

CHINA'S SICHUAN & NORTHERN YUNNAN 2024 TOUR REPORT

13 / 16 May - 4 June

by Simon Mitchell

The 2024 Birdquest tour to Sichuan and Yunnan was a resounding success. As well as recording a total of 339 species, we tallied an impressive 163 'diamond birds' – (species with restricted ranges rarely encountered on any other tour itinerary), exceeding or equalling recent tours in both 2015 and 2018. Whilst a few challenges such as the closure of the old road at Balangshan Pass, long waits for the appearance of some target Pheasants at feeding hides and unusually inclement weather around the Tibetan Plateau made for occasionally tougher than expected birding, the group very much rose to the challenge.

For any minor inconveniences there were a stunning array of highlights, a pick of 15 different Galliformes species, including the stunning Golden Pheasant, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Temminck's Tragopan, Chinese Monal, Tibetan Snowcock and Tibetan Partridge. We encountered a mind-boggling array of 12 Laughingthrushes with the vast majority performing fantastically and including the point-blank views of Biet's, Spotted, Buffy and Western Moustached. Parrotbills never failed to delight, with splendid views of 11 out of 12 species possible on the itinerary, including the highly restricted (and newly split) Eye-ringed (or Yunnan) Parrotbill, the chunky Three-toed and Brown Parrotbills and the undisputed 'daddy' of them all in the form of Great Parrotbill. On top of that, we found a dizzying number of *Phylloscopus* warblers (22 species, all seen well allowing us time to appreciate the nuances between these subtle congeners) as well as 10 Woodpecker species, 5 Shrikes, and 18 raptors. A plentiful selection of waterbirds included highlights such as encounters with Brown-cheeked Rail, Chinese Spot-billed Duck and Pallas's Gull. The unique Przevalski's Finch lived up to its name – with one of the 6 we encountered initially being written off as a colourful prayer flag flapping in the breeze. Mammals too were well represented -with a total of 24 species, including highlights as varied as Blue Sheep, Takim, Chinese Goral, Grey Wolf, Red-and-White Giant Flying Squirrel and the uber-cute Red Panda.

All this took place against a backdrop of climactic Himalayan peaks, sheer scrub-lined slopes, alpine meadows and verdant high-altitude planes. Pine forests gave way to belts of flowering rhododendrons that turned entire mountainsides pink. Elsewhere swathes of endless bamboo of every shape and size almost called to mind the Werner Hertzog description of jungle. Early morning mist lifted from rich broadleaved woodlands which began to thrum with birdsong, only to rise up the valleys and enshroud higher mountains with a cold thick fog that would sometimes suppress all activity. Cascading highland streams swelled from tickles to torrents in a few minutes, whilst the stillness of tranquil mountain wetlands barely betrayed the fact it had ever rained. We experienced an intensely varied China; more complex and contradictory than ever presented in

Western media. Staggering works of incredible road and rail engineering appear to surpass anything Britain even used to be capable of in both scale and efficiency, whilst clean streets and well-kept towns appeared to owe more to civic pride than government mandates. Whilst the locals thronged through tourist attractions with noisy enthusiasm, we also encountered numerous groups of Chinese birders waiting patiently or scanning diligently for their target birds. And the food of course was rich and varied, with something to meet every palette – especially those of the spice-obsessed amongst us.

For the majority of participants, the tour began with a pre-tour extension in Lijiang. The section turned out to be one of the most productive of the whole tour. We explore both dry pine forest and lush broad-leafed woodland valleys, finding a range of tricky species including Yunnan Fulvetta, Davidson's and Kloss's Leaf-warblers, Black-headed Sibia, Blue-winged Minla and enjoying spectacular views of both Streak-breasted and Black-streaked Scimitar Babblers. The undoubted highlights were the cooperative trio of increasingly rare Laughingthrushes staked-out in around a remote subalpine village. Right on que we had Biet's, Spotted and Western Moustached Laughingthrushes virtually hopping around our feet. A couple of skulky Lady Amherst's Pheasants provided colour, whilst along the forest edges we found Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Brown Dippers, Yellow-throated Bunting, Black-headed Greenfinch, Speckled Piculet and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Scrubbier habitat produced Crested Finchbills, Daurian Redstart, Russet Sparrow

Our final full day in Yunnan was spent primarily focussing on remaining targets species, and with some work we located both Yunnan Nuthatch and Eye-ringed Parrotbill. With a little extra time, we were also able to call in on some wetland areas where the likes of Grey-headed Lapwing, Eurasian Wigeon, Chinese Pond Heron, Plain Prinia, Oriental Reed Warbler, Yellow Bittern and Black-faced Bunting showed well as well as dozens of migrating warblers, including Hume's, Dusky, Greenish, Two-barred and Large-billed.

The main tour began in Chengdu, where local parks produced a number of tricky species including, Fork-tailed Sunbird, White-cheeked Starling, Ashy-throated Parrotbill, Chinese (Yellow-billed Grosbeak) and White-rumped Munia. Heading up into the hills once more, things took on a decidedly more temperate feel and we were able to connect with Kloss's Leaf Warbler and Buffy Laughingthrush before the afternoon rain suppressed activity. The next morning, we sat patiently surveying a bamboo-engulfed clearing, where cute Chinese Bamboo Partridges, glittering Lady Amherst's Pheasants and regal Silver Pheasants only whetted our appetites for the eventual robust fiery forms of not one but two male Temminck's Tragopans sauntered into view. After our patient Tragopan vigil stretched our legs with a walk to the other hides, picking up the likes of Elan shan Liocichla, Spot-breasted and Grey-hooded Parrotbills, Brownish-flanked Bush-warbler and Golden Parrotbill. The next morning, we added extra goodies such as Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Sichuan Bush-warbler, Red-winged Laughingthrush, Brown Bush-warbler and Pygmy Cupwing, before heading onward to the Wawushan mountains.

After some initial bemusement to the rather airport-like circus of bus transferred required at Wawushan we still managed a few good species on an evening walk out from our accommodation inside the park. Chestnut-crowned, Large-billed and Claudia's Leaf Warblers showed well. Over the next few days, the mid-elevation areas produced a number of broadleaf woodland specialities such as Necklaced Woodpecker, Speckled Pigeon, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Himalayan Owl, Martens's Warbler, Chestnut-flanked White-eye, White-collared Yuhina, Asian House Martin and Himalayan Cuckoo.

However, it was the Wawushan summit where we focussed our efforts and upon arriving at the top of the cable car each morning, we felt transported into a different world. The 30ft high 10km walkway provided incredible viewing opportunities and despite (or perhaps because of) other sometimes noise tourists and ambient music loudspeakers, the birds were fantastically confiding. Our first morning especially was entirely mist-free and we spent at least the first couple of hours in 'not-knowing-where-to-look-next' mode! Over two days we amassed a very impressive species list including Lesser Cuckoo, Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker (Dark-bodied) Long-tailed and Short-billed Minivets, Coal, Rufous-vented, Grey-crested, Black-bibbed and Green-backed Tits. White-throated Needletail and Himalayan Swiftlet whipped between the pines at breakneck speeds, whilst the undergrowth exploded with the songs of skulking bush-warblers and chats. Diligent listening allowed us to get tempt Spotted, Yellow-bellied and Aberrant Bush-Warblers into the open as well as White-browed Bush-robins, Golden Bush-robins, Himalayan Shortwing, Bianchi's Warbler and perhaps best of all a showy White-bellied Redstart (a nightingale in all but name)!

