



Mikado Pheasant (Frank Lambert)

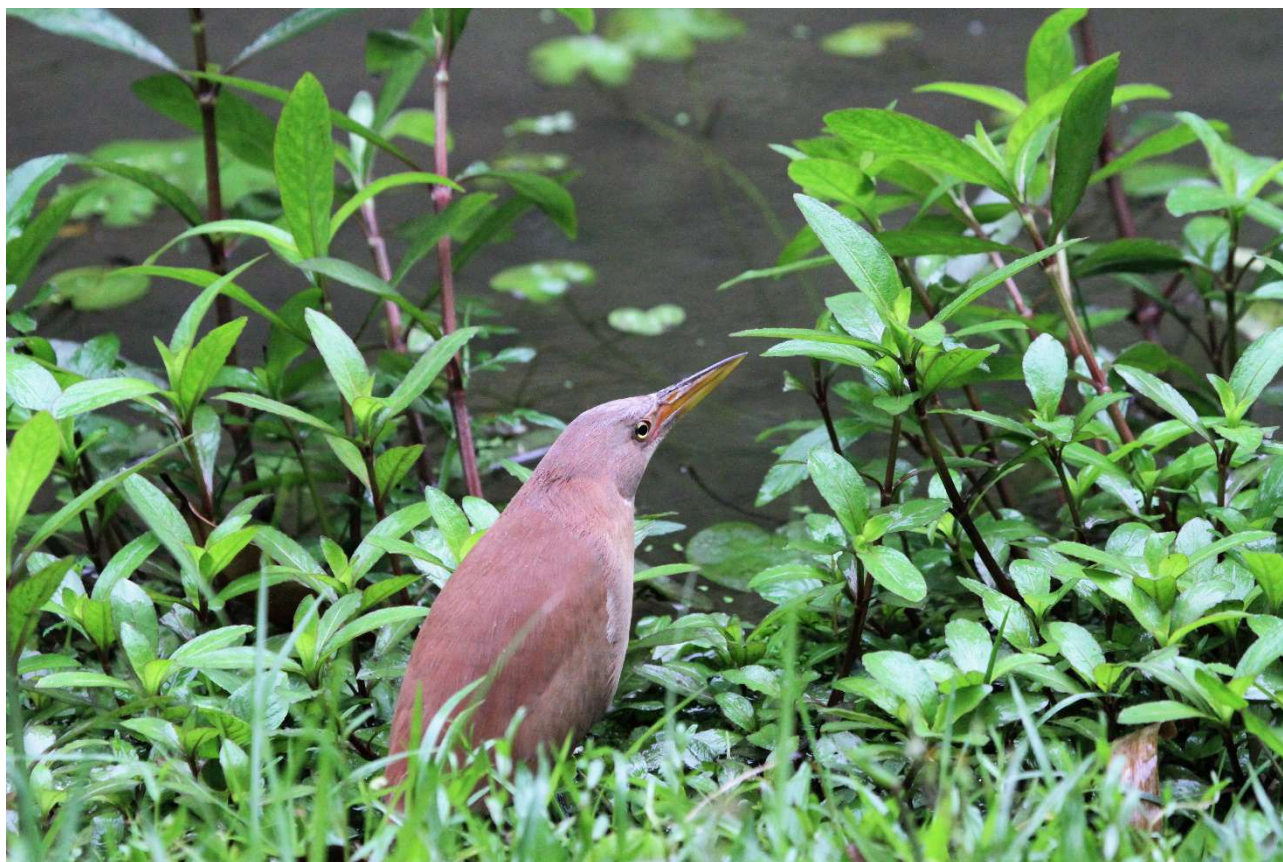
TAIWAN

17 – 30 APRIL 2016

LEADER: FRANK LAMBERT

Our tour to Taiwan this year was once again a greatly enjoyable trip, and we were successful in seeing all of the recognisable endemic species and most of the more distinctive endemic subspecies as well. We were unusually lucky in that we enjoyed fine weather for the entire trip, dodging the rain that often plagues visitors to this fascinating and beautiful island. Highlights included stunning Mikado and Swinhoe's Pheasants that gave prolonged close views on multiple occasions, a superb Fairy Pitta that perched in full view for us, and great views of both Taiwan Hill Partridges and Taiwan Bamboo Partridges. We had wonderful daytime views of Lanyu Scops Owl, enjoyed confiding Malayan Night Herons including one on a nest with three chicks, plus many attractive endemic passerines such as Taiwan Blue Magpies, Collared and "Sombre" Bush Robins, White-whiskered, Rusty and Rufous-capped Laughingthrushes, Black-necklaced and Taiwan Scimitar Babblers, Taiwan Barwing, Steere's Liocichla, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Shortwing, Taiwan Wren Babbler, Taiwan Bush Warbler, Taiwan Varied and Yellow Tit, Taiwan Rosefinches, Alpine Accentors and the

immaculate but tiny Flamecrest. We saw a huge flock of charming Golden Parrotbills, a pair of Little Forktail and Japanese Paradise Flycatchers, Black-faced Spoonbills, and the distinctive “Red” Oriole. We saw some exciting migrant waders, most in immaculate breeding plumage and a superb Siberian Crane was a great bonus bird. Good mammals seen included Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel, Taiwan Serow and leaping Bottle-nosed Dolphins.



Cinnamon Bittern was unusually tame in the botanic gardens of Taipei (Frank Lambert)

Our tour started in the Botanic Gardens of Taipei, a site famous for the fantastic opportunity presented to see Malayan Night Heron, which despite the rain did not disappoint. In most parts of its range this is a secretive, crepuscular species, but for some reason they mix freely with joggers, Tai Chi practitioners and even birders on Taiwan. Cinnamon Bittern also seems to be incredibly tame and oblivious to birders in this urban park, and we had excellent views of one hunting along the edge of a pond at very close range. Our first endemic was also quickly found in the botanic gardens, where we got close up scope views of a singing Taiwan Barbet. Once the rain subsided, they were everywhere and we probably saw at least ten in this relatively small park. Next we found a pair of confiding Taiwan Scimitar-babblers, followed closely behind by yet another endemic. This was the stunningly beautiful Taiwan Blue Magpie, which was initially chased by a Crested Goshawk, and, fortunately having escaped predation, then sat in the top of a palm tree in full view. It was a slightly unexpected bird since it is not often seen at this site. Other birds in the gardens included Japanese White-eye, Oriental Turtle Doves, Common Kingfisher and introduced Magpie Robins.

Having seen three endemics in our first hour, and eaten breakfast, we headed to the north coast in search of a much rarer, though not endemic species. For the previous year, a Siberian Crane had been resident in some ponds within an agricultural area. It had turned up as a juvenile, but as we drove up to the area we could easily see that it was now almost in adult plumage, with just a few fairly indistinct bars on the upperparts. This was a fantastic bonus, new for quite a few of us, and certainly very confiding as it fed in the shallow water about 80m from us. The ponds and surrounding marshy areas produced a few other species such as Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpipers, Plain Prinia, Stejneger's Stonechat and Grey-throated Martins.



