

BIRD TOURS
David Bishop

A Journey Through the Tibetan Plateau

2 July – 6 August, 2016

PART II



ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF BIRDS

Species highlighted in **bold blue** are endemic to China.

H = Heard only

1. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
22 July: Circa 51 counted at Donggai Cuona Lake.
2. **Ph** Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*
17 July: Circa 300+ at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo;
22 July: Circa 1,000+ including many young at Donggai Cuona Lake;
26 July: Good numbers, including several young on the shores of Koko Nor near Heimahe and at Bird Island reserve.
31 July: Ten in wetlands along the river near Lhasa.

As we noted this attractive species typically breeds on a variety of wetlands in highland plateau, generally at 4,000–5,300 m, preferably near rocky outcrops. This species' breeding population is crudely divided into three discrete populations: The Tibetan Plateau of Qinghai Province such as around Koko Nor; Tibet Proper and the far west of China up into the Tien Shan.
3. **Ph** Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
10 July: Widespread but only in small numbers (2-30) Hongyuan to Roergai.
22 July: Circa 100 with young at Donggai Cuona Lake.
26 July: Small numbers with young on the shores of Koko Nor near Heimahe and at Bird Island reserve.
4. Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*
17 July: Just one lovely male at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
26 July: A lone female on Donggai Cuona Lake.
5. Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
17 July: One drake at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo and
26 July: As many as 40 on the shores of Koko Nor near Heimahe and at Bird Island reserve.
6. **Ph** Common Merganser (Goosander) *Mergus merganser*
13 July: A flock of eleven chicks with on a lovely river within a broad valley

between Diebu and Jiuzhi.

16 July: Two females between Dari and Maduo.

7. Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

26 July: Circa 40 on the shores of Koko Nor near Heimahe and at Bird Island reserve.

8. Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*

9 July: One female on Mengbi Shan.

9. **Chinese Monal *Lophophorus ihuysii***

6 July: One female seen very nicely thanks to some good spotting by Alan on Balang Shan. This magnificent species has rather circumscribed range: Sichuan, S Gansu and possibly NW Yunnan; there are no recent records from NW Sichuan, SE Qinghai or E Tibet.

10. **H** Snow Partridge *Lerwa lerwa*

8 July: Heard two on the upper slopes of Balang Shan. Unfortunately heavy cloud precluded us from seeing them.

11. **Verreaux's Monal Partridge (Chestnut-throated P) *Tetraophasis***

obscurus **9 July:** Fantastic views of a single bird that ran right up to us on the slopes of Mengbi Shan. We then enjoyed prolonged views of a pair foraging in the evergreen forest below. Sensational. Endemic to the mountains of the eastern Tibetan Plateau in eastern Qinghai, central Gansu and N & W Sichuan.

12. **Ph** Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

We saw the first of these familiar birds as climbed onto the Tibetan Plateau *en route* to Hongyuan. Thereafter we saw and/or heard eight in the Baxi Valley; six between Roergai and Diebu; eight between Diebu and Jiuzhi; and one near Koko Nor.

13. White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

6 July: Great views of three adults and two chicks as they fed upslope on Balang Shan. This attractive species occurs in SE Qinghai, E Tibet (between the Yangtze and Salween rivers), SE Tibet and W Sichuan and from SW Sichuan to NW Yunnan. It barely crosses the border in to extreme northern Myanmar and NE India.

14. **Ph** Tibetan Eared Pheasant (Elwes's E P) *Crossoptilon harmani*

31 July: Common and ridiculously tame below Xionsi Nunnery near Lhasa. We saw eight adults and 4-5 chicks. The systematic position of this taxon has often been debated, especially as it interbreeds with *C. crossoptilon drouynii* in the Salween Valley and neighbouring watersheds; a detailed genetic study found that *harmani* is closest to *C. crossoptilon*, but that

differences between *crossoptilon* and *harmani* are similar to genetic differentiation shown by other taxa within this genus that are traditionally ranked as species. (HBW) HBW considers this taxon a good species distinct from *C. crossoptilon* on account of its mid-grey upperparts and underparts (except for the white throat, neck-sides and mid-belly and whitish-grey rump), with a white belly patch vs pale grey in morphologically closest form *dolani* (2); neck greyish-black, causing white throat and narrow white collar to stand out sharply (3); white belly patch vs none (1); slightly smaller size (on small sample, NHMUK, where mean wing 286 vs 310; at least 1). Monotypic. (HBW) Almost entirely confined to Tibet although there are a handful of records from the border areas of NE India.



15. **Blue Eared Pheasant** *Crossoptilon auritum*

11 July: Wonderful views of a handsome male as he fed, just after dawn, above the Baxi Valley. Endemic to China where it occurs from E Qinghai east through Gansu to Inner Mongolia (Helan Shan), and south to W Sichuan and extreme NE Tibet in the Tanggula Mountains.

16. Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hidgsoniae*

8 July: Fine views of a single male on Balang Shan. Four scurried across the road in front of us *en route* to Dari.

17. **H Koklass Pheasant** *Pucrasia macrolopha*

6 & 8 July: Heard commonly at and shortly after dawn on Balang Shan.

18. Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
17 July: Just a single bird at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
19. **Ph** Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
17 July: Circa 1,000, nearly all attending nests in the shallows at one end of a huge dam near Maduo;
22 July: Four attending young on Donggai Cuona Lake and
26 July: Circa 100 on the shores of Koko Nor and around Bird Island.
1 Aug: One on a small lake within the gardens of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet.
20. **Ph** Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*
16 July: Five in a broad valley with scattered wetlands (4,256m) between Dari and Maduo 34° 12' 34.4 N, 99° 13' 26.6 E.
21. Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
17 July: One at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo;
22 July: Circa 20 at Donggai Cuona Lake.
26 July: Several on the shores of Koko Nor and at Bird island.
22. Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea*
22 July: One at Donggai Cuona Lake.
23. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
5 July: Twenty-one counted as we passed through farmlands *en route* to Wolong from Chengdu;
10 July: One near Hongyuan on the SE Tibetan Plateau.
24. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
17 July: Circa 22 in a vast area of wetlands at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
25. Chinese Pond-Heron *Ardeola bacchus*
4 & 5 July: Present in small numbers in and around Chengdu, Sichuan.
22 July: One superb individual in breeding plumage at the small Wuzihu Reserve near Golmud.
26. Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
4 & 5 July: Modest numbers in and around Chengdu, Sichuan.
27. Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture) *Gypaetus barbatus*
We enjoyed several encounters with this magnificent bird: a total of six between Jiuzhi and Beiwu; three over a very little explored valley between

Shazhuyucum and Donggai Cuona Lake and one adult and an immature put on superb show over a small valley on Rubber Mountain.

28. **Ph** Himalayan Vulture (H Griffon Vulture) *Gyps himalayensis*
Widespread and fairly common throughout Sichuan, Qinghai and Tibet. Mostly in modest numbers (1-6) on most days, however, we counted 25 between Diebu and Jiuzhi and 24 between Jiuzhi and Beiwu. We also found an active nesting colony, high on a near vertical cliff within a small valley on Rubber Mountain; ca. 15 between Lhasa and Nyingchi and one soaring in the distance over Namche Barwa.



29. Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
16 July: One immature in very dry country between Dari and Maduo.
30. *Aquila sp*
21 July: One seen distantly in flight over the small Wuzihu Reserve near Golmud.
31. Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
14 July: One adult between Jiuzhi and Beiwu.
16 July: One adult and two immatures between Dari and Maduo and
26 July: One adult over Rubber Mountain.

32. Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus*
10 July: One female hunting over a protected patch of grassland at 3,540m near Cha'ergen, Qinghai.
33. ?Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*
16 July: One possible between Dari and Maduo.
34. Besra *Accipiter virgatus*
4 Aug: One at 3,635m in the Cuomujiri Reserve located just outside the city of Nyingchi, Tibet.
35. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
10 July: A total of six as we first emerged on to the SE Tibetan Plateau.
11 July: Four in and around the Baxi Valley.
12 July: Six between Roergai and Diebu.
13 July: Six between Diebu and Jiuzhi.
22 Aug: One as we headed out of Shazhuyucum.
1 Aug: One at 3,000m near Bahezhen, Tibet.

BUTEO spp

Not to put too finer point on it our understanding of Buteo taxonomy and especially how to identify the various taxa in the field, in eastern Asia, is nothing short of a complete mess. I recently wrote the following in order to gain some consensus as to what the situation is. I sent this to Pam Rasmussen who is supposedly something of an expert on such matters. Unfortunately she was too busy to take the time to comment on my summary. Robert DeCastello who has been working on raptors including monitoring Buteos on migration in Nepal recently commented that the group was a real mess and identifying them in the field was a lottery. The following is the summary I prepared and sent to Pam Rasmussen.

