Qingdao, Shandong, China: 29 Sep – 3 Oct 2012.

An at-a-glance list of 55 species of birds recorded.

By Jesper Hornskov ***this draft 21 Dec 2012*** ALL RIGHTS RESERVED®

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

Based on my field notes, this write-up covers the birds noted on a brief family visit to Qingdao in autumn 2012.

I had visited the city numerous times in the past without much ornithological success. The lack of easily accessible habitat seemed to be the problem: the city's location on a roughly NE/SW oriented coast suggested it ought to have some potential during migration.

On this visit I discovered that a bit of coastal waste ground near my in-laws' home near the main railway station had been landscaped into a park, Badaxia Park, on a pattern that will be familiar to regular visitors to Chinese cities: surprisingly large firs kept upright by lengths of bamboo, a variety of smaller trees on an embankment, various exercise racks & table tennis tables, and open spaces for badminton & *taichi*. Locals flocked there in the mornings, doing exercise, chatting, walking dogs, flying kites – not ideal for birdwatching, granted, but much better than having nowhere at all, and it was never realistic to hope a nature reserve would appear rather than somewhere for the space-starved public...

Less conveniently situated in relation to where I was staying is the larger, well wooded Zhongshan Park, with a zoo and a few adjacent fields. With the Oct 1st National Day holidays in progress this park was positively overrun with visitors, and you'd be very lucky to ever find it completely empty of people – except perhaps on a drizzly day when a fall of migrants could occur?

I 'did' Badaxia Park on the afternoon following our arrival & pre-breakfast on four consecutive mornings, but Zhongshan Park only twice. The weather throughout was the settled, sunny & breezy – ideal for the holidaymakers, but weather that tends to yield only a trickle of migrants early in the day, nothing more. Suitable weather anytime from mid-March into early June and from late August into early November could produce more...

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

E-mail <u>goodbirdmail(at)gmail.com</u> or <u>goodbirdmail(at)126.com</u>

Tel/fax +86 10 8490 9562 / **NEW MOBILE +86 139 1124 0659**

Species list:

Chinese Spotbill Anas zonorhyncha
Three migr at Badaxia Park at 06h31 on 30th.

***Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax 15 distant Herons on 30th were probably this species.

Chinese Pond Heron Ardeola bacchus One 1st c-y at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea

Six migr (incl a very high-up group of five) at Badaxia Park on 30th.

Amur Falcon Falco amurensis

One adult male migr at Badaxia Park at 08h09 on 3rd.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus

At Badaxia Park one adult in off the sea at 06h50 on 2nd, landing on a tall building, and one adult possibly the same @ that building again the next day.

Oriental Honey Buzzard Pernis ptilorhynchus

One 1st c-y migr at Badaxia Park at 06h23 on 30th, and four (one unaged bird at 06h25, one 1st c-y ->NE at 06h35 & two 1st c-y at 06h43) there on 2nd.

Japanese Sparrowhawk Accipiter gularis

One migr at Badaxia Park at 06h24 on 30th.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus

One at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Eurasian Woodcock Scolopax rusticola

One ('at 07h31: flew around & probably landed in outermost section') at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Black-tailed Gull Larus crassirostris

Three at Badaxia Park on 30th.

'Herring'-type Gull Larus vegae / Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus / Larus (fuscus) taimyrensis
At Badaxia Park four on 1st & three on 2nd.

Common Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus

At Badaxia Park 85 on 30th, 12 on 1st & five on 2nd.

Relict Gull Larus relictus

A flock of 16 1st c-y birds migr at Badaxia Park at 08h09 on 30th.

Oriental Turtle Dove Streptopelia orientalis

One at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Spotted Dove Streptopelia chinensis

Singles at Badaxia Park on 1+2nd & at Zhongshan Park on 3 Oct

Grey Nightjar Caprimulgus jokata

One in flight at Zhongshan Park on 30th – 'brief but sweet': TINGALING!

Common Kingfisher Alcedo atthis

One at Zhongshan Park on 3rd.

Hoopoe Upupa epops

Two (incl one migr) at Badaxia Park on 30th & two at Zhongshan Park on 3rd.

Ashy Minivet Pericrocotus divaricatus

At Badaxia Park heard-onlies: singles on both 30th & 1st, and 7+ on 2nd.

Brown Shrike Lanius cristatus

One at Badaxia Park on 3rd.

Black-naped Oriole Oriolus chinensis

At Badaxia Park one on 30th & a 1st c-y on 1st.

Azure-winged Magpie Cyanopica cyanus

At Badaxia Park two on 30th, 15+ (incl several short-tailed juveniles) on 1st, 23 on 2nd & 22 on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park 13 on 30th & 33 on 3rd.

Common Magpie Pica pica

At Badaxia Park eight on both 1+2nd & three on 3rd.

Varied Tit Parus varius

At Badaxia Park one heard on 29th, singles on both 1st/₂nd/₂ & 2-3 (one in strip of trees nearby en route, and two not necessarily incl the same one at main park) on 3rd/₂.

My visit to Zhongshan Park on 3rd was mainly to check if there might be some there as well – odd calls that initially sounded promising turned out to be from a cage containing a Yellow-bellied Tit.

A handful of bird photographers to whom I showed an image downloaded from www.orientalbirdimages.org were unfamiliar with the species and were not aware that it was one to look out for.

