



*The wonderful Tawny Fish Owls at Tangjiahe ended up as our 'Bird of the Trip' (all photos in the report taken on the tour by Pete Morris)*

# **SICHUAN (including Northern Yunnan)**

**9/12 – 31 MAY 2015**

**LEADERS: PETE MORRIS**

Our long run of tours to Sichuan continued with another highly successful visit to what is 'the heart of China'. As with the previous visit, we tagged on a visit to Yunnan which added a number of additional localized species, and amongst the 350+ species recorded were a vast majority of the specialities on offer. Sichuan is famous for certain groups such as pheasants, parrotbills, *Phylloscopus* warblers and rosefinches and we scored





*Black-necked Crane and Yak at Ruergai.*

heavily on these much desired families. Other special mentions should go to rarities such as Père David's Owl, Streaked Barwing and Golden-fronted Fulvetta, all of which showed well, and we were also delighted to find the spectacular Przevalski's Finch and even an unexpected Ibisbill! Old favourites such as Black-necked Crane, Chinese Grouse and Firethroat all performed well, and we were also fortunate to spend some quality time with a stunning pair of Tawny Fish Owls, our eventual bird of the trip. We also gazed at the wondrous scenery around Lijiang, Balangshan and the incredible Jiuzhaigou, enjoyed the wide-open space of the Tibetan Plateau and saw a number of interesting mammals including the impressive Tarkin, Chinese Serow, cheeky Yellow-throated Martens and even a Leopard Cat. All in all, it was a pretty amazing adventure!

The start of the tour (or at least the Yunnan extension) nearly didn't happen, as the flight that most of the group were on from Chengdu to Lijiang returned to Chengdu due to some pretty impressive electrical storms! Fortunately though, the airline made another attempt, and we were all united at our hotel in Lijiang, a little late and tired, but otherwise raring to go!

The first day out we passed the impressive Jade Mountain to the north and made our way to the 'First Bend of the Yangtze'. Here we were soon surrounded by interesting birds, many lured in by a feisty Asian Barred Owlet which showed well. Attracted in were several smart Black-breasted Thrushes, a pair of smart Rosy Minivets and both an unexpected Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker and White-throated Fantail. It took a little searching before we found our other main target, the smart little Brown-winged Parrotbill, but once we had, they showed very well. Heading back to Lijiang, we paused in some arid hills where we found Spectacled Fulvettas, smart Black-headed Greenfinches, colourful Daurian Redstarts, and a pair of localized Rufous-tailed Babblers (or Moupinias). After a lunch, which was enlivened by an incident with a fish bone (happily no lasting problems!), we headed to the nearby Elephant Hill. Here we soon tracked down our main target, the smart Yunnan Nuthatch, though they caused some confusion by forming mixed flocks with the local Chestnut-vented Nuthatches! Also here were unexpected Crested Finchbills, Blyth's Leaf and Buff-throated Warblers, Grey-crowned Warbler (our first of the difficult Golden-spectacled Warbler complex) and, nearby, a smart Grey-winged Blackbird and Blue-winged Minlas.





*Yunnan Nuthatch near to Lijiang.*

The following two mornings we made our way into some low forested hills to the east of Lijiang, where unfortunately the rare White-speckled Laughingthrush refused to appear. This rare species is severely threatened by the cagebird industry, and is becoming increasingly difficult to find sadly. That said, we did find a number of other special birds, pride of place going to a stunning male Lady Amherst's Pheasant that paraded back and forth in front of us. Other localized species included busy flocks of Black-browed Bushtits, Davison's Leaf Warblers, vocal Black-headed Sibias, smart Chinese Babaxes and skulking Rusty-capped Fulvettas and Black-streaked Scimitar-Babblers, as well as a variety of more widespread species such as a displaying Besra, a showy Large Hawk Cuckoo, Grey-backed Shrikes, Blyth's Shrike-Babbler, Bar-throated Minlas, White-browed Fulvettas, White-collared Yuhinas and colourful Mrs Gould's Sunbirds.



*A fine male Lady Amherst's Pheasant near to Lijiang*





Other highlights around Lijiang included (clockwise from top left) *Black-breasted Thrush*, *Black-browed Bushtit*, *Brown-winged Parrotbill* and *Black-headed Greenfinch*.

We also made a visit to a lake just outside Lijiang. Here, a variety of common waterfowl were joined by an unexpected Pheasant-tailed Jacana and a pair of lovely nominate Citrine Wagtails. Nearby Black-faced Buntings entertained, Pale Martins hawked for insects and a smart Black-winged Kite hunted the adjacent fields.

Very soon it was time to leave Yunnan and head back to Chengdu, and on this occasion there were no problems with the flight. After a quick lunch, and having met up with our final group member, we headed to the pleasant parkland surrounding DuFu's Cottage. Here having observed the busy heronry, we quickly moved on to the smaller birds, notching up Rufous-faced Warbler, Ashy-throated Parrotbill, an unexpected Eye-browed Thrush, several Chinese Blackbirds, hulking Chinese Grosbeaks and a migrant Brown Shrike. White-browed Laughingthrushes hopped around the gardens but it took some time to track down a smart Tiger Shrike, our final target for the afternoon.

The following day was largely a travel day, though we did pause on a few occasions, adding Red-billed Starlings, a smart male Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, Collared Finchbills, Brown-breasted Bulbuls, Vinous-throated Parrotbills and another Tiger Shrike. Further on, a pause for lunch gave us an opportunity to study Brown Dippers, Plumbeous Redstarts, smart White-crowned Forktails and dashing Yellow-throated Buntings. It was mid-afternoon by the time we arrived at our comfortable accommodation at Tangjiahe, having noted Eastern Crowned and Dusky Warblers and Brown-flanked Bush Warbler by the entrance gate.

Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve is a truly stunning area. Huge mountains fall almost vertically into crystal clear rivers, the bamboo gradually giving way to beautifully patterned mixed forests on the hillsides. We had an afternoon, a full day and a morning to explore this wonderful area and came away with a good selection of birds and mammals. In fact, it was the mammals that first caught our eye and we went on to see several

impressive Tarkin, Chinese Serows, Masked Palm Civets, angry Père David's (or Tibetan) Macaques and even a Leopard Cat. Birds were plentiful too. In the lower parts of the reserve, the absolute highlight was a fantastic pair of Tawny Fish Owls, our eventual bird of the trip, that we watched at length. Almost as good was the stunning male Golden Pheasant, and other goodies included some busy Chinese Sparrowhawks, a circling pair of Mountain Hawk Eagles, impressive Crested Kingfishers, near-endemic Yellow-bellied Tits, Sooty Bushtits, Claudia's and Kloss's Leaf Warblers, Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Marten's and Alström's Warblers, our first of many White-capped Redstarts (Riverchats) and a fine male Slaty Bunting.

Those that could face it also had the opportunity to climb higher to look for the rare Rusty-throated (or Przevalski's) Parrotbill. This proved to be a tough walk, though we were successful, bagging great views of a pair of this attractive rarity. Also at higher altitude we noted our first Temminck's Tragopan (a colourful but brief male), the localized Sichuan Treecreeper and a number of other goodies such as confiding Chestnut-headed Tesias,



*Rusty-throated (or Przevalski's) Parrotbill required a bit of a hike!*





gorgeous Golden-breasted Fulvetta and a confident White-browed Bush Robin, and we also saw a female *Calliope* robin which may well have been a female Blackthroat, but we'll probably never know for sure...

After our productive stay at Tangjiahe, we made our way over impressive mountain passes to the tourist haven of Jiuzhaigou, our base for the next three nights. Stops en route produced little other than our first Chestnut Thrushes and Yellow-streaked Warblers.



*The scenery at Jiuzhaigou really is quite magnificent!*







*One of the many waterfalls at Jiuzhaigou!*

The Jiuzhaigou Natural Reserve is understandably well known for its stunning scenery, and we were as impressed as the several thousand Chinese visitors, complete with selfie sticks, that we shared the park with. Fortunately we had our own private bus and found plenty of places to escape the crowds! Sadly, the rare Rufous-headed Robin seemed to have been late back this year, and as a result our many hours of hunting for this speciality went unrewarded. However, whilst looking we did see a number of other great birds. In the highest elevation forests we found the endemic Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, the attractive Three-banded Rosefinch, a showy Chinese Thrush and a cheeky couple of Yellow-throated Martens. Also here we found some Blue Eared Pheasants sharing a scrubby hillside with some Chinese Goral. Lower down, colourful Slaty-backed Flycatchers and Himalayan Bluetails were relatively common, the much-wanted Père David's Tits put



*A couple of cheeky Yellow-throated Martens were much appreciated at Jiuzhaigou!*



in several appearances as did Tibetan Siskins, and the mixed flocks included other goodies such as Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Grey-crested and Rufous-vented Tits and Bar-tailed and Hodgson's Treecreepers. We also noted our first Slaty-blue Flycatchers, White-throated Dippers and Grey-headed Bullfinches. At the lowest elevations we were delighted to find a flock of confiding Spectacled Parrotbills and an Indian Blue Robin which finally showed well, whilst flocks of Salim Ali's Swifts wheeled over the lakes and a migrant Blyth's Pipit entertained. Also in the park were a bewildering variety of *Phylloscopus* warblers, and we found time to get to grips with Alpine Leaf, Buff-barred, Chinese Leaf, Hume's Leaf, Greenish, Large-billed Leaf, and Sichuan Leaf Warblers as well as numerous Bianchi's Warblers. Without their distinctive vocalizations, this group really would be tough!! Also of interest was seeing the recently recognized Baikal Bush Warbler belting out its song a mere few yards from the near-identical Spotted Bush Warbler. Quite an experience!