NOTE regarding the taxonomy and distribution of Buteos with special reference to China and Bhutan

Until recently (the past decade or so) both Himalayan and Eastern (Japanese) buzzards were widely considered conspecific with Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. Recent studies indicate these three taxa and other closely related Buteos are strongly differentiated genetically. Conversely morphologically they are weakly distinct which adds substantially to the problem especially in the arena of field identification. Evidently there has been much hybridization in the recent past, and species boundaries are likely to be redrawn with further research. (HBW). As a consequence of these taxa having been lumped under one species for a very long time, viz. Common Buzzard, our understanding of the distribution and status of Himalayan and

Eastern buzzards is hazy at best. This coupled with the difficulties of field identification continues to make our understanding of the status and distribution of these taxa very messy and difficult. The following is a synopsis of my understanding of how things appear to stand at present:

Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo (burmanicus) rufectus* (NOTE: rufectus replaces burmanicus due to priority issues)

Monotypic: Breeds from the western Himalayas in northern India east to montane south central China (Sichuan, Gansu) (Clements Checklist 2016). However, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) state that this species is actually resident (implying present all year round?) from the W Himalayas perhaps as far to the east as Bhutan, whereas HBW shows it as resident east to Arunachal Pradesh. It should be noted that neither Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) nor HBW include China in the breeding range of this species. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) also state that Himalayan Buzzard is a winter visitor to the Himalayas, south Assam Hills and Bangladesh. There are scattered records from Sri Lanka and possibly South India and SE Asia but these probably require re-evaluation. Interestingly HBW describes this taxon's range as S Tibet and Himalayas but only shows this species' range extending east in the Himalayas as far as Arunachal Pradesh, NE India ??????. Thus there is even a lack of congruence in relatively up to date texts concerning the basic breeding distribution of this taxon.

Eastern (Japanese) Buzzard *Buteo japonicas*

Eastern Buzzard comprises three subspecies:

B. j. japonicus Resident Lake Baikal area and N Mongolia east through Amurland and NE China to Sakhalin, Japan and S Kuril Is. Winters from Korea and Japan to S & SE Asia. (HBW) This begs the question as to whether it passes through the rest of China during migration? And if so where and in what numbers? **NOTE:** Clements (2016) checklist only has this taxon wintering south to Southeast Asia. However, Cheng (1987) clearly maps this taxon as wintering throughout southern China including Yunnan.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

B. r. rufinus (Cretzschmar, 1829) – Northern Long-legged Buzzard – SE Europe, Turkey and Israel E through Transcaucasia, Iran, Afghanistan and C Asia to NW China, and S to N Pakistan and NW India (Kashmir); winters to NE Africa, Middle East, Pakistan and N India to Bangladesh. (HBW) Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) note that this taxon is a summer visitor to N and C Afghanistan, N Pakistan and Kashmir and a winter visitor to SW Afghanistan, all Pakistan, and NW India, a few reaching Bhutan in the east, C India and major rivers of N and C Bangladesh. Possibly a vagrant to Sri Lanka and the Andaman Is. Spierenburg (2005) noted that in Bhutan this species is an uncommon passage migrant with records from March to late-May and more commonly in autumn from mid-October to mid-November. A

few records from late November and January suggest that species also winters in Bhutan. However, the great majority of Bhutan records are based on sight records and thus must be questionable.

The implications of the above are that by far the most likely *Buteo* present in the uplands of Sichuan and the Tibetan Plateau throughout July and early August are Upland Buzzard and certainly our observations suggest this to be the case. However, one or two images taken this trip together with sight records from this trip suggest that a few of the *Butoes* that we observed may have been of either Long-legged Buzard and/or Eastern Buzzard on passage south.

36. Himalayan Buzzard *Buteo (burmanicus) rufectus*

Two over Balang Shan at ca. 3,200m and two more possibles later during the afternoon at slightly lower elevations. I have my doubts now about the two single birds we saw in the southeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau nearish Hongyuan and Roergai. One seen well in the 'scope in the Baxi Valley and a second bird, possibly its mate nearby. One over the gorge as we ascended from Diebu back on to the Tibetan Plateau (13 July).

[Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*]

I noted that we saw a pair of these birds circling up off the forest at 3,890m on Mengbi Shan. However, images of these birds clearly show they were Upland Buzzards. Subsequently, records of birds we saw in the southeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau nearish Hongyuan and Roergai and the Baxi Valley almost certainly refer to Eastern Buzzard or Himalayan Buzzard and NOT Long-legged Buzzard.

37. **Ph** Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*

In some parts of the Tibetan Plateau this magnificent raptor was notably common:

10 July: First recorded as climbed on to the southeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau where we watched a pair and a single soaring over a magnificent valley at Wo'er Jiagongma.

13 July: At least five between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.

14 July: One immature at 4,089m 33° 23' 60.0N, 101° 15' 22.1 E at the northern end of a small, unnamed mountain range and a single adult *en route* to Beiwu.

16 July: Dari to 'Weasel Valley' we recorded at least 60 including several pairs attending 1-2 young on telegraph pole nests – notably large numbers of Pikas and Voles over a distance of ca. 84 km.

17 July: First bird encountered right at the edge of Maduo, thereafter one young on a 'pole' nest and ca. 20 estimated for the day between Maduo and Quamalai.

18 July: Quamalai to Wudaoliang ca. 20 counted and nearly every pole occupied by an active nest.

- 19 July:** Circa five counted between Wudaoliang and Golmud. Notably none recorded thereafter until 26 July when we visited a small valley in Rubber Mountain. There we observed a pair attending two young on a nest.
- 27 July:** Two as we departed Koko Nor and drove to Huzhu Bei Shan.
- 28 July:** Two soaring above Huzhu Bei Shan. Notably none observed out of Lhasa and southeast to Nyingchi and the adjacent forested areas that we explored.
38. Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*
7 July: One seen well in flight over the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
39. Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
17 July: Five nesting pairs at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
31 July: One on wetlands along the river out of Lhasa.
40. Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*
21 July: One at the small Wuzihu Reserve near Golmud.
31 July: Several on wetlands along the river from Lhasa.
41. **Ph** Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*
 We enjoyed wonderful, memorable and evocative encounters with this charismatic bird throughout our time on the Tibetan Plateau. The Black-necked Crane breeds in eastern Ladakh (NW India), possibly Sikkim and thence extensively throughout parts of the Tibetan Plateau east to Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan, China. We observed this species as follows:
10 July: One pair between Hongyuan and Roergai;
13 July: Just one between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi;
14 July: One in flight as we looked on to a un-named mountain range;
16 July: At least three at 4,256m in a broad marshy valley with small pools and a stream (Dari to Maduo) 34° 12' 34.3" N, 99° 13' 26.6" E;
17 July: A total of 8 seen including a pair with two chicks at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
18 July: Four pairs noted between our lunch stop at 4,369m 34° 59' 03.0" N, 94° 35' 02.6" E and Wudaoliang including one pair with two chicks;
22 July: One pair at Donggai Cuona Lake – sadly these were to be the last we saw of this lovely crane.
 This species is classified by Birdlife International as **Vulnerable**.
42. Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*
 We observed single birds on three days:
12 July: One seen nicely at 2,430m, along a small river above Diebu 34° 05' 23.2" N, 103° 09' 34.9" E;
13 July: One between Diebu and Jiuzhi;

14 July: Between Jiuzhi and Beiwu.



43. **Ph** Lesser Sand-Plover *Charadrius mongolus*
16 July: Dari to Maduo - Two pairs with two chicks in notably drier, sandier country next to Weasel Valley.
17 July: Maduo to Quamalai – Total ten.
18 July: Quamalai to Wudaoliang - Total ten.
44. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
17 July: Three at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
45. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
16 July: One at 4,256m in a broad marshy valley with small pools and a stream (Dari to Maduo) 34° 12' 34.3 N, 99° 13'26.6 E;
17 July: A total of 4 at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
26 July: One at Bird Island, Koko Nor.
46. Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
26 July: One at Bird Island, Koko Nor.
47. **Ph** Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
10 July: One pair vociferously defending their territory in the midst of a

huge boggy marsh within a broad valley at Long Ri Ba at the southeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau.

16 July: Heard between Dari and Maduo.

17 July: Circa 50 estimated at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo (Madoi).

21 July: One at the small Wuzihu Reserve at the edge of the Talimakan Desert.

22 July: One in 'Blue Sheep' Valley north of Donggai Cuona Lake.

26 July: Two at Bird Island, Koko Nor.

48. Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

17 July: Five at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.

49. **Ph** Brown-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*

10 – 17 July: As soon as we ascended on to the Tibetan Plateau we started seeing these handsome gulls, invariably they were in breeding plumage.

22 July: Four seen well. Quite probably there were hundreds of others among the many thousands of other 'waterbirds' that thronged Donggai Cuona Lake but were too distant to see clearly.

