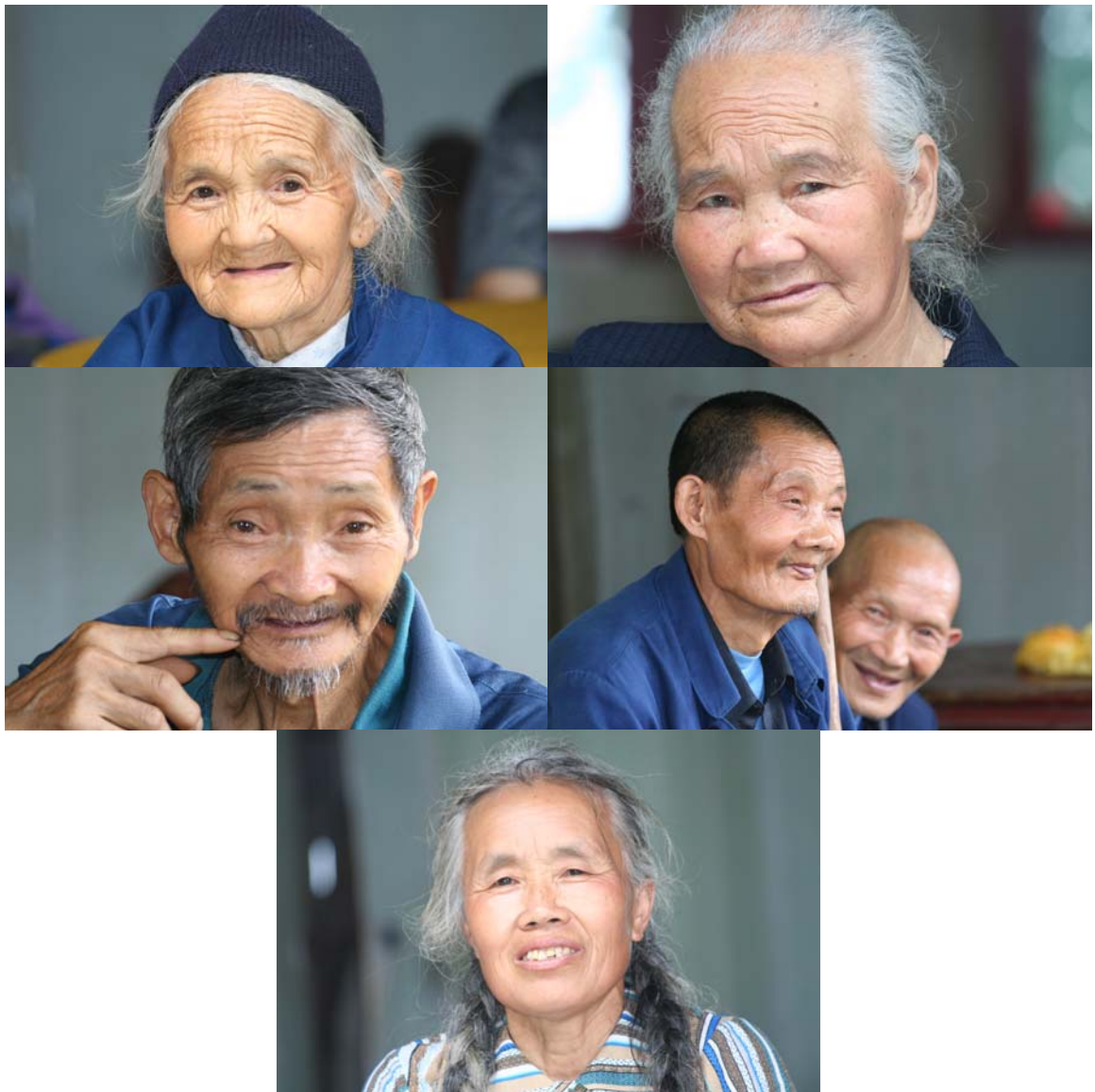


Emei Shan, Sichuan, China

7-9 July 2006

Björn Anderson



Emei pilgrims

General

This was yet another brief trip to this famous and crowded mountain. The purpose was to try to find what must by now be my top bogey bird in China, the Moustached Laughingthrush. Needless to say, I did not succeed this time either. However, I found no less than six species of other Laughingthrushes including Barred (which is very seldom seen on Emei) and Grey (of which I know no previous sightings on Emei and what also was a China tick for me).

Itinerary

7/7

I arrived late in the evening and tried to find a room at Teddy Bear, but it was already full. Instead I found another place just around the corner and I could later enjoy Teddy Bear's pancakes.

