

Species list:

Szechenyi's Monal Partridge *Tetraophasis szechenyi*

29 bird-days. Noted on three dates – two fairly distant birds 'scoped on 21st was as good as it got for most of us... as our vigil continued on the drizzly morning of 23rd our frustrations at not being able to spot one of the six pairs calling around our chosen position grew into incredulity...

Tibetan Snowcock *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

17+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 14+ on 20th.

Przevalski's Partridge *Alectoris magna*

Nine bird-days. Noted on two dates – no less than seven on 15th!

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*

21 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates – our 1st encounter (a male 'heard & then 'scoped up on a rock') was bettered by four on 22nd.

White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

44+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – unforgettable views were had more than once!

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

91 bird-days. Noted on six dates – on 13th we 'scoped ridges looking for Daurian Partridge but found only lots of Common Pheasants...

***Cheng (1987) listed no fewer than 18 races for mainland China. Of these he listed just three for Qinghai: *vlangalii*, *strauchi* (for 'NE part') & *suehschanensis* as an accidental to Zekog in SE.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

8-10 birds were noted on both visits to Koko Nor.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

4,337+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates – seeing no fewer than 3,820 on 24th was a trip highlight.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Two adults at their nest at Koko Nor – seen on two dates.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

628 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*

A good-looking female was seen at Summer Palace on 30th.
***Birds breeding around Beijing are not feral.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

22 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

62 bird-days. Noted on six dates, incl at Botanical Gardens on 10th & at Summer Palace on 30th.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

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

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

One drake at Koko Nor on 14th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

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

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

c37 bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

230 bird-days. Noted three dates – up to 150 daily at Koko Nor plus the long-staying female (which we saw come over for a munch when its friend the also long-staying Ferruginous Duck surfaced w/ food!) at Summer Palace on 30th.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

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

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

82 bird-days. Noted on four dates – at Koko Nor on 29th it was fun to watch two males in hot pursuit of a female!

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

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

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

One at Koko Nor on 28th.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

15 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Seven bird-days. Noted only @ Beijing.

***It was good to get views that allowed us to confirm that these birds had the white iris of ssp *poggei*, which also differs from the nominate in vocalizations...

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

222+ bird-days. Noted on six dates (incl at Summer Palace on 30th).

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

61 on bird-days. Noted at Koko Nor on two dates – main event 55 on 28th.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

Two at Summer Palace on 30th.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

19 bird-days. Noted on six dates, incl @ Beijing on both 11+30th.

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates, incl @ Beijing on both 11+30th.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus*

c44 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Seven at Koko Nor on 14th.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

One at Koko Nor on 28th.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Six bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

15 at Koko Nor on both visits.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

16 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

*****Kestrel sp** *Falco naumanni* / *F. tinnunculus*

One on 13th.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*

One female over the Beijing hotel on 11th!

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Five bird-days. Noted on four dates – one at Summer Palace on 30th hovered: we had to raise our binoculars to realize it wasn't the hoped-for, last-moment Amur!

Saker *Falco cherrug*

27 bird-days. Noted on six dates – it was especially satisfying to find a pair w/ three downy chicks.

***On 25th we were amused to witness a 2nd c-y bird attack a grounded Upland Buzzard; the buzzard stood its ground doing a defensive near-somersault, barely opening its wings!

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
One over the Yellow River.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
17 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*
14 bird-days. Noted on eight dates - there were plenty of chances to simply enjoy this charismatic species: we found a nest, and on 20th a bone-dropping 3rd/4th c-y bird up in Grandala-land landed repeatedly less than 200m from where we were taking a breather!

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*
152 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus*
One over the Beijing hotel [PL *et al.*] on 11th!

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo burmanicus*
Singles on two dates – one on 12th dove in to perch, allowing us good 'scope views.
***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...

