



Royle Safaris was back in Sichuan looking for mammals in spring 2025, we ran 5 tours in all, there will be other reports published and all but one were successful in seeing Giant Panda, very bad weather hindered one trip and alternative arrangements had to be made. Of these 5 tours, three of these were private tours and two were our scheduled group departures. This is the short summary of the first group trip as well as our sightings log of which animals were seen and where they were seen.

All of our Sichuan Mammals Tours start and end in Chengdu, after collection from Shangliu airport in the city the group was taken direct to our panda location in the Wolong Greater Ecosystem. We keep the site a secret and our plan is to spend a week here scanning and hiking and searching for possibly the most iconic species in the world as well as seeing what else we can find there. If we get our target early we can leave here and spend some time in Labahe Natural Nature Reserve where a wealth of species can be seen including many quite easily.

From the forested hills here we head towards the Tibetan Plateau and reach the edge and the grasslands of Rouergai, after some time where we finish the trip in the very famous and great reserve of Tangjiahe, there was also a side trip to a forest near Pingwu which has a habituated group of monkeys that we also visited.

However the above planned itinerary was changed on this trip as during the first week we had very bad weather with cold temperatures and deep snow. This adverse weather became a daily factor effecting our bird and mammal watching abilities and the conditions got so bad at our chosen panda site that the Toyota Landcruiser got badly stuck in the snow (which is very bad sign) and every drive into the park was a slippery hazardous journey over deep compacted ice. This weather is not usually still around in March, but with global climate change, predicting these things is getting harder and harder.

With all the clients on this trip making Giant Panda the top animal the snow weather impacted in both positive and negative ways: the positive being the easy identification of tracks in fresh snow, but the cold weather and snow covered tress probably decreasing the likelihood of a tree climbing animal. The tree climbing behaviour of the pandas obviously makes it much easier to find one than being lucky to have one cross the road, as other than these occasions they spend most of their time deep in the bamboo. Such was the eagerness of this group to see Giant Panda that itinerary was changed to omit the Ruoergai section of the trip – where temperatures were reaching -15C and so to maximise time in the panda area.

During that first week the Giant Panda search gave many signs in the form of fresh tracks in the snow and an animal was thought to be heard calling by one of our guides and a couple of clients – but although we must have been so close we were not able to see an animal. In addition to Giant Panda, Red Panda were also very difficult during this period – where normally we see one or two animals daily here, we only found a single sleeping **Red Panda**, indicating conditions were also poor for viewing this species.

After a week, with the weather further worsening and the forecast not looking good, the group decided that it was a good time to move the Pingwu area for Tangjiahe and the habituated Golden Snub-nosed Monkey site, with the idea that we would return to the Giant Panda site later on. The Tangjiahe section of the trip was successful with many **Sichuan Takin** being seen and also 3 **Northern Hog Badgers** among the mammal sightings – the habituated **Golden Snub-nose Monkey** gave their usual excellent photographic opportunities.

Returning to the panda site after 3 nights in the Pingwu area we again concentrated on Giant Panda – this time finding very fresh scat that indicated an animal still frequenting the park. However, even with improving weather and improved chances of scanning a tree for a climbing animal, we were again unlucky and only found a single **Red Panda**.

At this point the group split with 4 of the group wanting the last two nights at Labahe while the other 4 voted to stay and look for Giant Panda. Labahe gave good results with great views of several **Forest Musk Deer** and more fleeting views of a single **Chinese Ferret Badger**. Unfortunately, those who carried on searching for Giant Panda again had no luck.

In addition to the animals we expect to find in these locations on these tours we had some nice unexpected sightings including **Rufous Tube-nosed Bat & Japanese Greater Horseshoe Bat** (both single bats seen in a tunnel in Labahe), **Long-nosed Mole** (one individual brought up by melting snow), **Forest Musk Deer** and **Gray-headed Giant Flying Squirrel**. For more sightings please see the below list.

In Tangjiahe the group were treated to prolonged views of three **Yellow-throated Martens** as they chased each other down a river as well as three sightings of **Northern Hog Badgers** and the commonly seen **Masked Palm Civets**.

At the start of the trip we had organised a short (2 night) extension for Cheryl and Judy to go and see the habituated **Francois' Langurs** not too far from Chengdu, this was a great success with the langurs and also had a nice **Red-hipped Squirrel**. Extensions such as this can be arranged if you are interested.

The group was made up of Cheryl Antonucci, Carrie & Colin Van Reenen Mostert, Dylan Radin, Lesley McLennan, Lynne Venart, Natalie Kidd, Terry Goble and Judy Parrish.

Both of our group tours are currently fully booked for 2026 now and so there is currently no availability to join trips, however we can look to accommodate private tours (subject to availability) if anyone are interested. We have started getting bookings on our 2027 groups now also. Please just email me direct at info@royle-safaris.co.uk for more information on how to join groups for 2027 or look into the possibility of a private tour in 2026.

