

Wildwings

WILDWINGS SICHUAN TOUR
MAMMALS AND BIRDS
23rd October to 5th November 2017

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Siberian Weasel (Steve Holloway)

INTRODUCTION

Sichuan has in recent years become one of the best areas in eastern Asia for mammal watching and has been a destination which we had hoped to run tours to for several years. However with the Chinese authorities having previously closed the best areas for Giant and Red Pandas to tourism previous attempts to run tours had been aborted.

However with Labahe re-opening with the opportunity to see Red Pandas we were delighted to be able to offer the first Wildwings' mammal tour to Sichuan and we were not to be disappointed. We racked up the impressive total of at least 36 species of mammal (excluding unidentified rodents and bats) and no less than 168 species of birds although some views were more distant than others.

At Labahe the tour started well with at least seven and possibly eight **Red Pandas**, an unexpected **Mountain Weasel**, **Chinese Serow**, **Chinese Goral**, **Sambar**, **Tibetan Macaque**, **Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel** and at least three species of **flying squirrel**.

Rouergai lived up to its reputation as a great site for high altitude species with both **Pallas's** and **Chinese Desert Cats**, three **Asian Badgers**, superb close range views of **Siberian Weasel** at Baixi, a hunting **Steppe Polecat**, numerous

Tibetan Foxes, at least 12 'Tibetan' **Wolves** and ten **Tibetan Gazelles** and a supporting cast including **Red Fox**, **Siberian Roe**, **Woolly Hares** and **Plateau Pikas**.

The journey to Tangjiahe added some unexpected **Blue Sheep** to the species list while Tangjiahe itself produced a superb **Chinese Ferret-Badger**, several **Northern Hog Badgers** and **Himalayan (Masked) Palm Civets**, a troop of 40+ **Golden Snub-nosed Monkeys**, an obliging **Tufted Deer**, a less-obliging single observer **Northern Leopard Cat**, **Chinese Goral**, numerous **Takin** and **Reeves' Muntjac**, **Wild Boar**, **Pere David's Rock Squirrel** and **Tibetan Macaques**.

Our final stop in a park near our hotel on the final night produced the final species of the trip, a **Pallas's Squirrel**.

On the bird front we saw or heard 168 species with highlights including Himalayan and Tawny Fish Owls and Lady Amherst's Pheasants at Labahe, Blood Pheasants at Baixi and Tawny Fish Owl again at Tangjiahe.

Richard Webb
8th November 2017



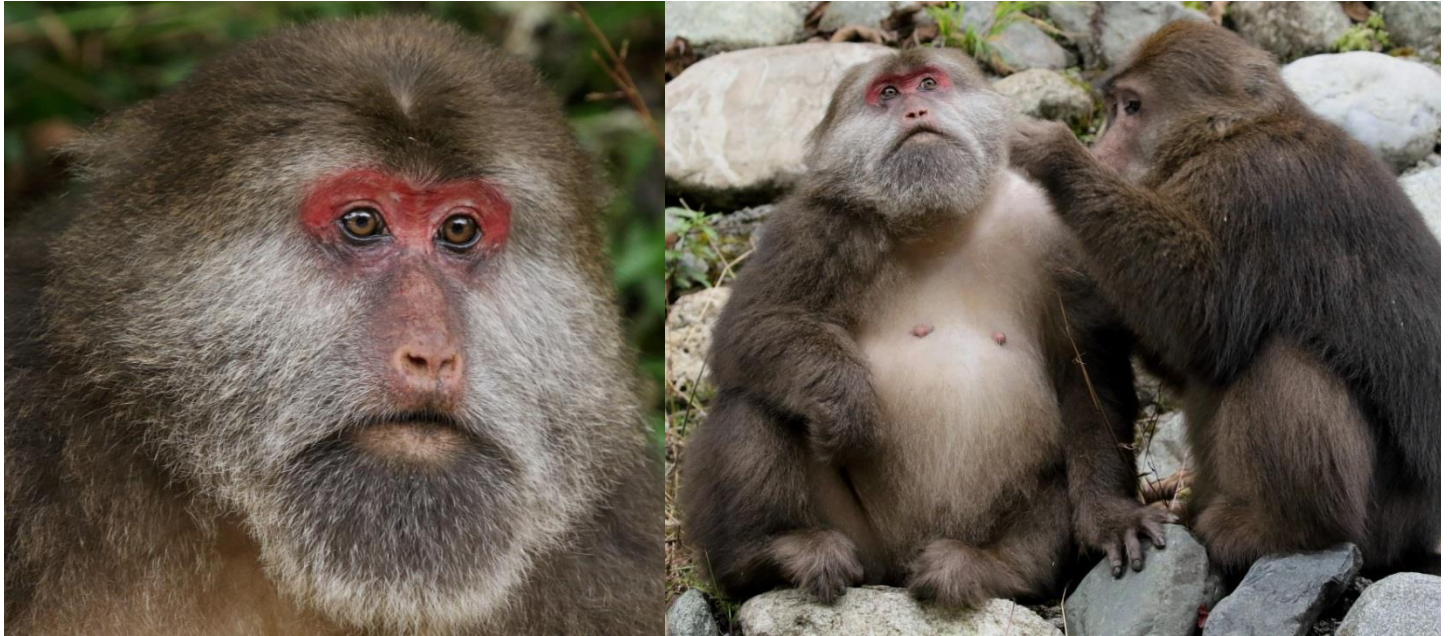
**Red Panda (Pete Wheeler
and Steve Holloway)**