Parrotbills were also wonderfully common and obliging with Brown, Great, Three-toed, Grey-hooded, Golden and Fulvous all showing well. Laughingthrushes were confiding like nowhere else and the photographers in the group were in seventh heaven from the performances of Black-faced, Red-winged and Elliots just feet away! Darjeeling and Three-toed Woodpeckers also showed fantastically and Sichuan Thrush, Rosy Pipit, Buff-throated, Sichuan and Buff-barred Warblers proved very confiding. Both days also produced moments of 'surely that's a cuddly toy and not a real animal' as we came within a few metres of three different Red Pandas.

Moving on from Wawushan, we visited the Erlangshan mountains around Labahe. The first afternoon walk along the river produced a handful of interesting birds, including Yellow-browed Tit, Yellow-bellied Tit, Black-browed Tit and Spotted Nutcracker. However, the highlight of the area was again around the highest reaches where we found both Rufous-breasted and Alpine Accentors, Collared Grosbeaks and our first Chinese White-browed and Dark-breasted Rosefinches. A couple of pairs of Blue-fronted Redstarts flitted amongst the sparse bushes above the treeline, whilst both Chestnut-crowned and Grey-sided Bush-warblers gave good performances singing close by in the rhododendron stands. A distant flock of Grandala could just above be discerned as blue as they flitted around on a high alpine meadow. We spent the remainder of our time in the area focussing on the middle altitude broad-leafed woodlands. Here we found several 'cute' singing Ashy-throated Leaf Warbler as well as prospecting pair of Ferruginous Flycatchers which gave tremendous views. Fire-capped and Yellow-browed Tits added to a lively morning as did Dusky-sided Flycatcher, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Grey-hooded Fulvetta and Stripe-throated Yuhina. A Grey-headed Woodpecker was our first since Sichuan, whilst a pair of responsive Besra gave an excellent performance, although Pere David's Tit frustrated with just a brief backlit bird.

Our next port of call was at Longgancangou. Whilst a grey afternoon walk around the village seemed to promise little, we still managed excellent views of a singing Chinese Blue Flycatcher as well as much improved sighting of the insanely skulky Sichuan Bush Warbler. The next morning, we began at the highest accessible point, making a number of stops on our way down the mountain. We were rewarded with nice views of Golden-breasted Fulvetta and nice flyby from a Eurasian Goshawk. The highlight of the morning, however, came slightly lower down when we achieved fantastic views of a truly untamed adult male Temminck's Tragopan. Further down still we found Alström's Warbler, David's Fulvetta, Emei Leaf Warbler and got a phenomenal performance from a singing Fujian Niltava.

Our last morning in the area was invested primarily on searching out Golden-fronted Fulvetta. Although there were plenty of highlights while we searched in the form of White-backed and Bay Woodpeckers, Black Baza and several show Alstrom's Warblers, it was still something of a nervous wait – taking until after 9am to track down a family group which eventually flitted around our heads. There was still time for a stop in some more open habitat lower down, where we connected a good selection of birds including Rufous-faced Warbler, Mountain Hawk-eagle, Grey-faced Buzzard, Oriental Greenfinch, Russet Sparrow, and Dusky Fulvetta.

A long journey to Wolong meant we arrived just before dusk. We were ready to go early the next morning however and wound our way up the mountain switchbacks for a dawn breakfast the first tunnel at Balangshan. We spent most of the next two days between here and the far side of the north tunnel where the old (now inaccessible) road over the pass rejoins the main highway. Careful scanning of the hillsides and mountain meadows in the area eventually produced multiple White Eared Pheasants, two distant Chinese Monals, multiple confiding Blood Pheasants and a group of Tibetan Snowcock. A flurry of new Rosefinch species, included Common, Chinese White-browed, Sharpe's, Dark-breasted, Pink-rumped (and Crimson-browed Finch for some). Redstarts delighted us throughout with White-capped Plumbeous, White-throated, Daurian and Blue-fronted all pleasingly common. Mammals were well represented too, with our first Himalayan Marmot, several groups of Blue Sheep and surprise pair of Yellow-throated Martens. The lower slopes too held a range of top birds. Working hard, we dug out Chestnut-throated Monal-Partridge, Giant Laughingthrush, Kessler's Thrush and even Rufous-bellied Niltava, although it took until dawn on our third day to gain good views of a spectacular male Firethroat. A couple of late afternoons spent in the lower-altitude hide near Wolong eventually produced sensational views of a total of 6 Golden Pheasants including an adult male, as well as pleasing views of Slaty Bunting, Sooty Tit, Grey-winged Blackbird and (for some) Barred Laughingthrush. With some final extra effort, we also managed to ascend up the old road high enough to find a confiding Chinese Rubythroat on our final morning before departing the area.

From Balangshan we began heading towards the Tibetan Plateau, first stopping overnight near Mengbishan. We were out first thing the next days, listening intently and straining our eyesight against the fog-enshrouded pine forests to discern movement. White-winged Crossbill, Himalayan Bluetail, Tibetan Serin, White-browed Fulvetta, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Dark-rumped Rosefinch and Black Woodpecker flicked between the pines and rhododendrons giving decent views and as we made our way to the treeline we found Long-tailed Thrush and Streaked Rosefinch. We the continued our way towards the town of Zoige (or Ruo'ergai), continuing to wend our way up and pass through a number of impressively long road tunnels. As we arrived onto the flat of Tibetan plateau, we immediately began seeing new species. Black-necked Cranes stood unconcerned at roadside marshes and Ruddy Shelducks flapped between pools. Gaggles of Black-rumped and Azure-winged Magpies were attendant on overhead wires. Stopping at small quarry we were greeted by the sounds of stratospheric Oriental Skylarks hovering in the wind before plunging their way earthward. A pair of Citrine Wagtails buzzed from a small pool while Rock Sparrows and Eastern Black Redstarts flicked between boulders. After considerable scanning we began to assume the formerly resident Eagle Owl had switched roost sites, until a gigantic form suddenly erupted the quarry side below us and glided onto the nearby marsh. Shifting position, we gained exceptional views until the bird decided to return towards its initial spot. Shortly after, an eagle-eyed spot of a Giant Shrike on the wires allowed us all to gain excellent views. A final stop of the day at the edge of an unassuming scrub-covered valley side produced our new bird of the day – the unique, monotypic Urocynchramidae that is Przevalski's Finch.