An unexpected bonus was this Siberian Crane on the north coast (Frank Lambert)

We then set a course for the mountains of Dasyueshan, and once a little way into the hills we made a stop in scrappy tall grasses and scattered bushes and trees where we saw our first Collared Finchbills and White-backed Woodpecker, but struggled to see a singing Hwamei – although at this site, they are mostly intergrades rather than pure Taiwan Hwamei, and probably not actually “tickable”. Further up the road at higher elevations, we waited at the top of a steep slope where we were soon rewarded with incredible views of a stunning male Swinhoe's Pheasant. The forest was, however, remarkably quiet, perhaps due to the heavy downpours and mist, and few other birds were seen. We did, however, have brief views of our first White-eared Sibia. We checked into our hotel in the forest of this beautiful national park, and after a traditional Taiwanese dinner searched for the Red-and-White Flying Squirrels that inhabit the area around the log cabins. Although one glided right in front of the group, only a few of us managed to see it before it disappeared into the tree tops. Dave, however, stayed out later than anyone else, and managed to get stunning views of two of these huge flying squirrels.

Incredibly, we awoke to blue skies and were at the upper elevations of the park at around 2,600m just after dawn. Our first endemic of the day, Collared Bush Robin, was seen before we'd even left the bus, and almost as soon as we stepped out we found Owston's Bullfinch and White-whiskered Laughingthrush, and some of us saw a pair of Ashy Wood pigeons flying past. We spent the next few hours within a relatively small but very birdy area, with stunning views of Taiwan Rosefinches, Flamecrest, Taiwan Yuhina, Taiwan Barwing, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Taiwan Bush Warbler and Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers close to the bus. Walking down a nearby trail quickly produced Sombre Bush Robin, Taiwan Shortwing, Black-throated Tit, Taiwan Fulvetta and Oriental Cuckoo, and on the way back, most of us saw Taiwan Wren Babbler. A Spotted Nutcracker put in a brief appearance, but we had to wait until the afternoon to get close views of this distinctive subspecies.

We returned to our cabins for lunch, where 30 minutes birding produced a few other new species for the trip, including the distinctive Taiwan form of Vivid Niltava, White-tailed Robin, Rufous-faced Warblers and

Eurasian Nuthatch. Rather than rest during such fine weather we opted to return to the field almost immediately after



A male Swinhoe's Pheasant – one of Taiwans most beautiful species (Frank Lambert)

lunch, and as we drove up the narrow road towards the summit Dave spotted one of our most wanted birds heading up a bank next to the road – a male Mikado Pheasant. We waited by the road, with the bird in view preening and occasionally giving its wing flapping display, and finally it moved back towards the road, crossed right in front of us and started feeding along the border of the road. This superb and confiding bird spent the next hour nonchalantly watching us as we stalked it along the road.

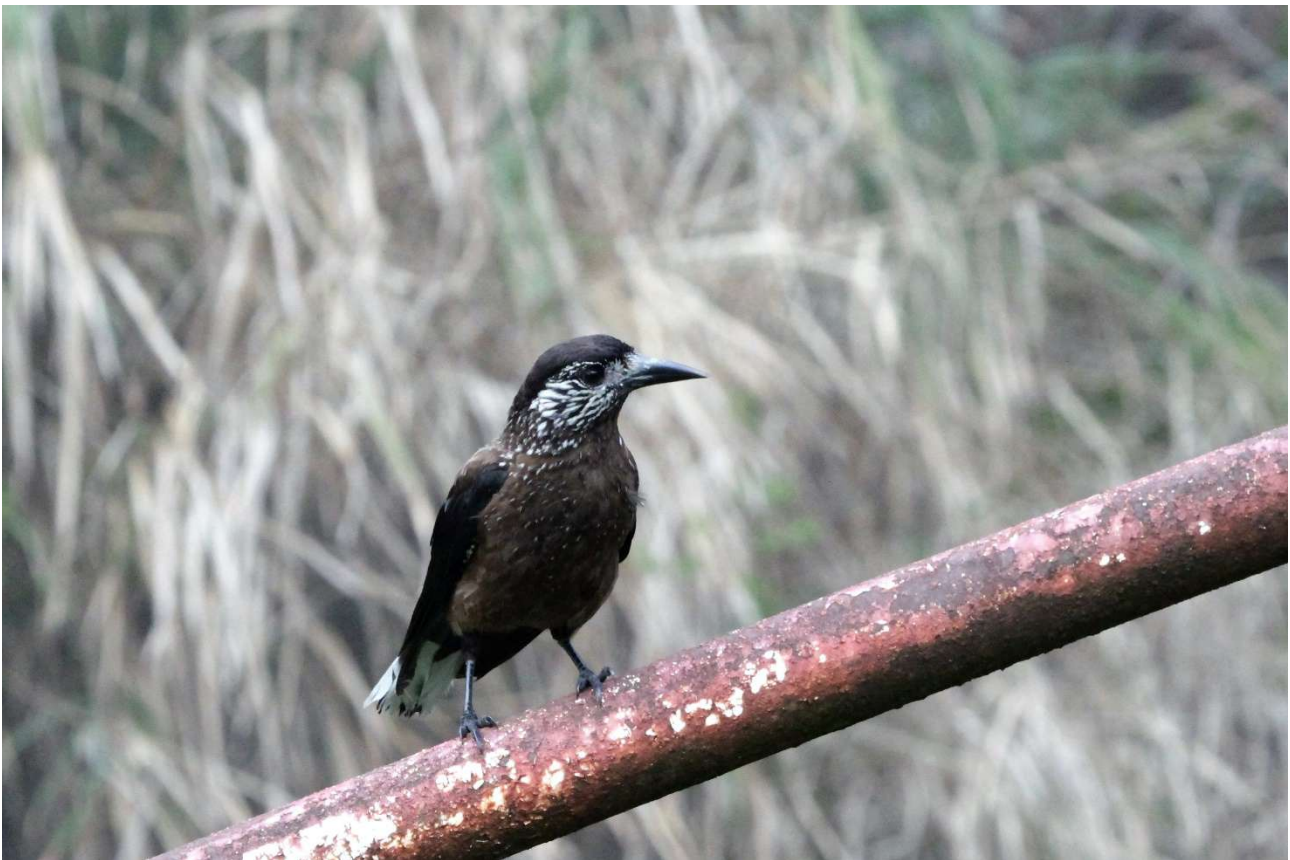


The immaculate Flamecrest and a female Collared Bush Robin (Frank Lambert)



Male and female "Owston's" Bullfinch (Frank Lambert)

A Taiwan Barwing put in a brief appearance, and White-whiskered Laughingthrushes fed close by, but the area was not particularly birdy so we headed back to the area where we had been in the morning. This was also much quieter, but we did see a pair of Mikado Pheasants there, along with those superb Spotted Nutcrackers. As the light faded we made an attempt to see Little Forktail on a waterfall along the road, but, as with yesterday, the bird didn't show itself. After dinner, we made a quick foray up the road in our bus, where we had stunning views of Red-and-White Flying Squirrels and, using the bus as cover, we were able to closely approach three fantastic Taiwan Serow, one of which we were able to watch for twenty minutes as it fed on a steep bank just above the road. After a long and exciting day we were more than happy to retire to our log cabin and climb into our snug beds, per-heated with an electric blanket.



The distinctive Taiwan subspecies of Spotted Nutcracker (Frank Lambert)

We started our final morning at Dasyeushan birding around our accommodation, where everyone finally got reasonable views of Taiwan Wren-babbler, but we failed to find our main target here, Rufous-capped Laughingthrush. We also encountered a slightly ferocious-looking Taiwan Macaque near the cabins. After a brief breakfast, we headed down the road, bumping into another Taiwan Barwing and a pair of Steere's Liocichla as we left our cabin. Birding near the entrance gate to the park produced a few good birds, most notably a pair of Rufous-capped Laughingthrushes, at first seen feeding on the ground by a few of us, and later chasing each other around in the treetops. Whilst looking, we also flushed a Eurasian Woodcock that flew only a few meters before landing in the open and running up a bank, giving nice views to those of us who saw it. Walking down the road we found a small bird flock that included our first Grey-cheeked Fulvetta as well as several confiding Rufous-faced Warblers and a White-backed Woodpecker. Further along the road we watched Asian House Martins at close quarters and eventually, after a considerable effort, we found our first Yellow Tit. This stunning endemic seems to be fairly localized, and prefers to keep high in the tallest trees, but it nevertheless gave us a spectacular view. Later we saw two more further down the road, as well as Taiwan Scimitar Babblers, Vivid (Taiwan) Niltava and several Eurasian Jays.



