

NE Tibet with OBC, 25 May – 14 June 2008.

An at-a-glance list of 229 species of birds & 22+ species of mammals.

By Jesper Hornskov

[this draft 18 June 2008]

Please note that the following list is best considered a work in progress. It should not be quoted without consulting the author.

This brief write-up covers the birds & mammals noted by J Adamson, N Birch, R Birch, P French, A Kelly, J Newman, D O'Mahony, J Penhallurick, A Short, B short & myself during the 2008 OBC Fundraiser trip.

Thank you all for making this trip so enjoyable, and thank you for, by joining, contributing to OBC's Conservation Fund. Special thanks are due to Michael Edgecombe for volunteering to coordinate.

Anyone considering China as a birding destination is welcome to contact the author at:

Tel/fax +86 10 8490 9562 / mobile +86 135 1335 9831

E-mail [goodbird\(at\)vip.sina.com](mailto:goodbird@vip.sina.com) or [goodbirdmail\(at\)126.com](mailto:goodbirdmail@126.com)

In the species list the concept "bird-days" is used - it is the avian equivalent of man-hours: for example, separate flocks of ten and 15 Henri's Snowfinches moving through score 25 bird-days, as would the same single individual seen daily for 25 days. The sum of day totals - a handy measure of relative abundance, nothing more.

The sequence of the bird list follows *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World – 3rd Edition* (Dickinson 2003), in my opinion by far the most useful one-volume checklist to date.

Initials in brackets after a few single-observer sightings does not imply that I have doubts as to the correctness of the ID.

BIRDS:

Severtzov's Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes sewerzowi*

Five bird-days. At Nangqian forest reserve four (two pairs) intermittently showing well on 6th & one briefly [PF] on 8th.

Szechenyi's Monal Partridge *Tetraophasis szechenyi*

24+ bird-days. Noted on three dates. Extended views of two at close range (<15m) on 8th far exceeded our wildest hopes - a well-earned reward for putting in the mileage in pursuit of this attractive species.

Tibetan Snowcock *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

13-15 bird-days. Noted on three dates... nothing like arriving at a high pass on a fine morning to find the pure air resounding with the clucking and curlew-ey calls of this snowline specialist.

Przevalski's Partridge *Alectoris magna*

3+ bird-days. Noted on two dates. A bit of extra motivation was needed to get them this year but we did, and what views! TINGALING...

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates. A pair flushed out of clumps of spiky grass on 13th (a third bird went the other way) was a much appreciated claw-back.

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*

24 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***'Not being molested by Buddhist faith, the bird is fairly common in most parts of its distributional range' ... Cheng (1987) was writing about the status another gamebird but his comment applies equally to this one.

Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*

c14 bird-days. Noted on four dates – heard-only until 10th when half a dozen allowed prolonged 'scope viewing.

White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

30 bird-days. Noted on four dates - we'd been out of the vehicles at the designated spot for barely 15 seconds before the first calls were heard, and then it was mostly a matter of scanning diligently.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

38 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

25+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates – different pairs had three and two goslings, respectively.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

530+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

*****Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* x **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

An adult hybrid was scrutinized at Koko Nor on 28th.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Three bird-days. An incubating bird was seen on two dates; on the 1st occasion its presumed partner was present nearby.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

c15 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

298+ bird-days. Noted on 14 dates.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

15 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

30+ bird-days. Noted on three dates: at Koko Nor & S of Maduo.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

c35 bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

24 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

20+ bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A drake at Koko Nor on 28th.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Six at Koko Nor on 14th.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

95 bird-days. 40-45 were noted on both visits to Koko Nor.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

45 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

18 bird-days. Outstanding views at Koko Nor on two dates.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

c231 bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event 130 at Koko Nor on 14th.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Six bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

16 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Four bird-days. Presumably the same pair present at Koko Nor on both visits... 'note the pale iris!'

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

214+ bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main events 125 at Koko Nor (where breeding) on 28th & 35 at colony S of Maduo on 12th.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

c80 bird-days. Noted only at Koko Nor where 40 active nests (birds incubating) were counted on 14th.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two bird-days. Singles at Koko Nor on both visits – seen...

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One non-adult (possibly 1st c-y) at Koko Nor on 14th.

***In addition, at least two flying over at our Beijing hotel on 25th.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event two near Gonghe on 13th: one was the only adult seen.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

15 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. One seemed to have resigned itself to summering on a stretch of river near HQ at Nangqian forest reserve...