Our time in the Zoige area was split between the pine-carpeted valleys of the Baxi Forest and the Yak-grazed plains and marshes of the plateau proper. The forest birds took a little work at times, although we still gained great views of a suite of new species. Plain Laughingthrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Spectacled Parrotbill, Three-banded Rosefinch, Crested Tit-warbler, Red Crossbill, Godlewski's Bunting, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Goldcrest, Sichuan Tit and Blue Eared-pheasant all gave good performances. A long afternoon hunt for we had only distant calls as reward for our Sichuan Jay hunt, however returning on our final morning we eventually gain phenomenal views of a confiding family group. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrushes, which remained embedded deep within the willow scrub in cold weather – only offering the briefest of glimpses for some of the group.

On the main plateau we found the grasslands littered by 'fluffballs' – in the main these were of course thousands of Plateau Pika. However, we soon found concentrations of White-rumped and Red-necked Snowfinches, with clumsy young birds wobbling out of their burrow nests for the first time and huddling together against snow flurries whilst waiting for their busy parents to deliver food. Amongst them we located several Ground Tits and Horned Larks and in areas with longer sward Tibetan Larks were obvious. The large wetland at Flower Lake (though a popular tourist attraction) also proved excellent for waterbirds, with Whiskered, White-winged and Common Terns hawking the water alongside good numbers of Salim Ali's Swift. Ducks included some confiding pairs of Ferruginous, whilst Eurasian Bittern, Eastern Marsh Harrier and Pallas's Gull were also highlights. Best of all however was a very territorial (and showy) Brown-cheeked Rail – a species not previously recognised as breeding species in the region.

Mammals were represented well in the area too – a Grey Wolf sauntered across the road just after dawn, giving us a couple of cursory glances before wandering off. A lone Tibetan Antelope grazed the hillside amongst scores of Himalayan Marmots and a single Tibetan Fox gave good enough scope views for us to appreciate its truly odd-looking face. Woolly Hares proved common on the scrubbiest hillsides as well as Tufted, Sika and Eastern Roe Deer.

From the Plateau we headed Southwards towards Gonggangling Pass. A productive en route stop provided excellent views of Pine Bunting, Plain Mountain Finch and a confiding pair of White-browed Tit-warblers. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated from here, making for a rather we final day in the highlands. However, we still located the likes of Blyth's Pipit, Chinese Thrush a surprise Lesser Coucal and a flushed Chinese Grouse whilst fighting to keep our optics dry. A stop off at Liing Yan temple near Dujiangyan on our return route gave nice views of Grey-headed Woodpecker, Black-chinned Fulvetta and Great Barbet, but a singing Chinese Hwamei unfortunately refused to show itself.

There was still time for an amazing evening meal in Chengdu and to reflect on some of our favourite experiences before parting ways for our early departing flights the next morning.

TOP 5 BIRDS OF THE TRIP

1. Temminck's Tragopan
2. Golden Pheasant
3. Firethroat

4. Lady Amherst's Pheasant

5. Przevalski's Finch

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g., it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range, the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). **2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.1)**.

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

BIRDS

Bar-headed Goose ◊ *Anser indicus* A flock of around 20 birds showed well by the roadside at Zoigê

Greylag Goose *Anser answer* A common breeding bird around Flower Lake, Zoigê

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* Common on wetlands throughout our visit to the Tibetan Plateau

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* A single bird flew over at Flower Lake,

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* A handful at Flower Lake, Zoigê

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* One at Lashi Lake, Yunnan

Eastern Spot-billed Duck (Chinese S-b D) *Anas zonorhyncha* A few pairs at Lashi Lake, Yunnan

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Lashi Lake and Flower Lake both held small numbers

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* One on our first morning in Qingxi Park and a few pairs around Flower Lake

Common Pochard *Aythya farina* A few on drives in Zoige county and several at Flower Lake

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* Several showy birds at Flower Lake

Blood Pheasant ◊ *Ithaginis cruentus* Several performed well at Balangshan, Mengbishan and Baxi Forest. Heard elsewhere

Temminck's Tragopan ◊ *Tragopan temminckii* Phenomenal views from the hide at Zhichang Ping and a wonderful 'traditional' sighting of a close male at Longgcangou N.P

Verreaux's Monal-Partridge ◊ (**Chestnut-throated P**) *Tetraophasis obscurus* Fantastic views of birds just below the pass at Balangshan and heard close by at Mengbishan.

Chinese Monal ◊ *Lophophorus lhuysii* Endemic. Fairly distant views of birds on hillsides around Balanagshan.

Chinese Grouse ◊ *Tetrastes sewerzowi* Endemic. Brief views for a couple of group members of a bird flushed at Gonggangling

Tibetan Partridge ◊ *Perdix hodgsoniae* One gave close-range flybys before perching right out in the open SW of Zoige

Golden Pheasant ◊ *Chrysolophus pictus* Endemic. After a patient wait, we eventually encountered 6 (including a superb adult male) from the hide at Wolong

Lady Amherst's Pheasant ◊ *Chrysolophus amherstiae* Several stunners from the hides at Zhichang Ping and a couple of obliging males elsewhere

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Not uncommon around the Baxi Forest and roadsides around Zoige county

White Eared Pheasant ◊ *Crossoptilon crossoptilon* Endemic. A couple of quite nice scope views of groups around Balangshan

Blue Eared Pheasant ◊ *Crossoptilon auritum* Endemic. Decent scope views in the Baxi forest.

Silver Pheasant ◊ *Lophura nycthemera* A displaying male in the middle of the road and another bossing the feeders at Zhichang Ping.

Chinese Bamboo Partridge ◊ *Bambusicola thoracicus* Endemic. Several obliging birds gave extended views from hides at Zhichang Ping

Sichuan Partridge ◊ *Arborophila rufipectus* Endemic. Heard fairly close to the hide at Sanchahe, but birds had not been visiting for over two weeks and were assumed to be in an unfavourable period of their breeding cycle.

Tibetan Snowcock ◊ *Tetraogallus tibetanus* Several scoped fairly well from the upper reaches of the road at Balangshan

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris* Small numbers at several highland locations. Best seen feeding low around Longcanggou.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* Frequently encountered in the highlands – especially at close range around Wawushan summit.

Salim Ali's Swift ◊ *Apus salimalii* Small numbers recorded in from high elevations at numerous sites were clearly this species. Over 70 birds presumed to be this species were feeding low over Flower Lake, however the species is virtually inseparable from formerly conspecific *pacificus* in the field, the migration route of which could conceivably include this area.

Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Fairly commonly heard and at least one seen from the roadside near Muchuan

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparverioides* Heard in various locations and seen fairly well at the summit at Wawushan

Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus* A couple of showy individuals at the Wawushan summit.

Himalayan Cuckoo *Cuculus saturates* Regularly heard. One seen well at mid-elevations at Wawushan

Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus* Very common at the highest elevations around Balangshan and Zoige

Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* A complete surprise Gonggangling pass – apparently not recorded previously North of Chengdu!

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral P) *Columba [livia] domestica* Small numbers around urbanisation

Hill Pigeon ♦ ***Columba rupestris*** A bird phenotypically matching this species flew over in the Zoige hills – a couple of other candidates were seen more distantly.