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*
176 bird-days. Noted on ten dates - a powerful, lumbering buzzard with a bewildering range of plumages.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
One immature at Koko Nor on 14th.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
15+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*
Three dark morph birds were seen N of Xining – two on 12th & one on 13th.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
Five bird-days. Noted on three dates – incl at Summer Palace...

Common Coot *Fulica atra*
115 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*
Reasonable views of one on 24th – a stray dog ensured that we got flights views as well...

Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*

76 bird-days. Noted on five dates – main event 60 on 24th.

***This hardy yet Vulnerable (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/143783/0>) Tibetan Plateau endemic breeder was one of the most hoped-for species!

Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***Somehow, Ibisbills seen in Tibet 'frozen' against a rushing stream - yaks snorting in the background - are *better* than the sad one or two which may still cling on along the last stretch of barely acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

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

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

At Koko Nor two on both visits.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Ten bird-days. Noted on four dates.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

One [PL] on 15th.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

47 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 40 on 15th.

'Spot-fronted' Sand Plover *Charadrius atrifrons*[^]

36 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

***[^]formerly consider conspecific with Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*.

***ssp *atrifrons* has 'forehead and band through and below eye to ear coverts black, occasionally with some white mottling in front of eye; rufous-cinnamon of chest extends to flanks and breast, not bordered by black bar against white chin' while *mongolus* has forehead white, often divided by narrow black line in middle, bordered from cinnamon forecrown by narrow black line; black line runs from lores to ear coverts and white line from above eye to above ear-coverts; narrow black bar between white chin and clear-cut cinnamon-rufous chest-band'. *schaeferi* 'often has some white on forehead; intermediate between *atrifrons* and nominate *mongolus*', 'often closest to *mongolus*': BWP vol III, p169.

Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria*

One seen well at Koko Nor on 14th: 'flew briefly [showing woodcock bulk], then on the ground running boldly and ducking between clods'.

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura*

Two W of Koko Nor on 15th - 'PL played the hero's part, risking wet feet to allow us to clinch the ID'.

Western Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

32 at Koko Nor on 14th.

*****?Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa melanuroides*

Exceptional views of a solitary bird which appeared to be this taxon on 17th.

***'sides of breast narrowly, flanks broadly banded; bars meet across belly. Vent speckled black on white; undertail coverts w/ arrowhead [markings]'...

*****Western / Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* / *L. melanuroides*

150 on 18th.

***What appeared to be an Eastern on the previous day introduced more caution...

'Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*[^]

One at Koko Nor on 28th.

***[^]vide Inskipp *et al* (2011) split into three species, incl Siberian Whimbrel *Numenius variegatus* & European Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*... the views we had did not allow us to form an opinion on which of the two it was...

****phaeopus* was listed only for Xizang and Xinjiang by Zheng *et al* (2005).

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

One in flight on 15th.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Noted on two dates: one (+ five: PL *et al.*) at Koko Nor on 14th & two on the Plateau on 18th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

163+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates – main event 80 on 24th.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One on 14th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

15 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

18 bird-days. Noted only on 14+15th.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

One seen well at Koko Nor on 14th.

***At Golmud, in the Qaidam, the species was only recorded in autumn despite good coverage also in spring (JH pers. obs.)...

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

One on 17th.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

81 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

***In addition, two large gulls N of Xining on 13th may have been this species.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*

91 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Common Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

One 2nd c-y bird at Koko Nor on 14th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

143 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Five at Koko Nor on 28th.

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

11+ on 15th – scrutinized on the ground... AND photographed! Essentially a bird of the steppes of Central Asia east to Mongolia, its occasional irruptions – during which it may reach and breed in e.g. Scandinavia – adds considerably to its charisma, making it a real Dreambird.

***Unfortunately the species' sought-after congener Tibetan Sandgrouse *S. thibetanus* eluded us despite many calories expended searching...