The immaculate Taiwan Barwing is fairly common but unobtrusive (Frank Lambert)

Leaving Dasyeushan behind, we returned to the lowlands for a 7-11 lunch before heading up into the low hills near Puli. Here we searched for Taiwan Varied Tit without success, but we did have good views of a group of ten Taiwan Blue Magpies, Black Bulbuls and our first Bronzed Drongos. We arrived at our pleasant accommodation at Ching Jing Farm where we were pleasantly surprised by a lavish dinner and, of course, some cold beer.

Between dawn and breakfast we birded the extensive grounds around our accommodation, at about 1,700m altitude. Steere's Liocichla's were very common, as were White-eared Sibias, and several that were congregating at a fruiting tree gave us outstanding views. Suddenly we noticed two other birds feeding in the area below the fruiting tree that turned out to be Taiwan Hwamei, shortly afterwards joined by a third bird. These gave us remarkably good views and even sung in full view. Taiwan Bamboo Partridges were also common in the area and three came up to the road after playback, crossing within only 10m of the group

before heading into old tea gardens. Here they continued to feed, often in full view, before being chased off by a cat. Another species seen well in the tea was Rufous-capped Babbler, a species that is often much more skulking. Brownish-flanked Bush Warblers were also giving their loud melodious song in the same area and after a short search we had had good views of this too. Having seen most of our early morning targets we returned for breakfast before heading up to higher elevation in our bus.



Vivid Niltava, a possible split, and Taiwan Yuhina are both relatively common in montane forests (Frank Lambert)

We spent the following two hours birding a wide, wet and muddy trail into nice forest about half an hour from our hotel. Almost as soon as we entered the forest we had stunning views of a male Snowy-browed Flycatcher, but Taiwan Shortwing, normally very vocal in this area, were proving elusive and it took nearly an hour to track one down. Once we had found a responsive individual, however, we all had excellent views of this distinctive taxon.



Taiwan Shortwing usually calls from dense cover so we were lucky to get full-on views of this one (Frank Lambert)



Taiwan Hwamei prefers scrub whilst White-eared Sibia is a forest bird (Frank Lambert)

Whilst waiting for a Taiwan Wren-babbler to appear, Dave, who was looking in the other direction, suddenly spotted two raptors passing us that turned out to be Mountain Hawk Eagles, a rather rare (or rarely observed) species in Taiwan and a nice bonus species. Moving higher still, we drove for nearly an hour to the Hehuanshan Pass, at 3275m, which was completely clear and less windy than usual. We did not have to venture any further than the parking area to see one of our main targets here, the distinctive and very isolated race of Alpine Accentor. Taiwan Rosefinches were also common here, and we found Flamecrests, Collared Bush Robins and White-whiskered Laughingthrushes in another car park further up the road. Golden Parrotbills, however, eluded us. Returning late afternoon to the Blue Gate trail area, we found the area to be much quieter than it had been in the morning, but we still managed to add yet another endemic to our list – Rusty Laughingthrush. We returned to our busy hotel happy with yet another excellent days birding, and again enjoyed a tasty Taiwanese dinner.



A pair of Alpine Accentors at Hehuanshan Pass (Frank Lambert)

Leaving pre-dawn, we reached the high elevations of Hehuanshan Pass not long after dawn, and a beautiful one at that. Not only was it another dry morning, but also fairly warm, with little wind, making our birding experience much more comfortable than on most tours that visit this outstandingly scenic but rather barren and windswept area. Walking down the main road, we heard a Eurasian Wren that was at first rather skulking. But as we searched for it a feeding flock of Golden Parrotbills suddenly appeared in front of the wren, and were feeding nearby us for the next 5-10 minutes giving everyone excellent views of this endemic subspecies. We also found several Owston's Bullfinches and Olive-backed Pipits in this vicinity. Moving down the road further, we stopped for coffee and snacks and here found three Brown Bullfinches feasting on the fruits of an elm tree only 50m from us. This is yet another endemic Taiwan form of a more widespread species.

We descended further along the narrow winding road through forest clad mountains, stopping regularly to look for several species that frequent the fast-flowing streams in this region. At one of the first streams we stopped at we found both Brown Dipper and Plumbeous Redstart, but we had to wait until the very last major stream to find the other main target, Little Forktail. Fortunately a pair were feeding fairly close, and probably had a nest with young nearby. Lower still we passed through the world-famous, spectacular Taroko Gorge and took the time to walk along the old road so that we could appreciate this impressive icon of Taiwan. Pacific Swallows were nesting close by along the old road, and we also had our best views yet of Taiwan Whistling Thrush in the Taroko area. A Crested Goshawk soared in the sky above the gorge. Arriving at our hotel in the lowlands of Taroko early, we had a much-welcomed couple of hours to relax before another pleasant meal in a traditional restaurant.



The beautiful male Taiwan Rosefinch is a confiding montane species found at Hehuanshan Pass (Frank Lambert)

Early morning birding took place around the nearby Taroko river mouth, where we found large numbers of the endemic Styan's Bulbuls, Oriental Skylark, an adult Peregrine sat on the beach, Golden-headed Cisticola

and Yellow-bellied Prinias, White Wagtail *leucopsis*, Little Terns, Brown Shrike, a Black-faced Bunting and a pair of Savanna Nightjars. There were also three species of plover on the beach, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers and Lesser Sandplover. After some breakfast we headed down to another river mouth, where we saw the endemic Taiwan subspecies of Common Pheasant, Brown and Long-tailed Shrikes, small numbers of shorebirds including Terek Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Chinese and Pacific Reef Egrets, Little, Common and Black-naped Terns, and at least six Oriental Pratincoles in a field full of Alaskan Yellow Wagtails.



Malaysian Night Heron with three chicks in its nest (Frank Lambert)

We headed southwards in the afternoon, stopping briefly for some Striated Swallows before visiting some fish and duck ponds. Here we found good numbers of shorebirds resting in some of the wetter muddier ponds that were not in use. These included small flocks of Black-winged Stilt, Marsh Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper and Common Greenshanks, and smaller numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked and Long-toed Stints in gorgeous breeding plumage, a few Lesser Sandpipers and two Curlew Sandpipers. There were also good numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons around the duck ponds. Just before reaching our night stop in Taitung city we visited a small park where we found Taiwan Barbet, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, and several tame Malayan Night Herons, including an adult on a nest with three chicks.

The following morning we set off to the airport early for our flight to Lanyu Island. After a delay due to a mix up with vehicles, we reached our first birding stop mid-morning and immediately saw two of our targets, in the same tree – the local race of Brown-eared Bulbul and a stunning male Taiwan Green Pigeon. We walked a short distance off the road where we met some local butterfly enthusiasts who very kindly pointed out a roosting owl, just above the trail. This turned out to be our third Lanyu target, the Lanyu race of Ryuku Scops-owl, sometimes considered to be a good species. As we watched we realized that another bird was sitting nearby and during the next half an hour, whilst waiting for Ken to catch up with the group (he came on the ferry) we had the occasional excellent view as one or the other owl would come out of its semi-slumber and peer down towards us.