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Eight bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on both visits – main event seven on 28th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Three bird-days at Koko Nor. Noted on both visits.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One N of Maduo on 12th.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

99 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

16 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Eight bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Saker *Falco cherrug*

17 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. For most of us a most welcome opportunity to familiarize ourselves with a species which is declining globally.

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

One over poplar grove near Koko Nor on 14th.

***The migratory *orientalis* is treated as a full species by Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2008): PF pers com.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*

11 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*

36 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. A top Dreambird for several group members, this emblematic species was not in the least devalued by several superb encounters...

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*

115-120+ bird-days. Noted on 15 dates.

***On 13th 13 birds 'around a yak carcass close to a felt tent whose owner, a nomad woman, untied large dog which started chasing the vultures. Fortunately the vultures never seemed in serious danger. Later the dog started feeding off the carcass...'

Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

Two overhead on 13th.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*

10-11 bird-days. Formerly considered a race of Common Buzzard *B. buteo* but genetically closer to Upland Buzzard *B. hemilasius* (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005) from which it is ecologically separated & easily - well, fairly easily! - distinguished... Superb views on several occasions!

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

195 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

A superb 2nd c-y bird overhead on 1st.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

14 bird-days. Noted on eight dates. A pair of adults on 10th crossed the valley mobbed by an Alpine Chough, then landed acrobatically on ledge; the Alpine Chough kept up the harassment. Later seen collecting material for nest-building: energetically pulled at bushes to break off stems.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

A dark morph bird near Koko Nor on 28th...

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Two bird-days. Singles noted on two dates.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

110+ bird-days. Noted on two dates at Koko Nor.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*

A flock of ten at a well-timed stop at Koko Nor on 28th - the birds did a bit of standing around and a bit of dancing before flying past us at <50m: very much a bonus bird as this time of the year!

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*

41 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Ten bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***Somehow, Ibisbills seen in Tibet feeding on a flowered-over meadow or 'frozen' against a rushing, icy stream - yaks snorting in the background - are more *real* than the sad one or two which cling on along the last stretch of acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

29+ bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates – five active nests.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirosta avosetta*

Four bird-days. Two on each visit to Koko Nor...

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Nine bird-days. Noted only at Koko Nor, with five on 14th in flight 'against still / yet again snow-covered hills'.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

One near Gonghe on 31st.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

c60 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

26+ bird-days. Noted on six dates. On 14th one in non-breeding plumage did quite a good job of blending in with the KPs...

Western Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Three bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on 28th & S of Maduo on 3rd.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

93 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

One [AK] at Koko Nor on 14th.

***An unusual record. Local birding at Golmud, Qaidam (JH pers obs) yielded 215 bird-days: in spring the species was noted from 22 April to 6 May (11 bird-days only), and in autumn from 21 July to 23 Sep. Daily maximum 16 on 29 Aug 1994.

Cheng (1987) recorded Marsh Sandpiper as a migrant west to Lanzhou, Gansu, and in Tian Shan, Xinjiang, but Vaurie (1972) did not include the species for Tibet.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One at Koko Nor on 14th.

***At Golmud, Qaidam, the species was recorded in spring from 16 Apr to 13 June, and in autumn from 19 July to 5 Nov (JH pers obs).

Stint sp.

One seen briefly [AK, JN] at Koko Nor on 14th.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

44 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*

c143 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Three 2nd c-y birds at Koko Nor on 28th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

98+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Seven bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

An adult was seen well at Koko Nor on 28th.

***Possibly only the 2nd modern record for Tibet: three adults at the Golmud reservoirs on 5 June 1992 (JH pers obs) was the 1st.

Tibetan Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes thibetana*

Four birds near Er La pass. The first two flew past us even before we'd reached the main target area, calling repeatedly and showing the diagnostic nearly all-black underwing 'under the sun' before dropping to become nearly impossibly to get on against a snow-flecked hillside... thus a couple of hours of agony for our top lister, but soon enough we were all watching another bird. WOW!

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

c20 near Chaka on 30th. A pair on the ground allowed prolonged 'scope views as others flew back and forth overhead, all in superb light... WOW!

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*

c228 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*

40 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Seeing these strikingly patterned birds effortlessly sail along the towering rock faces is a visual treat, the simple beauty of 'em enhancing the grandeur of the setting.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Four bird-days. Noted on just two dates: N of Xining on 26th & near Chaka on 30th.