*Baikal (above left) and Spotted Bush Warblers were found side-by-side at Jiuzhaigou, where Père David's Tit was another favourite.*







*Other goodies at Jiuzhaigou included (clockwise from top) Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Chinese Thrush and Spectacled Parrotbill*

Leaving Jiuzhaigou behind, we made several stops as we made our way towards the Tibetan Plateau. Some sneaky Barred Laughingthrushes delayed us somewhat, but ultimately showed well to all, and other species included a fine Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, an impressive Northern Goshawk and a family of Chinese Nut-hatches. Heading on our next stop was fairly quiet though did yield colourful Chinese White-browed Rosefinches and Blue-fronted and White-throated Redstarts, whilst up on the plateau we enjoyed some fabulous views of Siberian Rubythroats. After another lazy-Susan lunch, we made our way through the endless open space of the Tibetan Plateau, passing numerous yak herds and camps as we went. We made an extended stop in a scrubby valley where we were entertained by species such as cracking Kessler's Thrushes, subtle White-bellied Redstarts and beautiful White-browed Tit-Warblers. By the time we made it to the County Town of Ruergai we were ready for dinner and a rest.

We had two days to explore from Ruergai, and spent much of the time exploring high-elevation coniferous forest. On the way we stopped for our first Wallcreeper, and then set about our business. We soon had a fine



pair of Verreaux's Monal Partridges parading in front of us, but things then got tough. A calling Père David's Owl led us a merry dance for some time, but eventually we tracked down this shy individual, which then allowed great scope views for a prolonged period. Also here were our first good views of Blood Pheasants, smart Maroon-backed Accentors, a surprise pair of Blanford's Rosefinches feeding along a stream, perky Chinese Fulvettas, White-winged Grosbeaks, Crested Tit-Warblers for some, and the usual array of *Phylloscopus* warblers. We also saw more fine Blue Eared Pheasants. Nearby, we also managed to add a hulking Black Woodpecker, a neat flock of Sichuan Jays, a very obliging Chinese Grouse, Sichuan Tits, Red Crossbills, our first Plain Laughingthrushes and some impressive Giant Laughingthrushes.



*Verreaux's Monal Partridges showed exceptionally well this year...*

We also had time to explore the wide open grasslands and wetlands of the Tibetan Plateau close to Ruergai. Here, Tibetan Foxes roamed the plains as Upland Buzzards quartered, looking for their pika prey! White-rumped and Rufous-necked Snowfinches shared the short turf with Ground Tits (a.k.a. Hume's Ground Jays), Blyth's Pipits, smart Horned Larks and Daurian Jackdaws, whilst around the wetland fringes, huge Tibetan Larks could be found. The wetlands held a variety of wildfowl, waders and gulls, including Ferruginous Ducks, Red-crested Pochards and impressive Pallas's Gulls. A couple of Black Storks were noted and a Cinereous Vulture drifted over, along with numerous Himalayan Vultures. Pride of place however went to the stately Black-necked Cranes that graced many a vista!

Leaving Ruergai behind, we headed south, making a series of strategic stops as we went. A White-browed Tit, audible from the bus, brought us to a halt, and soon gave stunning views, starting the day in style. But things





*The Tibetan Plateau hosted some great birds including White-browed Tit, Eurasian Eagle Owl and Saker Falcon*

got better as at the next stop we were able to study the simply superb Przevalski's Finch as well as Tibetan (Chinese) Grey Shrike and Robin Accentor, and an intricately marked Tibetan Partridge showed wonderfully in the scope. Along the roadside we admired boldly marked Twite, Rock Sparrows, Azure-winged Magpies and black-backed *calcarata* Citrine Wagtails, and also stopped to admire several Saker Falcons (including one on a nest) and a cryptic Eurasian Eagle Owl at its day time roost. Further on, we scoured a river where we were delighted to find an Ibisbill, poking around a dead Yak, and our final stop of the day again proved successful as we found a fine Przevalski's Nuthatch and enjoyed more good views of Chinese Grouse!

The following day the weather was not looking too clever, and as we made our way on to Mengbishan, the rain gradually changed to snow and the road gradually changed from black to white! In no time at all we had been





*The group enjoying the snow on Mengbisha!*

transported into a winter wonderland! As cars skidded and slid, our bus ground to a halt and we could go no further. Fortunately this was no life-threatening situation! There was a mildness to the air, and it was clear the snow would soon melt, so we set off birding along the road. It was strangely quiet though, and I think many of the birds must have been forced down slope by the snow. We did enjoy a fine variety of rosetinches including more Three-banded Rosefinches and our first Pink-rumped and Streaked Rosefinches, and found a couple of smart Collared Grosbeaks. It was pretty quiet generally though, and once the roads became clear again, we set off on our way. The rest of the day is best forgotten, as it ended up being a long and rather tedious drive to Luding County thanks to the ongoing road construction.



*Kessler's Thrush: a common but eye-catching species of the highlands.*





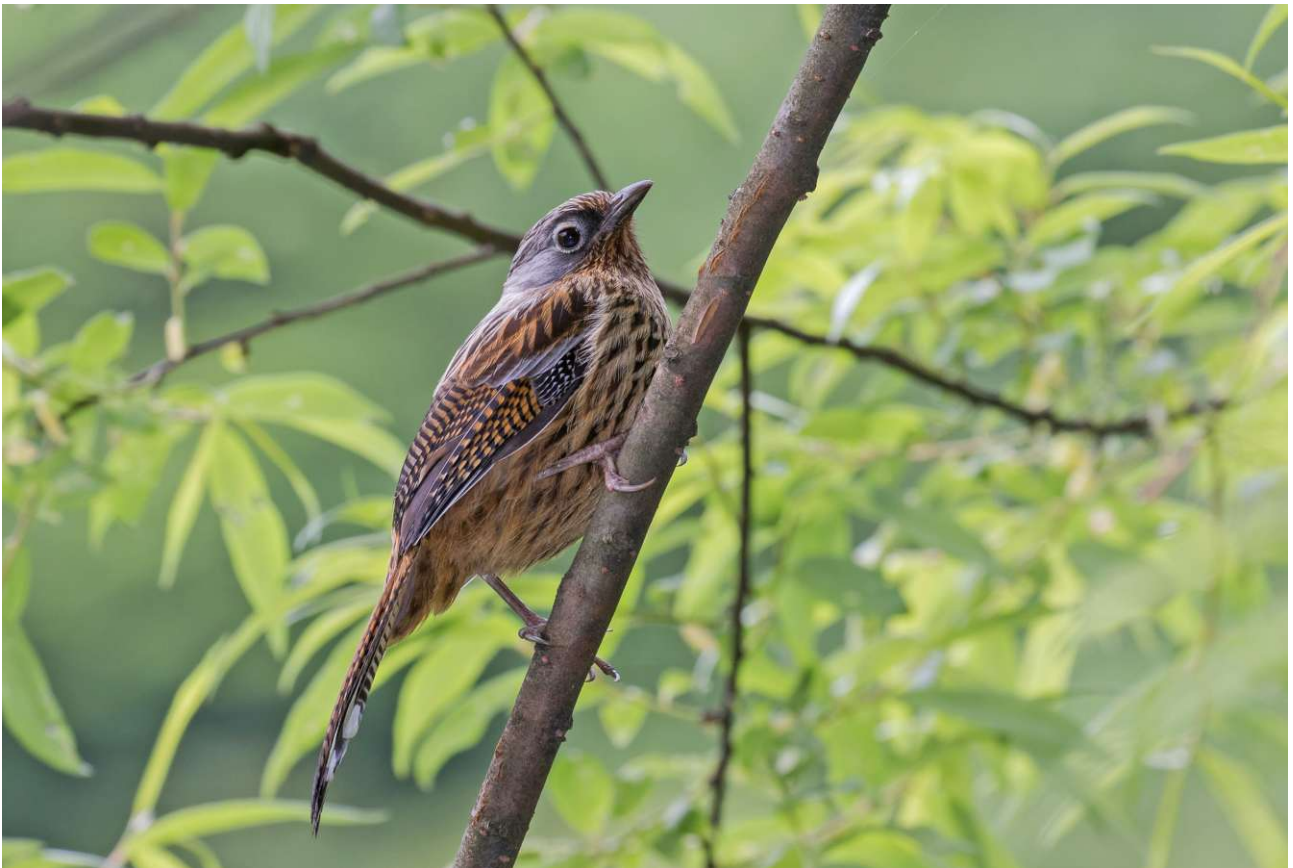
*Chinese White-browed Rosefinch - a common but attractive species.*

