

Taiwan, 2-14 May 2026

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This was primarily designed as a birding trip, but with time also specifically devoted to mammals and herps... and other species also recorded where time allowed!

SM & JP arrived on the evening of 2 May, with GD arriving late that night. GD & SM left on the afternoon of 11 May, with JP leaving early on 15 May.

Summary itinerary:

- 02 May: An evening trip to Fuyang Eco Park by JP & SM after landing in Taipei
- 03 May: Erbazi Botanical Garden first thing, ending up at Daxueshan National Forest
- 04 May: Daxueshan National Forest
- 05 May: Daxueshan National Forest; Shigang District; ending up at Xitou Nature Education Area, Natou District
- 06 May: Xitou Nature Education Area (note this only opens at 7am, but there is accommodation inside the gates); ending up at Alishan in the evening
- 07 May: Yushan National Park; ending up at Taitung in the evening
- 8 May: Ferry to, and night on, Lanyu
- 9 May: Lanyu, ferry back, then drive to Taroko for the evening
- 10 May: Taroko National Park; ending up at Xitou Nature Education Area for the evening
- 11 May: Xitou Nature Education Area; ending up at Jingualiao Creek (Pinglin District, New Taipei City) at night (JP only by this point)
- 12 May: Yangminshan National Park during the day and night, with a diversion at dusk to Bianfudong Park, Ruifang
- 13 May: Sandiaoling Ecological Tunnel (Shuangxi District, New Taipei City), Formosan Golden Bat's Home (Yunlin County), then the Mihu Historic Trail (near Alishan) at night
- 14 May: Yushan National Park pre-dawn, then a tunnel near Jiji on the way back to Taipei

Mammal species list:

- 1. Taiwanese Macaque (*Macaca cyclopis*)** – present in suitable habitat throughout, and often around car parks and picnic areas. For example: moderate numbers (up to 12/day) at Daxueshan National Forest on 3-5 May; ~10 at Xitou Nature Education Area on 6 May; and ~30 at Yushan National Park on 7 May.
 - 2. Pallas's Squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*)** – small to moderate numbers in forest at all elevations, including two at Erbazhi Botanical Garden on 2 May, up to eight/day at Daxueshan National Forest on 3-5 May, nine at Xitou Nature Education Area on 6 May, and four at Yushan National Park on 7 May.
 - 3. Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel (*Dremomys pernyi*)** – only one, on 4 May at km23.5 (which appeared to be a pheasant feeding area), Daxueshan National Forest.
 - 4. Maritime Striped Squirrel (*Tamiops maritimus*)** – two sightings of singles, at Daxueshan National Forest on 3 May and at Xitou Nature Education Area on 6 May.
 - 5. Hairy-footed Flying Squirrel (*Belomys pearsonii*)** – a single individual seen, pre-dawn on 6 May in a broad-leaved forest gully at Xitou Nature Education Area. However, by that point we had seen all three flying squirrel species (indeed, in an hour at that point – amazing that they all overlap at Xitou!), so we no longer specifically looked for them...
 - 6. Formosan Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista grandis*)** – Heard at Fuyang Eco Park on 2 May, then at least two at Xitou Nature Education Area pre-dawn on 6 May, at least one there pre-dawn on 11 May (GD & JP), ~12 at Jinguaiiao Creek on the evening of 11 May (JP only), and two at Yangminshan National Park on 12 May (JP only).
 - 7. Taiwan (Red-and-White) Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista lena*)** – Common at Daxueshan National Forest on 3-5 May (with up to eight in one short evening around the hotel complex), and three at Xitou Nature Education Area pre-dawn on 6 May (GD & JP).
 - 8. Taiwan Field Mouse (*Apodemus semotus*)** – One after dark across the road above the Daxueshan National Forest entrance gate on 3 May (SM & JP), then another at the Heavenly Pond on 4 May (SM only).
 - 9. Spiny Taiwan White-bellied Rat (*Niviventer coninga*)** – A single individual near the northern end of the Mihu Historic Trail (near Alishan) on 13 May (JP only).
 - 10. Soft-furred Taiwan White-bellied Rat (*Niviventer culturatus*)** – A single individual at Yushan National Park pre-dawn on 7 May (with extensive wholly pale distal part of tail), and at least three there pre-dawn on 14 May (JP only).
 - 11. Asian Long-fingered Bat (*Miniopterus fuliginosus*)** – at least two seen exiting the cave at Bianfudong Park, Ruifang, with more sound-recorded (JP only).
 - 12. Black-and-orange Myotis (*Myotis formosus*)** – About 10 of these stunning golden bats roosting in the open in trees around the school at the Formosan Golden Bat's Home, Yunlin County.
- Fringed Long-footed Myotis/Chinese Water Myotis *Myotis fimbriatus/laniger*** – a couple of bats repeatedly foraging low over the Jinguaiiao creek, Pinglin District, New Taipei City, were presumably one of these two species.