***In addition, one was in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

*****Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

Singletons were in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th & 15th.

***** Indian Cuckoo** *Cuculus micropterus*

At least two present around the grounds of our hotel in Beijing on 25th & 15th.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

117+ bird-days. Noted on 19 dates. Several were of the hepatic ('of or relating to the liver') morph which is far more common in Tibet than in the British Isles!

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo*

Three bird-days. Singles noted on three dates – one seen only by some on 25th, one seen well by all on 1st ('in flight; then perched on a ridge in full view, with two Red-billed Chough in attendance') & one seen in flight over Car One on 5th.

Pere David's Owl *Strix davidi*

One heard giving the full hoot sequence a couple of times, half an hour apart, late in the afternoon on 8th – we tried but failed to locate it...

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

11 bird-days. Seven bird-days.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

2,600+ bird-days. Noted on 12 dates – main event c2,500 at Koko Nor on 28th.

***In addition, c75 unidentified swifts en route back to Xining on 27th.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*

88+ bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

One en route at c4,200m on 3rd.

***There may be no more than seven previous records for Qinghai.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

26 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Northern Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Two (one seen singing later joined another we hadn't noticed) near Gonghe on 31st.

***Prior to 2004 (when one adult at this site on 23 June & two juveniles present on 11 July) no breeding season records although Cheng (1987) included E, SE & S Qinghai in the species' summer range.

At Golmud seen in autumn between 31 August and 3 October, with most records first half of September, including at least four birds on 2 September 1994. Remarkably, one was in the poplars next to the town hospital on 18 January 1991 [JH pers. obs.].

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Two near Gonghe on 31st.

Three-toed Woodpecker *Picoides tridactylus funebris*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates at Nangqian forest reserve.

***“Taxonomy: needs re-evaluation. Nearctic and Palearctic races recently split into two species, *P. dorsalis* and *P. tridactylus*, without discussion of status of the very distinct *funebris*.”: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005). The latter is listed by Zheng (ed., 2005) for Gansu, NE Qinghai, E Xizang, NW Yunnan & Sichuan. The ‘N Palearctic’ species is represented in China by *tianshanicus* (Tian Shan & Altai: Cheng 1987), *tridactylus* (NE Inner Mongolia & N Manchuria: Cheng 1987) & *kurodai* (SE Manchuria: Dickinson 2003 – Cheng (1987) did not list *kurodai*, including birds in this area with *tridactylus*).

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*

11 bird-days. Noted on four dates at Nangqian forest reserve: ‘scope views on a couple of occasions and frequently heard calling.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

Ten bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

One N of Xining on 26th.

***The only published record for Tibet appear to be a specimen taken at Blagodatny (c39°23'N 95°05'E) in the Northern Plateau region (*vide* Vaurie 1972). Cheng (1987) listed *L. c. cristatus* as occurring on migration in Qinghai but gave no specific locality. ‘Local birding’ at Golmud (JH in prep) yielded just one Brown Shrike, on 15 June 1992, and the species appears to be genuinely rare even in E-most Qinghai though it may occasionally breed (e.g. two adults w/ one chick near Gonghe on 17 Aug 2000: JH & M Kall/AviFauna pers obs).

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus tsaidamensis*

Seven bird-days. Noted near Chaka on two dates.

***The taxon is a look-alike for & belongs with the nominate, not with **Rufous Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides*. The latter appears to be only a vagrant to NE Tibet (JH pers obs).

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

73 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

Tibetan Grey Shrike *Lanius (s.) giganteus*

One put on a good show W of Koko Nor on 29th. A low-density species, wide-ranging and often inconspicuous even when present (and thus easily missed), we were fortunate to see this individual so well.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

One near Gonghe on 13th.

*****Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus*

One was in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th: JA, PF, AK *et al.*

‘**Eastern**’ **Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*

Singles N of Xining on two dates.

***Fairly common around the grounds of our hotel in Beijing...

***Apparently (G Pettersson pers com) the Iberian taxon, *C. (c.) cooki*, has been shown to be sufficiently differentiated genetically to merit elevation to full species status. In addition to the

ones we saw, *kansuensis* in NE Tibet & *interposita* at Beijing, the eastern species includes a further five taxa (Dickinson 2003)...