Snow Pigeon ♦ ***Columba leuconota*** A few were seen closely around the Balangshan tunnel.

Speckled Wood Pigeon ♦ ***Columba hodgsonii***

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* Small numbers around at mid-elevations. Best seen from the hide at Wolong.

Spotted Dove (Eastern S D) *Spilopelia chinensis* Common around human habitations in the lowlands. Best seen in Chengdu.

Brown-cheeked Rail ♦ ***Rallus indicus*** One performed spectacularly well at Flower Lake

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A few at Flower Lake

Eurasian Coot (Common C) *Fulica atra* Several at both Lashi Lake, Yunnan and Flower Lake

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* One glimpsed on a roadside pool near Zhichang Ping

Black-necked Crane ♦ ***Grus nigricollis*** Fairly common throughout our time on the Tibetan Plateau

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Common at Qingxi Park, Lijiang and Lashi Lake

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Common at Lashi Lake and Flower Lake

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* A brief pair seen by some at Flower Lake. A write-in.

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*** A trio at Lashi Lake, Lijiang

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus* Fairly common on plateau wetlands

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Two flew overhead at Flower Lake calling

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* A single adult was feeding over Flower Lake

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Birds of the distinctive dusky-breasted and short-billed race *tibetana* were common at Flower Lake and also noted feeding over many small water bodies around Zoige

Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* A single distantly at Lashi Lake and over 100 cavorting with tourists at Flower Lake

Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G) *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* Two feeding at Flower Lake gave distant scope views

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* A single bird seen in flight at flower lake

Yellow Bittern (Y) *Ixobrychus sinensis* Two showed well on the first morning at Qingxi Park, Yunnan

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Commonest in Huanhuaxi Park, Chengdu in the large heronry.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Common in Chengdu and seen at a number of roadside wetlands on the Tibetan Plateau

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A surprise lone individual was at Erlangshan

Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus* First noted at Lashi Lake, Yunnan but surprisingly along rivers in many highland areas.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* First seen at Lashi Lake, several other scattered singletons

Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta* A couple flew over in Chengdu

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Several birds around the heronries in Chengdu

Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) *Gypaetus barbatus* Not uncommon in the most mountainous areas – at least 5 seen around Balangshan

Crested Honey Buzzard (Eastern H B, Oriental H B) *Pernis [ptilorhynchus] orientalis* First seen over the mid-elevation slopes at Wawushan – a notable flock of 10+ at Baxi Forest

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* A single bird perched up co-operatively at Xiao Shi Ba, Longgcangou.

Himalayan Vulture (H Griffon V) *Gyps himalayensis* Several sightings in the most mountainous areas, including 20+ over the lower pass at Balangshan

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis* Singles at Erlangshan, Fazhan and Mengbisha

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* Three circling with vultures at Balangshan

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Pairs over Longgcangou, Xiao Shi Ba and the lower part of Balangshan

Besra *Accipiter virgatus* A showy pair at Longgcangou and circling bird at Xiao Shi Ba

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Several singles including

Eurasian Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* One in the highlands at Longgcangou was typically brief.

Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* A single distantly quartering over wetlands at Flower Lake.

Black Kite (Black-eared K) *Milvus [migrans] lineatus* Common around the Tibetan Plateau and Baxi Forest.

Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus* Only one recorded – a migrant drifting over Fazhan village.

Upland Buzzard ♦ ***Buteo hemilasius*** Fairly common around the plateau at Zoige.

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo refectus* Common around Balangshan and a single at Baxi Forest

Little Owl *Athene noctua* Three seen, including from the roadside on the plateau near Zoige.

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo* A cooperative bird was locating in a roadside quarry en route to Zoige

Himalayan Owl ♦ **(H Wood O) *Strix nivicolum*** One gave several good flight sorties in middle-elevation forest at Wawushan.

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Heard only. One calling in open pine forest near Lijiang

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Singles at Qingxi Park and Lashi Lake

Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens* Several calling and glimpsed bird one was finally seen well at Lin Yang Temple.

Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus* A single showed well, albeit briefly along the Jinan Road, Yunnan.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus* A cooperative pair near the Fuguo Temple, Lijiang and another along the river at Erlangshan

Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker ♦ **(Dark-bodied W) *Picoides [tridactylus] funebris*** Endemic. Two singles including a fantastically cooperative female at Wawushan summit.

Necklaced Woodpecker ♦ ***Dryobates pernyi*** One showed well near out accommodations at Wawushan

Darjeeling Woodpecker ♦ ***Dendrocopos darjellensis*** After several calls we eventually caught up with one at the Wawushan summit.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A few in Yunnan and one in Huanhuaxi Park, Chengdu

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* Good views along the river at Xiao Shi Ba

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* A brief flyover at Mengbishan

Grey-headed Woodpecker (Black-naped W) *Picus [canus] guerini* Singles in Lijiang, Erlangshan and Ling Yan Temple

Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis* Common by voice and seen well around and Wawushan

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Small numbers throughout.

Saker Falcon ♦ *Falco cherrug* A close perched bird and a couple of distant flybys as Flower Lake

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Singles at Lashi Lake and in Chengdy

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus* A brief male was seen on the Jinan Rd, near Lijiang. A write-in.

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus* Commonest at Wawushan, recorded from at least 8 locations.

Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris* A couple of on both days at Wawushan summit. Also, near Lijiang.

Black-naped Oriole (Eastern B-n O) *Oriolus [chinensis] diffusus* Five presumed migrants At Qingxi Reservoir and couple elsewhere

Hair-crested Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus* Best seen from the hide at Zhichang Ping

Ashy Drongo (Chinese White-faced D) *Dicrurus [leucophaeus] innexus* A couple showed well at Shanchahe, Yunnan

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Fairly common throughout open lowland areas

White-throated Fantail (Y) *Rhipidura albicollis* A single bird at Black Dragon Park, Lijiang

Chinese Grey Shrike ♦ *Lanius giganteus* Endemic. At least three seen around the Tibetan Plateau. Now split by IOC from Chinese Grey Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus* with the name Giant Grey Shrike

Tiger Shrike ♦ *Lanius tigrinus* Obliging males at Chengdu and Fazhan

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Ones and twos throughout. Seen well at Qingxi Park and Gonggangling Pass

Long-tailed Shrike (Chinese L-t S) *Lanius [schach] schach* Small numbers seen from the road while passing through the lowlands.

Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* A common bird of open upland areas.

Sichuan Jay ♦ *Perisoreus internigrans* Endemic. After giving us the run around a family group gave wonderful views at Baxi on our second attempt.

Eurasian Jay ♦ (Plain-crowned J) *Garrulus glandarius* Several brief views and finally some which stayed put around Lin Yang Temple.

Azure-winged Magpie ♦ (Asian A-w M) *Cyanopica cyanus* Several groups recorded along the road en route to Zoige

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythroryncha* Common in lower and middle elevations, including Fuguo Temple and Wawushan.

Black-rumped Magpie ♦ *Pica bottanensis* Several singles along the road to Zoige. Very similar to *serica*.