Blue Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*

1,420+ bird-days. Noted on 14 dates – main event 1,200+ in newly ploughed fields on 14th.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*

15 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on three dates.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

34 bird-days. Noted on seven dates, incl at Botanical Gardens on 10th & in the grounds of our Beijing on 11th.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

39 bird-days. Noted on eight dates, incl in Beijing on 11th.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates – 11 at Botanical Gardens on 10th was not unexpected, but one in a poplar grove W of Koko Nor on 27th was a notable record.

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus sparverioides*

Three bird-days in Beijing over 10-11th: two heard at Botanical Gardens & one flying by at our hotel the next morning.

Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*

Eight bird-days. Noted @ Beijing on three dates.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

49 bird-days. Noted on 14 dates, incl at Summer Palace on 30th.

Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia*

Two heard at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Three bird-days. Noted on just two dates...

Common Swift *Apus apus*

109+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates, incl @ Beijing on 10+11+30th.

***It was pleasing to obtain superb views of the distinctive *pekinensis*.

Salim Ali's Swift *Apus salimali*

25 bird-days. Positively identified on five dates, incl N of Xining on 29th.

***Leader (2011) concluded that the *Apus pacificus* complex should be treated as four species, at least three of which occur in China/Tibet.

***Salim Ali's Swift *Apus salimali* is 'restricted to E Tibetan Plateau and adjacent high-altitude W Sichuan' breeding at 'very high altitudes (above 3,400m)' – presumably 'Fork-tailed Swifts' breeding near Xining, Qinghai, at c2,500m are also this form. 'Its winter distribution is apparently unknown but, at the very least, it must be an altitudinal migrant'.

The species is longer-tailed with a proportionately shallower tail fork, has different throat pattern ('narrow pale strip on the center of the throat and is narrowest at the base of the bill, where it tapers to a neat point', 'less than half the width of the other taxa'), 'the rump patch is consistently narrow', 'the crown and nape are mid-brown, contrasting conspicuously' with the glossy black mantle, and the pale tips to the underparts are much reduced compared to *pacificus* (more comparable to *leuconyx* in this character).

*****Fork-tailed / Salim Ali's Swift** *A. pacificus* / *A. salimali*

33+ N of Xining on 13th, incl a flock of 23 heading N at 12h00...unfortunately they were too distant to allow us to identify them.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Singletons at Botanical Gardens on 10th & at Summer Palace on 30th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

12 bird-days. Noted on eight dates, incl at Summer Palace on 30th.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

One 'scoped at our Beijing hotel on 11th – TINGALING!

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates – two N of Xining on 12th was a bit unusual...

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*

One heard on 23rd.

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*

13 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than six dates – main event six at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus*

One migr at our Beijing hotel on 11th.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

Two bird-days. Noted at our Beijing hotel on 11th & W of Koko Nor on 15th.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

11 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

53 bird-days. This emblematic species was noted on 16 dates.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*

One heard in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 11th.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

One [PL *et al.*] at Summer Palace on 30th.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

95+ bird-days. Noted on six dates.

***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*

31 bird-days in Qinghai; not systematically recorded @ Beijing.

Tibetan Magpie *Pica (pica) bottanensis*

76+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

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

Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*

Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Hume's Groundpecker *Pseudopodoces humilis*

91+ bird-days. This delightful high-altitude specialist was noted on 13 bird-days.

***Apparently most closely related to *Paridae* (Dickinson 2003; B King pers com.) but please let us do our bit to avoid a newly concocted English name – which the risk of keyboard distress prevents me typing here _____ - ____ - from slipping into common usage!

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

295 bird-days. Noted on 17 dates.

Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*

18 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

c112 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

36 bird-days. Noted near Xining on three dates.

***ssp *pastinator* differs from the nominate in lacking 'bare chalky white facial skin [...] and has a more sharply pointed bill': Brazil (2009).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Four bird-days. Noted near Xining on two dates.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

21 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***According to Zheng (2005) ssp *tibetosinensis* is restricted to E Qinghai, SW Xizang, NW & W Yunnan, and N & W Sichuan.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

38 bird-days. Noted on ten dates.