26 July: Modest numbers near Heimahe and at Bird Island, Koko Nor.

31 July: One along the river, near Lhasa, Tibet.

1 Aug: Small numbers on a lake within the gardens of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet.

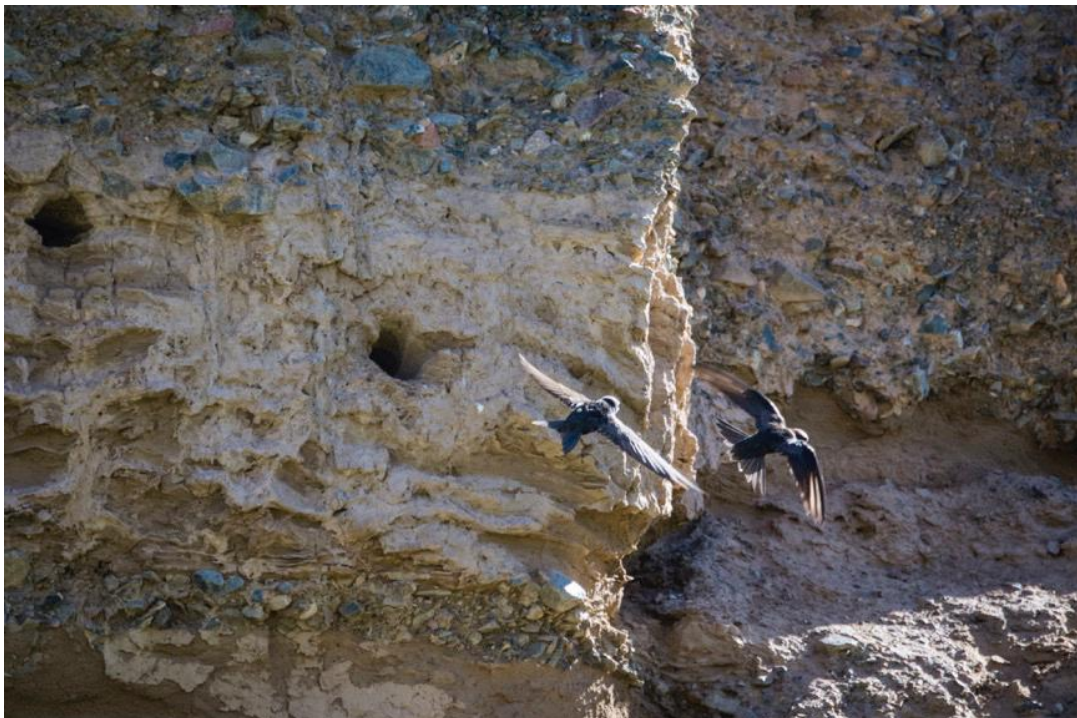


50. **Ph** Pallas's Gull (Great Black-headed G) *Ichtyaetus ichthyaetus*
17 July: One in non-breeding plumage at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo (Madoi).
22 July: One in non-breeding plumage at Donggai Cuona Lake.
26 July: Two in full breeding plumage, near Heimahe on the shores of Koko Nor and several at Bird Island.
51. **Ph** Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid*
13 July: Seven in full breeding plumage, constantly fishing back and forth along a modest-sized river within a broad valley at 3,439m; 34° 28' 52.9 N, 102° 45' 28.0 E between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.
52. Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
Widespread in small numbers; observed on ten days on the Tibetan Plateau.
17 July: Circa 20 pairs nesting within a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
53. Rock Dove *Columba livia*
FERAL
Widespread but rather local; invariably encountered in and around the larger towns.
54. **Ph** Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*
13 July: Circa 20 between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.
14 July: Six recorded between Jiuzhu and Beiwu.
16 July: Circa 30 recorded between Dari and Maduo.
17 July: Circa 25 at 4,500m between Maduo and Quamalai.
18 July: Circa 25 at 4,500m, between Quamalai and Wudauliang.
19 July: Six at the edge of the Kunlun Range.
22 July: At least 12 active nests in the cliff face at the entrance to 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.
55. Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*
8 July: Eight of these handsome birds seen nicely on the upper slopes of Balang Shan, Wolong, Sichuan.
56. Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
Notably scarce in Wolong National Nature Reserve where just single birds seen on two days; notably more common on the Tibetan Plateau especially in the southeast corner (Qinghai) where six seen on the first day and ten in the nearby Baxi Valley; modest numbers in Huzu Bei Shan and common on the slopes of Xionsi Nunnery and throughout SE Tibet.



57. Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Rather scarce with just six seen in the southeast of the Tibetan Plateau and two along the Diebu Gorge.
58. Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
5 July: Six in and around the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.
59. Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveriodes*
7 July: One heard near the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
60. **Ph** Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Widespread and locally common.
5 July: One singing in a small woodlot within farmland *en route* from Chengdu to Wolong.
6 July: Two below 3,200m on Balang Shan including one hepatic phase.
10 July: Common as we ascended onto the SE Tibetan Plateau (10).
11 July: Six in the Baxi Valley.
12 July: Ten between Roergai and Hongxingxiang and in the Diebu Sika Reserve.
13 July: Circa 30 between Diebu and Jiuzhi.
14 July: Just two between Jiuzhi and Beiwu.
Thereafter scattered singletons seen on several days and two as we drove from Huashixiazhen via Er La Pass to Gonghe.

61. **Ph** Little Owl *Athena noctua*
Two on the SE Tibetan Plateau; one between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi and a nesting pair on a rocky cliff-face within 'Weasel Valley'.
62. White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*
6 July: One over the Pitiao River, Wolong;
12 July: Two during the afternoon over Diebu Sika Reserve.
63. Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*
13 July: A flock of circa 30 soaring over a ridge above the Diebu Gorge.
64. Salim Ali's Swift *Apus salimalii*
8 July: A total of circa 25 between Balang Shan and Mengibi Shan.
12 July: 4-5 specifically identified among a large flock of mixed swifts congregating late in the afternoon at 3,000m in the Diebu Sika Reserve.
13 July: Circa ten attending nests on a rocky cliff face at 3,390 overlooking a broad, river valley 34° 28' 52.9" N, 102° 45' 28.0"E.
65. **Ph** Common Swift *Apus apus*
21 July: A total of circa 70 moving southwards over the edge of the Talimakan Desert near Golmud.
22 July: Circa ten pairs attending nest holes in circa 50m high cliff in an un-named valley between Shazhuyucum and Donggai Cuona Lake.
24 July: Ten over a small village east of Chaka.
25 July: One at Bird Island.
27 July: One as we descended towards Huzu Bei Shan.



66. **Ph** Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Widespread in small numbers.
67. Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*
11 July: One male in the Baxi Valley.
13 July: One male in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.
68. Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*
13 July: One in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.
4 Aug: One male was seen, especially well, in primary evergreen forest at 4,129m in the Cuomujiri Reserve near Nyingchi, Tibet.

This was a notably disappointing trip for woodpeckers almost certainly because of the time of the year – birds were not calling or drumming and were thus very inconspicuous.

69. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
5 Aug: One as we made our way back to Lhasa, Tibet.
70. Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*
14 July: One perched in a huge power-cable pylon between Jiuzhi and Beiwu.
16 July: One between Dari and Maduo.
18 July: One pair attending a nest, 4,44m 35° 03' 03.7N, 94° 14' 38.7E between Quamalai and Wudaoliang.
19 July: One at 4,419 in very flat, arid terrain on north side of Mt. Yuzhu Feng, Kunlun Range 35° 43' 18.7N, 94° 08' 51.3E.
2 Aug: Superb views of a female between Lhasa and Nyingchi.

This species has been up-listed to Endangered because a revised population trend analysis indicates that it may be undergoing a very rapid decline. This negative trend is a result of unsustainable capture for the falconry trade, as well as habitat degradation and the impacts of agrochemicals, and the rate of decline appears to be particularly severe in the species' central Asian breeding grounds. This classification is highly uncertain and may be revised when new information becomes available. Surveys are urgently needed to produce more robust and less uncertain population estimates, in particular for China, Russia and Mongolia. Further research to monitor key populations and to clarify the extent of the threat from trapping and its effect on population trends is vital.