Oriental Magpie *Pica serica* Often seen at the roadside at lower elevations.

Spotted Nutcracker (Eurasian N) *Nucifraga caryocatactes* Commonest in Yunnan, a few in Sichuan pine woods.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Common during our time around the Tibetan plateau.

Alpine Chough (Yellow-billed C) *Pyrhocorax graculus* Good numbers distantly at Balangshan.

Daurian Jackdaw ♦ *Coloelus dauuricus* Scattered birds seen from the road around Zoige

Carrion Crow ♦ (Oriental C) *Corvus [corone] orientalis* A couple at Baxi Forest and Geliping

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax* A handful around Balangshan and Zoige

Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* Fairly common throughout in lower elevation woodlands

Fire-capped Tit ♦ *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* Good views of a confiding bird at Erlangshan

Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus* Several cooperative individuals including at Erlangshan and Langcangou.

Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris* First seen at Wawushan. Common in the highest elevation forests.

Coal Tit (Himalayan C T) *Periparus [ater] aemodius* Lots of nice views of this distinctive crested form in high elevation pine forest.

Yellow-bellied Tit ♦ *Pardaliparus venustulus* Endemic. Occasional in broadleaf mid elevation forest including Erlangshan.

Grey-crested Tit *Lophophanes dichrous* Scarce at Wawushan but commoner at Baxi and Gonggangling.

White-browed Tit ♦ *Poecile superciliosus* Endemic. Four tracked down SW of Zoige after some effort.

Pere David's Tit ♦ (Rusty-breasted T) *Poecile davidi* Endemic. A frustratingly brief individual seen by some of the group at Erlangshan

Black-bibbed Tit ♦ *Poecile hypermelaenus* Two brief encounters near Lijiang and on the summit at Wawushan.

Sichuan Tit ◊ (Tibetan T) *Poecile weigoldicus* Endemic. Common around Balangshan and Baxi Forest

Ground Tit ◊ *Pseudopodoces humilis* An easily spotted feature of open landscapes around Zoige where small numbers were seen in the open pastures each day.

Japanese Tit *Parus minor* Common in Yunnan and a handful in Sichuan.

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus* One of the commonest birds of mid-elevation forests. Fifteen or more at Xiao Shi Ba.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Common on the plateau around Zoige

Horned Lark ◊ (Himalayan H L) *Eremophila alpestris* A handful seen around the Zoige area

Tibetan Lark ◊ *Melanocorypha maxima* Fairly common around Zoige, including Flower Lake

Black Bulbul (Himalayan B B) *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* Common in degraded and forested habitats below ~2000m

Crested Finchbill ◊ (Y) *Spizixos canifrons* A handful each day in Yunnan.

Collared Finchbill ◊ *Spizixos semitorques* First seen near Wuchuan. A couple of confiding birds at Fazhan

Brown-breasted Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* Common throughout the lowlands and ever recorded at over 4000m at Balanshan

Light-vented Bulbul (Chinese B) *Pycnonotus sinensis* Small numbers throughout the lowlands

Pale Martin *Riparia diluta* A couple of groups around Lashi Lake, Yunnan and Flower Lake

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Small number in the lowlands and around Zoige

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus* Nesting in the uplands as high as 3800m including on accommodations and park buildings.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Common in Yunnan lowlands and a couple at Fazhan

Pygmy Cupwing (P Cupwing) *Pnoepyga pusilla* One showed at close proximity at Zhichang Ping

Rufous-faced Warbler ◊ *Abroscopus albogularis* Heard in a number of spots, seen well at Fazhan.

Brown-flanked Bush Warbler *Horornis fortipes* Commonly heard from the mid-elevation understory. Seen well at Zhichang Ping

Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler ◊ *Horornis acanthizoides* Endemic. Common in highest-elevation scrub. Seen well at Wawushan summit.

Aberrant Bush Warbler ◊ (Perplexing B W) *Horornis [flavolivaceus] intricatus* Commonest at Wawushan summit were seen well.

Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler ◊ *Cettia major* A confiding bird at the highest reaches of Erlangshan

Grey-sided Bush Warbler ◊ *Cettia brunnifrons* A very showy bird in the high reaches of Erlangshan

White-browed Tit-warbler ◊ *Leptopocile sophiae* A responsive pair gave themselves up at Geliping Pass

Crested Tit-warbler ◊ *Leptopocile elegans* One eventually showed well, albeit briefly at Baxi Forest

Black-throated Bushtit (B-t Tit, Red-headed T) *Aegithalos concinnus* Common in the lowlands of Yunnan and Chengdu

Black-browed Bushtit ◊ (B-b Tit) *Aegithalos bonvaloti*

Sooty Bushtit ◊ (S Tit) *Aegithalos fuliginosus* Endemic. A small group showed well from the hide at Wolong.

Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher* Perhaps the commonest warbler of very high-altitude scrub

Ashy-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis* A couple of singing birds responded well at Erlangshan

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* Common by voice in higher altitude pinewoods, good numbers passing at Qingxi Park

Chinese Leaf Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* Endemic. A few singletons including in Yunnan and at Baxi Forest

Sichuan Leaf Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus forresti* Endemic. Best seen at Wawushan summit, but several elsewhere

Yellow-streaked Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus armandii* A few scattered sightings including at Baxi Forest

Tickell's Leaf Warbler ◊ (Alpine L W) *Phylloscopus [affinis] occisinensis* Endemic subspecies. Migrants in Yunnan and breeding birds at Erlangshan. Alpine Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus occisinensis* was previously split from Tickell's Leaf Warbler *P. affinis* (Martens et al. 2008) but is relumped with *P. affinis* based on bioacoustic, morphological and genomic analyses (Zhang et al. 2019; IOC 2024).

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* Many migrants in Qingxi Park and a couple at Lashi Lake

Buff-throated Warbler ◊ *Phylloscopus subaffinis* A couple were found on territory at Wawushan summit

Eastern Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus* A passage bird on the mid-slopes of Wawushan

Grey-crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus tephrocephalus* Fairly frequent on degraded forest edges, particularly in Yunnan. One confirmed at Longgancangou.

Bianchi's Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus valentine* Uplands of Yunnan and showy at Wawushan summit

Alström's Warbler ♦ (Plain-tailed W) *Phylloscopus soror* Endemic. The trickiest to find of the 'Grey-crowned' complex – eventually seen well in the submontane area of Longgancangou

Martens's Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus omeiensis* Endemic. Common at mid-elevations, especially at Wawushan

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* A ubiquitous warbler, present to even the highest elevations

Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* At least one bird confirmed from inspection of sonogram at Qingxi Park and another photographed at Wawushan summit was watched by the whole group

Emei Leaf Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus emeiensis* Small numbers in the Longgancangou area.

and Balangshan.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus castaniceps* Seen well at Wawushan and Longgancangou.

Blyth's Leaf Warbler (Y) *Phylloscopus reguloides* Several seen well at Sanchahe, Yunnan

Claudia's Leaf Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus claudiae* Endemic. Common in mid-elevation broadleaf woodlands, 15 at Erlangshan

Kloss's Leaf Warbler ♦ *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti* Several in Yunnan and one at Longgancangou.