Eastern Great Tit *Parus minor*

Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Yellow-bellied Tit *Parus venustulus*

Five bird-days. Noted at Beijing on three dates.

Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*

22 bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*

Six bird-days. Noted @ Beijing on two dates.

***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*

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

***Note that of the several Songar Tit ssp maybe only *weigoldicus* merits full species status (the rest are now lumped back in with Willow Tit *Parus montanus* by e g IOC).

***Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) noted that "the case for treating *weigoldicus* as a full species appears particularly strong on the basis of its unusually high genetic distances from other taxa, despite weak morphological differentiation". Actually – as we couldn't help noticing (& see Collar & Pilgrim 2007) - *weigoldicus* does differ 'conspicuously' in many respects, incl vocalizations, from even *affinis*.

White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*

Four on 27th.

Grey Crested Tit *Parus dichrous*

Three on 21st.

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta*

95 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

27+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates, incl @ Beijing on 10+11+30th.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

32+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 25+ seen intermittently throughout the morning of 22nd, allowing us to see e.g. the diagnostic black underwing coverts.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl. at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

'Silver-throated' Tit *Aegithalos glaucocularis*[^] *vinaceus*

Five seen well on 29th.

***^IOC, following HBW, elevates the taxa *vinaceus* & *glaucogularis* to full species status as 'Silver-throated Bushtit' *Aegithalos glaucogularis* - as recently as 2008, however, the notion of *vinaceus* as a possible split was firmly booh'd by group members.

White-browed Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*

18 bird-days. Noted on no less than seven dates – WOW! views were had by all...

Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*

Five on 21st – we had to work a bit for it, but were then duly blown away by a full adult male, at eye level & very close.

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

12 bird-days. This attractive species was noted on three dates.

Long-billed Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*

39 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*

15 bird-days. Local breeders were noted on seven dates.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

16 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Two seen very well 'by the buffet' on 16th – would have been 'Lark of the Day' if we hadn't just seen Mongolian, a species which relegates most other larks to also-ran status.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

***One on 13th one imitated the call of Ibisbill as it took off to commence singing.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Chinese Hill Warbler *Rhopophilus pekinensis*

We heard – and almost saw – two at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*

15 bird-days. Noted @ Beijing on three dates.

Pere David's Bush Warbler *Bradypterus davidi*

One heard singing at Summer Palace on 30th.

***Kennerley & Pearson (2010) accepts the Pere David's (or 'Baikal') Bush Warbler, comprising the taxa *davidi* (breeding in 'E Siberia from the NW Amur region south to NE China, with an isolated population in C China') & *suschkini* (breeding in 'Siberia from the Russian Altai east through Sayan Mountains to the region of Lake Baikal'), as a species, *B. davidi*, distinct from Spotted Bush Warbler, comprising the taxa *thoracicus* (breeding 'C and E Himalayas to W & S China'), *przevalskii* (breeding 'Sichuan to N Qinghai, SW Gansu and S Shaanxi') & *kashmirensis* (breeding in 'W Himalayas').

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*

Six at Summer Palace on 30th – one relatively obliging bird offered 'scope views.

Oriental Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*

21 at Summer Palace on 30th.

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*

23 at Summer Palace on 30th.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Noted only @ Beijing: two at our hotel on 11th & one at Summer Palace on 30th.

'Chinese' Tickell's Warbler *Phylloscopus occisinensis*

91 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

***Martens (2008) elevates part of Tickell's Warbler to full species status as *P. occisinensis*
http://globiz.sachsen.de/snsd/publikationen/vertebrate-zoology/vz58-2/06_Martens.pdf

Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*

85 bird-days. Noted on seven dates, incl on 11th when a bonus singleton was seen & (especially!) heard in the grounds of our Beijing hotel – main event 41 N of Xining on 30th.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 11th.

Buff-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*

Two chasing after each other & singing N of Xining on 29th.

Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis*

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

***This attractive warbler was only recently reaccepted as a valid species, and its winter quarters remain undiscovered...

Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

Two heard N of Xining on 29th.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Somewhat surprisingly the Beijing area yielded just one, at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Eastern Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus forresti*

16 bird-days. Noted on two 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?*

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

13 bird-days @ Beijing over 10-11th.

Hume’s Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*

87 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

***Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) treats both ssp as full species, noting that “although the call of *mandellii* is markedly different from [nominate] *humei*, the whistled songs of both taxa are variable and often inseparable. While *mandellii* is genetically closer to *humei* than to *inornatus*, it is long-separated from either according to mtDNA (Irwin *et al.* 2001); its status as a full species thus remains equivocal.”

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis ssp*

Two at Summer Palace on 30th – one was seen particularly well: ‘w/ yellow belly stripe & relatively small?’.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

14 bird-days. Noted on just two dates.

‘Margelanica’ Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia margelanica*

Four on 26th – great views, eventually, of a singing bird...

Kozlov’s Babax *Babax koslowi*

13+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – on 19th ‘two out in the open, ‘scoped across the river’: one of our best excuses for visiting an unbeatably pretty area on the remote Xizang border, this restricted-range species proved comparatively obliging.

Pere David’s Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*

21 bird-days. This charismatic endemic was noted on five dates, incl at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax maximus*

24+ bird-days. Noted on three 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 moving about will mark their progress with occasional sessions of loud calling.

Elliot’s Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*

104+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Chinese Fulvetta *Alcippe striaticollis*

A pair heard singing and calling in the designated spot on 22nd.

***Knowing the call AND where to listen out for it is - even more so than in the case of the skulking Kozlov's Babax – the key to locating this subtly attractive but, alas, skulky endemic.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*

18 at Botanical Gardens on 10th got the parrotbill life list started for more than one of us...

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

12 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Northern Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Chinese Nuthatch *Sitta villosa*

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

Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*

Three on 12th.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*

Two on 13th.

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Seven on 12th.

Hodgson's Treecreeper *Certhia hodgsoni*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates S of Yushu.

***This newly elevated species “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. Birds in SE Qinghai & E Xizang are this taxon: Cheng (1987).

*****Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristellatus*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 11th & two at Summer Palace on 30th.

***Birds @ Beijing (& Beidaihe!) are presumed feral...

Red-billed Starling *Sturnus sericeus*

An adult accompanied by a juvenile at Summer Palace on 30th.

***Zheng *et al.* (2005) listed the species for nowhere closer than S Henan, but the species is now a scarce breeder as far N as Beijing.

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*

Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates – incl near Xining airport on 29th...

Chinese Blackbird *Turdus mandarinus*

Two males at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*

69 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates – ten on 19th put on a particularly good show: doing lots of chasing around & singing in a rush of breeding season motivation.

Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 11th 'landed, called, but flew on'.

Chinese Song Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*

N of Xining two heard singing on 13th & one rather distant bird 'scoped as it sang from a treetop on 29th.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*

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

Himalayan Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*

16 bird-days. Noted on four dates – particularly memorable was a singing male sitting out on 22nd: not only did it show superbly allowing close approach by our team photographers, it incorporated mimicry of White-browed Tit calls into its song!

Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus*

Seven birds on 21st - main event an adult male seen very well (highly distracting when you're trying to 'nail' your first-ever male Crested Tit-warbler!).

Northern Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

16 on 12th – incl two adult males & three female-types seen well...

***Apparently (L Svensson pers com) birds breeding in NE Qinghai – with a white brow in adult males – are *albocoeruleus*, a long neglected taxon hitherto considered of doubtful validity, but with a song distinct from both *cyanurus*' & *rufilatus*'. It is genetically closer to *cyanurus*, but has legs as long as *rufilatus*'.

Przevalski's Redstart *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

Eight on 27th – this localized endemic is 'arguably the prettiest in the genus'.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

109+ bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*

15 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*

19 bird-days. Noted on five dates – this species is arguably not far behind Przevalski's in terms of prettiness...