The global population is estimated to number c.12,800-30,800 mature individuals, based on national population estimates of breeding pairs. Assuming a generation length of 6.4 years and that the species' decline had already begun (at least in some areas) prior to the 1990s (consumption in the Middle East was heavy by the mid-1980s), the overall

population trend during the 19-year period 1993-2012 equates to a 47% decline (based on median estimates), with a minimum-maximum decline of 2-75%. Given the substantial degree of uncertainty over the estimates used, the population trend is best placed precautionarily in the band for a 50-79% decline over three generations. (Birdlife International)

71. **Lord Derby's (Derbyan) Parakeet** *Psittacula derbiana*
Undoubtedly a major avian highlight of the entire expedition.
3 Aug: Sensational flight and perch views at 3,146m, 23° 49' 13.6" N, 94° 44' 19.4" E at the margins of extensive mixed *Pinus spp* evergreen forest. This poorly known and rarely observed parakeet is confined to SE Tibet and NW & W Yunnan. Recently this species has been found in extreme NE India (NE Arunachal Pradesh).
4 Aug: Three in flight at the entrance to Cuomujiri Reserve.
72. Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris*
The following is the only definitive record of this species recorded during this trip. Characteristically this species is uncommon to rare in the areas explored and virtually all of the minivets we observed were the next species.
11 July: One female seen well in the small side valley leading off the Baxi Valley.
73. **Ph** Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*
6 July: Large numbers (total ca. 80) in Spruce, Birch and evergreen woodland from the tunnel on Balang Shan down to 3,100m, Wolong.
7 July: Large numbers (total ca. 60) in a mosaic of Spruce, Birch and evergreen woodland above the Lama Monastery; and five during the afternoon in a mosaic of farmland, scrub and mature secondary woodland.
12 July: One pair in the Diebu Gorge.
74. **Ph** Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
21 Aug: Circa 12, almost certainly all belong to the subspecies *tsaidamensis*, in the chest high scrub surrounding the small wetland Wuzihu Reserve. Presumably post-breeding dispersal either wintering here on passage.
75. Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*
5 July: One in farmland between Chengdu and Wolong; one above Lama Monastery, Wolong.
10 July: Two on the southeastern corner of the Tibetan Plateau.
12 July: Two just north of Roergai.
13 July: One between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.

76. **Ph** Gray-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*

Widespread, generally in low numbers (ca. 2 per day) although moderately common (ca. 10 per day) in the southeast (Qinghai) corner of the Tibetan Plateau. Two immatures begging from a pair of adults in the Diebu Sika Reserve and other immatures seen between Roergai and Hongxingxiang. Two pairs with two young seen near Chaka. Circa seven in Huzhu Bei Shan and observed commonly in the Cuomujiri Reserve and between Nyingchi and Lhasa.



77. **Ph** Chinese Gray Shrike *Lanius sphenocercus*

13 July: One photographed between Helongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.

22 July: Two of these striking shrikes in an un-named valley between Shazhuyucum and Donggai Cuona Lake.

Despite its wide range this species is quite sparsely distributed.

78. Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*

10 July: Two at the edge of a small village between Hongyuan and Roergai.

12 July: One at 2,524m 34° 07' 44.0N, 103° 04' 08.6E, at the eastern end of the Diebu Gorge. A flock of six in the valley bottom of the Diebu Sika Reserve.

13 July: A total of circa 15 between Diebu and Jiuzhi.

27 July: One in scrub near Chamba on the north shore of Koko Nor.

79. Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
6 July: One or two of these very striking birds on Balang Shan, Wolong.
7 July: A total of 15 these fabulous birds feeding around the edge of the village in which we were staying and in the nearby hills.
27 July: Four *en route* to Huzhu Bei Shan.
80. Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*
13 July: Circa 30 between Diebu and Jiuzhi.
24 July: Several between Gonghe and Chaka.
31 July: Circa ten in and around Lhasa and the Shushep Monastery.
81. Henderson's Ground Jay *Podoces hendersoni*
21 July: At least three of these most interesting and striking-looking birds at the southern edge of the Talimakan Desert near Golmud. This may well be the southern most point of this species' world range which barely extends beyond China into Kazakhstan in the region of Zaizan Nor.
82. Eurasian Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*
7 July: Heard above Lama Monastery, Wolong.
13 July: One at 2,621m in the Diebu Gorge and three more at 3,110m in patches of pines at the tree line above Diebu Gorge.
83. **Ph** Red-billed Chough *Pyrhacorax pyrrhacorax*
Widespread and common to very common on the eastern Tibetan Plateau (Roergai east to Wudauliang), including a flock of ca. 40 in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve and ca. 100 between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.
14 July: One pair feeding orange-billed young at a nest in a hole in a roadside retaining wall, 4100m, west of 33° 23' 60.0N, 101° 15' 22.1"E.
22 July: A pair observed bathing in a small stream within an un-named valley, 3,215m; six pairs nesting in holes on a 50m high sandstone cliff at the same site.
84. Alpine Chough *Pyrhacorax graculus*
8 July: Two over Balang Shan, Wolong.
22 July: A flock of eight in an un-named valley, 4,200m.
28 July: A flock of circa 60 at 4,105m Huzhu Bei Shan.
85. Daurian Jackdaw *Coloeus dauuricus*
12 July: Flock of circa 30 at the edge of Hongxingxian. Circa 20 near a small village at 2,534m 34° 07' 44.0" N, 103° 04' 08.6" E as we descended to the Diebu Sika Reserve.
13 July: Circa 20 between Diebu and Jiuzhi.
86. Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
10 July: A flock of six in the spectacular Suomo Gorge.
11 July: At least six foraging in fields within the Baxi Valley.

- 28 July:** Two at Huzhu Bei Shan.
3 Aug: Small numbers on the slopes of Sarkimla, 3,146m and 3,500m,
87. Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
8 July: Four at 3,504m, Balang Shan, Wolong.
9 July: One on the upper slopes of Mengbi Shan.
11 July: Four scrounging from us as we ate breakfast in the Baxi Valley.
12 July: Circa 32 in the farmland in the valley bottom of the Diebu Sika Reserve.
13 July: Three in the Diebu Gorge.
15 July: One in the Beiwu Valley.
88. **Ph** Northern Raven (Common R) *Corvus corax*
13 July: Our first, a single bird west of Hongxingxiang; two at 3,647m; 34° 07' 48.8 N, 102° 11' 27.9" E.
14 July: One at 3,920m, 33° 18' 38.2" N, 100° 45' 08.5" E.
15 July: Ten in the Beiwu Valley.
17 July: One in a vast area of wetlands at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
18 July: One at 4,521m between Qamalai and Wudauliang.
19 July: One on the north side of Yuzhu Feng, Kunlun Range.
23 July: One at Donggai Cuona Lake.
89. **Ph Tibetan Lark (Long-billed Calandra L) *Melanocorypha maxima***
13 July: Two between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.
23 July:
26 July: Two pairs in a grassy meadow at ca. 3,000m from the shores of Koko Nor near Heimahe. Rather worryingly this habitat has been all but eradicated since I was last at this site, largely as a result of being overrun by uncontrolled domestic tourism.
27 July: Four in the Prezwalski's Gazelle Reserve.
90. Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*
26 July: At least one pair of these distinctive larks seen nicely in flight over grasslands to the north of G214 between Chaka and Daotanghezhen.
91. Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
26 July: At least six seen perched and in flight over grasslands to the north of G214 between Chaka and Daotanghezhen.
92. Hume's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella acutirostris*
21 July: A total of six at the edge of the Talikaman Desert, including three at the Wuzihu wetland reserve.
22 July: One at the edge of Donggai Cuona Lake.

93. Asian Short-toed Lark *Alaudala cheleensis*
30 July: At least ten seen well from a wayside stop at circa 5,000m during our train journey from Xining to Lhasa.
94. Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*
10 – 13 July: Common in the southeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau; Hongyuan, Roergai, Hongxingxiang, Jiuzhi.
23 – 25 July: Common between Gonghe and Koko Nor.
26 July: Six over Rubber Mountain; small numbers at Bird Island.
31 July: Several on the outskirts of Lhasa, Tibet.
2 Aug: Several between Lhasa and Nyingchi.
4 Aug: Several in the Cuomujiri Reserve near Nyingchi.
95. **Ph** Horned Lark (Shore) *Eremophila alpestris*
Widespread and common throughout the Tibetan Plateau; locally very common e.g. Chaka area where pairs observed feeding young.
96. **Ph** Pale Martin *Riparia diluta*
13 July: Six attending nest holes in a roadside cutting overlooking a broad river valley, 3,439m.
14 July: Two in a broad, flat valley at 3,920m, 33° 18' 38.2" N, 100° 45' 08.5" E, here referred to as the Beiwu Valley.
17 July: A total of 15 counted attending nesting in holes in a roadside embankment above a vast area of wetlands at the margins of a huge area of lakes and marshes immediately south of Maduo.
26 July: Six over Rubber Mountain; one at Bird Island.
31 Aug: One just out of Lhasa.