Davison's Leaf Warbler ♦ (Y) *Phylloscopus intensor* Three seen well at Jinnan Road near Lijiang.

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* A few around Qingxi Park and Lashi Lark

Brown Bush Warbler ♦ *Locustella luteoventris* First seen Sanchahe, a couple elsewhere

Spotted Bush Warbler ♦ *Locustella thoracica* Showy birds at Wawushan summit. Heard in a couple of other highland sites.

Sichuan Bush Warbler ♦ *Locustella chengi* First glimpsed at Zhichang Ping, fortunately better views were forthcoming at Longgancangou.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* Two singing at Qingxi Park a couple of singles elsewhere

Golden-breasted Fulvetta ♦ *Lioparus chrysotis* Over a dozen totalled from mid-elevation woodlands, including Wawushan and Zhichang Ping.

Spectacled Fulvetta ♦ *Fulvetta ruficapilla* Endemic. A few around Fuguo temple Lijiang and a couple of others in Yunnan.

Yunnan Fulvetta ♦ *Fulvetta fratercula* Small groups at Jinnan Road and Fuguo Temple, Lijiang.

Chinese Fulvetta ♦ *Fulvetta striaticollis* Endemic. A pair showed well for less than 10 minutes or so in Baxi Forest.

White-browed Fulvetta ♦ *Fulvetta vinipectus* A couple of brief birds at Mengbishan

Grey-hooded Fulvetta ♦ *Fulvetta cinereiceps* Endemic. Seen well at several sites – perhaps best at Wawushan summit.

Spot-breasted Parrotbill ♦ *Paradoxornis guttaticollis* A small group showed well at Zhichang Ping, Yunnan

Great Parrotbill ♦ *Paradoxornis aemodius* Several birds performed splendidly at Wawushan summit.

Brown Parrotbill ♦ *Paradoxornis unicolor* Small groups each day on the Wawushan summit

Three-toed Parrotbill ♦ *Paradoxornis paradoxus* Endemic. A couple of pairs each day on the Wawushan summit

Grey-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis gularis* Mobile but cooperative birds showed well in the scrub around Zhichang Ping. The best-looking Parrotbill of the trip?

Fulvous Parrotbill ♦ *Suthora fulvifrons* Small groups each day on the Wawushan summit

Golden Parrotbill ♦ *Suthora verreauxi* Common in dense bamboo stand on the lower hills, although tricky to photograph!

Spectacled Parrotbill ♦ *Suthora conspicillata* Endemic. A single bird on the scrubby hillsides at Baxi Forest

Grey-hooded Parrotbill ♦ *Suthora zappeyi* Endemic. At least 8 at Wawushan around the summit.

Eye-ringed Parrotbill ♦ (Y) *Suthora ricketti* Endemic. A flock of 10 or so found in riverside scrub not far from Lijiang. Formerly considered a race of Brown-winged Parrotbill *Suthora brunnea*, but now split by both Clements and IOC (14.1)

Ashy-throated Parrotbill ♦ *Suthora alphonsiana* A handful in the parks of Chengdu

White-collared Yuhina ♦ *Parayuhina diademata* One of the commonest birds of highland woodlands throughout.

Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta* A couple of large flocks at Longgcangou and Ling Yan Monestary

Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis* Two showed well on the mid-slopes of Erlang Shan

Rufous-vented Yuhina ♦ *Yuhina occipitalis* A couple of unfortunately brief birds came in right whilst most of the group was understandably distracted by enjoying our staked-out Biet's Laughingthrush!

Chestnut-flanked White-eye ♦ *Zosterops erythropleurus* Small numbers around Wawushan.

Swinhoe's White-eye *Zosterops simplex* Regularly seen in at lower elevations especially in Yunnan. Also, in Longgancangou. Formerly considered part of Warbling White-eye *Zosterops japonicus*.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Cyanoderma ruficeps* Common by voice in mid-elevation forests. Seen well at Wawushan.

Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* Common in Yunnan. Also recorded in Wawushan and Fazhan

Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler ♦ *Erythrogenys gravivox* Multiple obliging groups in Yunnan pine forests. Heard at Erlangshan

Golden-fronted Fulvetta ♦ *Schoeniparus variegaticeps* Endemic. A confiding family party at Xio Shi Ba.

Rusty-capped Fulvetta ♦ (Y) *Schoeniparus dubius* A couple around Sanchahe, Yunnan

Dusky Fulvetta ♦ (Brown-capped F) *Schoeniparus brunneus* Endemic. Heard around Longgancangou and seen well at Fazhan

David's Fulvetta ♦ *Alcippe davidi* Small groups at Longgancangou and Xiao Shi Ba.

Yunnan Fulvetta ♦ (Y) *Alcippe fratercula* Obliging groups at Jian Road and Fuguo Temple, Yunnan

Black-faced Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron affine* A handful of cooperative birds at the Wawushan summit

Elliot's Laughingthrush ♦ *Trochalopteron elliotii* The commonest Laughingthrush. First seen in Yunnan and present in high elevation woodland and scrub throughout.

Red-winged Laughingthrush ♦ *Trochalopteron formosum* One at Zhichang Ping and several at Wawushan

Black-headed Sibia ♦ *Heterophasia desgodinsi* Some cooperative birds in Yunnan where several were seen.

Blue-winged Minla *Actinodura cyanouroptera* A few at Jinan Road, Yunnan and common at Wawushan and Longgancangou.

Bar-throated Minla (Y) (Chestnut-tailed M) *Actinodura strigula* Fairly common in Yunnan.

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* Common in mid-elevation scrub to almost the point of annoyance!

Red-tailed Minla *Minla ignotincta* Several showy birds, including on the summit at Wawushan

Emei Shan Liocichla ♦ *Liocichla omeiensis* Endemic. Wonderful views from the hides at Zhichang Ping and a couple found at Wawushan

Chinese Hwamei ♦ *Garrulax canorus* Photographed by one lucky group member at Sanchahe and heard only at Ling Yan Temple.

Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush ◊ *Lanthocincla sukatschewi* Endemic. Heard on four separate occasions at Baxi Forest and Gonggangling, but frustratingly unresponsive, remaining in dense scrub – glimpsed by one tour member.

Moustached Laughingthrush ◊ (Western M L) *Lanthocincla [cineracea] strenua* An obliging bird at the stakeout at Sanchahe. Nominata and *strenua* forms actually constitute the Western clade – a strong contender for a future split from Eastern () already adopted by Birdlife /

Spotted Laughingthrush ◊ *Lanthocincla ocellata* Two very showy birds at Sanchahe and heard at Zhichang Ping

Giant Laughingthrush ◊ *Lanthocincla maxima* Endemic. Fairly common and obliging in the highest elevation scrub around Balangshan

White-speckled Laughingthrush ◊ (Y) (Biet's L) *Lanthocincla bieti* Endemic. A wonderful performance by bird at our stakeout near Sanchahe.