After Ken arrived we headed into a nearby gully where we found a female Japanese Paradise Flycatcher after some searching, and then a couple of us had views of the male briefly. This is usually a flighty species

and can be difficult to get onto, but not usually this difficult and frustrating. We also had our first views of our fourth target, Lowland White-eye. We decided to look elsewhere, and after our usual picnic lunch we headed to a new location. Here, we all had excellent views of Philippine Cuckoo-dove, a species that is at the edge of its range in Lanyu. We also had more views of Taiwan Green Pigeon and another scops owl before returning to our first gully. This time a male Paradise Flycatcher flew in but alighted so close to us that it was disturbed by our presence and flew off again, and was not seen again despite most of the afternoon searching for it here and for other Paradise Flycatchers in nearby locations. Back near our hotel Dave found four Chinese Egrets on the beach, although most of us did not see these.



Ryuku Scops Owl on Lanyu is potentially a good species (Frank Lambert)

In the morning we again concentrated our efforts on finding the male Japanese Paradise Flycatcher but it proved just as elusive as the previous day. However, we did find a nest with a female incubating in the very same area where we had seen the male, which probably explains why the male had been so unresponsive. A presumed young male was, however, very responsive (in a nearby locality) and sat preening close by giving us all excellent views. It occasionally sang as well. We headed to the docks, where some Blue Rock Thrushes on the beach gave nice views, then boarded our boat back to the mainland.

The weather had been very calm over the past week and there were very few seabirds in evidence. We had distant views of both Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwater, a small flock of Red-necked Phalaropes and a close Brown Booby as well as a couple of unidentified seabirds that flitted past too quickly to identify. A large pod of Bottlenosed Dolphins put on a good display as we neared the mainland, with quite a few jumping clear out of the water. And whilst far from land we saw a couple of more interesting cetaceans with bold white spots on the body and what appeared to be a lump on the forehead, almost certainly beaked whales.

Once on the mainland we headed down the west coast towards Hulu Ponds where we had great views of some spectacular Pheasant-tailed Jacanas in full breeding attire. Birding some nearby fallow fields was also very productive, with good numbers of breeding plumage Pacific Golden Plovers and Oriental Pratincoles dotted around. After a considerable search we also found a damper area that produced several pairs of immaculate Painted Snipe as well as small numbers of Common Snipe and a few other snipe that looked

most like Swinhoe's. To finish the day we had a nice view of a male Cinnamon Bittern, perched in the open as the light faded.



Even the brightly coloured female Painted Snipe is hard to see because of its behaviour (Frank Lambert)

We spent the morning birding in wetlands along the central portion of the west coast, looking in particular for shorebirds and Black-faced Spoonbill. It did not take long to see a Black-faced Spoonbill fly by, but not everyone saw it and we had to wait another hour before Dave found a flock of 32, almost hidden from view. These were the only ones we saw, despite covering an extensive area of marshes and ponds before lunch. Whiskered Terns were common on this coast, and we also saw a few Caspian Terns. Very few ponds held shorebirds, and the water levels were too high in some of the areas where shorebirds traditionally congregate. Nevertheless we saw a good selection of which Whimbrel, Common Redshank, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler and Grey Plover were all new for the trip. We also had good numbers of breeding plumage Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Pacific Golden Plovers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Marsh Sandpipers. Huge numbers of Little and Eastern Great Egrets were present along this coastline, as well as large numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons. The only migrant songbirds that we saw were a couple of Brown Shrikes and small numbers of Green-headed Wagtails. After lunch, we headed inland along the highway towards Alishan, where we spent the afternoon near the Fireflies Homestay.

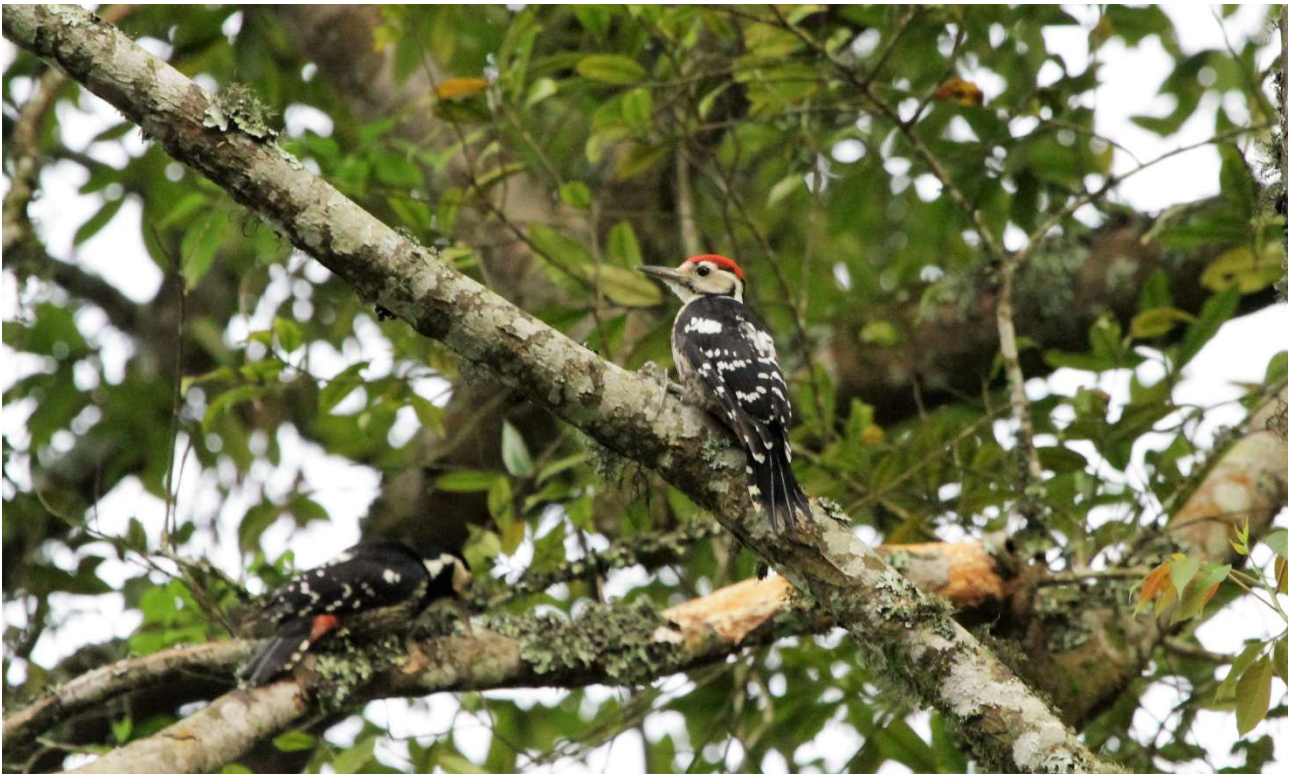
On arrival we were taken by our hosts up a track too steep for our bus, and eventually reached some blinds in the forest, where we sat by a feeding station for a couple of hours. Unfortunately we had to share the blinds with about 15 Taiwanese birdwatchers and photographers, some of whom were too noisy and restless for the situation. When a family of Taiwan Partridges appeared, the adults hung back nervously and decided not to descend, so only half of the group managed to see them. We all saw a superb male and female Swinhoe's Pheasant that came to visit on several occasions, feeding within 5-10m of the blind. As the light faded we left the blind and the last to leave saw a pair of Dusky Fulvettas feeding quietly nearby. We all piled back into the open-topped truck and headed back for some excellent dinner, before heading again out to look for owls. Although it was dry the sky was dark and no definite owls were heard; the Mountain Scops Owl we had heard early on was almost certainly playback from another group of birders.