97. Sand Martin
22 July: Four over Donggai Cuona Lake.
98. Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
8 July: Three at 3,200m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
9 July: Circa 20 foraging during the late afternoon over the busy streets of Maerkang City.
10 July: Two at 3,395m, over Kang'mer Monastery, as we ascended on the Tibetan Plateau.
99. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
5 July: Several in and around Chengdu including circa 30 over our hotel.
6 July: Circa 50 estimated as we drove from Chengdu to Wolong.
10 July: One on the southeast Tibetan Plateau.
16 July: One, a long way from anywhere, ca. 4, 100m.
22 July: Two over Donggai Cuona Lake.
100. Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropsis daurica*
5 July: Ten over farmland en route to Wolong.
101. Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*
6 July: Circa 30 over the old road alongside the tunnel on Balang Shan, Wolong.
7 July: Circa 100 low over farmland, 2030m, during the late afternoon, Wolong.
14 July: A flock of ca. 15 at 3,920m, in the Beiwu Valley, 33° 18' 38.2" N, 100° 45' 08.5" E.
15 July: Three in the Beiwu Valley the following morning.
27 July: One at 2,295m, Huzhu Bei Shan.
102. Coal Tit *Periparus ater*
6 July: One in evergreen forest below the tunnel on Balang Shan, Wolong.
7 July: Two and three with two mixed flocks at ca 2,300m, above the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
4 Aug: A total of six with several mixed flocks in primeval evergreen forest at 4,129m in the Cuomujiri Reserve near Nyingchi, Tibet.
103. Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris*
9 July: Ten in evergreen forest on the upper slopes of Mengbi Shan.
11 July: Two in the Baxi Valley.
104. **Yellow-bellied Tit *Paradaliparus***
7 July: Two in evergreen forest near the Lama Monastery; one in partially wooded farmland at 2,300m, Wolong.

105. Gray-crested Tit *Lophophanes dichrous*

4 Aug: Two in evergreen forest Cuomojiri Reserve near Nyingchi.

106. **Pere David's Tit** *Poecile davidi*

6 July: Fine views of one in a mixed flock at 3,100m, Blang Shan, Wolong.

107. **Ph White-browed Tit** *Poecile superciliosus*

14 July: One photographed as it foraged in scub and bathed in a small stream within the Beiwu Valley.

26 July: Fabulous encounter with four very confiding birds on Rubber Mountain.



108. **Sichuan Tit** *Poecile weigoldicus*

11 July: Three in the Baxi Valley.

109. Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*

27 July: Six in Huzhu Bei Shan.

110. **Ph Ground Tit (Hume's G, Groundpecker)** *Pseudopodoces humilis*

Widespread and locally common throughout the eastern Tibetan Plateau.

NOTE: Recent taxonomic work asserts that this taxon is an aberrant ground-foraging tit!

111. Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*

7 July: Moderately common in the evergreen forests surrounding the Lama

Monastery, Wolong.

8 July: Two on the mid-slopes of Balang Shan, Wolong.



112. Japanese Tit *Parus minor*

10 July: Two between Balang Shan and mengbi Shan.

11 July: Three in the Baxi Valley.

12 July: Two in Diebu Sika Reserve.

13 July: Three in Diebu Gorge.

27 July: One in Huzhu Bei Shan.

113. Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*

4 July: One in a city park in Chengdu.

114. **Ph** White-browed Tit-warbler (Severtzov's) *Leptopoecile sophiae*

22 July: A family group of six in low shrubs in an un-named valley between Shazhuyucum and Dongghai Cuona Lake.

26 July: One superb male in a small valley within the Rubber Mountains.

31 July: One on the slopes of Xiongsi Nunnery, Tibet.

115. Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos iouschistos*

5 July: Three in the lovely wooded and bamboo rich grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.



116. Sooty Tit *Aegithalos fuliginosus*

5 July: Two in patches of evergreen woodlands within farmland, Wolong.

117. Przevalski's Nuthatch *Sitta przewalskii*

27 July: Three of these attractive endemics with small mixed flocks in evergreen forest as we descended in to Huzhu Bei Shan.

118. Hodgson's Treecreeper *Certhia hodgsoni*

4 Aug: One with a mixed flock at 4,129m within Cuomujiri Reserve.

119. Eurasian Wren (Winter, Northern) *Troglodytes troglodytes*

9 July: One sat out and sang at us at Mengbi Shan.

120. White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

12 July: One gave fine views as oozled in the river along the valley bottom of the Diebu Sika Reserve.

121. Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*

5 July: One along the Pitiao River, Wolong.

14 July: One bathing in a clear freshwater pool in the Beiwu Valley.

122. Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques*

5 July: Two in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.

7 July: Fine studies of three of these handsome bulbuls in lightly wooded farmland, 2,200m, Wolong.

123. Brown-breasted Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous*

7 July: One of these very handsome birds in lightly wooded farmland, 2200m, Wolong.

124. Light-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*

July 5: Circa 15 in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.

125. Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

9 July: One on Mengbi Shan.

126. H Pygmy Cupwing *Pnoepyga pusilla*

7 July: Heard in forests surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong.

127. Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*

5 July: Three of these delightful little sprites in mixed broadleaved woodland within the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.

128. Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *Horonis fortipes*

7 July: Moderately common in the tall scrub above the Lama Monastery, Wolong.

129. Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

10 July: Three seen at very close quarters as they foraged in 2-3m tall shrubs at 3,615m, 32° 16' 56.3" N, 102° 29' 30.4" E.



130. Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
31 Aug: Three at 4,200m, below the Xionsi Nunnery, Lhasa, Tibet.
- 131. Alpine Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus occisinensis***
Widespread and common at high elevations in the edge of evergreen forest, low scrub among boulders and scrub within semi arid uplands.
Recorded: Balang Shan, Wolong; Mengbi Shan; Baxi Valley; Beiwu Valley; at 3,215m in an un-named Valley between Shazhuyucum and Donggai Cuona Lake, Rubber Mountain and Huzhu Bei Shan.
132. **Ph** Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*
Widespread and locally common. First seen and seen superbly (as well as photographed) in scrub above the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
133. Buff-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*
Notably common on Balang Shan, Wolong 3,300 – 3,000m and in the evergreen woodlands surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong. Also very common in evergreen forest on the upper slopes of Mengbi Shan.
Thereafter just two seen as we climbed towards the Tibetan Plateau from Maerkang.
134. **Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis***
Seen and heard very nicely in evergreen forest at Huzhu Bei Shan.
- 135. Sichuan Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus forresti***
Widespread and common and seen and heard daily throughout Wolong National (Panda) Nature Reserve and the Baxi Valley.
136. **Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis***
12 July: Two in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.
13 July: Three in Diebu Gorge.
137. Yellow-browed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*
10 July: Three with a small mixed flock in roadside scrub at 3,615 just below the Tibetan Plateau.
138. Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*
7 July: Two in mixed secondary *Betula sp* woodland just below the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
9 July: Ten on Mengbi Shan.
10 July: Two at Kang'mer Monastery.
11 July: Six in the Baxi Valley.
139. Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
4 Aug: A pair feeding young at the edge of primeval evergreen forest at 4,129m with the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.

Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*
Widespread and very common; seen and heard daily throughout Wolong National (Panda) Reserve northeastwards to the Diebu Deer Reserve; Huzhu Bei Shan and the slopes of Sarkimla, east of Nyingchi, Tibet.

140. **Claudia's Leaf-Warbler** *Phylloscopus claudiae*

5 July: A group of five cuddling in the rain during our first afternoon in the evergreen woods surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong.

7 July: Common in the evergreen woods surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong.

141. Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*

3 Aug: Common within a well forested side-valley at 3,400m, 29° 43' 41.7" N, 94° 42' 19.1" E.

4 Aug: Common within the Cuomujiri Reserve near Nyingchi.

142. Martens's Warbler *Seicercus omissus*

7 July: One heard, taped and subsequently observed with a mixed flock in secondary woodland above the Lama Monastery, Wolong. At least two during the afternoon within partially wooded farmland at circa 2,200m in Wolong.

143. **Chinese Fulvetta** *Fulvetta striaticollis*

10 July: One in 1-2m high shrubbery with a small mixed flock at 3,615m, 32° 16' 56.3" N, 102° 29' 30.4" E just below the very lip of the Tibetan Plateau.

144. **Tarim Babbler** *Rhopophilus albosuperciliaris*

Something of a surprise, a big surprise and a new bird for KDB!

21 July: Two heard and seen superbly in scrub at the edge of the tiny Wuzihu wetland reserve at the southern edge of the Talimakan Desert. NOTE: The two subspecies that originally formed one species known in the field guide as White-browed Chinese Warbler, but with very discrete and well separated populations, have recently been demonstrated to be separate species. Both taxa are now classified as babblers.

145. **Ph Spectacled Parrotbill** *Sinosuthora conspicillatus*

12 July: A flock of eight of these very neat little birds foraging actively during the later afternoon within the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve, at 2,698m.

146. **Ph Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Sinosuthora webbiana*

5 July: At least five adults and nearly fledged young in a bamboo thicket within the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.