Barred Laughingthrush ◊ *Lanthocincla lunulata* Endemic. Seen by a couple of people and heard by all at Wolong

White-browed Laughingthrush ◊ *Pterorhinus sannio* Common in low lying woodlands including Qingxi Park and Chengdu.

Plain Laughingthrush ◊ *Pterorhinus davidi* Endemic. Only seen around Baxi Forest, where we had good views.

Chinese Babax ◊ *Pterorhinus lanceolatus* Small numbers throughout. Most obliging from hides at Zhichang Ping and Wolong.

Buffy Laughingthrush ◊ *Pterorhinus berthemyi* Endemic. A common visitor to the hides at Zhichang Ping.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* A couple before the pass at Balangshan and numerous in Baxi Forest (yunnanensis / sikkimensis)

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* Common in the highest altitude woodlands and scrub, first seen at Wawushan (*szetschuanus*). "Recent DNA work suggests that species consists of four distinct clades, in Europe, Caucasus, Nepal and East Asia, respectively, which has been interpreted as cryptic speciation" (Birds of the World).

Przevalski's Nuthatch ◊ *Sitta przewalskii* A couple showed well in Baxi Forest

Yunnan Nuthatch ◊ (Y) *Sitta yunnanensis* After several hours searching and navigating road closures, we finally found two groups near Shijin Shan

Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *Sitta nagaensis* Showy birds at Sanchahe and Fuguo Temple, Yunnan

Hodgson's Treecreeper ◊ *Certhia hodgsoni* Common at Wawushan summit, a few elsewhere

Sichuan Treecreeper ◊ *Certhia tianquanensis* Heard at both Wawushan and Erlangshan, but frustratingly uncooperative at the former and from a moving cable car at the later!

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* A few around Chengdu

Red-billed Starling ♦ (Silky S) *Spodiopsar sericeus* A showy group at roadside service station near Mushuan

White-cheeked Starling ♦ (Grey S) *Spodiopsar cineraceus* A couple around the parks in central Chengdu.

Grandala ♦ *Grandala coelicolor* A handful scoped very distantly from the upper reaches of both Erlangshan and Balangshan

Long-tailed Thrush ♦ *Zoothera dixonii* One perched up singing gave great scope views at Mengbishan

Sichuan Thrush ♦ *Zoothera griseiceps* A couple of responsive individuals put in a great performance at Wawushan summit.

Chinese Thrush ♦ (C Song T) *Turdus mupinensis* A couple of frustratingly brief birds at Mengbishan.

Chinese Blackbird ♦ *Turdus mandarinus* Best seen in the Culture Park at Chengdu.

Grey-winged Blackbird *Turdus boulboul* First seen Qingxi Park, Yunnan a few others including near Wolong.

White-backed Thrush ♦ (Kessler's T) *Turdus kessleri* Common in the higher reaches of Balangshan and Zoige county

Chestnut Thrush ♦ *Turdus rubrocanus* A common inhabitant of high-elevation forest up to the treeline, though generally lower than the former. First seen Wawushan summit.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* Several in Chengdu and also at Fazhan.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica* A couple around Erlangshan

Ferruginous Flycatcher ♦ *Muscicapa ferruginea* A displaying pair on the mid-slopes at Erlangshan.

Fujian Niltava ♦ *Niltava davidi* Phenomenal views of a bird which came in to Owllet calls at Longgancangou

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara* A female showed well to a few of us at Balangshan

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* Common in mid-elevation woodland

Chinese Blue Flycatcher ♦ *Cyornis glaucicomans* Endemic. Close views of a singing male at Longgancangou.

White-bellied Redstart ♦ *Luscinia phaenicuroides* Very common by voice in highland scrub. Seen well at Wawushan summit

White-tailed Robin *Myiomela leucura* Heard regularly from the thickest bamboo stands. Seen briefly at Zhichang Ping.

Firethroat ♦ *Calliope pectardens* Breeding endemic. Nice views of both males and (unusually) a female at mid-elevation of Balangshan

Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* A singing bird perched up for scope views at Baxi Forest, another glimpsed near Gonggangling

Chinese Rubythroat ♦ *Calliope tschebaiewi* Some considerable physical exertion allowed us to get high enough to find a stunning singing bird at Balangshan.

Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri* One heard along the upper slopes of Longgcangou unfortunately didn't show.

White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus leschenaultia* A bird seen briefly at mid-elevation at Wawushan.

Blue Whistling Thrush (Black-billed W T) *Myophonus caeruleus* Common in Yunnan along most watercourses, a couple in Sichuan

Himalayan Shortwing *Brachypteryx cruralis* One showed at the summit at Wawushan

Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea* Heard only around Wolong

Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor* Common by voice, seen well at Erlangshan

Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra* A couple of brief females perched in tough viewing conditions at Longgangou for some of the group.

Slaty-backed Flycatcher ♦ *Ficedula erithacus* Nice views around Wawushan and especially Baxi Forest.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophinata* Seen well at Wawushan summit

White-browed Bush Robin ♦ *Tarsiger indicus* Heard at numerous spots throughout. Seen briefly at Wawushan summit.

Golden Bush Robin ♦ *Tarsiger chrysaesus* A couple of smart birds at Wawushan and Erlangshan

Himalayan Bluetail (H Red-flanked B) *Tarsiger rufilatus* Nice views at Mengbishan and Baxi Forest

Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis* First seen at Erlangshan, common thereafter.

White-throated Redstart ♦ *Phoenicurus schisticeps* Very common around Zoige country and Baxi Forest

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus* Common along watercourses throughout.

White-capped Redstart (River Chat) *Phoenicurus leucocephalus* Common along watercourses throughout.

Black Redstart (Eastern B R) *Phoenicurus ochruros* Common around the Tibetan Plateau.

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus* Scattered individuals throughout. Best seen in Yunnan

Grey Bush Chat *Saxicola ferreus* Several in Yunnan. An obliging bird near Longgancangou.

Siberian Stonechat (Tibetan S) *Saxicola [maurus] przewalskii* Plenty seen from roadsides and some close views in Yunnan.

White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* One along the river at Balangshan

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasi* Seen well in Yunnan and a couple along the river near Longgancangou.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus* Common in Yunnan, a handful at lower-level forest in Sichuan

Mrs. Gould's Sunbird ◊ (Scarlet-breasted S) *Aethopyga [gouldiae] dabryi* Common in mid-elevation woodlands, particularly in Yunnan.

Fork-tailed Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga christinae* A pair showed well in Huanhuaxi Park, Chengdu.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia* A handful during our time around Zoige county.

White-rumped Snowfinch ◊ *Onychostruthus taczanowskii* The commonest passerine of well-grazed areas of the Tibetan Plateau.

Rufous-necked Snowfinch ◊ *Pyrgilauda ruficollis* Common in rockier areas of Zoige county

Russet Sparrow *Passer cinnamomeus* A few in Yunnan and small numbers at Fazhan village.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Common around human habitation.