MAMMALS

Nomenclature follows **A Guide to the Mammals of China** (Smith and Xie).

1 - Tibetan Macaque *Macaca thibetana*

Labaha: Two on the 23rd & 30+ on the 24th. Tangjiahe. 10+ daily.



Tibetan Macaques (Steve Holloway)

2 - Golden Snub-nosed Monkey *Rhinopithecus roxellana*

40+ on a distant hillside viewable from the track approximately six kilometres from the hotel at Tangjiahe on the 3rd.

3 - Pere David's Rock Squirrel *Sciurotamias davidianus*

Tangjiahe: Two on the 3rd and 2+ on the 4th.

4 - Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel *Tamiops swinhoei*

Labaha: 6+ on the 24th and one on the 25th.

5 - Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraeus*

One in the park at Dujiangyan on the 5th.

6 - Red-and-White Flying Squirrel *Petaurista alborufus*

Labaha: Common (10+) on all three night drives.

7 - Grey-headed Flying Squirrel *Petaurista elegans*

Labaha: One seen at close range on the 25th and possibly one distantly on the 24th.

8 - Complex-toothed Flying Squirrel *Trogopterus xanthipes*

Labaha: One on the 24th and another on the 25th.

9 - Woolly Hare *Lepus comus*

Rouergai – three SE of Rouergai on the 27th and 25+ in a valley SW of Rouergai on the 31st.

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

Rouergai – abundant, 100s seen each day, and the reason for the exceptional numbers of mammalian and avian predators in the area.

11 - Confucian Niviventer (Chinese White-bellied Rat) *Niviventer confucianus*

Labahe: One on the 24th and two on the 25th. Tangjiahe: Probably encountered most nights with most unidentified rodents likely to have been this species.

Rodent sp?

Several unidentified rodents were seen particularly at Tangjiahe. An extremely large, long tailed and highly mobile rat was seen distantly at Labahe by the first vehicle but remains unidentified at the time of writing although was nicknamed 'Psycho' Rat.

12 - Pallas's Cat *Felis manul*

Rouergai – One of the highlights of the trip. Eyeshine from two individuals shortly prior to dawn on the 28th one of which was re-found by Sid shortly after dawn and performed well hunting pikas at one of our traditional sites albeit in poor light.

13 - Chinese Desert (Mountain) Cat *Felis bieti*

Rouergai – two sightings of probably the same individual while spotlighting SE of Rouergai on the 27th with presumably the same individual in the same area on the 28th.