13. Japanese Pipistrelle (*Alionoctula abramus*) – At least five seen roosting at the Formosan Golden Bat's Home, Yunlin County. Apparently this species, though noting that pipistrelle taxonomy in Taiwan is not yet resolved.

14. Great Himalayan Roundleaf Bat (*Hipposideros armiger*) – A single individual roosting in the km23.5 road tunnel at Daxueshan National Forest, at least six in a tunnel in Shigang District on 5 May, and superb views of ~15 in the Sandiaoling Ecological Tunnel on 13 May (JP only).

15. Formosan Woolly Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus formosae*) – Great views of a single individual in the Sandiaoling Ecological Tunnel on 13 May (JP only) and at least one in a tunnel near Jiji on 14 May (JP only).

16. Formosan Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus monoceros*) – ~6 in a tunnel near Jiji on 14 May (JP only).

bat sp. – one on 6 May roosting very high inside the 'Giant Hollow Tree', which I believe was on the Zhushan Forest Road, Alishan National Park. Unfortunately not photographed, but highlighted here for others to check in future.

Short-toed Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) – Burrows and digging sign seen at Yangminshan National Park on 12 May. Taiwan seems to have the best remaining populations of this species, so three speculative efforts were made to find it – in Yangminshan (where 2018-19 data on distribution and abundance have been published), at the Mihu Historic Trail (where one had been videoed by a tourist a week earlier), and north of Taitung (where previous research has shown remarkably high densities in the eastern coastal hill ranges). Only Yangminshan looked promising – this species seems to be most abundant (at least in Taiwan) in bamboo-dominated forest in foothills, so it is difficult to find locations with ease of access, ability to walk quietly, and good visibility. With further reconnaissance, however, it seems this species should be find-able in Taiwan.

17. Yellow-throated Marten (*Martes flavigula*) – Three seen very well late afternoon at Daxueshan National Forest on 3 May.

18. Formosan Ferret-badger (*Melogale subaurantiaca*) – 1 on 2 May at Fuyang Eco Park, though not seen well (SM & JP).

19. Siberian Weasel (*Mustela sibirica*) – At least one individual seen repeatedly and well on the side of the road pre-dawn at Daxueshan National Forest on 5 May, and an individual of what was presumed this species briefly across the road pre-dawn at Yushan National Park on 14 May (JP only).

20. Masked Palm Civet (*Paguma larvata*) – Singles well at Fuyang Eco Park on 2 May (SM & JP), Jingualiao Creek on 11 May (JP only), the Mihu Historic Trail on 13 May (JP only), and pre-dawn at Yushan National Park on 14 May (JP only).

beaked whale sp. – A single was seen from the ferry to Lanyu on 8 May. It was only seen logging at the surface, so is not confidently identifiable, but was perhaps most likely Cuvier's Beaked Whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) based on coloration and relative abundance. There seem to have been four species of beaked whale recorded in Taiwan, with Gingko-toothed (apparently seen on 60% of May pelagics from Dong'ao), and Cuvier's the most common/least uncommon, Blainville's very rare (only two likely live records, one acoustic record, and five strandings?), and only one (?) record of Longman's. There seems to be a perception that Blainville's Beaked Whale is regular on the Lanyu crossing, but I can only trace two old sight records from this general area, and a record from John Wright in 2016 – this latter record seems more likely to refer to Cuvier's or perhaps Gingko-toothed, given their relative abundance in Taiwan and the apparent low prevalence of breaching in Blainville's.