- ***Zheng et al. (2005) listed the species only for E Liaoning & SW Jilin.
- ***Several years ago a single bird turned up at Happy Island, Hebei, around 17th/18th Oct as part of a large-scale irruption of Coal, Eastern Great & white-headed Long-tailed Tits, and Common Treecreeper.
- ***Interestingly, N Moores had suggested to me c20 Sep that it might be worth looking out for the species as some had been turning up outside its normal range in S Korea, and unbeknownst to me prior to my sightings there had already been records near Shanghai & in Hong Kong (T Townshend pers com), suggesting a rare influx. Two at Beijing's Botanical Gardens on 4 Oct 2012 (JH pers obs) was apparently the 1st record for the municipality.
- ***^vocalizations noted incl a nasal 'daah' suggesting Yellow-belied Tit *Parus venustulus* also not listed for Shandong by Zheng *et al.* (2005) and an insistent 'tseet' unlike anything heard from Yellow-bellied Tit. The bird did not give anything like Yellow-bellied's familiar twittery series.
- ***^Showing well and vocalizing strongly before 06h15. Vocalizations noted were
- 1) 'tseee-tseee'
- 2) 'tseee-tseee'
- 3) 'tsee-tsuuh'
- ...the 'tseee' variably more or less buzzy; sometimes inquisitive, sometimes almost Goldcrest *Regulus* regulus pitch.
- 4) 'tsee-tsee, daah-daah' recalling Songar Tit Parus songarus (and quite likely mimicry)
- 5) 'pfuid-pfuid'
- ...the variation in calls alone invites confusion with Yellow-bellied Tit!
- ***^\Seen feeding in firs: both bark-tapping near trunk and occasionally working a cone briefly. Today an abrupter version of the 'tseet' call was heard, recalling Grey-backed Thrush. The birds again today ceased to be vocal after c06h10.

Sand Martin Riparia riparia

Three on 30th.

Barn Swallow Hirundo rustica

At Badaxia Park 115 on 30th, 20 on 1st, 25 on 2nd & ten on 3rd.

Red-rumped Swallow Cecropis daurica

At Badaxia Park four on 30th, ten on 1st & eight on 3rd.

Chinese Bulbul Pycnonotus sinensis

At Badaxia Park two on 30th, four on 1st, two on 2nd & seven on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park 40 on 3rd.

Black-browed Reed Warbler Acrocephalus bistrigiceps

One at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Dusky Warbler Phylloscopus fuscatus

One at Badaxia Park on 29th.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler Phylloscopus proregulus

One at Badaxia Park on 2nd.

Yellow-browed Warbler Phylloscopus inornatus

At Badaxia Park five on 30th, ten on 1st, eight on 2nd & five on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park four on 30th & five on 3rd.

***Hwamei Garrulax canorus feral / escape

Two tail-less individuals 'in from the outermost section' at Badaxia Park on 1st.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill Paradoxornis webbianus

At Badaxia Park heard on 30th & 11 on both 1st+2nd.

Chestnut-flanked White-eye Zosterops erythropleurus

At Badaxia Park six on 30th, four on 1st, 23 on 2nd& 11 on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park c35 on 3rd.

***Crested Myna Acridotheres cristellatus presumed feral

One at Zhongshan Park on 3rd.

Red-billed Starling Sturnus sericeus

Two headed E at Badaxia Park at 08h06 after a bit of flying around on 3rd.

***The species was not listed for Shandong by Zheng et al. (2005). An ongoing range expansion has seen the species reach Beijing (JH et al. pers obs) & S Korea (N Moores pers com).

White-cheeked Starling Sturnus cineraceus

At Badaxia Park 45 -> WSW at 06h59 on 2nd & three -> S at 08h06 on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park two on 3rd.

Grey-backed Thrush Turdus hortulorum

One at Badaxia Park on 3rd.

Chinese Blackbird Turdus mandarinus

1+ at Zhongshan Park on 30th.

*** Thrush sp Turdus sp

One at Badaxia Park on 30th.

Siberian Rubythroat Luscinia calliope

Four at Badaxia Park on 2nd briefly showing well, sitting up on tree supports.

Daurian Redstart Phoenicurus auroreus

At Badaxia Park one male on 1st, two males on 2nd & one heard on 3rd.

Common Stonechat Saxicola torquatus

One male on 1st.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow Passer montanus

Fairly common – not systematically recorded.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail Motacilla tschutschensis

At Badaxia Park five on 30th, 12 on 1st, six on 2nd & four on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park one on 30th.

Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea

At Badaxia Park five on 30th, two on 1st, one on 2nd & 12 on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park one on 30th.

White Wagtail Motacilla alba

At Badaxia Park 16 on 30th, 18 on 1st & 14 on 2nd.

Richard's Pipit Anthus richardi

At Badaxia Park 48 on 30th, three on 1st, 35 on 2nd & 20 on 3rd.

Olive-backed Pipit Anthus hodgsoni

At Badaxia Park ten on 30th, 11 on 1st, 30 on 2nd & 11 on 3rd, and at Zhongshan Park one on 30th & nine on 3rd.

Red-throated Pipit Anthus cervinus

At Badaxia Park three on 30th, 11 on 1st, five on 2nd & two on 3rd.

Brambling Fringilla montifringilla

Two at Badaxia Park on 2nd.

Oriental Greenfinch Carduelis sinica

Three at Badaxia Park on 3rd.

Chinese Grosbeak Eophona migratoria

At Badaxia Park 2+ on 30th & eight on 3rd.

Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla

At Badaxia Park three on 1st & four on 2nd.

Yellow-browed Bunting Emberiza chrysophrys

One at Badaxia Park on 2nd.

Black-faced Bunting Emberiza spodocephala

At Badaxia Park four on 30th, and 13 on both 1st+2nd.