Common Magpie *Pica pica sericea*

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***Also present around Beijing.

Tibetan Magpie *Pica (pica) bottanensis*

32 bird-days. Noted on seven days.

***The two *Pica* taxa occupy mutually exclusive ranges and display a number of vocal, morphological & habitat differences.

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*

Eight bird-days. Noted near Chaka on two dates. An (extended?) family party of six on 29th included two still-dependent juveniles with incomplete cap & short tail.

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*

61+ bird-days. Noted on 15 dates.

***Apparently most closely related to *Paridae* (Dickinson 2003; B King pers com.) but please let us refrain from concocting a new English name such as Tibetan Ground-tit!

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

146 bird-days. Noted on 18 dates.

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

105 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

50 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

22+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

24 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

'Great' (= 'Japanese') Tit *Parus (major) minor*

Nine bird-days. Noted on five dates – ssp *minor* near Xining & ssp *tibetanus* S of Yushu.

***Both taxa belong with *minor*, one on 3-4 'Great Tit' species in China. Keep your fingers crossed that the inappropriate name 'Japanese' Tit doesn't stick!

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*

39 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

*****Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

One [PF] in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th... an exceptionally late bird even considering that a major irruption occurred in autumn 2007.

*****Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris hellmayri*

1+ by our Beijing hotel on 25th.

***Given that 'each male [Marsh Tit] may have a repertoire of up to 19 song variants' (Harrap & Quinn 1996), differences in vocalizations between this taxon, the SE-most, and others will need to be shored up by DNA & behavioral studies before skeptics will even begin to consider elevating the morphologically only subtly different *hellmayri* to full species status...

Songar Tit *Parus songarus*

20 bird-days. Noted on five dates N of Xining (ssp *affinis*) & S of Yushu (ssp *weigoldicus*).

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*

16+ bird-days. This attractive endemic was noted on five dates.

Grey Crested Tit *Parus dichrous*

22 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

One near Xining on 27th...

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta*

108 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

22 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

c54 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

c334 bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Counts of 100+ on two dates along the Yangtze tributary.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

c16 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

White-browed Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*

Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates. To say that this species does not draw attention to itself is hardly an exaggeration... our patience was, however, amply rewarded: I've leafed through the dictionary and two Birdquest brochures in search of a superlative which fully does this jewel justice, in vain...

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

14 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Long-billed Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*

35 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*

18 bird-days. Noted on five dates. Some of us made the most of several opportunities to scrutinize this potential vagrant to W Europe...

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

Nine bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Three bird-days. Noted only near Gonghe.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*

One N of Xining on 26th.

Chinese Bush Warbler *Bradypterus tacsanowskii*

Two singing at edge of cultivation N of Xining on 27th was a bonus - we were able to 'scope one of them as it sat in the open giving its 'faulty high-voltage insulator' buzz.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Six bird-days. A migrant seen near Chaka [JA, AK, PF *et al.*] on 30th, then five near Koko Nor on 31st. The latter at least were *weigoldicus*, the distinctive breeding form.

Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*

c124 bird-days. Noted on 15 dates. 'If one made it to Ireland, would anyone notice?'...

Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*

49+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Buff-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*

33 bird-days. Noted on three dates. – noticeably scarcer than other *Phylloscopus* warblers even in optimum habitat but the distinctive call, combined with the flash of white tail as it moves across into the next tree, is a give-away.

Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

25 bird-days. Noted N of Xining on two dates.

***This attractive warbler has only very recently been reaccepted as a valid species, and its winter quarters remain to be discovered...

Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

One seen singing N of Xining on 27th.

'Eastern' Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus (chloronotus) forresti*

37 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***Martens *et al.* 2004 (*vide* Rheindt 2006) elevated *forresti*, considered a synonym of *chloronotus* by Cheng (1987), to full species status, splitting it from *chloronotus* (of Nepal) which, with *simlaensis*, becomes Western Lemon-rumped Warbler. The two differ "dramatically

in song and mitochondrial DNA (4.2% cytochrome-b divergence)": Rheindt (2006). Given that the type locality for *forresti* is Lijiang, in Yunnan (Cheng 1987) it is not obvious that "Sichuan Leaf Warbler" is preferable to 'Eastern Lemon-rumped Warbler'. "Presumably the hitherto unknown border between both species lies somewhere in Yunnan, Burma or north-eastern India.": Rheindt (2006). *Ahem?*

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei mandelii*

128 bird-days. Noted on nine dates – main event 95 in forest N of Xining on 26th.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

One [JA, PF, AK] near Chaka on 30th.