The following day and a half was spent exploring the lower slopes of Erlangshan. Here, abundant Spotted Nutcrackers seemed to be everywhere, and several Lady Amherst's Pheasants plodded along the roadside like skinny chickens! Our first real stop almost immediately yielded one of our targets as smart Sharpe's Rosefinches showed very well alongside numerous Vinaceous Rosefinches and a singing Chinese Babax. A little lower and a tell-tale song alerted us to our next target. An orange throat glowed in the undergrowth, and we stood in awe as a gorgeous male Firethroat enthralled us all. Giant Laughingthrushes entertained at the same spot and a little lower we found another male Firethroat, several Yellow-throated Buntings, Chestnut-flanked White-eyes, a flock of Black-browed Bushtits and a surprise in the form of a Black-bibbed Tit, a rarely recorded species in Sichuan. We were also pleased to see more Rufous-tailed Babblers and a male White-tailed Robin. In an area of wetter forest, we were delighted to find an obliging Chinese Wren-Babbler, a species that can be tough to see well, as well as Himalayan Cuckoo, delightful Little Forktails and showy Emei Leaf Warblers.



*Firethroats did not disappoint!*





*Fantastic views of a pair of Streaked Barwings was a major bonus!*

We also enjoyed the mixed flocks which included our first Stripe-throated Yuhinas, and some extremely smart Fire-capped Tits alongside some rather dowdy Yellow-browed Tits. Pride of place however went to the brilliant pair of Streaked Barwings which gave incredible views at close range.



*Erlangshan also brought us great views of delightful Fire-capped Tits and Stripe-throated Yuhinas*

The Longcanggou area has come on to the birding scene in recent years, rather by default, as other reserves have been closed for 'redevelopment'. Sadly this redevelopment is now commencing at Longcanggou, and the heavy machinery along the road had turned the road into a bit of a mud bath – made even worse when trucks became stuck in the road, blocking the road, a situation that happened twice to us!! That said, the two and





*Three-toed Parrotbill (above) and Grey-hooded Parrotbill were two of the stars at Longcangou.*







*Early morning looking over the rolling hills from Longcanggou.*

a half days spent in the area proved extremely productive. We had a number of tricky targets, most of which obliged. Grey-hooded (or Zappey's), Three-toed and Golden Parrotbills were three of the undoubted favourites, not least because they showed so well in their dense bamboo habitats! The recently described Sichuan Bush Warbler, Brown Bush Warbler, Emei Shan Liocichlas and a gorgeous Red-winged Laughingthrush were teased into view, a Plain-backed Thrush sang its heart out in the scope, and other interesting species included Grey-faced Buzzard, smart Darjeeling Woodpeckers, the local form of White-browed Shortwing, Aberrant and Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers, Ferruginous Flycatchers, and smart Red-tailed Minlas. At a nearby forest patch Temminck's Tragopans and a pair of Silver Pheasants tantalized us along the road, a Great Barbet and White-backed Woodpeckers posed, a Chinese Blue Flycatcher delighted us with its song and gaudy plumage, and an amazing and rare Golden-fronted Fulvetta showed brilliantly at close range. By the accommodation, a flock of



*Golden-breasted Fulvetta and Darjeeling Woodpecker were both much-appreciated at Longcanggou.*



Brown Bullfinches were photographed and lovely Forest Wagtails wandered on the old buildings, whilst overhead, Himalayan Swiftlets and White-throated Needletails (surely the ultimate swift in the world?!) entertained.

After our fine stay at Longcanggou, we then made our way to our final major birding destination – the wonderful Wolong and Balangshan. We had a few hitches along the way thanks to some incomprehensible Chinese bureaucracy, and ended up arriving at our hotel rather later than planned, and in three 4-WD vehicles rather than a bus!



*The fantastic mountains at Balangshan are home to species such as Red-fronted Rosefinch.*







*Gamebirds at Balangshan included Tibetan Snowcock, Chinese Monal and White Eared Pheasant.*

For the next three days, we largely concentrated on the higher zones. Here one is surrounded by some of the most amazing mountain scenery one will see anywhere. Gamebirds were high on our target list, and we were not disappointed. Great views of simply stunning Chinese Monals was perhaps the highlight, but the supporting cast wasn't bad! White-eared Pheasants were scoped from the same spot, as was an entertaining Hog Badger, both Snow Partridge and Tibetan Snowcock were scoped on the high peaks, Koklass Pheasants called and were flushed out of cover, and both Blood Pheasant and Lady Amherst's Pheasant were seen again. On the highest slopes, Alpine and Red-billed Choughs mixed with dazzling Grandalas, stunning Red-fronted Rosefinches, Alpine Accentors, and Plain and Brandt's Mountain Finches. Lammergeiers, drifted overhead, Snow Pigeons circled the valleys and we got some more amazing views of Wallcreepers. In the low scrub, stunning White-tailed Rubythroats sang their hearts out, and in forested areas we were delighted to





*There are not too many better sights in birding than a male White-tailed Rubythroat!*

find a fine male Golden Bush Robin, smart Crimson-browed Finches, Dark-breasted, Himalayan Beautiful and more Sharpe's Rosefinches, and a showy Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler.

With potential travel/traffic problems afoot, we decided to head down from the mountains and spend our last night at Ya'an to ensure that we had no problems getting to the airport and our flights on time. This allowed us to spend a few hours on our last morning in the lowlands. Here, we reacquainted ourselves with a number of species such as David's Fulvetta and Rufous-capped Babbler and added a few new ones including sneaky, but ultimately showy, Dusky Fulvettas, a pair of Black-faced Laughingthrushes and some smart Streak-breasted Scimitar Babblers. The transfer back to the airport was indeed trouble free, and we now had time to sit back and reflect on all that we'd achieved in just a few weeks of magical birding. Cheers and roll on the next one!



*Crimson-browed Finch was an excellent bonus at Balangshan!*





*Przevalski's Finch, now in a family of its own, and an undoubted highlight of the tour!*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**(E)**= Endangered, **(V)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* c50 at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai, and a few the following day [*rubrirostris*].

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* Common on the Tibetan Plateau. First seen on the way to Rouergai.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. Also seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai [nominate].

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope* First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. Also seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [nominate].

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca* A few seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai [nominate].

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* 3 seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai.

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* c8 seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai.

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser* A few seen south of Hongyuan [*orientalis*].

**Chinese Grouse** ◊ *Tetrastes sewerzowi* (NT) Excellent views of a male near Baxi, and a pair north of Mearkang.



**Snow Partridge** ◇ *Lerwa lerwa* Good scope views of 3 just below Balangshan Pass.

**Verreaux's Monal-Partridge** ◇ *Tetraophasis obscurus* Great views of a pair in the forest near to Baxi. Heard elsewhere.

**Tibetan Snowcock** ◇ *Tetraogallus tibetanus* Great scope views of a pair below Balangshan Pass [*henrici*].

**Tibetan Partridge** ◇ *Perdix hodgsoniae* 3 west of Ruergai, including great scope views. Also a pair at Balangshan [*sifanica*].

**Chinese Bamboo Partridge** ◇ *Bambusicola thoracicus* Heard at a few sites, and seen by some at Longcanggou.

**Blood Pheasant** ◇ *Ithaginis cruentus* First seen near to Baxi. A few others seen with best views at Balangshan [*berezowskii*].

**Temminck's Tragopan** ◇ *Tragopan temminckii* See note.

**Koklass Pheasant** ◇ *Pucrasia macrolopha* Two seen near the tunnel at Balangshan and others heard there [*ruficollis*].

**Chinese Monal** ◇ *Lophophorus lhuysii* (VU) Several seen very well near the tunnel at Balangshan.

**Silver Pheasant** ◇ *Lophura nycthemera* A pair and then a male on the track near Longcanggou [*omeiensis*].

**White Eared Pheasant** ◇ *Crossoptilon crossoptilon* (NT) Great scope views of 5+ below Balangshan.

**Blue Eared Pheasant** *Crossoptilon auritum* Good scope views of 4 at Jiuzhaigou and another near to Baxi.

**Common Pheasant (Ring-necked P)** *Phasianus colchicus* See note.

**Golden Pheasant** ◇ *Chrysolophus pictus* Great views of this stunner at Tangjiahe, and a few others heard.

**Lady Amherst's Pheasant** ◇ *Chrysolophus amherstiae* Stunner! See note.



The spectacular Lady Amherst's Pheasant first showed well near to Lijiang.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. Also at Du Fu's cottage [*poggei*].