A female Swinhoe's Pheasant in front of the blind at Fireflies (Frank Lambert)

We were back in the blind as the forest was waking up, but we had to wait an hour and a half before some Taiwan Partridges finally showed themselves – probably nine in total. The male Swinhoe's Pheasant also put in its customary appearance. We returned to our homestay for breakfast then headed back to the field, this time looking in particular for one of the two remaining endemics, Black-necked Laughingthrushes. During the course of the morning we heard perhaps five pairs of these skulkers, and even though one bird was definitely fairly close on one occasion, and perhaps even crossed the road, nobody saw them at all. We did, however, have great views of several White-bellied Green Pigeons, a pair of Dusky Fulvetta and both Black Eagle and Crested Serpent Eagle overhead. The only new bird we saw was White-bellied Erpornis. After lunch we briefly tried again for the scimitar babblers, but soon gave up and headed up to higher elevations where we birded near our accommodation at Alishan. Birding was very slow at first, but in the late afternoon the weather suddenly improved and there was significant activity. Small bird flocks with Black-throated Bushtits, Rufous-faced Warblers, Rufous-capped Babblers and Grey-headed Fulvetta occasionally crossed our path, but more interesting was a large dispersed flock of larger species. This flock held White-backed Woodpeckers, Eurasian Nuthatch and Eurasian Jay in the canopy, whilst at ground level we found at least eight Taiwan Barwings. Taiwan Shortwings were also common along the track, and we saw a couple of Vivid Niltavas, but the show was probably stolen by great scope views of an Ashy Woodpigeon.

We left Alishan early the next morning and returned to the Fireflies area to search for Black-necked Scimitar Babbler, one of the last endemics we needed. Having heard them here the previous day we thought that they would be easier to see early in the morning, but after a few frustrating encounters we gave up and moved on down towards Huben. Along the way, however, we spotted a likely looking spot for scimitar babblers and tried our luck. Almost immediately we found a pair of Rusty Laughingthrushes, and within five minutes a Black-necked Scimitar Babbler was calling nearby. During the next 20 minutes we got superb views of a pair of these birds as they circled us. This was a good result because later in the day at Huben we got nowhere near to seeing this species.



White-backed Woodpeckers are common in montane forests of Taiwan (Frank Lambert)

The main reason for visiting the Huben area is to try to see Fairy Pitta. This species has declined significantly in the last decade, with 44 present around Huben in 2007 but only ten in 2015, and this combined with the fact that the species only arrives in Huben a few days before our visit, and are difficult to see before they settle down in territories, meant that we faced a daunting task. During the afternoon we heard at least four different birds, probably two pairs, but we only saw one bird briefly as it flew across a deep V-shaped valley a few times, high above the bamboo. We had a lot more luck with Red Oriole, a male of which put in an exceptional display in the middle of the day, calling nearby and giving us excellent views. We headed into town where our hotel was located, and saw several Savanna Nightjars flying around the taller buildings.



"Red" Oriole and Fairy Pitta at Huben (Frank Lambert)

At dawn, after picking up breakfast at our now familiar 7/11 convenience store, we walked a short distance into the forest near Huben to try our luck again with Fairy Pitta. This time, after just a few minutes wait, a Fairy Pitta flew in close and perched in view for several minutes, putting a big smile on everyone's faces. Very satisfied, we headed back to our bus, seeing a couple of Dusky Fulvettas and White-rumped Munias

on the way. We then drove for a couple of hours to Guguan where we spent several hours looking for Taiwan Varied Tit. One put in a brief appearance early on, but only a couple of people saw it before it disappeared, and at some distance. Perseverance again paid off, however, and we finally found a pair of tits at eye level, our last recognized endemic, bringing this excellent tour to a great ending. A Taiwan Blue Magpie was also in the town park, with a nest nearby. With all our targets now seen, almost all by everyone, we hit the highways and headed north to Taipei and the end of our memorable adventure, but not before another fine meal where we were able to toast our success and congratulate ourselves on a great trip before heading our separate ways.



Taiwan Blue Magpie eating a rat that it caught near its nest (Frank Lambert)

'BIRDS OF THE TRIP' WINNERS 2016:

- 1st: Swinhoe's Pheasant
- 2nd: Mikado Pheasant
- 3rd: Flamecrest
- 4th: Fairy Pitta
- 4th: Collared Bush Robin
- 5th: White-whiskered Laughingthrush
- 5th: Taiwan Blue Magpie



Birding near Taroko Gorge (Frank Lambert)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). IOC World Bird Names. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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).

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* A few seen at Aogu wetlands.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck ◊ *Anas zonorhyncha* A few encounters along our route.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* A male seen at Aogu wetland.

Taiwan Partridge ◊ *Arborophila crudigularis* Good looks at up to nine near the Firefly Homestay.

Taiwan Bamboo Partridge ◊ *Bambusicola sonorivox* Several seen very well near Chingjing Farm Guesthouse.

Swinhoe's Pheasant ◊ *Lophura swinhoii* Great views of both sexes near Firefly Homestay and at Dasyeushan.

Mikado Pheasant ◊ *Syrmaticus mikado* Three males seen superbly at Dasyeushan.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Several birds seen along the eastern side of Taiwan.

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelus* One or two seen en route to Kenting.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* One seen en route to Kenting.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* One seen en route to Kenting.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Scattered sightings in the west coast wetlands.

Sacred Ibis (introduced) *Threskiornis aethiopicus* A few seen around the west coast wetlands.

Black-faced Spoonbill ◊ *Platalea minor* At flock of 32 seen in coastal wetlands.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* A couple of singles seen around the west coast wetlands.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* A good look at one in Taipei and another on the west coast.

Malayan Night Heron ◊ *Gorsachius melanolophus* Great views of several along our route, including two nests.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Common around the west coast wetlands.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* A couple of sightings on the west coast.