***In addition, two were in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

57 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

'Margelanica' Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia (minula) margelanica*

Two singing birds 'scoped near Gonghe on 31st.

Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis dedekeni*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***Collar (2006) elevated *odicus* (of NE and E Burma, N Indochina, S Yunnan and Guizhou (except N), *decarlei* (of 'E Xizang', SW Sichuan, and NW Yunnan), '*dedekensi [sic]*' (of '(N)E Xizang', W Sichuan, and NW Yunnan), *gravivox* (of S Gansu, S Shaanxi, S Shanxi, NW Henan, and N Sichuan), and *cowensae* (of C and E Sichuan, N Guizhou, and W Hubei) to species status on morphological grounds, a 'new arrangement, which clearly rests on uncertain foundations and is in need of considerable fortification (which is not supplied by morphometric analysis, as this shows as much variation within the new species as between them, notably a remarkably long tail in *dedekensi [sic]*...'. In the absence of DNA analysis and a thorough study of the notoriously varied vocalizations of these birds, such rearrangement seems fairly meaningless...

Kozlov's Babax *Babax koslowi*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates. Occupying a restricted range this was one of our main targets. Often a rather tricky one to dig out but this time the species could hardly have surrendered itself more easily: everyone got memorable views as two birds fed in the open, one squabbling briefly with a Giant Laughingthrush.

Pere David's Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining.

Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax maximus*

c62 bird-days. Noted on five dates. This superb-looking species has an impressive range of calls, some subdued, some anything but, yet others direct or derived mimicry – duetting birds are often a striking component in the dawn chorus, and throughout the day groups traveling through the pristine forest will mark their progress with sessions of loud calling.

***We were surprised to see one do a long flycatching sally, not returning to its starting point.

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*

137 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

***Cheng (1987)'s range map seems to contradict his text here – according to the latter only the nominate ssp occurs in Qinghai, while the map indicates that birds in the Yangtze and Mekong watersheds are ssp *bonvaloti*. Dickinson (2003), on the other hand, does not accept *bonvaloti* but has southern birds belonging to the nominate, and northern birds to ssp *prjevalskii* (a taxon Cheng lumps with the nominate). Morphology and vocalizations suggest that birds N of Xining are indeed a different ssp from those in the SE, as per the Cheng range map & Dickinson, but what are the correct names?

Chinese Fulvetta *Alcippe striaticollis*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates at Nangqian forest reserve.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

25 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Ten bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

Four N of Xining on 26th.

Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates. A pair near Xining on 26th allowed our team photographers to go to work as the rest of us stood back a couple of paces, enjoying prolonged 'scope views.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

5+ birds on 10th. Memorable encounters with another emblematic species – the setting could hardly have been bettered...

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Two N of Xining on 26.

***Unfortunately, and for no obvious reason, the species' southern counterpart **Hodgson's Treecreeper** *C. hodgsoni* eluded us – this new-ish split “embraces the Sino-Himalayan [taxa] *hodgsoni* Brooks, 1874 (W Himalayas), *mandellii* Brooks, 1874 (E Himalayas) and *khamensis* Bianchi 1903 (SW & W China [N as far as the road between Jiuzhaigou & Sungpan in N Sichuan]” : D T Tietze *et al.* (2006)

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*

Three near Gonghe on 13th.

***In addition, breeders were recorded around our Beijing hotel on both 25th & 15th.

Eurasian Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Three bird-days: two near Gonghe on 13th & one [BS] at Koko Nor the following day.

***Not previously recorded on JH's summer trips in E Qinghai. Local birding at Golmud, Qaidam (JH in prep), yielded 142 bird-days: the species was recorded in spring between 11 March and 25 April (eight bird-days; maximum three on 11 March 1994), and in autumn between 12 September and 17 November, with an exceptional daily maximum of 48 on 7 October 1992.

Interestingly, a small flock was seen at Beijing's Wild Duck Lake on 31 March 2008 (JH *et al.* pers obs)...

Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*

Six bird-days. Six different individuals heard over two days at Nangqian forest reserve.

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

Six N of Xining on 27th.

Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*

145 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates – this supremely attractive species proved common near Yushu.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

26 bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining and – unexpectedly – near Koko Nor (where a singing male obliged by sitting out repeatedly).

