

Happy Island, Hebei, China

17-18 May 2008

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General

This was a weekend family trip to this famous migration hot-spot on the coast off Beijing. We also convinced family Nordstrom about the brilliant idea of going, which was helped by Elisabeth being a bit into birding.

Itinerary

On Friday night we drove to the town near the end of the Tanggang expressway. It took 3h15m and upon arrival we checked in at the hotel.

Next morning we set off at 5.00 in order to spend a couple of hours at Little Wood, which is a mere 15 minutes drive. The birding was rather disappointing as there were very few migrants, with only a few warblers and flycatchers as well as a lonely Daurian Starling. By 8.00 we drove to the Weidong Wharf where we rather easily found our boat that would take us to Happy Island. It was very misty and it was even impossible to see the island from the mainland.



The captain navigated through the shallow waters and fish-nets and soon landed us at the jetty on Happy Island. We got some VIP treatment in that the local policemen greeted us with formal salutes and we were swiftly whisked away to our cabins by the electric cars. Being peak season for birding, it was not surprising to find lots of birders around, all of whom gave the same message about the lack of migrants.

Anyway, after a quick late brecky, we walked along the sand-dunes (which were much appreciated by the kids) to the southern tip in order to watch waders and gulls. By lunch we were back at the restaurant for some refreshments.



Much of the afternoon was spent around the Temple Wood, where we all enjoyed some birds being mist-netted. Nothing serious in terms of species, but interesting for the kids to see the birds close-up. The evening was spent enjoying our BYO food and drinks (why suffer?).

The Sunday was much the same regarding the migrants, but a fair selection of typical Happy Island stuff was around. Best birds in the mist-nets were Rufous-tailed Robin and Manchurian Reed-Warbler. Elisabeth and I later also walked out along the western mudflats and had some nice wader flocks, before we returned for lunch.

In the early afternoon we packed up and drove to the jetty for the return trip.



Weather

The weather was initially rather misty on the Saturday with a moderate northerly wind. Apparently it was raining in Shandong, so very few birds had made it across the water. During the day it cleared up a bit. On the Sunday it was sunny and clear, but still very few birds around.

Logistics

As usual I am indebted to Jean Wang in Beidaihe, who as usual so perfectly arranged all the logistics for us.



Birds

Little Grebe, *Tachybaptus ruficollis poggei*

One at Little Wood (on mainland).

Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

One on Happy Island.

Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta garzetta*

A few on the mainland.

Chinese Pond-Heron, *Ardeola bacchus*

A few on the mainland.

Striated Heron, *Butorides striatus amurensis*

Two on Happy Island 17/5.

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*

Up to 20 on Happy Island.

Yellow-knobbed Duck, *Anas zonorhyncha*

50 on Happy Island.

Oriental Honey-Buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus orientalis*

Five on Happy Island 18/5.

Eastern Marsh-Harrier, *Circus spilonotus*

Five on Happy Island.

Japanese Sparrowhawk, *Accipiter gularis sibiricus*

Five on Happy Island.

Amur Falcon, *Falco amurensis*

One female on Happy Island 18/5.

Eurasian Hobby, *Falco subbuteo ssp*

Five on Happy Island.

Ring-necked Pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus ssp*

Common on Happy Island.

Eurasian Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostragelus osculans*

One on Happy Island 17/5.

Black-winged Stilt, *Himantopus himantopus*
Two on Happy Island.

Pied Avocet, *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Two on Happy Island 18/5.

Pacific Golden Plover, *Pluvialis fulva*
One on Happy Island 18/5.

Grey Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*
200 on Happy Island.

Kentish Plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*
10-15 on Happy Island.

Lesser Sand-Plover, *Charadrius mongolus ssp*
One at Weidong Wharf and 20 on Happy Island.

Greater Sand-Plover, *Charadrius leschenaultia leschenaultii*
Two on Happy Island 17/5.

Common Snipe, *Gallinago gallinago gallinago*
One on Happy Island 17/5.

Asian Dowitcher, *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
One near Weidong Wharf 17/5.

Bar-tailed Godwit, *Limosa limosa melanuroides*
500-800 on Happy Island.

Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus variegatus*
50-100 on Happy Island.

Eurasian Curlew, *Numenius arquata orientalis*
200-400 on Happy Island.

Far Eastern Curlew, *Numenius madagascariensis*
20-40 on Happy Island and two near Weidong Wharf.

Spotted Redshank, *Tringa erythropus*
One at Little Wood (on mainland) and one on Happy Island 17/5.

Common Redshank, *Tringa totanus ssp*
Two at Little Wood (on mainland).

Common Greenshank, *Tringa nebularia*
5-10 on Happy Island.

Wood Sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*
About five on Happy Island.

Terek Sandpiper, *Xenus cinereus*
Four near Weidong Wharf 17/5.

Great Knot, *Calidris tenuirostris*
Ten on Happy Island 17/5.

Red-necked Stint, *Calidris ruficollis*
50-100 on Happy Island.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, *Calidris acuminata*
One on Happy Island 17/5.