147. **Ph** White-collared Yuhina *Yuhina diademata*
5 July: One in the evergreen woods surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
6 July: Three at 3,300m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
7 July: Common with as many as ten seen and heard in the secondary and evergreen woodland surrounding the lama Monastery, Wolong.
8 July: Two between Balang Shan and Mengbi Shan.
148. **Ph** Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus*
4 July: Several in city parks within Chengdu.
7 July: Two in secondary woodland below the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
149. **Giant Laughingthrush** *Ianthocincla maximus*
A truly impressive endemic both to look at and for its wonderful repertoire of vocalisations.
6 July: Moderately common (ca. 10 seen and heard) on Balang Shan, 3,300 – 3,000m and heard there again on 8 July.
9 July: Six seen superbly well on Mengbi Shan where on all my visits I have invariably found this species to be impressively common.
10 July: Heard along the Suomo Gorge and as we ascended towards the Tibetan Plateau.
11 July: Heard in the Baxi Valley.

12 July: Four in the Diebu Deer Reserve.



150. **Plain Laughingthrush (Père David's) *lanthocincla davidi***

11 July: Two seen well in the Baxi Valley.

12 July: Four in the Diebu Deer Reserve.

13 July: Two in Diebu Gorge.

151. **Ph White-browed Laughingthrush *lanthocincla sannio***

5 July: Impressively common in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.

152. **Chinese Babax *lanthocincla lanceolatus***

7 July: Heard in the scrub above the Lama Monastery, Wolong.

10 July: Four including one carrying nesting material at 2,965 as we climbed from Maerkang to the Tibetan Plateau.

153. **Ph Giant Babax *Babax waddelli***

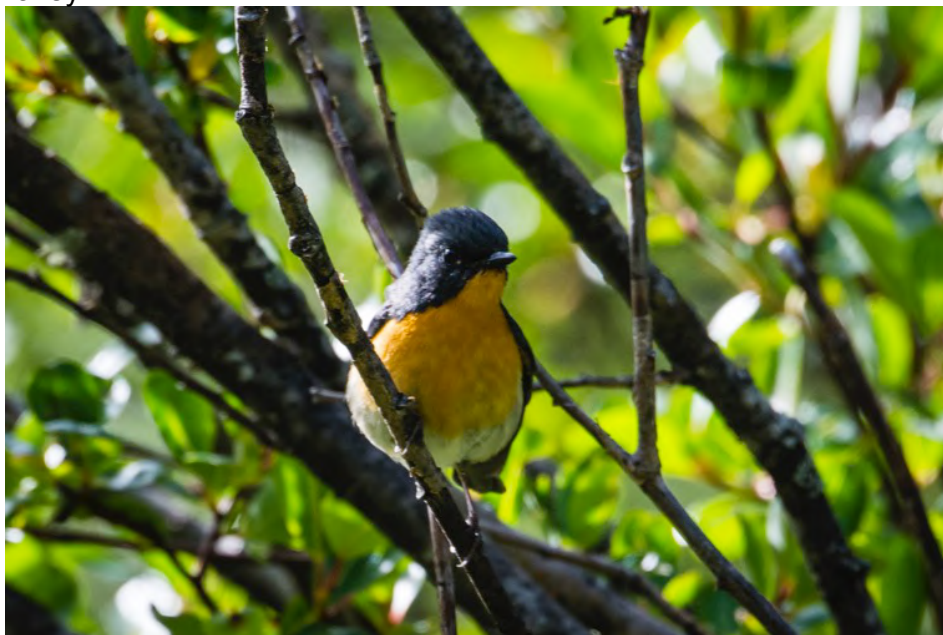
30 July: Common in the scrubby farmland at the base of the slope leading up to Shuksep, near Lhasa.

154. **Elliot's Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron elliotii*
Widespread and locally very common; Wolong; Mengbi Shan; Baxi Valley – ca. 50 including three young; Diebu Deer Reserve; Huzhu Bei Shan.
155. **Ph Prince Henri's Laughingthrush** *Trochalopteron henrici*
Widespread and locally very common throughout southeast Tibet from Lhasa to Lulang. Circa 30 recorded on the slopes of the Shushep Monastery.



156. Black-faced Laughingthrush *Tochalopteron affine*
3 Aug: One seen and at least four heard on the slopes of Sarkimla, Tibet.
157. Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*
5 July: Six in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.
158. Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*
6 July: One at 3,200m near the tunnel on Balang Shan, Wolong.
4 Aug: One at 4,129m within the Cumujiri Reserve above Nyingchi.
159. Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*
4 July: Several in a Chengdu city park.
5 July: Three in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding reserve.
160. White-bellied Redstart *Luscinia phaenicuroides*
6 July: Fine views of this inveterate skulker at 3,200m on Balang Shan.

161. Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*
9 July: One briefly on Mengbi Shan.
4 Aug: One in Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.
162. **Firethroat** *Calliope pectardens*
6 July: Fabulous views of a resplendent male at ca. 3100m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
163. **Ph** White-tailed Rubythroat *Calliope pectoralis*
14 July: A male heard then finally seen by Alan only and a juvenile seen by all and photographed at 4,089m, 33° 23' 60.0" N, 101° 15' 22.1" E among scrub and boulders at the northern end of an un-named mountain range.
164. **Ph** Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*
8 July: As always, and rightly so, one of THE highlights of the trip; we enjoyed prolonged views of three males and two females as they foraged at 4,384m on the upper slopes of Balang Shan, Wolong;
165. Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus*
9 July: Two lovely males and a female on Mengbi Shan.
166. **Ph** Golden Bush-Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*
6 July: Two fantastic males and two females in dense shrubbery at 3,100m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
167. **Ph** Slaty-backed Flycatcher *Ficedula hodgsonii*
9 July: Two females on Mengbi Shan.
11 July: At least four pairs, including singing, territorial males in the Baxi Valley.



168. Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*
8 July: Two males at 3,504m, on Balang Shan, Wolong.
9 July: Two female and an immature at the tree line on Mengbi Shan.
10 July: Four at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau.
15 July: One male in the Beiwu Valley.
16 July: One between Dari and Maduo.
4 Aug: One at 4,129m in the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.
169. **Ph** Plumbeous Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginous*
Widespread and common from Wolong, Sichuan to Diebu, Gansu, Huzuhu Bie Shan and Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet..
170. **Ph** White-capped Redstart *Phoenicurus leucocephalus*
Widespread and common within its specialist riparian habitat from Wolong, Sichuan to Diebu, Gansu and Quamalai, Qinghai and Huzhu Bei Shan.
171. **Przevalski's Redstart (Ala Shan R) *Phoenicurus alaschanicus***
26 July: Despite our best efforts of searching every seemingly suitable patch of habitat we could only find a single immature in a small valley on Rubber Mountain. As with several other species that we either missed or found difficult the time of the year, the breeding cycle may have played an important role, i.e. parent birds were attending young or the young had just fledged and thus birds were especially quiet and secretive.
172. Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
12 July: One pair in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.
14 July: One pair in the Beiwu Valley; superb views of the male singing.
173. **Ph** White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*
Undoubtedly one of the most handsome birds that happily we recorded quite regularly throughout our trip:
6 July: One superb adult male and immature on the old road alongside the tunnel, at 3,200m on Balang Shan, Wolong. Presumably the same male was seen again at the same site on 8 July.
9 July: Three males at the tree-line on Mengbi Shan.
11 July: Three males in the Baxi Valley.
31 July: One male in scrub on the slopes below the Shushep Nunnery, Tibet.
4 Aug: One male in the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchu, Tibet.



174. **Ph** White-winged (Güldenstädt's) Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*
14 July: A total of five of these very handsome redstarts between Jinzhi and Beiwu, invariably at very high elevations.
15 July: Two between Beiwu and Dari.
175. **Ph** Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Widespread in low numbers; usually in pairs. One pair observed attending nearly fledged young in low scrub on the north side of the Kunlun Range. Notably common around Chaka, Rubber Mountain and Koko Nor.
176. Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*
7 July: A family group four in lightly wooded farmland at ca. 2,200m, Wolong.
2 Aug: One male at 3,949m, 29° 53' 54.0" N, 92° 43' 41.3" E, Between Lhasa and Nyingchi, Tibet.
177. Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola Maura*
10 July: One pair in scrub within spectacular flowering hills, southeast Tibetan Plateau.
13 July: Two in Diebu Gorge.
26 July: Four between Rubber Mtn. and Koko Nor.
178. Gray Bushchat *Saxicola ferreus*
7 July: One female and one immature in scrub below the Lama Monastery, Wolong. One male in lightly wooded farmland at 2,200m in Wolong.