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* One between Erlangshan and Longcanggou [nominate].

**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Two different singles seen near to Ruergai.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Common at Du Fu's Cottage. A few others seen [nominate].

**Chinese Pond Heron** *Ardeola bacchus* First seen at Jiuzhaigou, and a few others during the trip.

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* First seen on the way to Tangjiahe. A few others seen.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* First seen at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. Also at Du Fu's cottage [*jouyi*].

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* First seen at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. Also at Du Fu's cottage etc [nominate].

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* 3 in Yunnan including one seen well at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [*vociferus*].

**Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier)** *Gypaetus barbatus* (NT) A few seen well in the Balangshan area [*aureus*].

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* One at Erlangshan was the only one [*orientalis*].

**Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis* (NT) Quite common in the north. First seen on the journey to Ruergai.

**Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* (NT) One seen very well at Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai.

**Mountain Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus nipalensis* Excellent views of a circling bird (and a 2<sup>nd</sup> briefly) at Tangjiahe [nominate].

**Asian Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malaiensis* One seen well at Dove Tree Park [*malaiensis*].



**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* A total of five seen, the first at Gongangling Pass [*daphanea*].

**Chinese Sparrowhawk** ◊ *Accipiter soloensis* Two males seen at Tangjiahe, the first seen well hunting.

**Besra** *Accipiter virgatus* A calling bird seen near Lijiang and heard and seen briefly at Longcanggou [*affinis*].

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus* Four seen in total, the first near to Baxi [*melaschistos*].

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis* Great views of 1 displaying near to Jiuzhaigou. Also seen near to Baxi [*schvedowi*].

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* Common on the Tibetan Plateau. The form *lineatus* is often referred to as Black-eared Kite.

**Grey-faced Buzzard** *Butastur indicus* Singles seen well at Longcanggou and near Ya'an.

**Upland Buzzard** ◊ *Buteo hemilasius* Several seen well on the Tibetan Plateau, first on the journey to Ruorgai.

**Himalayan Buzzard** ◊ *Buteo burmanicus* c6 seen, the first at Jiuzhaigou. Several were very dark.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* A few, first seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [n nominate].

**Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* Just a few. First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang.

**Black-necked Crane** ◊ *Grus nigricollis* Good numbers (c40) seen well on the Tibetan Plateau. Great birds.

**Ibisbill** ◊ *Ibidorhyncha struthersii* Good scope views of one on the river at Rangkou Town. A nice surprise!

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* c50 seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai.

**Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius [mongolus] atrifrons* 3+ seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai.

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* 1 in breeding-plumage at Lashi Lake, Lijiang, was a surprise.

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* 1 flew in front of us and landed at Tangjiahe, and was then flushed by a muntjac!

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* Quite common on the Tibetan Plateau. First seen at Zoer Daba [*eurhina*].

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* 2 seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* (H) Heard at Lashi Lake, Lijiang.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* 3+ seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* 1 seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai.

**Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* Especially common around Ruorgai.

**Pallas's Gull** *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* c8 (mostly 2cy, but including a stunning full-hooded 3cy) at Zoer Daba, Ruorgai.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* A few seen at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai, [*tibetana*].

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia* Introduced, feral nonsense!!

**Snow Pigeon** ◊ *Columba leuconota* A couple of smart pairs seen at Balangshan [*gradaria*].

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* Common. First seen at around Lijiang [n nominate].

**Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica* A single at Erlangshan [*humilis*].

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Especially common in Chengdu [*chinensis*].

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Several heard and a few seen, the first of which was at Tangjiahe [*chinensis*].

**Large Hawk-Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx sparveroides* Commonly heard and great views of a few, the 1<sup>st</sup> near to Lijiang.

**Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ *Hierococcyx nisicolor* (H) A few heard in the Longcanggou area, but never close!

**Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus* Frequently heard and a couple seen in flight around Longcanggou.

**Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus* (H) First heard on the drive north of Chengdu.

**Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus saturatus* Frequently heard. Seen at Tangjiahe, well at Erlangshan and Longcanggou.

**Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. Many more seen and heard [*bakeri*].

**Eurasian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo bubo* A pallid roosting bird seen very well in a quarry north of Hongyuan [*tibetanus*].

**Tawny Fish Owl** ◊ *Ketupa flavipes* Stunning views of a daytime at Tangjiahe. Absolute stunners and views superb!

**Pere David's Owl** ◊ *Strix davidi* It took a while but we eventually got great scope views of a day calling bird near Baxi.

**Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) First heard at Wanmu Dujuanyan, Lijiang, and a few others heard.

**Asian Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium cuculoides* 1 seen at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. Also briefly at Du Fu's cottage [*whiteleyi*].

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua* Three seen well between Ruorgai and Hongyuan [*ludlowi*].

**Himalayan Swiftlet** *Aerodramus brevirostris* Several in the Longcanggou area [*innominatus* – Chinese Swiftlet]

**White-throated Needletail** *Hirundapus caudacutus* Seen very well in the Longcanggou/Dove Tree Park [*nudipes*].

**Salim Ali's Swift** ◊ *Apus salimalii* Birds assumed to be this species (narrow white throats) seen well at Jiuzhaigou.

**Cook's Swift** *Apus cooki* See note.

**House Swift** *Apus nipalensis* Just a few. First seen at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis* A few. First seen at Black Dragon Park, Lijiang [*bengalensis*].

**Crested Kingfisher** *Megaceryle lugubris* Great views of a few at Tangjiahe. Impressive! [*guttulata*].

**Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* Just a couple seen, the first near to Tangjiahe [n nominate].

**Great Barbet** *Psilopogon virens* Great views of one at Dove Tree Park [n nominate].

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos canicapillus* A couple seen well at Longcanggou [*scintilliceps*].

**Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** ◊ *Dendrocopos cathpharius* Singles seen well at Jiuzhaigou and Longcanggou [*pernyi*].

**Darjeeling Woodpecker** ◊ *Dendrocopos darjellensis* See note.

**White-backed Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos leucotos* 3 seen well at Tangjiahe, and 2 at Dove Tree Park [*tangji*].



**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* See note.

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius* Excellent views of a female near to Baxi [*khamensis*].

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* See note.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Just a few. First seen between Ruergai and Hongyuan [*interstinctus*].

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* One briefly near the 'First bend of the Yangtze', and one on the way to Tangjiahe.

**Saker Falcon** ◊ *Falco cherrug* (EN) See note.

**Rosy Minivet** ◊ *Pericrocotus roseus* A pair seen well at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. Smart!

**Long-tailed Minivet** *Pericrocotus ethologus* First seen in Yunnan but fairly common throughout.

**Tiger Shrike** ◊ *Lanius tigrinus* Great views of an assumed female at Du Fu's Cottage, and one briefly the following day.



*Tiger Shrike and Rosy Minivet. Two scarce and localized species.*

**Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* First seen at Du Fu's Cottage, and a few others elsewhere. All seemed to be *confusus*.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Just a few. First seen on the drive north of Chengdu.

**Grey-backed Shrike** *Lanius tephronotus* First at Black Dragon Park, Lijiang, and common in Sichuan [nominate].

**Chinese Grey Shrike** ◊ *Lanius sphenocercus* Good views of one or two of a pair around a nest near Ruergai [*giganteus*].

**Blyth's Shrike-Babbler** *Pteruthius aeralatus* Good views at Wanmu Dujuanyan, Lijiang [*ricketti*].

**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis* Just a handful; first seen at Du Fu's Cottage [*diffusus*].

**Black Drongo** *Dicrurus macrocercus cathoecus* Small numbers. First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [*cathoecus*].

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* See note.

**Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus* First seen at Du Fu's Cottage, Common at Dove Tree Park [*brevirostris*].

**White-throated Fantail** *Rhipidura albicollis* One seen well at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. A write-in!

**Sichuan Jay** ◊ *Perisoreus internigrans* (VU) Great views of a flock of 4 close to Baxi.



*The endemic Sichuan Jay did not prove too tricky to pin down this year.*



**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* Seen well at several sites - first on the way to Tangjiahe, [*sinensis*].

**Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus* A few seen north and south of Hongyuan [*swinhoei*].

**Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythroryncha* First seen near Lijiang, then common at several sites [n nominate].

**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica* First seen on the way to Tangjiahe [*bottanensis*].

**Spotted Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* First seen at Tangjiahe; particularly common at Erlangshan [*macella*].

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* First seen near to the Gongangling Pass [*himalayanus*].