Curlew Sandpiper, *Calidris ferruginea*
Three on Happy Island 18/5.

Dunlin, *Calidris alpina ssp*
100 on Happy Island.

Black-tailed Gull, *Larus crassirostris*
Two 2yr on Happy Island 17/5.

Saunders's Gull, *Larus saundersi*

Ten on Happy Island and two near Weidong Wharf.



Saunders's Gull

Relict Gull, *Larus relictus*

Eight on Happy Island 17/5.

Gull-billed Tern, *Gelochelidon nilotica addenda*

20 on Happy Island.

Caspian Tern, *Hydroprogne caspia*

Three on Happy Island.

Little Tern, *Sternula albifrons sinensis*

50-100 on Happy Island.



Little Terns

White-winged Black Tern, *Chlidonias leucopterus*

A few on Happy Island 18/5.

Oriental Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia orientalis orientalis*

One on Happy Island 17/5.

Cuckoo sp, *Cuculus* sp

Two on Happy Island.

Eurasian Hoopoe, *Upupa epops saturata*

5-10 on Happy Island, several breeding pairs.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, *Dendrocopos hyperythrus subrufinus*

One on Happy Island 17/5.

Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia* ssp

A few on Happy Island.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica* ssp

Common on Happy Island and the mainland.

Red-rumped Swallow, *Cecropis daurica* ssp
A few on Happy Island and the mainland.

White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba leucopsis*
Two on Happy Island.

Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava* ssp
Ten on Happy Island.

Richard's Pipit, *Anthus richardi* ssp
Two on Happy Island 17/5.

Blyth's Pipit, *Anthus godlewskii*
One on Happy Island 17/5.

Olive-backed Pipit, *Anthus hodgsoni yunnanensis*
Five on Happy Island.

Ashy Minivet, *Pericrocotus divaricatus*
Three on Happy Island 17/5.

Light-vented Bulbul, *Pycnonotus sinensis sinensis*
20-30 on Happy Island.

White-throated Rock-Thrush, *Monticola gularis*
One female on Happy Island 17/5.

Zitting Cisticola, *Cisticola juncidis tinnabulans*
One heard on Happy Island.

Black-browed Reed-Warbler, *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*
Two on Happy Island 17/5.

Manchurian Reed-Warbler, *Acrocephalus tangorum*
One mist-netted on Happy Island 18/5.



Manchurian Reed-Warbler

Dusky Warbler, *Phylloscopus fuscatus fuscatus*
One at Little Wood (on mainland) and 10-15 on Happy Island.

Pallas's Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Five at Little Wood (on mainland) and 20-30 on Happy Island.



Pallas's Leaf-Warbler

Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus inornatus*

One at Little Wood (on mainland) and five on Happy Island.

Arctic Warbler, *Phylloscopus borealis* ssp

Two on Happy Island, of which one mist-netted was tinged yellowish on the upper breast.



Arctic Warbler

Two-barred Greenish Warbler, *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*

Two on Happy Island.



Two-barred Greenish Warbler

Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler, *Phylloscopus tenellipes*
One at Little Wood (on mainland) and two on Happy Island.



Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler

Eastern Crowned Warbler, *Phylloscopus coronatus*
Two on Happy Island.



Eastern Crowned Warbler

Grey-streaked Flycatcher, *Muscicapa griseisticta*
Three on Happy Island.



Grey-streaked Flycatcher

Asian Brown Flycatcher, *Muscicapa dauurica*

One at Little Wood (on mainland) and two on Happy Island.

Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, *Ficedula zanthopygia*

One female at Little Wood (on mainland) and one male on Happy Island 17/5.



Yellow-rumped Flycatcher

Mugimaki Flycatcher, *Ficedula mugimaki*

One at Little Wood (on mainland) and three on Happy Island.



Mugimaki Flycatchers

Taiga Flycatcher, *Ficedula albicilla*

One on Happy Island 18/5.





Taiga Flycatcher

Rufous-tailed Robin, *Luscinia sibilans*

One mist-netted on Happy Island 18/5.



Rufous-tailed Robin

Bluethroat, *Luscinia svecia* ssp

One on Happy Island 17/5.

Coal Tit, *Periparus ater* ssp

One on Happy Island 18/5.

Chestnut-flanked White-eye, *Zosterops erythropleurus*

Many small flocks on Happy Island.

Black-naped Oriole, *Oriolus chinensis diffusus*

15 on Happy Island.



Black-naped Oriole

Brown Shrike, *Lanius cristatus* ssp

20 on Happy Island. Mostly closer to *lucionensis*, but at least a couple of brown-crowned birds.



Brown Shrike with lucionensis features

Eurasian Magpie, *Pica pica* ssp

Common.

Daurian Starling, *Sturnia sturnina*

One at Little Wood (on mainland).



Daurian Starling

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus* ssp

Common.

Chestnut Bunting, *Emberiza rutila*

Three on Happy Island.