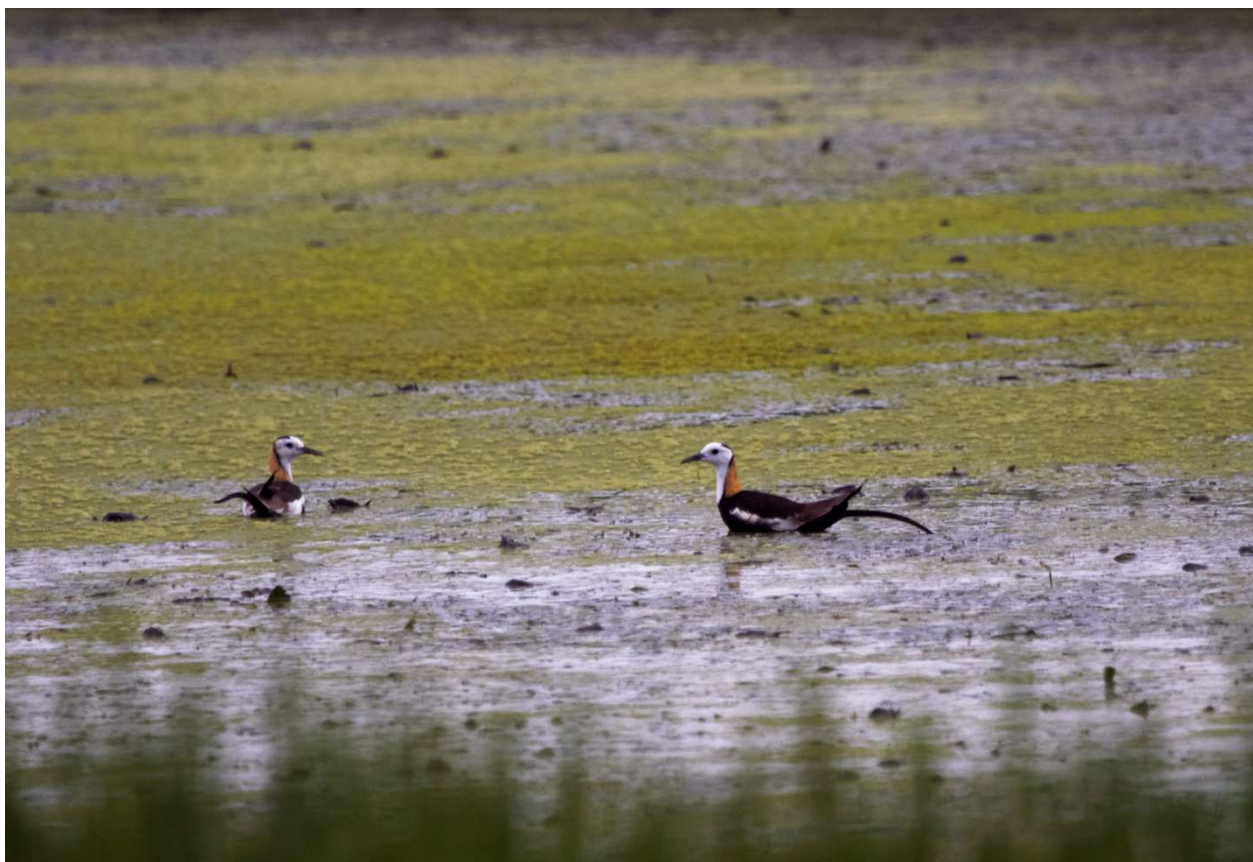
Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Frequent and numerous, in smart breeding plumage.
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A few seen along the way, more on the west coast.
Eastern Great Egret *Ardea modestus* Numerous on the west coast wetlands, a few elsewhere including Lanyu..
Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* A couple of sightings.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Frequently seen, and numerous on the west coast wetlands.
Pacific Reef Egret *Egretta sacra* A few dark birds seen around the shores of Lanyu island and on the west coast.
Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* One on the east coast and four seen by some on the shore of Lanyu.



Egrets are common in Taiwan, many in immaculate plumage such as this Little Egret (Frank Lambert)

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* A close fly-by in good light on our way to Kenting from Lanyu.
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Two seen at Aogu wetlands.
Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* A single on the west coast.
Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Several seen around the west coast wetlands.
Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis orientalis* Soaring birds seen on several occasions.
Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* A pair flying closely together near the Blue Gate Trail.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* Frequently seen, a common bird in Taiwan. Very common around Huben.
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* One seen soaring in the Fireflies Homestay area.
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Seen at several sites, with several good views of perched birds.
Chinese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter soloensis* A single male at Huben.
Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A single seen flying around at Jinshan on our first day.
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A small number seen around Huben and elsewhere.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Not uncommon around the west coast wetlands.
Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* Two from the bus in the the west coast wetlands.
Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* Excellent views of Taiwan's first ever at Jinshan, where it has been for a year.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Common in the west coast wetlands and at Jingshan.
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* At least 56 seen in the west coast wetlands.
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Good numbers on the west coast wetlands, also some seen on Lanyu.
Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Four at the Black-faced Spoonbill Reserve.
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* A few at the Taroko estuary.
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* Good numbers seen on the west coast wetlands, some with chicks.
Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus* Common in some west coast wetlands, also a few at Taroko estuary.

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* At least seven near the Jacana reserve gave spectacular views.
Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* At least 50 of these wonderful birds at their Guantian reserve.
Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* One seen well by some of us in Dasyeushan.



Pheasant-tailed Jacanas are very hard to approach and fly off from 100m or so (Frank Lambert)

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Good numbers seen at the Jacana reserve at Hulu Ponds.
 [Swinhoes Snipe *Gallinago megala* Several birds seen well in flight at Hulu Ponds seemed to be this species]
Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* One in the Black-faced Spoonbill Reserve.
Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* One in the Black-faced Spoonbill Reserve.
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Several seen in the Black-faced Spoonbill Reserve area.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Good numbers in the west coast wetlands.
Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers in the west coast wetlands, also at Taroko river.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Quite good numbers on the west coast wetlands, and a few in the east.
Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* Two on the mudflats at the Black-faced Spoonbill Reserve.
Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* At least 13 seen at various localities.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Several sightings at various localities.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Five seen at the estuary north of Taroko.
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* In good number on the west coast wetlands and a few near Taroko.
Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* A fair number on some west coast wetlands, seen very well.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* More than 50 seen in the west coast wetlands, also one at Jinshan.
Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Good numbers in the west coast wetlands, many in bright plumage.
Broad-billed Sandpiper \diamond *Limicola falcinellus* Quite a few seen well in the west coast wetlands.
Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Several seen at sea after leaving Lanyu.
Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Frequent encounters, some great views near Taroko and Hulu Ponds.
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Three in the Beiman District on the west coast wetlands.
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* Seen often around the coasts, with more than 100 north of Taroko.
Common Tern *Sternula albifrons* Small numbers north of Taroko.
Black-naped Tern *Sternula albifrons* A few birds on the estuary north of Taroko.
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Large numbers seen on the west coast wetlands near the end of the tour.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia* Available.

Ashy Wood Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis* A couple in flight at Dasyeushan, another seen nicely at Alishan.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* A scattering of sightings, mostly in the Guanghai area.

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Common in the lowlands.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* Commonly seen in most areas except in mountain forest.

Philippine Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia tenuirostris* Good views of some on Lanyu.



Philippine Cuckoo-Dove is common on Lanyu Island (Frank Lambert)

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* A couple of flight views and heard on Lanyu.

White-bellied Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron sieboldii* Good numbers seen well around Guanghai.

Taiwan Green Pigeon ♦ *Treron formosae* A handful seen well on Lanyu.

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Seen in the Taitung area and at Huben.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparverioides* (H) Heard at Alishan.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* Three seen at widely scattered locations, others heard.

Mountain Scops Owl ♦ *Otus spilocephalus* (H) Several heard distantly around Firefly (Guanghai).

Lanyu Scops Owl ♦ *Otus botelensis* Two seen very well at roost in the daytime and another hunting in the day.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* (H) Heard at Dasyeunshan, near Firefly and at Alishan.

Northern Boobook ♦ *Ninox japonica* One seen well at night on Lanyu.

Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* A pair seen near Taroko in the day, and heard around our hotel in Douliou.

Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis* (NL) One seen at Dasyeunshan.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* Small numbers at Taroko, some on Lanyu and a few in-between.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* Common and frequently seen.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Odd ones seen along the way.

Taiwan Barbet ♦ *Megalaima nuchalis* Seen and frequently heard at a number of localities.

Grey-capped Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* A few encounters along the way.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopus leucotos*. Quite common in mountain areas with many sightings.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* (H) Heard at Dasyeunshan and in the Blue Gate Trail area.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* An adult sat on the beach at Taroko river mouth.

Fairy Pitta ♦ *Pitta nympha* Superb views of one near Huben.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* Regularly seen in the warmer forests along our route.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A few migrants seen on Lanyu and around the coasts.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* A few sightings at lowland sites.