179. **Ph** Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
21 July: One male in very degraded arid land at the edge of the Talimakan Desert.
25 July: Six, including a pair, feeding young on the flats near Chaka.
180. Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*
23 July: A total of eight at the edge of knee-high grassland, ca. 40 km west of Gonghe.
27 July: A total of four in the Prezwalski's Gazelle Reserve.
181. *Zoothera sp*
4 Aug: One flushed from old-growth evergreen forest at 4,100m in the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.
182. **Ph** White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus*
3 Aug: Two on the slopes of Sarkimla, southeast Tibet.
4 Aug: One flushed from old-growth evergreen forest at 4,100m in the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.
183. Chinese Blackbird *Turdus mandarinus*
4 & 5 July: Several in and around Chengdu.
184. **Ph** Tibetan Blackbird *Turdus maximus*
1 Aug: Six in the gardens of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet.
2 Aug: Two as we drove east out of Lhasa, Tibet.
185. **Ph** Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*
Impressively common throughout Wolong, Mengbi Shan, the southeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau (Qinghai), Baxi Valley and Diebu Sika Deer Reserve. Just a single bird seen in Huzhu Bei Shan. Heard singing night and day, often sitting out conspicuously in the tops of trees, shrubs and along roads. 32 were counted, one morning, along the road through Wolong from our hotel to the point where the road turns sharply uphill and 41 between Rilong and Mengbi Shan.
186. White-backed (Kessler's) Thrush *Turdus kessleri*
9 July: Two on Mengbi Shan.
10 July: Six in the southeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau.
11 July: Two in the Baxi Valley.
12 July: One in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.
13 July: One in Diebu Gorge.
15 July: Three in the Beiwu Valley.
187. Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*
5 July: As many as six in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.



188. Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae*
6 July: One male at 3,345m on Blang Shan, Wolong.
7 July: Common (>10) in the scrub and secondary woodland surrounding the Lama Monastery, Wolong.
189. Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*
8 July: Six high up on Balang Shan, ca 4,400m.
28 July: One high up on Huzhu Bei Shan.
3 Aug: One at 4,425m on Sarkimla, southeast Tibet.
190. **Ph** Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*
Widespread and often common on the Tibetan Plateau just west of Helongxingxiang south and west to near Maduo, Er La Pass and Rubber Mountain. Several pairs observed courting and one or two immatures also seen.
191. Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophciata*
Low numbers (2-4) daily in Wolong.
192. **Ph** Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*
22 July: Four in an un-named valley between Shazhuyucum and Donggai Cuona Lake.
23 July: Several in and around Er La Pass.
25 July: Four in a lovely valley 70km west of Chaka.

193. Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*
6 July: One of these lovely birds within thick shrubbery at 3,100m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
194. Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
 Notably scarce and surprisingly only one seen in breeding plumage.
13 July: One in a broad, river valley between Hongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.
17 July: One in wetlands just south of Maduo.
21 July: A total of 21 in non-breeding plumage at the Wuzihu wetland reserve.
195. Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
5-8 July: Moderately common (2-8) along the road through Wolong.
196. **Ph** White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
 Widespread and moderately common; recorded daily from Chengdu to Maduo. Thereafter recorded only near Gonghe and in the Cuomujiri Reserve near Nyingchi.
197. Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*
25 July: Two at the Chaka flats.
198. Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*
31 July: One at the foot of Xionsi Nunnery, Tibet.
199. **Ph** Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
6 July: One at 3,200m on the old road at the tunnel on Balang Shan, Wolong; one just below the tunnel.
15 July: One in the Beiwu Valley.
3 Aug: One carrying food on the slopes Sarkimla, SE Tibet.
200. Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
22 July: One in 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.
201. Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
6 July: One at 3,200m on the old road at the tunnel on Balang Shan, Wolong.
8 July: A pair carrying food on the old track at the tunnel, 3,300m, Wolong.
202. **Ph Przevalski's Finch (Pink-tailed) *Urocynchramus pylzowi***
15 July: Three of these wonderful birds including one adult male that sat up and sang his heart out for us in a small valley within the Rubber Mountain massif. NOTE: Recently elevated to its own family.



203. Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

25 July: Five of these handsome birds including three territorial males in a small and very beautiful valley ca. 70 km to the west of Chaka, 3,535m.

204. **Tibetan Bunting (Kozlov's)** *Emberiza koslowi*

14 July: One in Beiwu Valley.

205. **Ph** Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*

10 July: One male at 3,615m with a small mixed flock in scrub just below the lip of the Tibetan Plateau.

12 July: Two males in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.

14 July: Two in the Beiwu Valley.

28 July: Two as we drove from Huzhu Bei Shan to Xining.

31 July: Four seen at very close quarters below Xiongsi Nunnery, Tibet.

206. Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*

8 July: Two at ca. 4300m on Balang Shan, Wolong.

14 July: One at 3,540m in the Beiwu Valley.

207. Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*

14 July: Three at 4,089m, among low scrub and boulders on a steep slope overlooking an un-named massif.



208. Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*

22 July: Two very flighty females showing their huge horn-coloured bills as they foraged among low scrub 'Blue Sheep Valley'; north of Donggai Cuona Lake.

209. **Ph** Crimson-browed Finch *Pinicola subhimachala*

9 July: We first heard the distinctive song of this striking species and a short while afterwards enjoyed superlative views of the male sitting out singing in old growth evergreen forest on Mengbi Shan.

210. **Ph** Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

8 July: One male on Balang Shan, Wolong.

11 July: One very handsome male seen superbly in the Baxi Valley.

13 July: A pair seen well at 2,620m in the Diebu Gorge.

211. Dark-breasted Rosefinch *Carpodacus nipalensis*

6 & 8 July: Fine views of a male at 3,504m on Balang Shan, Wolong.

212. **Ph** Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

8 July: A pair, of which the male was seen singing at 3,508m on Balang Shan, Wolong.

1 Aug: A flock of six males and four females feeding among a seeding crop at the edge of a village between Lhasa and Nyingchi; 3,959m, 29° 53' 54.0" N, 92° 43' 41.3" E.

4 Aug: One in the Cuomujiri Reserve, near Nyingchi, Tibet.

213. **Ph** Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*
9 July: Three females feeding around us on Mengbi Shan as we ate our breakfast.



214. **Ph** Pink-rumped Rosefinch (Stresemann's) *Carpodacus waltoni*
14 July: One male and three females foraging around as we ate breakfast at 4,089m perched on a steep slope overlooking a Yak grazed valley and un-named Massif.
23 July: One male foraging on Er La Pass.
31 July: Common on the slopes of Xiongxi Nunnery, Tibet.
215. Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus*
6 July: Thanks to some good work by Judith we all enjoyed fine views of a male at 3,508m on Balang Shan, Wolong.
216. **Ph** Three-banded Rosefinch *Carpodacus trifasciatus*
12 July: Two sensational males and a female in the mosaic of scrub and evergreen woods in a steep narrow valley within the Diebu Sika Reserve.
217. **Ph** Chinese White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus dubius*
8 July: Two males at 3,504m, Balang Shan, Wolong and two higher up.
9 July: Very common (>12) at the tree-line on Mengbi Shan.

11 July: Ten in the Baxi Valley.

12 July: Four in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.

3 Aug: Three in lovely evergreen forest below Sarkimla.



218. **Ph** Tibetan Rosefinch (Roborovski's) *Carpodacus roborowskii*

23 July: Sensational close and prolonged studies of three males and two females as they fed on vegetative matter on the barren slopes above Er La Pass.



219. **Ph** Streaked Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

9 July: One pair on the upper slopes of Mengbi Shan.

14 July: One male at 3,540m, between Jiuzhi and Beiwu.

22 July: Three of these superb birds including one male which permitted us to study and photograph him at length; 3,215m, 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.



220. Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla*
14 July: One male likely belonging to this taxon in Beiwu Valley.
221. Red-fronted Rosefinch *Carpodacus puniceus*
8 July: Two pairs seen and heard at 4300m among a wonderland of flowering, rocky slopes on Balang Shan, Wolong.
222. Long-tailed Rosefinch
13 July: One lovely male in the Diebu Gorge.
223. Oriental (Grey-capped) Greenfinch *Chloris sinica*
5 July: Four in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.
12 July: Two females in the Diebu Sika Reserve.
21 July: One male at the small Wusihu wetland reserve.
24 July: One among poplars at a small village on the outskirts of Gonghe.
224. Twite *Linaria flavirostris*
Widespread and locally common.
225. Yellow-billed Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*
5 July: Two of these handsome birds siting out in a bare tree at the edge of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.
226. Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*
6 July: Heard on Balang Shan, Wolong.
4 Aug: Three males and an immature seen superbly in old growth evergreen forest at 4,109m in the Cuomujiri Reserve above Nyingchi, Tibet.
227. **H** White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*
6 July: Heard on Balang Shan, Wolong.
228. Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Widespread and locally common.
229. Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
1 Aug: Common in the gardens of the Potala Palace.
230. Tibetan Snowfinch (Prince Henri's S) *Montifringilla henrici*
23 July: At least six on the slopes above Er La Pass including a pair with young.
231. Black-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*
15 July: One pair feeding young in a hole in a rock pile within a small run-down walled garden in the Beiwu Valley; 3,920m.
22 July: One or two pairs nesting in a 30m cliff face in 'Blue Sheep Valley'

north of Donggai Cuona Valley.