8/7

I got up at 3.00 in order to take the 3.30 bus to Leidongping, which we arrived 1.5 hours later. As it was still dark, I filled up with some noodles before starting to walk downhill towards Xixiangchi. It soon got light and I birded my way down and had my best view ever of a Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler.

By mid-morning I arrived at Xixiangchi and booked a small room in one of the restaurants just above the monastery. Payment in advance of 20 RMB felt like an acceptable offer. From Xixiangchi I descended to an altitude of about 1800 masl. Both Red-winged and Spotted Laughers were both seen and heard. The rest of the day was spent birding twice up and down between just below Xixiangchi and all the way down to below Chudian Hall. The habbo looked perfect for Moustached Laugher and there are at least a few recent records from this area by other birders. I continuously played recordings of it, but alas not a sniff of it. Just above the crossroads I instead found a skulking family party of Barred Laughers.

At dusk I returned to Xixiangchi and had a hot shower, a nice dinner and a stunning view of the full moon climbing the sky.

9/7

At the crack of dawn, I was on the same trail as yesterday with high expectations (or was it desperation?). I slowly birded downhill, seeing the same Barred Laughers as yesterday and several Spotted and Red-winged Laughers. Lower down I found a Rusty Laugher as well as a couple of Hwameis. By midday I had reached Wannian and the altitudes of "the deafening cicadas". A quick Gongbaojiding in the temple and I was recharged enough to get out on the Pipeline trail (to find it, walk counter-clockwise around the temple and follow the 15 cm thick water-pipe). Moustached Laugher has been seen here and I spent a total of three unsuccessful hours before I had to leave. In close proximity to a large flock of Grey-headed Parrotbills I glimpsed what I thought was a Grey Laugher and sure enough, a pair came in like bullets when playing a recording. By 16.00 I returned to Wannian and took the cable-car down to the bus station. From then on it was a bus-ride to Bauguo, where I picked up my deposited bag and had a bite at Teddy Bear. Back in Chengdu in the evening.

Weather

Surprisingly the weather was unusually good in spite of the monsoon season. Clear skies and even a nice sunrise from Xixiangchi is nothing one is spoiled with on Emei.

Logistics

Between Chengdu and Emei I took a taxi, which was 350-380 RMB one way. On Emei one is forced to go with the tourist buses, but the good thing this time was that I found out that there was one early set of buses leaving at 3.30 in the morning in order to ship the tourists to the top of the mountain for the sunrise. This suited me perfectly as I arrived at Leidongping at 5.30 and was on the trails before dawn.



Hwamei

Site descriptions

Emei Shan is well described in so many other reports. The habitat that I find best is between Leidongping and Xixiangchi and also between Xixiangchi and to below Chudian Palace. Between Xixin Place and Wannian it is rather poor and more a transportation section in my opinion. Along the contouring Pipeline trail from Wannian, the forest is rather good. Caution is needed, especially in wet conditions, as parts of it are dangerously close to some real steeps.



Xixiangchi monastery

Birds

Chinese Bamboo-Partridge, *Bambusicola thoracica thoracica*
One heard above Wannian.

Pheasant sp

One unidentified female, possibly a Lady Amherst's, sneaked away at the pipeline trail.

Wedge-tailed Pigeon, *Treron sphenura sphenura*
Two heard below Xixiangchi.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo, *Cuculus sparverioides sparverioides*
Two heard.

Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo, *Cuculus nisiclor*
Two heard below Xixiangchi.

Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus micropterus micropterus*
One heard above Xixiangchi.

Common Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus bakeri*
Two heard.

Lesser Cuckoo, *Cuculus poliocephalus*
Commonly heard.

Asian Koel, *Eudynamys scolopacea chinensis*
One heard above Wannian.

Oriental Scops-Owl, *Otus sunia malayanus*
One heard at Xixiangchi.

Collared Owlet, *Glaucidium brodiei brodiei*
One heard at the pipeline trail.

White-throated Needletail, *Hirundapus caudacutus nudipes*
Two at Xixiangchi.

Fork-tailed Swift, *Apus pacificus kanoi*
Three at Xixiangchi.

Great Barbet, *Megalaima virens virens*
One heard above Wannian.

Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos cathpharius pernyi*
Three above Wannian.

Bay Woodpecker, *Blythipicus pyrrhotis pyrrhotis*
One heard at Xixiangchi and one heard at the pipeline trail.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica gutturalis*
Seen in Emei town.

Asian House Martin, *Delichon dasypus nigrimentalis*
Heard at Xixiangchi.

Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla cinerea robusta*
One at Xixiangchi.

Grey-chinned Minivet, *Pericrocotus solaris ssp*
One above Wannian.

Mountain Bulbul, *Hypsipetes maclellandii holtii*
One at the pipeline trail.

Black Bulbul, *Hypsipetes leucocephalus leucothorax*
A few above Wannian.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, *Cettia fortipes davidiana*
Common.

Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler, *Cettia acanthizoides acanthizoides*
One heard below Xixiangchi.

Sichuan Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus forresti*
One heard above Xixiangchi.

Large-billed Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus magnirostris*

A few heard at mid altitudes.

Claudia's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus claudiae*

Fairly common above and below Xixiangchi.

Ogilviegranti's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti disturbans*

One above Xixiangchi.

Bianchi's Warbler, *Seicercus valentini*

Common above Xixiangchi.

Omei Warbler, *Seicercus omeiensis* (?)

Common around Xixiangchi and below Xixiangchi. Call was a single or double che, or chep. ID is tentative due to insufficient knowledge.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler, *Seicercus castaniceps sinensis*

Two below Xixiangchi.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, *Ficedula strophinata strophinata*

A few between Leidongping and Xixiangchi.

Slaty-blue Flycatcher, *Ficedula tricolor diversa*

A few heard below Xixiangchi.

Chinese Blue-Flycatcher, *Cyornis glaucicomans*

One heard above Wannian and probably a female seen at the pipeline trail.

Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis calochrysea*

Common below Xixiangchi to Wannian.

Grey Laughingthrush, *Garrulax maesi grahami*

One pair about 1.5 km in along the pipeline trail. First record for Emei Shan?

Spotted Laughingthrush, *Garrulax ocellatus artemisiae*

About ten seen and several more heard, mostly below Xixiangchi.



Spotted Laughingthrush

Barred Laughingthrush, *Garrulax lunulatus*

One pair with at least one young bird about 50 m "above" the cross-roads.

Rusty Laughingthrush, *Garrulax poecilorhynchus berthemyi*

One in a flock of Grey-headed Parrotbills below Chudian Palace.

Hwamei, *Garrulax canorus canorus*

One pair above Wannian and one heard at the lower cable car station at Wannian.

Red-winged Laughingthrush, *Garrulax formosus formosus*
A few seen and a few heard, mostly below Xixiangchi.



Red-winged Laughingthrush

Omei Shan Liocichla, *Liocichla omeiensis*

Frequently heard and a couple seen, mostly below Xixiangchi.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, *Pomatorhinus ruficollis eidos*

About ten seen and heard.

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler, *Pnoepyga albiventer albiventer*

Two heard and one of them seen very well between Leidongping and Xixiangchi.

Pygmy Wren-Babbler, *Pnoepyga pusilla pusilla*

A few heard below Xixiangchi and one seen at the pipeline trail.

Rufous-capped Babbler, *Stachyris ruficeps davidi*

A few heard and one seen above Wannian.

Red-billed Leiothrix, *Leiothrix lutea ssp*

Common.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta, *Alcippe chrysotis swinhoii*

About ten seen, mostly around Xixiangchi.

Streak-throated Fulvetta, *Alcippe cinereiceps cinereiceps*

About ten seen, mostly around Xixiangchi.

Dusky Fulvetta, *Alcippe brunnea olivacea*

One seen at the pipeline trail.

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, *Alcippe morrisonia davidi*

Common at lower altitudes.

White-collared Yuhina, *Yuhina diademata*

One above Xixiangchi.

Black-chinned Yuhina, *Yuhina nigrimenta intermedia*

About five above Wannian.

Grey-headed Parrotbill, *Paradoxornis gularis fokiensis*

One flock of about 20 above Wannian, another similar-sized flock at the pipeline trail where also a single bird was seen.



Grey-headed Parrotbill

Green-backed Tit, *Parus monticolus yunnanensis*

Frequently seen.

Yellow-browed Tit, *Sylviparus modestus modestus*

Five below Xixiangchi.

Gould's Sunbird, *Aethopyga gouldiae dabryi*

One male at Xixiangchi.

Japanese White-eye, *Zosterops japonicus simplex*

About ten seen and heard.

Long-tailed Shrike, *Lanius schach schach*

Common in the lowlands.

Hair-crested Drongo, *Dicrurus hottentottus brevirostris*

About ten seen, mostly at low altitudes.

Large-billed Crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos colonorum*

A few seen and heard.

Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus obscuratus*

Seen in Emei town.