**Alpine Chough** *Pyrrhocorax graculus* A few seen well around Balangshan [*forsythi*].

**Daurian Jackdaw** ◊ *Coloeus dauuricus* Several seen well in the Ruoergai area.



*Birds of the Plateau, clockwise from top left: Ground Tit; Daurian Jackdaw; White-rumped Snowfinch; Horned Lark and Rufous-necked Snowfinch.*



**Oriental Crow** ◇ *Corvus [corone] orientalis* First seen at Jiuzhaigou and several at higher altitudes further north.  
**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* Common, first seen near Lijiang [*tibetosinensis*].  
**Northern Raven** *Corvus corax* A few on the Tibetan Plateau where first seen near to Ruorgai [*tibetanus*].  
**Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Fairly common - first seen at Black Dragon Park [*calochrysea*].  
**Fire-capped Tit** ◇ *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* Seen very well at Tangjiahe, Erlangshan and Longcanggou [*olivaceus*].  
**Yellow-browed Tit** ◇ *Sylviparus modestus* Also seen very well at Tangjiahe, Erlangshan and Longcanggou [nominated].  
**Rufous-vented Tit** *Periparus rubidiventris* Seen at several sites, first at Jiuzhaigou [*whistleri*].  
**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater* First seen at Tangjiahe and common at a few sites. Crested here [*eckodedicatus*].  
**Yellow-bellied Tit** ◇ *Pardaliparus venustulus* First seen at Tangjiahe; a lovely little bird.



The lovely Yellow-bellied Tit - always great to see!

**Grey Crested Tit** *Lophophanes dichrous* Two forms: *wellsi* first seen at Tangjiahe; *dichroides* first at Jiuzhaigou.  
**White-browed Tit** ◇ *Poecile superciliosus* Great views at a couple of spots near Ruorgai. A real stunner!  
**Pere David's Tit** ◇ *Poecile davidi* Excellent views of good numbers of this cracker at Jiuzhaigou.  
**Black-bibbed Tit** ◇ *Poecile hypermelaenus* See note.  
**Sichuan Tit** ◇ *Poecile weigoldicus* A few seen well, the first few near to Baxi.  
**Ground Tit** ◇ *Pseudopodoces humilis* Many on the Tibetan Plateau, the first on the way to Ruorgai. Charismatic!  
**Japanese Tit** *Parus minor* First seen in Lijiang, and fairly common generally [*tibetanus*].  
**Green-backed Tit** *Parus monticolus* First seen near Lijiang, and seen at several sites in Sichuan too [*yunnanensis*].  
**Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* Two forms: *weigoldi* at Lashi Lake, Lijiang; *inopinata* on the Tibetan Plateau.  
**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris* Fairly common in the Ruorgai. Really smart birds.  
**Tibetan Lark** ◇ *Melanocorypha maxima* Several seen very well at Zoer Daba, north of Ruorgai [nominated].  
**Crested Finchbill** ◇ *Spizixos canifrons* Great views of several behind Elephant Hill, Lijiang. A write-in! [*ingrami*].  
**Collared Finchbill** ◇ *Spizixos semitorques* Common in the lowlands, first seen on the drive to Tangjiahe [nominated].  
**Brown-breasted Bulbul** *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Several seen; first at the 'First bend of the Yangtze' [*andersoni*].  
**Light-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis* Common in the lowlands. First seen at Du Fu's Cottage [*sinensis*].  
**Sooty-headed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster* 1 in Black Dragon Park and a few by Lijiang Airport. A write-in [*latouchei*].  
**Mountain Bulbul** *Ixos mccllellandii* (NL) One for some of the group at Tangjiahe.  
**Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* See note.  
**Pale Martin** *Riparia diluta* Several at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. A few others at Jiuzhaigou and elsewhere [*fohkienensis*].  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Common - first seen at Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze) [*gutturalis*].  
**Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* First seen on the journey to Jiuzhaigou.  
**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus* First seen near Jiuzhaigou. Some nice colonies at Balangshan [*cashmeriense*].  
**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Pretty common. First seen at the 'First bend of the Yangtze' [*rufula*].  
**Chinese Wren-Babbler** ◇ *Pnoepyga mutica* Excellent views of one at Erlangshan. Several others heard.



**Pygmy Wren-Babbler** *Pnoepyga pusilla* One seen at Erlangshan. Several others heard at various sites [*pusilla*].  
**Rufous-faced Warbler** ◇ *Abroscopus albogularis* First seen at Du Fu's Cottage. Several others noted [*fulvifacies*].  
**Brown-flanked Bush Warbler** *Horornis fortipes* First seen near Tangjiahe. Many others heard and a few seen [*davidianus*].  
**Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler** ◇ *Horornis acanthizoides* Fairly common in bamboo; first at Tangjiahe [nominate].  
**Aberrant Bush Warbler** ◇ *Horornis flavolivaceus* Fairly common (by voice especially). First at Tangjiahe [*intricatus*].



*Aberrant Bush Warbler showing unusually well!!*

**Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler** ◇ *Cettia major* Excellent views of at Balangshan. Smart [*intricatus*].  
**Chestnut-headed Tesia** ◇ *Cettia castaneocoronata* First seen very well at Tangjiahe. Also seen at Longcanggou [nominate].  
**Black-throated Bushtit** *Aegithalos concinnus* First seen in Yunnan and then many more seen [*talifuensis*].  
**Black-browed Bushtit** ◇ *Aegithalos bonvaloti* A few smart flocks seen very well near Lijiang and at Erlangshan [nominate].  
**Sooty Bushtit** ◇ *Aegithalos fuliginosus* Only seen at Tangjiahe where seen very well and in good numbers.



*Sooty Bushtit was seen very well on several occasions.*



**White-browed Tit-Warbler** ◇ *Leptopoecile sophiae* Excellent views of several on the Tibetan Plateau [*obscurus*].  
**Crested Tit-Warbler** ◇ *Leptopoecile elegans* (NL) Proved elusive but seen well by some near Baxi  
**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* See note.  
**Alpine Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus occisinensis* First seen at Jiuzhaigou and common on the Tibetan Plateau etc.  
**Buff-throated Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus subaffinis* Several seen well in Yunnan and again at Erlangshan.  
**Yellow-streaked Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus armandii* Common in suitable habitat. First on the drive to Jiuzhaigou [n nominate].  
**Buff-barred Warbler** [p *Phylloscopus pulcher* Fairly common at high altitude. First seen at Jiuzhaigou [n nominate].  
**Ashy-throated Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis* 1 at Wanmu Dujuanyan, Lijiang. Also at Longcanggou [n nominate].  
**Chinese Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* First at Tangjiahe. Also seen at a few other sites. Great voice!  
**Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* (LO) A bright looking bird seen at Tangjiahe.  
**Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei* Fairly common at higher altitudes. First seen at Tangjiahe [*mandellii*].  
**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides* See note.  
**Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Common by voice at many sites. First seen at Tangjiahe.  
**Eastern Crowned Warbler** *Phylloscopus coronatus* 1-2 singing birds seen well near the gate at Tangjiahe.  
**Blyth's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus reguloides* Fairly common around Lijiang, first seen at Elephant Hill [*assamensis*].  
**Claudia's Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus claudiae* Common at many sites in Sichuan. First seen at Tangjiahe.  
**Emei Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus emeiensis* Excellent views at Erlangshan and at Longcanggou.  
**Davison's Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus davisoni* Several seen very well near Lijiang. Song very different to Kloss's.  
**Kloss's Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti* First seen well at Tangjiahe. Many more heard and a few seen.  
**Sichuan Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus forresti* Common and widespread, especially at high altitudes. First seen at Tangjiahe.  
**Sulphur-breasted Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus ricketti* Two seen well at Tangjiahe.  
**Grey-crowned Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus tephrocephalus* Several seen around Lijiang. Also common at Erlangshan.  
**Bianchi's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus valentini* First seen well at Tangjiahe, and generally easy to see at higher altitudes.  
**Martens's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus omeiensis* First seen at Tangjiahe. Also easy at Erlangshan.  
**Alström's Warbler** ◇ *Seicercus soror* First seen/heard at Tangjiahe. Also seen well at Longcanggou.  
**Chestnut-crowned Warbler** *Seicercus castaniceps* A few sightings, first seen at Tangjiahe [*sinensis*].



*Sichuan Leaf Warbler and Bianchi's Warbler: representatives from two confusing genera!*

**Oriental Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis* One seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang.  
**Sichuan Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella chengi* See note.  
**Spotted Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella thoracica* Excellent views of one at Jiuzhaigou; others heard there and at Balangshan.  
**Baikal Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella davidi* Brilliant views at Tangjiahe, and again at Jiuzhaigou (next to Spotted!!) [n nominate].  
**Brown Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella luteoventris* Just one seen well at Longcanggou.  
**Plain Prinia** *Prinia inornata* A few seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [*extensicauda*].  
**Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler** ◇ *Pomatorhinus gravivox* See note.  
**Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* Great views at Longcanggou, and near Ya'an [*reconditus-group*].  
**Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyridopsis ruficeps* First seen at Tangjiahe. Particularly common around Ya'an [*davidi*].  
**Golden-fronted Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe variegaticeps* (VU) Absolutely stunning views of a superb pair near to Longcanggou.  
**Rusty-capped Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe dubia* Generally elusive but reasonably good views of one near Lijiang [*genestieri*].  
**Dusky Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe brunnea* Excellent views of a few at Bifeng, north of Ya'an [*weigoldi*].  
**David's Fulvetta** ◇ *Alcippe davidi* Seen well near to Longcanggou, and also common around Ya'an [n nominate].





