at Koko Nor.
Common redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Very small numbers at Koko Nor.
Spotted redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor.
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	A few at Koko Nor.
Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	A few at Koko Nor and Huashixia. Five along the river at Jiang You en route to Chengdu on the last day

Black-winged stilt Ibisbill	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> <i>Ibidorhynchus struthersii</i>	One for Mervyn at Koko Nor. At nice flock of ten individuals north of Yushu this year. At least 8 the next day in 'Greentours Valley' (south of Yushu). Seven birds on the drive back to Yushu.
Northern lapwing Long-billed plover	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i> <i>Charadrius placidus</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor. A fantastic total of 13 on the river at Jiang You on the last day of the tour.
Pallas' gull Black-headed gull	<i>Larus ichthyaetus</i> <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Small numbers on five dates on the plateau. Occasionally encountered on plateau wetlands (two dates).
Brown-headed gull Whiskered tern Lammergier	<i>Larus brunnicephalus</i> <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i> <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Scattered records in Qinghai (five dates). One at Koko Nor. Records on 12 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>	One above the lunchtime shelterbelt en route to Golmud. Three in the Qaidam Basin the next day. One in the Dulan Mountains.
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Migrating birds recorded on four dates on the plateau this year.
Western marsh harrier Crested goshawk Chinese sparrowhawk Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> <i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i> <i>Accipiter soloensis</i> <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Two at Koko Nor. Several at Tangjiahe (Sichuan). One at Laba He. Scattered records (five dates on the plateau) and a few at Laba He (Sichuan).
Northern goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Recorded singly on five dates at Huzhu and on the plateau.
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Birds on the plateau leg of the tour were Himalayan buzzards, subsp. burmanicus, sometimes split. The few birds noted in Sichuan were all japonicus, which is also sometimes split as Eastern buzzard.
Upland buzzard Steppe eagle Golden eagle	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i> <i>Aquila nipalensis</i> <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Large numbers almost daily on the plateau. Small numbers noted on four days on the plateau. One to three birds on eight dates on the plateau. Two at Tangjiahe.
Imperial eagle Booted eagle Mountain hawk-eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i> <i>Hieraetus pennatus</i> <i>Spizaetus nipalensis</i>	Jesper had one on the last day at Chaka gulag. Single with other migrating soaring birds at Huzhu. One watched perched at Laba He. Several sightings at Tangjiahe.
Oriental honey-buzzard Black-eared kite Common kestrel	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i> <i>Milvus lineatus</i> <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	One or two at Huzhu. Small-scale passage over Huzhu on day 1. Scattered, almost daily, records throughout the Tibetan leg of our journey.
Merlin Peregrine	<i>Falco columbarius</i> <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Singles on two dates on the plateau. At least one at Huzhu was a surprise.

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.
Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	One on the reservoir en route to Tangjiahe. Several at Jiang You this year.
Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Recorded in small numbers at Koko Nor.
Black-necked grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor.
Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor and another plateau wetland (three dates).
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>	Singles at Koko Nor, on the river at Wenquan and at Baixha. One or two at Laba He (Sichuan).
Great egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	Recorded only at Koko Nor this year.
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Small numbers at Koko Nor.
Black-crowned night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	One flushed from the riverside cliff at Wenquan.
Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Twelve migrating overhead at Huzhu.
Chinese grey shrike	<i>Lanius sphenocercus</i>	One on the first day. Only on three dates thereafter – a poor showing.
Tibetan grey shrike	<i>Lanius giganteus</i>	Recorded on three dates on the plateau.
Eurasian jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Small numbers in the woods on the first day (Huzhu). Recorded once 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 nice flock entertained us from lunch stop on day 1. A large flock at Chaka gulag.
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	'Lowland' birds were of little interest to us but the Tibetan race <i>bottanensis</i> was deemed different and was recorded on five dates. Occasional in Sichuan away from the mountains.
†Henderson's ground-jay	<i>Podoces hendersoni</i>	At least six at the goitered gazelle site in the Qaidam Basin.
Spotted nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers daily at both sites visited.
Red-billed chough	<i>Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i>	Recorded everyday on the plateau.
Alpine chough	<i>Pyrhcorax graculus</i>	Recorded on two dates in Qinghai.
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.
Collared crow	<i>Corvus torquatus</i>	Three en route to Chengdu on the last day.
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Only on the high plateau, where recorded daily.
White-throated dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	Recorded in small numbers on four 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>	One for Roland at Tangjiahe.