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*

29-30 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Although very much an expected species we initially struggled to get satisfactory views of a satisfactory individual (our first bird was a singing male in a rarely seen ruby-throat-patch-less plumage!) but with the trip barely begun it was too soon to panic, and sure enough we managed no less than 26-27 singing males in a morning later on, several of which sat out to the delight of camera-wielding team members.

Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus*

29 bird-days. Noted on three dates at Nangqian forest reserve.

***The split (accepted by e.g. Rasmussen & Anderton 2005) from the Siberian taxon is based mainly on morphological and vocal differences. While I have no real problem with the split it may be worth bearing in mind that there seem to be consistent differences in song between birds in NE Qinghai and those in the SE, as well as a range of 'dialects' across the species vast range in Siberia.

Northern Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

A singing male was seen well N of Xining on 26th. Apparently the 1st breeding season record of this taxon.

***In addition, eight further Bluetails were heard that morning, relegated to 'unidentified' status only on account of the chance sighting of the *cyanurus*.

Przevalski's Redstart *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

Five males & three females W of Koko Nor. We'd barely caught our breath before the 1st superb male appeared, and throughout a fine morning we were treated to close-up encounters with this sought-after, very pretty species.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

170 bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

38 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

26 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

25 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

33 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates. We were treated to unobscured views of a singing male on 10th – otherwise mostly a very skulking species.

River Chat *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

35 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates. A nest-building pair at 3,950m close to the N edge of the species' known range very early in the trip. The species never came close to losing its place on the hypothetical Bird of the Trip shortlist: 'Grandala Blue' may not be in your dictionary but it should be - no named shade captures the glowing colour of the male of this sought-after species.

***In addition, a couple of probables on 10th [JH].

'Common' Stonechat *Saxicola 'torquatus'*

Five bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***Ssp *maurus*, *przewalskii* & *stejnegeri* occur in China / Tibet. Dickinson (2003): "proposed splits of this complex species seem unsatisfactory if only in how the forms are ascribed to species".

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

39 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Two pairs showed well at Xining on 25th.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

11 bird-days. Noted on two dates W of Koko Nor.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

A songflighting male near Chaka on 30th provided a wonderful spectacle.

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica rothschildii*

Five bird-days. At Nangqian forest reserve four on 6th & one [DO] on 7th.

***Work on vocalizations may well lead to suggestions that the distinctive *rothschildii* be elevated to full species status...

***In addition, a migrant *sibirica* was in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 25th.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

Two bird-days. Singles in poplar grove near Chaka on 30th & E of Koko Nor on 14th.

***Only previous Qinghai record may be a 1st c-y in Qaidam on 3 Sep 2004 (JH *et al.* pers obs)

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*

43 bird-days. Noted on five dates, incl N of Xining on 26th.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

16 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
54 at Wenquan on 2nd.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
26 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Henri's Snowfinch *Montifringilla henrici*
41 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Tibetan (=Himalayan) Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*
36 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.
***Rather plain on the ground but spectacular in flight, this species is blessed with no less than four English names...

White-rumped Snowfinch *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*
37 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Pere David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana*
Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*
62 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*
Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*
15 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*
44 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Rufous-browed Accentor *Prunella strophiate*
41 bird-days. Noted on ten dates. Getting repeated scope views of this subtly patterned beauty was *please tick as appropriate* [] great. [] fantastic. [] nothing to brag about.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*
37 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*
Two bird-days. Singles were heard / seen briefly by some of us on two dates at Nangqian forest reserve.
***We speculated that this species would have been vulnerable to the headline-grabbing, harsh weather in February...

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Three bird-days. One flying over near Chaka on 30th & a pair of *thunbergi* types near Gonghe (where the species has been found breeding in the past) on 13th.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

26 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

***It was a surprise that no fewer than four were male *citreola*: in the breeding season normally one sees only the black-backed form *calcarata*.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba leucopsis* & *M. a. alboides*

63 bird-days. Noted on 15 dates.

***Dickinson (2003) evidently consider without merit the idea that *lugens* is a valid species. Alstrom & Mild (2003) also concludes that various factors “suggest that the White Wagtail is best treated as a single species under the BSC”.