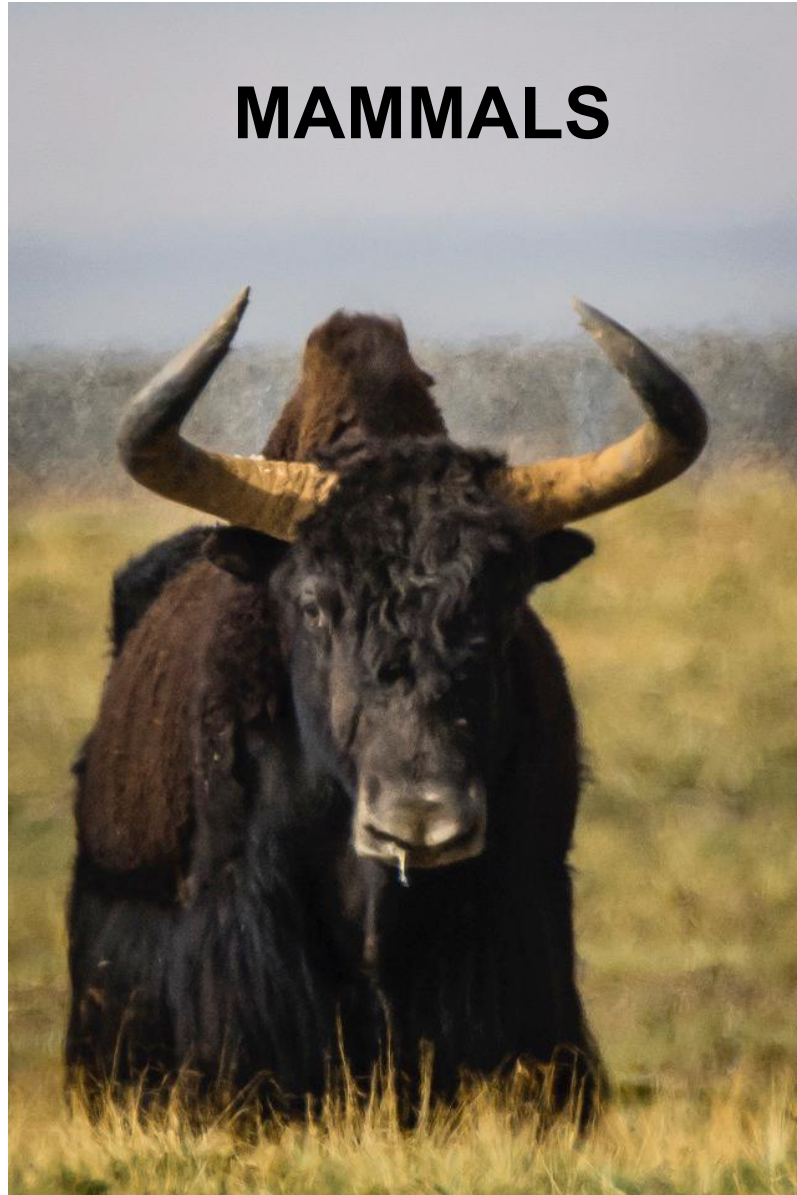
232. White-rumped Snowfinch *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*
12 – 22 July: Common and widespread, locally abundant such as on the approach to 'Weasel' Valley where hundreds possibly thousands present.
233. **Père David's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda davidiana*
26 July: Four in and around Koko Nor and Bird Island.
27 July: Two in the Chamba area north of Koko Nor.
234. **Ph Rufous-necked Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*
Common and widespread.



235. **Ph Blanford's Snowfinch (Plain-backed)** *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*
18 July: Our first of these subtly distinctive birds was a group of four right in the midst of whilst we were watching the Wild Yak; 4,419m.
19 July: Eight between Wudauliang and the Kunlun Range.
22 July: Several including an adult feeding one young in 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.
26 July: Six in a small valley within the Rubber Mountain Massif.
2 Aug: Two as we crossed a high pass between Lhasa and Nyingchi, SE Tibet.

236. Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

5 July: Two in the grounds of the Chengdu Panda breeding centre.



1. Grey Wolf (Wolf) *Canis lupus*

17 July: One at a wetland south of Maduo.

22 July: One in 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.

2. **Ph** Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

13 July: One between Helongxingxiang and Jiuzhi.

16 July: Four between Dari and Maduo.

17 July: Two in wetlands south of Maduo.

- 18 July:** Two between Quamalai and Budongquan.
30 July: At least two seen from the Lhasa train.
3. Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*
16 July: One at 4,256m between Dari and Maduo.
 4. Hog Badger *Arctonyx collaris*
6 July: One seen nicely by KDB as it foraged in dense Juniper forest on the slopes of Balangshan, Wolong.
 5. **Ph** Alpine Weasel *Mustela sibirica*
16 July: One of these delightful creatures was incredibly confiding, actively hunting right in front of us whilst taking Plateau Pikas every 5-15 minutes and running back to its den where it presumably was feeding young; 4,260m, 34° 22' 19.1 N, 99° 13' 19.9" E.
19 July: One en route to Golmud.
 6. **Ph** Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass) *Equus kiang*
16 – 19 July: Wonderfully common and quite approachable.
 7. White-lipped Deer *Cervus albirostris*
22 July: Circa 30 on the crest of the ridge above 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.
 8. **Ph** Sika Deer *Cervus Nippon*
12 July: Sixteen counted in the Diebu Sika Deer Reserve.



9. **Ph** Wild Yak *Bos mutus*

Undoubtedly seeing a huge male Wild Yak charging around, corralling his harem on the plateau plains south of the Kunlun Range was one of THE highlights of an amazing trip.

18 July: A single, lean male and then a huge male rounding up his harem on the plains at the edge of the huge Changtang Reserve.

19 July: At least two males including one that permitted a reasonably close approach for photography between Wudaoliang and Budongqing.

10. **Ph** Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

16 – 19 July: Widespread and locally common.

11. **Ph** Prezvalski's Gazelle *Procapra prezvalskii*

27 July: A total of 82 counted in the Chamba Reserve on the north side of Koko Nor. This is one of the most endangered Gazelle on our planet.



12. **Ph** Chiru (Tibetan Antelope) *Pantholops hodgsonii*

18 July: At least 40 of these very striking a classically Tibetan antelope grazing quite near to the road as drove across the plains south of the Kunlun Range.

19 July: Circa 20 between Wudaoliang and Budongquiang

13. **Ph** Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur*

8 July: Thanks to some amazing spotting by Judith we enjoyed fine views of a huge male as he surveyed his domain above Balang Shan.

22 July: 52 counted on very steep slopes above the road leading through 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.

26 July: Several in a small valley within Rubber Mountain.

14. Chinese Ghoral *Nemorhaedus griseus*

6 July: One on Balang Shan, Wolong.

15. **Ph** White-maned Serow *Capricornis millne-edwardsi*

6 July: One of these very impressive animals gave us superb views on the slopes of Balang Shan, Wolong.



16. **Ph** Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana*

8 – 26 July: Widespread and sometimes impressively common.

17. Pere David's Rock Squirrel *Sciurotamias davidianus*

12 July: One scrambling across a small rock cliff above a river at 2,524m near a small village in the Diebu Gorge.

Pikas OCHOTONIDAE

18. **Ph** Black-lipped Pika (Plateau P) *Ochotona curzoniae*

Our first pikas were only seen on 12 July! Somewhat surprising as on previous trips to the southeast (Qinghai) corner of the Tibetan Plateau I had found pikas notably common as soon as I ascended to this habitat

and elevation. A small colony just north of Roergai near Flower Lake. Thereafter widespread and locally abundant

19. **Ph** Large-eared Pika *Ochotona macrotis*
14 July: A small colony amongst a pile of rocks at the base of a steepish slope overlooking a Yak grazed valley, 4,089m.
20. **Ph** Glover's Pika *Ochotona gloveri*
4 Aug: A superb, close encounter with this very attractive species as it fed among large boulders on a steep slope above a gorgeous alpine lake at 4,129m, Cuomujiri Reserve, Tibet.
21. **Ph** Moupin Pika *Ochotona thibetana*
6 July: One observed at very close quarters as it foraged at the base of trees on rocky slopes, ca. 3,200m, Wolong.
22. **Ph** Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*
11 July: Two in the Baxi Valley.
15 July: One in the Beiwu Valley.
22 July: One photographed in 'Blue Sheep Valley' north of Donggai Cuona Lake.



23. Blyth's Mountain Vole
16 July: Several 70 km out of Dari.