Scaly-breasted Munia (Y) *Lonchura punctulate* A few at the first bend of the Yantze, near Lijiang.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* Two in Huahuaxi Park, Chengdu

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* A couple at the highest reaches of Erlangshan

Rufous-breasted Accentor ◊ *Prunella strophiata* Common at the highest reaches of Erlangshan and Balangshan.

Maroon-backed Accentor ◊ *Prunella immaculata* A brief bird at Mengbishan and a good views at Baxi Forest

Citrine Wagtail ◊ (Southern C W, Tibetan W) *Motacilla [citreola] calcarata* Great views of this stunner around Flower Lake

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* First seen in Yunnan and common at Zhichang Ping.

White Wagtail (Himalayan W) *Motacilla [alba] alboides* The stunningly distinctive

Blyth's Pipit ◊ *Anthus godlewskii* A single bird showed well in a clearing at Gonggangling.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Scattered singles throughout in pine forest and highland scrub.

Rosy Pipit ◊ *Anthus roseatus* Commonest above the treeline at Erlangshan

Przevalski's Finch ◊ *Urocynchramus pylzowi* Endemic. Stunning views of a total of 6 birds on scrubby hillsides around Zoige.

Collared Grosbeak ◊ *Mycerobas affinis* A few flying around at the top of Erlangshan

White-winged Grosbeak ◊ *Mycerobas carnipes* A couple gave reasonable views at Mengbiashan

Chinese Grosbeak ◊ (Yellow-billed G) *Eophona migratoria* A couple around the parks in Chengdu.

Grey-headed Bullfinch ◊ *Pyrrhula erythaca* Common in submontane scrub around Balangshan and Baxi Forest.

Dark-breasted Rosefinch *Procarduelis nipalensis* Numerous singles and pairs, including some confiding birds at Erlangshan and Mengbishan.

Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola* A few birds showed well at Geliping.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Plenty around Balangshan and Mengbishan

Streaked Rosefinch ◊ (Eastern Great R) *Carpodacus rubicilloides* Only a couple of females at Mengbishan

Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus pulcherrimus* Several at Geliping and Gonggangling

Pink-rumped Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus waltoni* Endemic. Common in the upper reaches of Balangshan where nice views were had.

Dark-rumped Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus edwardsii* A small flock showed well at Mengbishan

Sharpe's Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus verreauxii* A male and a couple of females in the fog at Balangshan – good job the calls are distinctive!

Vinaceous Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus vinaceus* Nice views at Wawushan summit and the hide at Wolong.

Three-banded Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus trifasciatus* An inconspicuous group gave brief views at Baxi forest.

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch ◊ *Carpodacus dubius* Endemic. Seen well and the distinctive nasal call was a constant feature of upland pine forest.

Crimson-browed Finch ◊ *Carpodacus subhimachalus* A duo performed briefly to a few of the group at Erlangshan.

Grey-capped Greenfinch *Chloris sinica* A couple showed well on the village edges at Fazhan

Black-headed Greenfinch ◊ (Y) *Chloris ambigua* Nice views at Sanchahe, Yunnan.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris* A handful of this dark-billed and different-sound birds around Flower Lake.

Red Crossbill (Common C) *Loxia curvirostra* Plenty of small flocks have good views at Baxi Forest.

Tibetan Serin ◊ (T Siskin) *Spinus thibetanus* Surprisingly just sing bird, which perched up for a couple of minutes at Mengbishan.

Slaty Bunting ◊ *Emberiza siemsseni* A couple of pairs around Wolong, including from the hide.

Pine Bunting ◊ *Emberiza leucocephalos* A dapper male showed well at Geliping

Godlewski's Bunting ◊ *Emberiza godlewskii* A single en route to Mengbishan and another dug out at Baxi Forest for those who had dipped.

Godlewski's Bunting ◊ (Yunnan B) *Emberiza [godlewskii] yunnanensis* Common throughout the pine forest of Yunnan.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* A pair at Qingxi Park, Lijiang.

Yellow-throated Bunting ◊ (Elegant B) *Emberiza elegans* Common in Yunnan and a confiding bird near Wolong.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* A small group of migrants showed well at Lashi Lake, Yunnan.

MAMMALS

Grey Wolf *Canis lupus* A smart adult sauntered across the road at dawn near Zoige.

Tibetan Fox* *Vulpes ferrilata* A singleton gave decent scope views on a hillside near Flower Lake.

Western Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*** Good views of four different individuals – three at Wawushan summit and fourth by the cable car station at Erlangshan.

Yellow-throated Marten* *Martes flavigula*** A family briefly high up at Balangshan.

Eastern Roe Deer* *Capreolus pygargus*** Three en route to the Tibetan Plateau.

Western Red Deer* *Cervus elaphus*** A handful in the lowlands of Erlangshan.

Sika Deer* *Cervus nippon*** A small group at Baxi Forest.

Tufted Deer* *Elaphodus cephalophus* Daily around Balangshan and a close individual in Baxi Forest.

Reeves's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* A brief one in the lower levels of Erlangshan.

Sambar* *Rusa unicolor* Up to 50 around the river at Erlangshan by night.

Takin (Golden T) *Budorcas taxicolor* Three by day on a distant mid-altitude hillside at Erlangshan.

Chinese Goral *Naemorhedus griseus* Several seen (both night and day) at mid-elevations of Erlangshan.

Tibetan Gazelle*** *Procapra picticaudata* A single grazing on a hillside near Flower Lake.

Blue Sheep* (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur* Multiple small groups high up at both Erlangshan and Balangshan.

Tibetan Macaque *Macaca thibetana* A few potentially troublesome troops around Erlangshan and Longgancangou.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus* Four or five on hillsides around Zoige.

Plateau Pika (Black-lipped P) *Ochotona curzoniae* Abundant on the Tibetan Plateau.

Moupin Pika (Forest P) *Ochotona thibetana* Small numbers around Erlangshan and Balangshan.

Pallas's Squirrel* *Callosciurus erythraeus* Common in broadleaved woodland, particularly the feeders at Sanchahe.

Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel *Dremomys pernyi* Common in broadleaved woodland, particularly the feeders at Sanchahe.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana* Abundant around Zoige..=

Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel *Tamias swinhoei* Common and tame around the summit at Wawushan.

Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel

Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus* A few around the parks in Chengdu.

BUTTERFLIES

Chinese Peacock Swallowtail *Papilio bianor* One in Fazhan village.

Chestnut Tiger *Parantica sita* One drifted around for a few minutes at Longgancangou.

Labyrinth sp. *Neope agrestis* This species (lacking a full English name) is endemic to central China but was common in mid-elevation woodland at several sites, most notable Erlangshan.

Indian Red Admiral *Vanessa indica* At least one at the summit at Wawushan.

REPTILES

Bamboo False Cobra *Pseudoxenodon bambusicola* This excellent cobra-mimic gave some of us a serious fright at Longgancangou.

Wa Shan Keelback *Hebius metusia* Nice views of this globally endangered snake on the road at Longgancangou, before it was shepherded to safe (IUCN: EN).