White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis zantholeuca* A few at Baxianshan and some near Firefly Homestay.

Red Oriole ◇ *Oriolus ardens* A superb view of a calling male at Huben. Undoubtedly a good split!

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Common in the lowlands throughout the country, but absent on Lanyu.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* A small number of sightings in foothill forests.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Two along the road to Taroko Gorge.

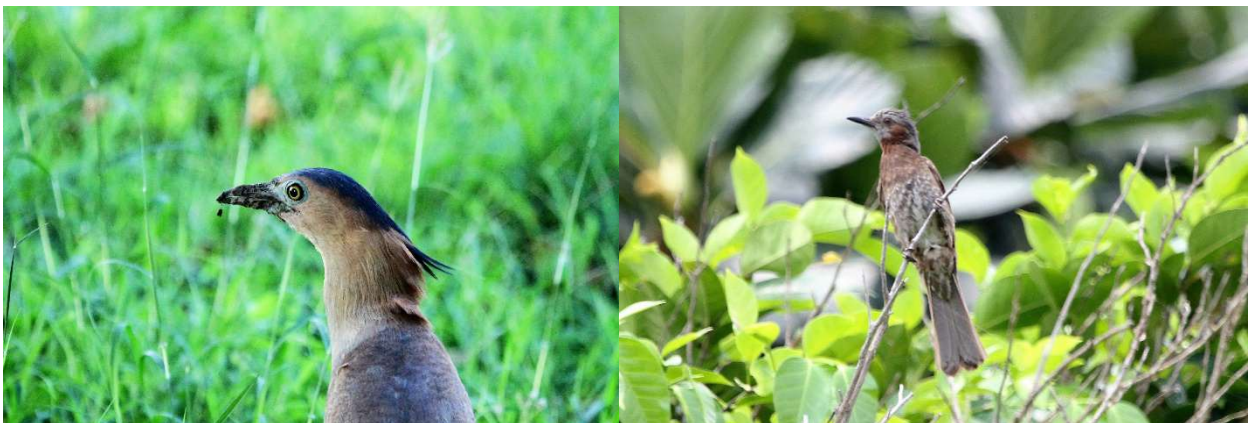
Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* A few seen at scattered lowland sites.

Japanese Paradise Flycatcher ◇ *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* Three including a female on a nest on Lanyu.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* Several at Dasyueshan and several in the Alishan/Firefly area.



Eurasian Jay of the endemic subspecies taivanus (Frank Lambert)



Malayan Night Heron in one of the many parks and Brown-eared Bulbul on Lanyu (Frank Lambert)

Taiwan Blue Magpie ◇ *Urocissa caerulea* One in Taipei, ten near Puli and one around a nest at Baxianshan.
Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* Widespread, and common in places.
Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* A few seen, especially common in the Taipei area.
Spotted Nutcracker ◇ *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Several sightings at Dasyueshan.
Large-billed Crow *Corvus japonensis* Not common, but scattered sightings of up to eight a day.
Coal Tit *Periparus ater* Small numbers at Dasyueshan and other montane sights.
Taiwan Varied Tit ◇ *Poecile castaneiventris* Three near Baxianshan on our last morning were very welcome.



Coal Tits on Taiwan are quite different to European birds (Frank Lambert)

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* Seen regularly in the hill forests.
Yellow Tit ◇ *Parus holsti* Just two seen, in the taller forest at Dasyueshan.
Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Not uncommon along the coasts and near Hulu Ponds.
Collared Finchbill ◇ *Spizixos semitorques* Seen on a few occasions, each time in foothills forest.
Light-vented Bulbul ◇ *Pycnonotus sinensis* Seen commonly in lowland habitats, except in the south east.
Styan's Bulbul ◇ *Pycnonotus taivanus* Seen in good number from Hualien southwards.
Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Frequently encountered in lower altitude forests.
Brown-eared Bulbul ◇ *Microscelis amaurotis* Fairly common on Lanyu, endemic subspecies *harteri*.
Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis* Several sightings in the east coast and west coast wetlands.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common, and nesting in towns and villages.
Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Seen throughout though in smaller numbers than the above.
Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus* Seen very well in several montane areas, nesting at Dasyueshan.
Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata* In small numbers around some of the towns in the west and south.
Taiwan Wren-Babbler ◇ *Pnoepyga formosana* Two seen at Dasyueshan, many heard.
Rufous-faced Warbler ◇ *Abroscopus albogularis* Seen very well at several montane forest areas and at Huben.
Strong-footed Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis robustipes* One furtive individual seen near Chingjing farm.
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis acanthizoides* Good views at Dasyueshan and near Hehuanshan Pass.
Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus* Very numerous in the warmer hill forests.
Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* H (LO). One heard Taipei Botanic Gardens

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* One seen well at Baxianshan

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* (H) One hidden songster near Taroko river estuary.

Taiwan Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella alishanensis* Good views at Dasyueshan and Hehuanshan. Heard Alishan.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen along our route.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* One seen very well near Taroko river estuary.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* Numerous at Taroko river mouth, also seen on the west coast.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Regular sightings in lowland habitats.

Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis* Two seen very well below Firefly.

Taiwan Scimitar Babbler ◇ *Pomatorhinus musicus* Superb looks in Taipei Botanic Gardens. Heard elsewhere.

Rufous-capped Babbler ◇ *Stachyris ruficeps* Common by voice. A few sightings at various locations.

Dusky Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe brunnea* Good views at Guanghua and at Huben.

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe morrisonia* Good numbers in the warmer forests.

Taiwan Hwamei ◇ *Garrulax taewanus* Great looks at Chingjing, then at several other localities.

Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax ruficeps* Brief views of a pair at Dasyueshan.

Rusty Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax poecilorhynchus* One seen well at Wushe, and a pair below Firefly.

White-whiskered Laughingthrush ◇ *Garrulax morrisonianus* Confiding and conspicuous at the higher altitudes.



White-whiskered Laughingthrushes are often totally habituated (Frank Lambert)

Steere's Liocichla ◇ *Liocichla steerii* Very numerous and noisy in the hill forests.

Taiwan Barwing ◇ *Actinodura morrisoniana* Several observations at Dasyueshan and a flock of 8 at Alishan.

White-eared Sibia ◇ *Heterophasia auricularis* Common and noisy in the hill forests.

Taiwan Fulvetta ◇ *Alcippe formosana* Several seen well at Dasyueshan.

Golden Parrotbill ◇ *Paradoxornis verreauxi* Another star bird, close views of about 50 at Hehuanshan.

Taiwan Yuhina ◇ *Yuhina brunneiceps* Numerous and obvious at Dasyueshan, Wushe and Guanghua.

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* Scattered sightings at lower altitudes.

Lowland White-eye ◇ *Zosterops meyeri* Multiple sightings on Lanyu Island.

Flamecrest ◇ *Regulus goodfellowi* Some fantastic views at Dasyueshan, and seen again at Hehuanshan.

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* One seen at Hehuanshan Pass.

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* Two at Dasyueshan, and others in the Alishan area.
Asian Glossy Starling ◊ (introduced) *Aplonis panayensis* One on the outskirts of Taipei.
Javan Myna ◊ (introduced) *Acridotheres javanicus* Common in lowland areas and open country.
Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* One on our journey to Taipei on the last afternoon.
Common Myna (introduced) *Acridotheres tristis* In smaller numbers than the above, around human habitation.
Black-collared Starling (introduced) *Gracupica nigricollis* (NL) One near Taipei.
Oriental Magpie Robin (introduced) *Copsychus saularis* Seen well in the Botanic Gardens, Taipei.
White-rumped Shama (introduced) *Copsychus malabaricus* Several seen in Huben.