We have some pictures below the sightings log from Lesley McLennan & Cheryl Antonucci.

Martin Royle

Species List

Sichuan's Mammals Tour & Langur Extension

March 2025

Mammals († = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Giant Panda	<i>Ailuropoda melanoleuca</i>
2	Chinese Red Panda	<i>Ailurus styani</i>
3	Northern Hog Badger	<i>Arctonyx albogularis</i>
4	Sichuan Takin	<i>Budorcas tibetana</i>
5	Pallas's Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus erythraeus</i>
6	Chinese Serow	<i>Capricornis milneedwardsi</i>
7	Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel	<i>Dremomys pernyi</i>
8	Red-hipped Squirrel	<i>Dremomys pyrrhomerus</i>
9	Tufted Deer	<i>Elaphodus cephalophus</i>
10	Long-nosed Mole	<i>Euroscaptor longirostris</i>
11	Parti-coloured Flying Squirrel	<i>Hylopetes alboniger</i>

Key: WOL (Panda Location) / LAB (Labahe) / LAN (Francois' Langur Location) / TAN (Tangjiahe) / PIN (Pingwu)				
WOL	LAB	LAN	TAN	PIN
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12	Malayan Porcupine	<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>
13	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca macaque</i>
14	Tibetan Macaque	<i>Macaca thibetana</i>
15	Yellow-throated Marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>
16	Chinese Ferret Badger	<i>Melogale moschata</i>
17	Forest Musk Deer	<i>Moschus berezovskii</i>
18	Reeve's Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>
19	Rufous Tube-nosed Bat	<i>Murina leucogaster</i>
20	Chinese Goral	<i>Naemorhedus griseus</i>
21	Confucius Niviventer	<i>Niviventer confucianus</i>
22	Masked Palm Civet	<i>Paguma larvata</i>
23	Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista alborufus</i>
24	Gray-headed Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista caniceps</i>
25	Indochinese Leopard Cat	<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>
26	Japanese Greater Horseshoe Bat	<i>Rhinolophus nippon</i>
27	Golden Snub-nosed Monkey	<i>Rhinopithecus roxellana</i>
28	Pere David's Rock Squirrel	<i>Sciurotamias davidianus</i>
29	Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scofra</i>
30	Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel	<i>Tamias swinhoi</i>
31	Francois' Langur	<i>Trachypithecus francoisi</i>
32	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>

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NB 1: Some bats identified 100% at roosts or with good views. Others identified with spectrograms in combination with sightings (no spectrograms without visual confirmation are recorded), behaviour and habitat – so not 100% but best educated guesses. For more information please email me.

Outstanding Birds (not a full list)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>
2	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
3	Hodgson's Treecreeper	<i>Certhia hodgsoni</i>
4	Sichuan Treecreeper	<i>Certhia tianquanensis</i>
5	White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
6	Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>
7	White Eared Pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i>
8	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>
9	Crimson-naped Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates cathpharius</i>
10	Godlewski's Bunting	<i>Emberiza godlewskii</i>
11	Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>
12	Slaty Bunting	<i>Emberiza siemsseni</i>

13	Little Forktail	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>
14	Black-faced Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax affinis</i>
15	Grandala	<i>Grandala coelicolor</i>
16	Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
17	Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
18	White-tailed Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
19	Giant Laughingthrush	<i>Ianthocincla maximus</i>
20	Tawny Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa flavipes</i>
21	Plain Mountain-Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>
22	Scaly-Sided Merganser	<i>Mergus squamatus</i>
23	Chestnut-bellied RockThrush	<i>Monticola rufiventris</i>
24	Collared Grosbeak	<i>Mycerobas affinis</i>
25	Spot-breasted Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis guttaticollis</i>
26	White-throated Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>
27	Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>
28	Blue-fronted Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
29	Hodgson's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i>
30	Rufous-breasted Accentor	<i>Prunella strophiate</i>
31	Green Shrike-Babbler	<i>Pteruthius xanthochlorus</i>
32	Grey-headed Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula erythaca</i>
33	Ashy-throated Parrotbill	<i>Sinosuthora alphonsianus</i>
34	Qilian Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger albocoeruleus</i>
35	Himalayan Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>
36	Chestnut Thrush	<i>Turdus rubrocanus</i>



Chinese Red Panda



Yellow-throated Marten



Golden Snub-nosed Monkey



Francois' Langur



Tibetan Macaque



Swinhoe's Striped Squirrel



Asian Red-hipped Squirrel



Pallas's Squirrel



Pere David's Rock Squirrel



Sichuan Takin



Chinese Goral



Reeve's Muntjac



Japanese Greater Horseshoe Bat



Rufous Tube-nosed Bat



Golden Pheasant



Gray-headed Parrotbill



Asiatic Toad