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*

One singing male 'scoped on 11th.

Guldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*

16 bird-days. This high altitude specialist was noted on no fewer than six dates.

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*

26 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phaenicuroides*

Nine bird-days: five (only one – an adult male – seen) on 22nd & four (of which only one - a 2nd c-y male w/ blue bib + narrow blue band across upper mantle; otherwise plumage female - was seen) on 29th.

River Chat *Chaimarornis leucocephalus*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***This bird is NOT called 'White-capped Water Redstart'!

Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*

A pair flew by at c4,950m on 20th – TINGALING!

'Siberian' Stonechat *Saxicola 'torquatus'*

One [PL] on 28th.

***Spp *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*

44 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

One pair on 11th.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

One at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*

Two at Botanical Gardens on 10th & five @ our hotel the next morning.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

14 bird-days. Noted on eight dates – at least three were the all-brown morph.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

13 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*

31 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Henri's Snowfinch *Montifringilla henrici*

c71 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

***DNA work has shown this taxon to be more closely related to Tibetan Snowfinch than to Eurasian (with which it was lumped in the past).

Tibetan (= Himalayan) Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*

11 bird-days. Noted on five bird-days.

***Rather unspectacular on the ground but truly striking in flight, this species is blessed with no less than four English names...

White-rumped Snowfinch *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*

43 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

Pere David's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda davidiana*

Seven bird-days. Noted on just two dates – incl in desert W of Koko Nor where the species is scarce.

Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

246 bird-days. Noted on eight dates – main event 153 on 17th.

Blanford's Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

20 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than five dates.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*

19 bird-days. Noted on just two dates – but what views!

Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*

62 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Rufous-browed Accentor *Prunella strophciata*

36 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*

38 bird-days. This subtle beauty was noted on six dates.

Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*

One on 21st was simply the best ever, delighting us all by offered prolonged views at <5m – what a bird!

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

71 bird-days. Noted on eight dates – of the males, 19 were identified as *citreola* & seven as *calcarata*... main event 33 at Koko Nor on 14th (incl no fewer than 17 *citreola* & two *calcarata*).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Six bird-days. Noted on four dates, incl one at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

75 bird-days. Noted on 15 dates – sspp involved were *leucopsis* (none identified S of @ Er La pass), *alboides* (in the Yushu/Nangqian area) & *baicalensis* (a single at Koko Nor on 14th).

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

12 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

One flying over on 20th.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

A vagrant was 'scoped as it sat preening in buckthorn scrub next to a poplar grove [PL, JH] on 27th.

***'boldly marked back; boldly streaked rear crown; lacked 'broken' eyebrow. Didn't call'.

***Interestingly, one was collected in Zaidam (no specific locality) in Sep, with Vaurie apparently vouching for the correct identification of the specimen (V).

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

53 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates, incl at Botanical Gardens & at our Beijing hotel.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseus*

58 bird-days. Noted on nine dates.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

One in the grounds of our Beijing hotel on 11th.

Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*

37 bird-days. Noted on six dates – main event 15 at Botanical Gardens on 10th.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Four N of Xining on 12th.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

184 bird-days. Noted on 16 dates.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

870+ bird-days. Noted on six dates – main events 450+ 'over the hill from the Mekong' on 21st & c350 on 26th.

Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

2,635+ bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event a shocking fall of 2,625+ on 17th: a strong candidate for the Most Interesting Record of the Trip award, and certainly a real eye-opener! ***'Habits: Tame, quarrelsome ground birds, in flocks even during the breeding season ; outside of it flocks often same-sex. Nests located in rock crevices; breeds late summer [mostly above 4300m]. In highest areas, only occurs with 1-2 other passerines, especially in winter when often associates with Twites. [Close-knit flocks make spectacular circling flights](#). Male displays by wheeling, then swooping over female to stand with outstretched quivering wings': Rasmussen & Anderton (2005, p561).