Golden Parrotbill is almost impossible to photograph since they hardly stop moving! (Frank Lambert)

Ferruginous Flycatcher ◊ *Muscicapa ferruginea* Several birds seen well at Dasyueshan and Wushe.
Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* One in the botanic gardens in Taipei.
Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida* Many sightings in hill forest where not uncommon.
White-browed (Taiwan) Shortwing ◊ *Brachypteryx goodfellowi* Seen very well at Wushe. Often heard elsewhere.
White-tailed Robin ◊ *Myiomela leucura* Common in hill forests, where seen regularly.
White-browed Bush Robin ◊ (Sombre B R) *Tarsiger indicus* A singing male showed well at Dasyueshan.
Collared Bush Robin ◊ *Tarsiger johnstoniae* Multiple sightings at Dasyueshan, and high up at Hehuanshan.
Little Forktail ◊ *Enicurus scouleri* A pair en route to the Taroko gorge.
Taiwan Whistling Thrush ◊ *Myophonus insularis* Good views at several localities.
Snowy-browed Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula hyperythra* A couple of good views at Wushe.
Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa* Several on rivers en route to Taroko, another at Baxianshan.
Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* Not uncommon on Lanyu, red-bellied birds of the *philippensis* race.
Stejneger's Stonechat *Saxicola stejnegeri* A pair at Jinshan, where presumably on migration
Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* A couple seen on mountain rivers en route to the Taroko gorge.
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectum* (H) Only heard once, near the Blue Gate Trail.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Not uncommon around towns and agriculture.



One of the star birds of Taiwan is male Collared Bush Robin (Frank Lambert)

- White-rumped Munia** *Lonchura striata* A small number seen at Huben.
- Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* Seen around the west coast wetlands.
- Chestnut Munia** *Lonchura atricapilla* A small flock at the Taroko estuary..
- Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris* Good numbers at Hehuanshan.
- Eastern Yellow Wagtail** ♦ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* At least 30 at Hualien river mouth.
- Green-headed Wagtail** ♦ *Motacilla [tschutschensis] taivana* Small numbers on the east coast.
- Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* A single migrant seen.
- Amur Wagtail** *Motacilla [alba] leucopsis* A small number seen at scattered locations.
- Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* Three migrant birds seen along the road from Hehuanshan to Taroko.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* A couple seen in the Aoga wetlands area.
- Brown Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula nipalensis* Good numbers at scattered localities in the hills.
- Grey-headed (Taiwan) Bullfinch** ♦ *Pyrrhula owstoni* At least ten at Dasyueshan and a few on the way to Taroko.
- Taiwan Rosefinch** ♦ *Carpodacus formosanus* Plenty of these tame birds at Dasyueshan and at Hehuanshan.
- Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala* A single seen at the Taroko estuary.



Brown Bullfinch and female Taiwan Rosefinch (Frank Lambert)



The group at the spectacular Taroko Gorge (Yenhui Hsu 徐彥暉)

MAMMALS

Perny's Squirrel (Owston's Long-nosed S) *Dremomys pernyi* Many seen at Dasyueshan.

Pallas's Squirrel (Red-bellied S) *Callosciurus erythraeus* Several encounters, at lower elevations.

Maritime Striped Squirrel (Formosan S S) *Tamiops maritimus* A handful of sightings.

Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel (White-faced F S) *Petaurista alborufus* Several at Dasyueshan.

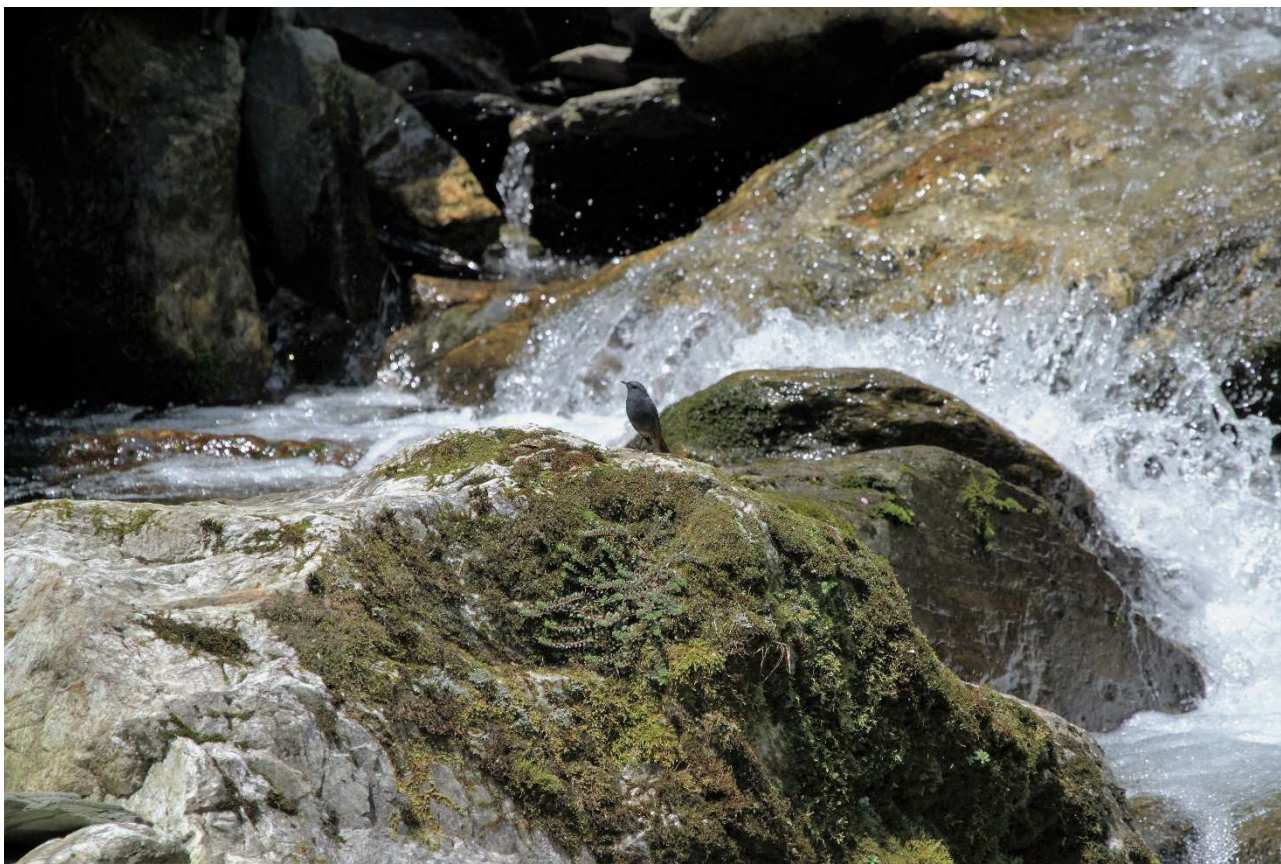
Taiwan Macaque *Macaca cyclopis* Small numbers in the hill forest.

Reeves's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* One seen at Wushe, heard more often elsewhere.

Taiwan Serow *Capricornis swinhoei* Three seen very well at Dasyeushan.

Bottlenosed Dolpin *Tursiops truncatus* A pod of 50+ plus from the Lanyu ferry.

Beaked Whale sp. Two heavily spotted individuals seen off the boat from Lanyu.



The clear waters of montane rivers in Taiwan support a number of specialised species (Frank Lambert)