Red-throated thrush	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	Occasional in small numbers on the plateau (three dates in total).
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Only in Sichuan. One en route to Chengdu on the transfer to Tangjiahe and another along the river at Jiang You. The mandarinus race of blackbird, sometimes split as Chinese blackbird.
Chestnut thrush	<i>Turdus rubrocanus</i>	A few at Laba He this year. Odd singles at Tangjiahe.
Kessler's thrush	<i>Turdus kessleri</i>	Only recorded on the plateau on four dates this year, mostly in small numbers although a large flock was noted on the Kanda Shan day.
Himalayan bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>	Small numbers at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Red-flanked bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>	Three in the shelterbelt en route to Golmud.
†Przewalski's redstart	<i>Phoenicurus alashanicus</i>	Qinghai only. Jesper had on at the lunchstop on Day 2 (Koko Nor). Four at Xidangride.
White-throated redstart	<i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i>	Recorded on five dates on the plateau.
Daurian redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureoreus</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Just one male en route to Tangjiahe.
Hodgson's redstart	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i>	One on the back road to Yushu. 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 three further dates on the plateau. Small numbers at Tangjiahe.
White-capped redstart	<i>Chaimarornis leucocephalus</i>	A few on the Hu Zhu day and on two dates south of Yushu. Common in Sichuan.
Plumbeous redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa</i>	Common along rivers and streams in Sichuan.
Rufous-gorgetted flycatcher	<i>Ficedula strophiiata</i>	Sichuan only. Single at Laba He.
Taiga flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	Single at the shelterbelt before Golmud.
Siberian stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>	Only recorded in the Xiewu side valley this year.
Little forktail	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers noted almost daily at 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>	Noted en route to Tangjiahe.
Red-billed starling	<i>Spodiopsar sericeus</i>	Small numbers en route to Chengdu on the last day.
White-cheeked starling	<i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers en route to Chengdu on the last day.
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 at Laba He, this species and the previous one are difficult to diagnose...
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>	Heard in the Kanda Shan.

Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	One from car 1 en route to Nangqian was our only record. Too warm?
Hodgson's treecreeper	<i>Certhia hodgsoni</i>	One in the Kanda Shan. Single seen poorly at Tangjiahe.
Sichuan treecreeper	<i>Certhia tianquanensis</i>	One on the Ranger Danger trail at Laba He.
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Recorded at Huzhu and Baixha. Also in Sichuan.
Hume's groundtit	<i>Pseudopodoces humilis</i>	This little clown was the jewel in the crown of the plateau's avifauna (on just 10 dates). Declining?
Willow tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>	Common on the first day. Formerly Songar tit which is now included within 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 six days on the plateau.
Rufous-vented tit	<i>Parus rubidiventris</i>	Seen at Huzhu. Also a few heard on two dates south of Yushu.
Grey-crested tit	<i>Parus dichrous</i>	A few on the first day were seen well, recorded on one further two dates on the plateau.
Grey tit	<i>Parus minor</i>	One at Baixha and another on the back road to Yushu.
Green-backed tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Recorded in small numbers at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Black-throated tit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>	Only in Sichuan. Seen in 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.
Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	One for Jesper north of Yushu.
Sand martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	A few at the bridge north of Yushu. Single near Zhiduo. Several at Jiang You (Sichuan).
Asian house martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	Recorded at the bridge north of Yushu.
Collared finchbill	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>	Only in Sichuan. A few at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Mountain bulbul	<i>Ixos mcclllandii</i>	Only in Sichuan. Small numbers at Tangjiahe.
Light-vented bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Noted in Chengdu only.
†Tarim hill warbler	<i>Rhopophilus albosuperciliaris</i>	Several pairs of this recently-split species in the Qaidam Basin.
Chestnut-headed tesia	<i>Tesia castaneocoronata</i>	Seen once at Laba He, heard frequently.
Brownish-flanked bush-warbler	<i>Cettia fortipes</i>	Only in Sichuan. One at Laba He.
†Stolitzcka's tit-warbler	<i>Leptopoeile sophiae</i>	Widespread and frequently encountered on the plateau (seven dates).
Siberian chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus tristis</i>	A few in Wild Yak valley.
Ashy-throated warbler	<i>Phylloscopus maculipennis</i>	Only in Sichuan. A few at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Pallas' leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	One at Chaka. A few at Tangjiahe.
Chinese leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus yunnanensis</i>	Recorded on one day at Laba He.
Buff-barred warbler	<i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>	One at Huzhu. 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 occasionally in Sichuan. A recent split from pale-rumped leaf warbler <i>P. chloronotus</i> .
Yellow-browed warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	One in the shelterbelt en route to Golmud, a scarce migrant in Qinghai.