21. Formosan Serow (*Capricornis swinhoei*) – Surprisingly common at Daxueshan National Forest, with the aid of frequent scanning with thermal scopes during the day (and night), with ~12 seen on 3 May and ~8 on 4 May.

22. Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*) – A single animal seen by thermal scope high in the forest at Yushan National Park pre-dawn on 14 May (JP only).

23. Reeves's Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) – Present throughout, with high counts of 10 in a night at Yangminshan National Park on 12 May, and eight per day/night at Daxueshan National Forest on 3 & 4 May.

Missed mammals

Apart from those mentioned above, notably Short-tailed Pangolin, it would have been possible to see more bat species with more focus on visiting known roost locations and/or use of bat detectors. This was simply a limitation of our short trip.

We did not know the law on small mammal trapping, so avoided this, but saw very few small mammals even despite extensive diurnal and nocturnal use of thermal cameras. For birds, our focus was largely montane, so this undoubtedly also restricted records of some small mammals/bats. Taiwan Vole seems to get regularly reported from Taroko National Park (Hehuanshan Lookout car park), but we were in a hurry through there owing to temporary road closures.

Asian Black Bear was always a long shot – it seems most common in the east of Yushan National Park, but we could find no information on any location with regular sightings.

Last, it is clear that additional cetaceans are possible through the Dong'ao pelagic or any other time spent at sea.

Bird species

All endemic species and potential endemics (pending future taxonomic change) were seen, except Taiwan Thrush (this was an odd year, with not a single confirmed sighting in the first half of May) and White's/Scaly Thrush (this undescribed taxon was only heard, by JP, at Yushan National Park).

Reptile species

All individuals recorded, and GD put in some time specifically searching for snakes. We collectively saw 15 species, plus a *Takydromus* not identified to species level: Black Odd-scaled Snake *Achalinus niger* (endemic); Many-banded Krait *Bungarus multicinctus*; King Ratsnake *Elaphe carinata*; Red-banded Snake *Lycodon rufozonatus*; Formosa Wolf Snake *Lycodon ruhstrati*; Habu/Brown Spotted Pitviper *Protobothrops mucrosquamatus*; Chinese Green Snake *Ptyas major*; Chinese Green Tree Viper *Trimeresurus stejnegeri*; Brown Anole *Anolis sagrei*; Taiwan Japalure *Diploderma swinhonis* (endemic); Longtail Mabuya *Eutropis longicaudata*; Hokou Gecko *Gekko hokouensis*; Brown Forest Skink *Sphenomorphus incognitus*; Taiwan Alpine Skink *Sphenomorphus taiwanensis*; Pond Slider *Trachemys scripta*.

Amphibian species

Only incidentally recorded, but ten species seen (and a *Polypedates* not identified to species level), including five endemics, of a total of 44 (19 endemic) extant species: Ota's Stream Tree Frog *Buergeria otaï* (endemic); Robust Kajika Frog *Buergeria robusta* (endemic); Taiwan Common Toad *Bufo bankorensis* (endemic); Asian Common Toad *Duttaphrynus melanostictus*; Crab-eating Frog *Fejervarya cancrivora*; Paddy Field Frog *Fejervarya limnocharis*; LaTouche's Frog *Hylarana latouchii*; Temple Tree Frog *Kurixalus idiotocus* (endemic); Swinhoe's Frog *Odorrana swinhoana* (endemic).

Other species

With lots of identifications pending, so far we have 125 species of plant, and 40 species of invertebrate photographed and identified to species level. These include such spectacular endemic species as the millipede *Spirobolus panmaus* and the moth *Camptoloma carum*, as well as the stunning longhorn beetle *Chloridolum accensum* (pictured below), restricted to Lanyu and the Ryuku Islands.