*Golden-fronted Fulvetta: another stunner that has seldom been seen on previous tours!*

**Chinese Babax** ◇ *Babax lanceolatus* Two forms noted: nominate near Lijiang; *bonvaloti* seen well at Erlangshan.

**Chinese Hwamei** ◇ *Garrulax canorus* (H) Heard south of Ya'an. Plenty of others in cages sadly!

**Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax sukatschewi* (VU) Brilliant views of at 4+ at Jiuzhaigou. Also near Baxi.

**Barred Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax lunulatus* Great views near to Jiuzhaigou, though some effort was required!

**Giant Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax maximus* Seen a number of times. First seen well in the Baxi area.



*Giant Laughingthrushes were common, but always impressive!*



**Spotted Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax ocellatus* (H) Only heard at Longcanggou [*artemisiae*].

**Plain Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax davidi* Excellent views near to Baxi [*concolor*].

**White-browed Laughingthrush** ◇ *Garrulax sannio* Fairly common. First seen well at Du Fu's Cottage [*objectans*].

**Elliot's Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron elliotii* Common and widespread, often heard! First seen well in Yunnan.



We saw a number of excellent laughingthrushes: clockwise from top: Elliot's, Plain and White-browed Laughingthrushes.

**Black-faced Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron affine* Good views of a pair for some at Bifeng, north of Ya'an [*blythii*].

**Red-winged Laughingthrush** ◇ *Trochalopteron formosum* Great views of this stunner for all at Longcanggou [nominate].

**Blue-winged Minla** *Minla cyanouroptera* Seen well near Lijiang, and also seen at Longcanggou [*wingatei*].

**Bar-throated Minla** *Minla strigula* Excellent views at Wanmu Dujuanyan, near Lijiang [*yunnanensis*].

**Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta* Good views of 2 to the Collared Owlet tape at Longcanggou [*jerdoni*].

**Emei Shan Liocichla** ◇ *Liocichla omeiensis* (VU) Great views of a pair at Longcanggou. Others heard and seen by some.

**Streaked Barwing** ◇ *Actinodura souliei* Outstanding views of a stunning pair at Erlangshan – a trip highlight [nominate].

**Red-billed Leiothrix** *Leiothrix lutea* A few sightings, first seen at Tangjiahe [nominate].

**Black-headed Sibia** ◇ *Heterophasia desgodinsi* Excellent views at a few sites around Lijiang [nominate].

**Golden-breasted Fulvetta** ◇ *Lioparus chrysotis* Another stunner. Seen well at Tangjiahe and Longcanggou [*swinhoii*].





Rufous-tailed Babbler (or Moupinia) showed well on two occasions. Chinese (left) and Grey-hooded Fulvettas were also much admired!

**Rufous-tailed Babbler** ◇ (R-t Moupinia) *Moupinia poecilotis* See note.

**White-browed Fulvetta** *Fulvetta vinipectus* Common at Wanmu Dujuanyan, and a couple at Erlangshan [bieti].

**Chinese Fulvetta** ◇ *Fulvetta striaticollis* Great views near Baxi and in the Balangshan area. Smart bird.

**Spectacled Fulvetta** ◇ *Fulvetta ruficapilla* Great views of a few around Lijiang in Yunnan [sordidior].

**Grey-hooded Fulvetta** ◇ *Fulvetta cinereiceps* A smart Chinese endemic which gave with many great views.

**Great Parrotbill** ◇ *Conostoma aemodium* Excellent views of this brute at Tangjiahe and again at Longcanggou.

**Three-toed Parrotbill** ◇ *Cholornis paradoxa* Brilliant views at Longcanggou, even noting the 3 toes!! [nominate]

**Spectacled Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora conspicillata* Seen well at Tangjiahe and again at Jiuzhaigou [nominate]..

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora webbiana* Best were the birds seen on the way to Tangjiahe [suffusa].

**Ashy-throated Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora alphonsiana* First at Du Fu's Cottage, then at several sites west of Chengdu [nominate].

**Brown-winged Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora brunnea* Great views of 3 at Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze) [nominate].

**Grey-hooded Parrotbill** ◇ *Sinosuthora zappeyi* (VU) c8 of these localized birds seen superbly at Longcanggou [nominate].

**Przevalski's Parrotbill** ◇ (Rusty-throated P) *Sinosuthora przewalskii* (VU) Stunning views of a pair at Tangjiahe.

**Golden Parrotbill** ◇ *Suthora verreauxi* Brilliant views of a few groups in the Longcanggou area [nominate].





Parrotbills always excite: Pictured here, clockwise from top: Ashy-throated, Great and Golden Parrotbills.

- Stripe-throated Yuhina** *Yuhina gularis* Great views of several at Erlangshan and Longcanggou [*omeiensis*].
- White-collared Yuhina** ◇ *Yuhina diademata* Two forms: *ampelina* in Yunnan; nominate common in Sichuan.
- Chestnut-flanked White-Eye** ◇ *Zosterops erythropleurus* Several seen well at Erlangshan.
- Japanese White-Eye** *Zosterops japonicus* Common and widespread. First seen in Yunnan [*simplex*].
- Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* Several at higher elevations. First seen at Tangjiahe. Song seems a little different [*yunnanensis*].
- Eurasian Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* First seen at the forest near to Baxi. Very high song [*idius*].
- Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea* A few seen well at Jiuzhaigou [*sinensis*].
- Chestnut-vented Nuthatch** *Sitta nagaensis* Common and seen at a number of sites. First seen in Yunnan [*montium*].
- Yunnan Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta yunnanensis* (NT) Excellent views of several at Elephant Hill near Lijiang.
- Chinese Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta villosa* Good views of 3 or 4 near to Jiuzhaigou [*bangsi*].
- Przevalski's Nuthatch** ◇ *Sitta przewalskii* Smart bird, seen well north of Mearkang and near Rilong.
- Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* First seen near to Gouwa, then the usual excellent views at Balangshan [*nepalensis*].
- Hodgson's Treecreeper** ◇ *Certhia hodgsoni* A few seen. First seen well at Jiuzhaigou [*khamensis*].
- Bar-tailed Treecreeper** ◇ *Certhia himalayana* Excellent views of at least 3 at Jiuzhaigou [*yunnanensis*].
- Sichuan Treecreeper** ◇ *Certhia tianquanensis* (NT) Only seen at Tangjiahe, where seen very well high up.
- Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristatellus* Common in the lowlands. First seen at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [nominate].
- Red-billed Starling** ◇ *Spodiopsar sericeus* A few seen, first on the drive to Tangjiahe.





The subtlety of treecreepers! Sichuan Treecreeper (left) and Bar-tailed Treecreeper.

- Plain-backed Thrush** ◊ *Zoothera mollissima* See note [*griseiceps*].
- Long-tailed Thrush** ◊ *Zoothera dixonii* A couple flushed at the forest near to Baxi.
- Grandala** ◊ *Grandala coelicolor* Lovely views of a few near to the pass at Balangshan.
- Black-breasted Thrush** ◊ *Turdus dissimilis* Great views of a few at Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze).
- Grey-winged Blackbird** *Turdus bouboul* Good views of a pair at Black Dragon Park, Lijiang.
- Chinese Blackbird** ◊ *Turdus mandarinus* First seen at Du Fu's Cottage, Chengdu. Recently split by the IOC.
- Chestnut Thrush** ◊ *Turdus rubrocanus* Fairly common. First seen on the journey from Tangjiahe to Jiuzhaigou [*gouldii*].
- Kessler's Thrush** ◊ *Turdus kessleri* A cracker. Common at altitude, first seen on the way to Ruoergai.
- Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* A single seen at Du Fu's Cottage, Chengdu - must have been a migrant.
- Chinese Thrush** ◊ *Turdus mupinensis* Stunning views of one at Jiuzhaigou. A couple of others seen briefly.
- Oriental Magpie-Robin** *Copsychus saularis* First seen at Du Fu's Cottage, Chengdu [*prosthopellus*].
- Dark-sided Flycatcher** *Muscicapa sibirica* 1 at Longcanggou and 1 at Dove Tree Park the following day [*rothschildi*].
- Ferruginous Flycatcher** ◊ *Muscicapa ferruginea* A total of 3 seen at Longcanggou.
- Chinese Blue Flycatcher** ◊ *Cyornis glaucicomans* Great views of a male at Dove Tree Park. Others heard.
- Verditer Flycatcher** *Eumyias thalassinus* First seen at Wanmu Dujuanyan, Lijiang, and a few others in Sichuan.
- White-browed Shortwing** ◊ *Brachypteryx montana* See note [*cruralis*].
- Indian Blue Robin** *Larvivora brunnea* Commonly heard, best views at Jiuzhaigou [nominate].
- White-bellied Redstart** *Luscinia phoenicuroides* Surprisingly common, especially by voice, and several seen well [*ichangensis*].