[Hume's warbler]	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	A few heard in Chengdu on the last evening.
†Alpine leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus occisinensis</i>	Recorded at Huashixia and south of Yushu (four dates). This race of Tickell's leaf warbler has been split by Clements.
[Yellow-streaked warbler]	<i>Phylloscopus armandii</i>	Heard on one date south of Yushu.
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Huzhu and amazingly heard in the Qaidam Basin on the plateau leg.
[Rufous-faced warbler]	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>	Heard at Tangjiahe.
White-throated laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax albogularis</i>	A small flock at Laba He.
Giant laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax maximus</i>	Seen well a number of times at Baixha and heard the next day in the Kanda Shan. Also recorded in Greentours valley and on the back road to Yushu. A good show for this species.
[Barred laughingthrush]	<i>Garrulax lunulatus</i>	Heard at Tangjiahe.
Elliott's laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax ellioti</i>	Vocal on the first day. Thereafter frequently encountered in lowland areas, eg south of Yushu and at forested sites in Sichuan.
[Plain laughingthrush]	<i>Garrulax davidi</i>	Heard on the Huzhu day.
Black-faced laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax affinis</i>	Only in Sichuan. Seen well on occasion at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Streak-breasted scimitar-babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus ruficollis</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Small numbers in flocks at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Kozlov's babax	<i>Babax koslowi</i>	Three birds seen on the first day south of Yushu. Also at Baixha the next day and recorded the day we left Nangqian too.
Red-billed leiothrix	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Frequently encountered at Tangjiahe. A few at Laba He.
[Blyth's shrike-babbler]	<i>Pteruthius aeralatus</i>	Heard at Tangjiahe.
Green shrike-babbler	<i>Pteruthous xanthochlorus</i>	A few at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
Chinese fulvetta	<i>Alcippe striaticollis</i>	Perhaps ten in total at Baixha (south of Yushu).
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>	A few in the big bird wave at Laba He (Ranger Danger trail).
White-collared yuhina	<i>Yuhina diademata</i>	Only seen in Sichuan. Small to large flocks of this species encountered occasionally at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
[Scaly-breasted wren-babbler]	<i>Pnoepygia mutica</i>	Heard frequently at Laba He.
Bearded reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	A large number present at Koko Nor this year. Also present in good numbers in the Qaidam Basin.
Great parrotbill	<i>Conostoma oemodium</i>	Only in Sichuan. Nice loose flock at Laba He on our first day.
Brown parrotbill	<i>Cholornis unicolor</i>	Two flocks encountered at Laba He.
Tibetan lark	<i>Melanocorypha maxima</i>	Seen well first on the Koko Nor walk. Heard and seen elsewhere on the plateau in wetter areas on three dates.

Mongolian lark	<i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i>	Seen on the last day in Qinghai at both Chaka and Koko Nor.
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 (five dates).
Horned lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Frequently encountered often in good numbers on the plateau.
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Migrants outside 'Greentours Valley' (south of Yushu). A few at Tangjiahe.
Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Almost ubiquitous.
Rock sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	Only seen in the desert at Chaka on the last day in Qinghai.
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.
Rufous-necked snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda ruficollis</i>	Only on the higher plateau where recorded, often in large flocks, on nine dates.
Blanford's snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda blanfordi</i>	Recorded on the last day on the plateau but not seen well.
White wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Small numbers this year of late birds lingering on the plateau (five dates). Frequently encountered in Sichuan on the extension.
Citrine wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	Scarce this year. Heard at Huzhu. A few on the hot springs at Wenquan.
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	One at Jiang You (Sichuan).
Blyth's pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>	The rain at Laba He brought down an unexpected individual on the first day there.
Olive-backed pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	Also small numbers at Laba He on two dates.
Water pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Scattered singles on the plateau this year (four dates).
Alpine accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	Two in the Kanda Shan and two more on the back road to Yushu the next day. A good year.
Robin accentor	<i>Prunella rubeculoides</i>	Frequently encountered in suitable habitat on the plateau leg of the tour (ten dates).
Rufous-breasted accentor	<i>Prunella strophiaata</i>	Small numbers on just two dates on the plateau leg of the tour. Seen in small numbers on two dates at Tangjiahe (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>	One seen at Laba He.
Brandt's mountain finch	<i>Leucosticte brandti</i>	Recorded on one date on the plateau.
Plain mountain finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	A huge flock of 700+ in the Kanda Shan. Recorded on two further days on the plateau.
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	Recorded on seven dates on the plateau leg of the tour.
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Heard migrating through Wild Yak Valley! A few flocks encountered at Tangjiahe on a couple of days.
Mongolian finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>	Flyovers at Chaka.

†Chinese beautiful rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus davidianus</i>	Recorded on the first day (Huzhu). Recorded on seven further dates in Qinghai.
Pink-rumped rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus eos</i>	Recorded in small numbers on two dates south of Yushu.
†Chinese white-browed rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus dubius</i>	Small numbers on six dates on the plateau, eg sites south of Yushu and Dulan Mountains.
†Eastern great rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rubicilloides</i>	Noted on six dates in high altitude scrub and woodland in Qinghai.
†Caucasian great rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>	Recorded on a couple of dates on the plateau in arid areas.
†Przewalski's pinktail	<i>Urocynchramus pylzowi</i>	At least 20 at Jesper's site for this fantastic species on the plateau near Huashixia.
Grey-headed bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula erythaca</i>	Heard in Baixha. Small numbers on one day at Laba He and Tangjiahe.
White-winged grosbeak	<i>Mycerobas carnipes</i>	A few at Huzhu and small numbers in the Kanda Shan.
Pine bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	A good flock of c25 in the Dulan Hills.
Godlewski's bunting	<i>Emberiza godlewski</i>	Scattered records in Qinghai (six dates).
Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	At least one at Koko Nor (where scarce). One for Phil of the large-billed race in the Qaidam Basin.
Little bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	A few in the shelterbelt neat Golmud.