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

11 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event a total of eight coming down to drink at a roadside puddle on 27th

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Three on 17th took some finding but fortunately there were plenty of birds (and one or two cute mammals!) to keep us sharp while we put in the mileage.

***The taxonomically challenged Przevalski's Rosefinch is nowadays considered to represent a monotypic family - is it a "Rosefinch"? or is it a "Bunting"?... good question, seeing that in the field it does not appear obviously close to either, with its graduated, blindingly pink tail, absurdly thin lower mandible, and a summertime habit of doing 'parachute' type songflights.'

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates.

***Local breeders are ssp *roseatus* (Dickinson 2003) which is markedly different from at least the nominate...

Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus davidianus*

23 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Pink-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus eos*

35 bird-days. Noted S of Yushu on four dates – as is frequently the case, the 1st were also the sweetest: WOW! views of two males & a female in riverbank buckthorn on 19th...

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*

24 bird-days. Noted on five dates.

Eastern Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

39 bird-days. Noted on eight dates – on 24th, just as we all thought we were leaving, a pair appeared on the roof of the building next to our lunch-stop restaurant, and before PL could say 'let's go!' two group members were off in hot pursuit into the back yard...

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Nine bird-days. This often erratic species was seen on five dates.

Roborovski's Rosefinch *Kozlowia roborowskii*

8+ bird-days. Noted on two dates – superb views of three adult males & 3+ female-types on 16th.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

64+ bird-days. Noted on four dates – main event 30+ N of Xining on 12th.

Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

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

Chinese Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*

Nine bird-days. Noted at both Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace – on 10th, one drinking from a puddle by a leaky pipe was a highlight.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carniceps*

39 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than eight dates, ensuring repeated 'scope views for everyone... on 29th two males & one female chasing about was but one ingredient in a thoroughly enjoyable final morning!

Mammals:

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

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

Fairly common & often confiding, engaging in wrestling contests close to the road or sitting back watching the world go by – encountered on at least six dates.

Gansu Pika *Ochotona cansus*

Four seen well at c4200m on 17th.

Plateau Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

Glover's Pika *Ochotona gloveri*

Singles noted on at least three dates.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*

17+ animal-days. Noted on seven dates.

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai*

Two near Xining on 11th.

Wolf *Canis lupus*

No less than 13 individuals were seen: two packs of three on different kills, a pack of four, two together, and a single female no more than 100m from the road allowing us to get some pretty decent photos! Noted on four dates...

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

36 animal-days. Noted on six dates – excellent views on a number of occasions, incl on 18th when one was watched rolling about in the snow & scent marking.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Four animal-days. Noted on two dates.

Kiang *Equus kiang*

558 animal-days. Noted on three dates. It was a real pleasure to watch these dignified 'donkeys' - in the absence of hunters they (and other large mammals on the Plateau) are fairly confiding, and in a couple of cases we were able to get good-to-decent photos even without the help of long lenses!

MacNeill's (Red) Deer *Cervus macneilli*.

28 animal-days. Noted S of Yushu on two dates.

****macneilli* is 'the pale red-grey deer of the eastern margins of the Tibetan plateau': Groves (2005).

Gansu Red Deer *Cervus (elaphus) kansuensis*

Three fully antlered stags W of Koko Nor on 27th - 'greyer [than animals seen S of Yushu on 19+23 May]... but they swiveled 'round too soon', not allowing scrutiny.

White-lipped Deer *Przewalskium albirostris*

A herd of 28 seen well S of Yushu on 23rd...

Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

63 individuals on 27th – excellent views in early morning sun...

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

1,333 animal-days. Noted on seven dates – main event 843 in a day along the remotest Roof of the World stretch of road!

Tibetan Antelope *Panthalops hodgsonii*

Seeing 402 individuals along the remotest Roof of the World stretch of road was truly something to remember...

***See <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/15967/0>

Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur*

224 animal-days. Noted on five dates.