There were plenty of good 'chats' on show, including Himalayan Bluetail and White-bellied Redstart.



**White-tailed Rubythroat** ◊ *Calliope pectoralis* Stunning views of superb males and females at Balangshan [*tschebaiewi*].  
**Siberian Rubythroat** *Calliope calliope* Great views of a couple of males near the Gongangling Pass [*beicki*].  
**Firethroat** ◊ *Calliope pectardens* (NT) Superb views of a 2cy male and an adult male at Erlangshan. Others heard.  
**[Blackthroat** ◊ *Calliope obscura* See note.]  
**White-tailed Robin** *Myiomela leucura* Reasonable views of a male at Erlangshan. Others heard.  
**White-browed Bush Robin** ◊ *Tarsiger indicus* Great views of one high up at Tangjiahe.  
**Himalayan Bluetail** *Tarsiger rufilatus* Reasonably common – a real cracker. First seen at Jiuzhaigou.  
**Golden Bush Robin** ◊ *Tarsiger chrysaeus* Brilliant views of a cracking male at Balangshan [nominate].  
**Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* Great views of an adult and juv at Erlangshan.  
**White-crowned Forktail** *Enicurus leschenaulti* Great views on the way to Tangjiahe [*sinensis*].  
**Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus* Not uncommon. First seen at Tangjiahe [*temminckii*].  
**Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula zanthopygia* A male seen very well on the way to Tangjiahe.  
**Slaty-backed Flycatcher** ◊ *Ficedula hodgsonii* Common at several sites, especially at Jiuzhaigou.  
**Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophitata* A few seen well, first seen at Jiuzhaigou [nominate].  
**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* (NL) One for some of the group at Elephant Hill, Lijiang.  
**Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor* A few seen well. First seen at Jiuzhaigou [*diversa*].  
**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochrurus* Common on the Tibetan Plateau [*rufiventris*].  
**Hodgson's Redstart** ◊ *Phoenicurus hodgsoni* Just a few, the first a smart pair close to Baxi.  
**White-throated Redstart** ◊ *Phoenicurus schisticeps* Many of these crackers seen well; first at Gongangling Pass.  
**Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus* Common in the lowlands. First seen near to Lijiang [*leucopterus*].  
**Blue-fronted Redstart** *Phoenicurus frontalis* Fairly common at altitude. First seen at Gongangling Pass.  
**Plumbeous Water Redstart** *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Common and widespread. First on the way to Tangjiahe [nominate].



Two more delightful redstarts: White-throated Redstart and Plumbeous Redstart.

**White-capped Redstart (River Chat)** *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* Common and widespread. First seen at Tangjiahe.  
**Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* Just a couple seen on journeys, the first on the way to Tangjiahe [*pandoo*].  
**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* Seen at a few upland sites and around Lijiang [*przewalskii*].  
**Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* (NL) One identified during a journey in Yunnan.  
**Grey Bush Chat** *Saxicola ferreus* A few seen, the first on the way in to Tangjiahe.  
**White-throated Dipper** *Cinclus cinclus* A few seen, best views in Jiuzhaigou [*przewalskii*].  
**Brown Dipper** *Cinclus pallasii* First seen on the way to Tangjiahe and very common there [*przewalskii*].  
**Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker** ◊ *Dicaeum melanoxanthum* A male seen well at the 'First bend of the Yangtze'. A write-in!  
**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** *Dicaeum ignipectus* Common at sites around Lijiang [nominate].  
**Mrs. Gould's Sunbird** *Aethopyga gouldiae* Common at several sites. An attractive species, first seen in Yunnan [*dabryii*].  
**Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans* Common. First seen at Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze) [*intensior*].  
**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Common and widespread [*tibetanus*].  
**Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia* Common at several spots between Ruoergai and Hongyuan [*brevirostris*].  
**Tibetan Snowfinch** ◊ (Adam's/Black-winged S) *Montifringilla adamsi* (NL) Seen by some near Ruoergai.  
**White-rumped Snowfinch** ◊ *Onychostruthus taczanowskii* Plenty seen well around Zoer Daba, north of Ruoergai.



**Rufous-necked Snowfinch** ◊ *Pyrgilauda ruficollis* A few seen well around Zoer Daba, north of Ruergai [*isabellina*].  
**White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata* A few seen briefly south of Ya'an [*swinhoei*].  
**Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* A flock seen in Black Dragon Park, Lijiang [*yunnanensis*].  
**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* A couple seen well around Balangshan [*nipalensis*].  
**Robin Accentor** ◊ *Prunella rubeculoides* Great views of one near Ruergai. A write-in [*nipalensis*].  
**Rufous-breasted Accentor** ◊ *Prunella strophiate* The commonest accentor, first seen on the Tibetan Plateau [nominate].  
**Maroon-backed Accentor** ◊ *Prunella immaculata* Great views at the forest near to Baxi. Others seen/heard more briefly.  
**Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* Great views of a pair by the hotel at Longcanggou.  
**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* See note.  
**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Common and widespread. First seen on the way to Tangjiahe.  
**Himalayan Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] alboides* Common and widespread, especially along rivers.  
**Blyth's Pipit** ◊ *Anthus godlewskii* First seen at Jiuzhaigou, a few others on passage around Zoer Daba, Ruergai.  
**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* A few seen at various sites, both migrants and singing birds.  
**Rosy Pipit** ◊ *Anthus roseatus* First seen at Jiuzhaigou. Particularly common around Balangshan.  
**Przevalski's Finch** ◊ *Urocynchramus pylzowi* Stunning views of a brilliant pair near Ruergai. Mega! Strange bill!  
**Collared Grosbeak** ◊ *Mycerobas affinis* Great views of a couple at Mengbishan.  
**White-winged Grosbeak** ◊ *Mycerobas carripes* First seen at the forest near to Baxi. Several others seen.



Collared Grosbeak (left) and White-winged Grosbeak both showed well at Mengbishan.

**Chinese Grosbeak** ◊ *Eophona migratoria* A few, first seen at Du Fu's Cottage, Chengdu [*sowerbyi*].  
**Brown Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula nipalensis* (NL) A small group seen by the hotel at Longcanggou.  
**Grey-headed Bullfinch** ◊ *Pyrrhula erythaca* Fairly common and widespread. First seen at Jiuzhaigou.  
**Blanford's Rosefinch** ◊ *Agraphospiza rubescens* A smart pair near to Baxi were a bonus.  
**Dark-breasted Rosefinch** *Procarduelis nipalensis* Great views around the tunnel at Balangshan [*nipalensis*].  
**Plain Mountain Finch** *Leucosticte nemoricola* Fairly common around Balangshan [nominate].  
**Brandt's Mountain Finch** ◊ *Leucosticte brandti* Several good views around Balangshan.  
**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus* Common and widespread, and often very brightly coloured! [*roseatus*].  
**Streaked Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus rubicilloides* A male seen well near the pass at Mengbishan [nominate].  
**Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* Quite a few seen, first at Gongangling Pass [*argyrophrys*].  
**Pink-rumped Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus waltoni* Best identified by call!! First seen well at Mengbishan [*eos*].  
**Sharpe's Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus verreauxii* Great views of a pair at Erlangshan. Also seen at Balangshan.  
**Vinaceous Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus vinaceus* First seen well near Jiuzhaigou. Others seen well at Erlangshan etc.  
**Three-banded Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus trifasciatus* Brilliant views at Jiuzhaigou. Also see well at Baxi and Mengbishan.  
**Chinese White-browed Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus dubius* Fairly common and widespread but stunning [*femininus*].  
**Red-fronted Rosefinch** ◊ *Carpodacus puniceus* Brilliant views of 3, ncluding a fine male, at Balangshan.





Grey-headed Bullfinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch (above left) and the rare and endemic Sharpe's Rosefinch.

- Crimson-browed Finch** ◇ *Carpodacus subhimachalus* Excellent views of a pair at Balangshan. A scarce bird!
- Grey-capped Greenfinch** *Chloris sinica* Common in the lowlands. First seen on the drive to Tangjiahe [nominat].
- Black-headed Greenfinch** ◇ *Chloris ambigua* Common around Lijiang [*longirostris*].
- Twite** *Linaria flavirostris* Fairly common near Ruergai, many showing bright pink rumps [*miniakensis*]!
- Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra* A few scoped the forest near to Baxi, also at Rilong [*himalayensis*].
- Tibetan Serin** ◇ *Spinus thibetanus* A few flocks seen, with the first views at Jiuzhaigou being the best.
- Slaty Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza siemsseni* A male seen well at Tangjiahe, and a female seen at Jiuzhaigou. Others briefly.
- Godlewski's Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza godlewskii* Two forms: *yunnanensis* first on the drive to Tangjiahe; *omissa* near to Baxi.
- Yellow-throated Bunting** ◇ *Emberiza elegans* Seen well on the journey to Tangjiahe and at Erlangshan [*elegantula*].
- Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala* A few seen well at Lashi Lake, Lijiang [*sordida*].