14 – Northern Leopard Cat *Felis bengalensis*

One seen briefly by Richard while spotlighting at Tangjiahe prior to dawn on the 3rd. Now Split from Sunda Leopard Cat found in Borneo and Sumatra.

15 – Himalayan (Masked) Palm Civet *Paguma larvata*

Tangjiahe: Three on the 2nd, four on the 3rd including a female with two young, and two prior to dawn on the 4th. All seen while spotlighting.

16 – 'Tibetan' Wolf *Canus lupus*

Rouergai: One on the 28th, three on the 30th and a total of eleven (five, three, one and two) on the 31st. All somewhat distant but great views of the three on the 30th interacting with each other.

17 - Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*

Rouergai. Seen on all four full days with daily counts of four, 10+, 12+ and five.

18 - Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

One on route to Rouergai and daily counts of three, one, four and one at Rouergai.

19 – Mountain Weasel *Mustela altaica*

At Labahe two brief daytime sightings of possibly the same individual on the 26th.

20 – Siberian Weasel *Mustela sibirica*

Fabulous close range daytime views of an individual that responded well to squeeking at Baixi on the 29th.

21 – Steppe Polecat *Mustela eversmanni*

A fabulous individual watched hunting at night in a valley south-west of Rouergai on the 30th. It was interesting to watch it disappear down one burrow only to re-emerge from another several metres away,

22 – Red Panda *Ailurus fulgens*

A good showing at Labahe with a distant individual on the morning of the 24th followed by a much closer individual the same afternoon. On the 25th at least two distant individuals, a much closer individual seen by Richard and Tom before it descended into the bamboo, another seen by Sid and Fugui walking along a track just in front of them and a final individual initially found by Jean and seen at close range by the whole group albeit in partial cover for much of the time.

23 – Northern Hog Badger *Arctonyx albogularis*

Tangjiahe: One on the drive into the reserve on the 1st, two on the 2nd and another on the 3rd.

24 – Asian Badger *Meles leucurus*

Three sightings of what was a previously difficult to find species but which now appears relatively reliable. One about 25 kilometres from Rouergai on the 27th, another 8 kilometres south-east of Rouergai on the 28th and a third near Baixi on the 29th. All three were daytime sightings high on roadside slopes with the initial individual being positively inter-galactic when first sighted but fortunately much closer when we drove further along the road.

25 – Chinese Ferret Badger *Melogale moschata*

Excellent close range views of one for most of the group on our final morning in Tangjiahe and mammal of the trip for some.



Chinese Ferret Badger (Pete Wheeler)

26 - Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*

Tangjiahe. Two sightings on the 3rd. A single boar and a sow with a young one.

27 - Siberian Roe *Capreolus pygargus*

Eight south-east of Rouergai on the 28th, two near Baixi on the 29th and 30th. .

28 - Tufted Deer *Elaphodus cephalophus*

Scarce this year but the one that we did see near the protection station at Tangjiahe on the 3rd performed superbly at close range during the early afternoon.



Tufted Deer (Pete Wheeler)

29 - Reeve's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi*

Up to 15 each day at Tangjiahe.

30 - Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

Up to three per day at Labahe were releases from the aborted introduction scheme.

31 - Sambar Deer *Rusa unicolor*

Up to 11 each night at Labahe.

32 - Chinese Takin *Budorcas taxicolor*

Common at Tangjiahe with up to 15 being seen on each drive.



Takin (Steve Holloway)

33 - Chinese Serow *Capricoris milneedwardsii*

Great views of a single sub-adult male while spotlighting at Labahe on the 24th and 25th.



Chinese Serow (Steve Holloway)



Chinese Goral (Pete Wheeler)

34 - Chinese Goral *Naemorhedus griseus*

Nightly counts of one, 6+ and two at Labahe and one at close range at Tangjiahe on the 3rd.

35 - Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayeur*

An unexpected bonus of six on a distant mountainside as we had a picnic lunch stop on route from Rouergai to Tangjiahe.

36 - Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

Not seen on either recce but four near Rouergai on the 28th and at least six at a second site on the 31st.



Red-and-White Flying Squirrel (Steve Holloway)