Richard’s Pipit *Anthus richardi*

19 bird-days. Noted on six dates, mainly near Gonghe where breeding birds put on a good show sitting up on wires and fence posts, and even singing.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

26+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates, including alongside Rosy Pipit at >4,600m on 9th.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseus*

20 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Eight N of Xining on 26th.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

c84 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

c175 bird-days. Noted on seven dates – main event a flock of c150 near Yushu on 11th.

Brandt’s Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

34 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Przevalski’s Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***The alternative English names suggested for this species are hereby vetoed...

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

34+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

16 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Pink-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus eos*

c84 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Sinai Rosefinch *Carpodacus synoicus beicki*

Two lovely males near Xining on 25th.

***It seems likely that *beicki* will be proved specifically distinct from at least the nominate.

Three-banded Rosefinch *Carpodacus trifasciatus*

Four at Nangqian forest reserve on 7th – a pair seen exceptionally well plus two heard-onlies...

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*

55 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Eastern Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

19 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

A pair N of Yushu on 12th was exactly what we had hoped for: 'flew in as we had breakfast, landed c100m downstream, we made a dash... everyone saw it'.

***Split from *C. rubicilla* (of the Caucasus) following Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

Red-fronted Rosefinch *Pyrrhospiza punicea*

Five bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Roborovski's Rosefinch *Kozlowia roborowskii*

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates... the first – as is often the case – were the most satisfying: three males & five females 'scoped as they were feeding together at close range.

Crimson-browed Finch *Pinicola subhimachala*

Six bird-days. This retiring species was seen extremely well & heard singing on two dates at Nangqian forest reserve.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

15+ bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining & at Nangqian forest reserve (where an immature male was seen on the ground sorting through fallen spruce cones).

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carniceps*

18 bird-days. Noted on seven dates – memorable views W of Koko Nor on 29th...

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Nine W of Koko Nor on 29th.

Eastern Rock Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*

38 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Kozlov's Bunting *Emberiza koslowi*

Four birds – two pairs – S of Yushu... Unsurpassable views were had – and we'd earned 'em! TINGALING!

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates N of Xining & at Gonghe.

MAMMALS:

Sequence and taxonomy follows "A Guide to the Mammals of China", Smith & Xie (ed.) 2008.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

*****Stoliczka's Mountain Vole** *Alticola stoliczkanus*

Animals provisionally identified as this species were seen at >4,500m.

*****Gansu Pika** *Ochotona cansus*

Animals provisionally identified as this species were seen on a few occasions.

Plateau (=Black-lipped) Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Glover's Pika *Ochotona gloveri*

Several were seen well.

*****Moupin Pika** *Ochotona thibetana*

Animals provisionally identified as this species were seen on two or three occasions.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

?Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai*

It remains unclear if hares near Xining, as previously assumed, are this species rather than *Lepus oiostolus*...

Pallas' Cat *Felis manul*

2-3 at >4,500m on 3rd. A rarely encountered species... we were very fortunate indeed to get prolonged views of one sitting still in good light, then stalking down towards us.

Wolf *Canis lupus*

Singles were noted on three dates.

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

14 animal-days. Noted on four dates.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Nine animal-days. Noted on four dates.

Brown Bear *Ursus arctos pruinosus*

An adult with three cubs on 2nd.

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra*

Two 'playing' & allowing extended viewing on 5th.

Asian Badger *Meles leucurus*

Three singletons, all seen very well.

***One seen digging for pikas on 12th, dust flying everywhere – it was obviously a longer-legged and much longer-tailed animal than its European counterpart.

Mountain Weasel *Mustela altaica*

At least three singletons were seen.

Kiang *Equus kiang*

244 animal-days. The superb "Tibetan Wild Ass" was noted on two dates – main event 160 on 3rd when time allowed us more frequent stops. Several group members remarked on how confiding these graceful 'donkeys' were, making things easy for our team photographers.

Siberian Roe *Capreolus pygargus*

Three at c4,450m on 11th.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

38 animal-days. Noted on five dates.

***Smith & Xie (2008) considered the species "very rare and restricted in China"

White-lipped Deer *Przewalskium albirostris*

27 animal-days. Noted on two dates. On 5th a group of 11 unwary individuals gawped right back at us when we stopped...

Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

11 W of Koko Nor on 29th... two of them were males who briefly engaged in a half-hearted sparring contest.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

528 animal days. Noted on eight dates.

Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur*

223 animal-days. Noted on six dates – main event 127 on 10th included three which ascended an 'impossible' rock face...