Three-banded Rosefinch, a scarce but great bird, and the amazing Yellow-throated Bunting.





Best not to get too close to the Père David's Macaques at Tangjiahe!!

## MAMMALS

- Black-lipped Pika (Plateau P) *Ochotona curzoniae*** Common on the Tibetan Plateau.
- Moupin Pika *Ochotona thibetana*** A few seen in more wooded areas.
- Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*** A few sightings on the Tibetan Plateau.
- Père David's Rock Squirrel *Sciurotamias davidianus*** A few noted at Tangjiahe.
- Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus*** Seen in the forests near to Baxi.
- Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*** Fairly common at high altitudes. Characterful.
- Perny's Squirrel (P's Long-nosed S) *Dremomys pernyi*** A few identified – terrestrial.
- Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraeus*** A couple identified at Jiuzhaigou.
- Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel *Tamiops swinhoei*** One seen at Jiuzhaigou.
- Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata*** Several fantastic sightings at Tangjiahe.
- Leopard Cat *Felis bengalensis*** A brilliant individual spotlighted at Tangjiahe.
- Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*** Nice scope views of a couple on the Tibetan Plateau.
- Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*** Seen superbly at Jiuzhaigou, and again at Rilong near Balangshan.
- Mountain Weasel *Mustela altaica*** One seen bounding along at Balangshan.
- Hog Badger *Arctonyx collaris*** Great scope views of a foraging animal at Balangshan.
- Père David's Macaque *Macaca thibetana*** Some nasty looking individuals near to the hotel at Tangjiahe.
- Reeve's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi*** Several noted at Tangjiahe.
- Takin (Golden T) *Budorcas taxicolor*** These impressive creatures showed superbly at Tangjiahe.
- Chinese Goral *Nemorhaedus caudatus*** Great views, with the Blue Eared Pheasants, at Jiuzhaigou.
- Chinese Serow *Capricornis milneedwardsii*** Brilliant views at Tangjiahe – a real cracker!





*Blue-fronted Redstarts were delightfully common at some sites.*

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. (Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds). 2014. IOC World Bird Names v4.1. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

### **Temminck's Tragopan** *Tragopan temminckii*

Several seen, but all were rather brief. Our first was a male at Tangjiahe. We also saw several on the roads in the Longcanggou area, though again, they didn't stay for too long.

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

We saw two different subspecies, both in the 'Grey-rumped' group of subspecies. The form *suehschanensis* was the form on the Tibetan Plateau while *decollatus* was first seen at Jiuzhaigou.

### **Lady Amherst's Pheasant** *Chrysolophus amherstiae*

Stunning views of a cracking male in Lijiang, a real trip highlight, and we also saw a brief female and heard others there. Also seen well at Erlangshan (3 imm males), Longcanggou area (male and female) and below Balangshan (a male and heard there the next day).

### **Cook's Swift** *Apus cooki*

Birds seen well in the lowlands near to Shimian County were thought most likely to be this species. They seemed to show broader white throats than Salim Ali's and seemed to be exhibiting breeding behaviour in the lowlands.

### **Darjeeling Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos darjellensis*

Great views of several at Longcanggou, including a pair feeding a well-grown, red-crowned juvenile at the nest [*desmursi*].





*Lammergeier and Upland Buzzard were both seen very well.*

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Two forms noted: at Jiuzhaigou the form seen was assumed to be *beicki*, whilst at Wanmu Dujuanyan, Lijiang, the form seen was assumed to be *stresemanni*.

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

More than one form was seen. One of the form *sordidor* was seen behind Elephant Hill, Lijiang. In Sichuan we saw a few seen at various sites, and although it's difficult to allocate all to subspecies, all were part of the *guerini-group*. All of these forms are part of Black-naped Woodpecker *P. [c]. guerinii* a species recognized by HBW/BirdLife.

**Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug*

A pair SSW of Ruergai, followed by another on a post and then a female on the nest with chicks. The form concerned is *milvipes* – Eastern Saker. The species is now listed as endangered as it is a favourite target of the despicable falconers that hunt the equally endangered Houbara Bustards!!

**Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

A dark Himalayan type bird of the form *hopwoodi* was seen well at Black Dragon Park, Lijiang, and in Sichuan we saw a pallid white-faced bird near to Ya'an which was of the form *leucogenis* or *salangensis*. It is hard to believe these forms are part of the same species!!



*Two more stunners! Golden Bush Robin and the unique Grandala!*





*White-throated Dippers were extremely confiding at Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve.*

**Black-bibbed Tit** *Poecile hypermelaenu*

It was a surprise to see a single well at Erlangshan. There are few records in Sichuan and indeed this was Birdquest's first sighting in Sichuan. It was in similar habitat to where we've seen them in Lijiang. The large bib and crested nape give this species a distinctive appearance.

**Black Bulbul** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*

Two forms were seen. The form *stresemanni* was first seen on the way to Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze). Both dark and white-headed birds of this form were seen in Yunnan. In Sichuan, the form *leucothorax* was first seen around Longcanggou.

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

First seen at the entrance to Tangjiahe. The breeding birds seen near to Gongangling were of the form *robustus*.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

One seen at Shuguncun (First bend of the Yangtze) was not identified to form. In Sichuan, first seen at Jiuzhaigou, and seen elsewhere, especially around the Balangshan tunnel where quite common. The form involved is *obscuratus* which is quite grey-crowned.



*Mrs Gould's Sunbird and White-capped Redstart provided a splash of colour!*



**Sichuan Bush Warbler** *Locustella chengi*

This recently described species was seen very well at Longcanggou. It was formerly thought to be a high-pitched singing Russet Bush Warbler, but it has been found to be living sympatrically with that species and was described as a new species earlier this year. The IOC is in the process of adding it to its checklist.

**Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus gravivox*

We recorded two forms during the tour. The form *odicus* was heard several times around Lijiang and seen at Wanmu Dujuanyan. In Sichuan, the nominate form was heard only at Erlangshan and around Ya'an.

**Rufous-tailed Babbler (or Moupinia)** *Moupinia poecilotis*

Good views of a pair on a scrubby hillside near to Lijiang, Yunnan, and then brilliant views of a singing bird at Erlangshan in Sichuan. An interesting looking species.

**Plain-backed Thrush** *Zoothera mollissima*

We were fortunate to get great scope views of a singing bird at Longcanggou, and to see another along a trail at Balangshan. Usually a tricky bird to see, the form we saw is *griseiceps*. This species is currently under study and may well be revised taxonomically in the near future. Watch this space!!

**White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana*

A few heard at Longcanggou where I saw a 'blue' male and a singing brown-plumaged bird, was seen by most of the group after some effort. The form here is *cruralis*. To me, shortwings are the Asian equivalents of tapaculos. White-browed Shortwing (song and plumage varies greatly geographically) is sure to be split into several species in the near future...

**Blackthroat** *Calliope obscura*

A possible female (or maybe Firethroat) seen in bamboo at c2000m at Tangjiahe. We heard the tale-tale, grating call of a Firethroat or Blackthroat in some bamboo on the way up for the parrotbills at Tangjiahe. I played a few bursts of Blackthroat song, and very soon the bird popped up. Sadly it was a female-plumaged bird, and no images were obtained. Basically a fairly dark, dull and uniform looking bird. The upperparts were a dull mid olive-brown, with a slightly warmer and contrasting rufescent-tinged tail. There was a relatively conspicuous buff orbital ring. The underparts were a fairly dirty, darkish buff, though the throat was conspicuously paler. The literature on these two species is poor and it's difficult to identify this bird with any certainty, though there are some suspicions that it may have been a Blackthroat??!!

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

We enjoyed great views of a pair of the nominate subspecies (grey-backed) at Lashi Lake, Lijiang. On the Tibetan Plateau we saw several black-backed birds. The form concerned, *calcarata*, is sometimes referred to as Tibetan Wagtail.



*Maroon-backed Accentor was another crowd pleaser.*



## APPENDIX 1

### TOP TEN BIRDS OF THE TOUR

- 1<sup>st</sup> TAWNY FISH OWL
- 2<sup>nd</sup> FIRETHROAT
- 3<sup>rd</sup> CHINESE MONAL
- 4<sup>th</sup>= Streaked Barwing
- 4<sup>th</sup>= Przevalski's Finch
- 6<sup>th</sup> Lady Amherst's Pheasant
- 7<sup>th</sup>= Tibetan Snowcock
- 7<sup>th</sup>= Three-toed Parrotbill
- 9<sup>th</sup> Ground Tit
- 10<sup>th</sup>= Gold-fronted Fulvetta
- 10<sup>th</sup>= Grandala



*On the rare occasions there were no birds to look at, there were usually some wonderful butterflies such as this Chinese Three-tailed Swallowtail!*