





Qinghai (Snow Leopards & Tibetan Mammals)


Destination: Qinghai Province, China **Season:** Spring, Summer, Autumn

 Expert guides throughout including all permits and permissions to enter these areas

 Quality optical equipment including thermal imagers available for finding wildlife

 Visit specially discovered locations for higher chances of seeing targeted species

 Excellent chances for Snow Leopards and good chances for Eurasian Lynxes

 Possibility for over 40 species of mammals including some real rarities



Dates:

Next group tour: 3rd Jul – 17th Jul 2020

Private / Tailored Tour information:

This tour can be booked (in theory) at any time of the year (subject to availability) – however it is worth bearing in mind that the winter on the Tibetan Plateau can be brutal and it is not recommended.

So we recommend travelling in the summer months or spring / autumn. These times of year have all resulted in very good sightings of our top targeted species (including snow leopard).

We have only included the cost for our group tour (right) as the logistics for this trip mean that private tours for less than 5 people can be very high. However we can run private tours here if you wish and so if you wish we can provide a quote.

We also have flexibility for the duration of trip you would like to book, if people would like to spend longer in some of these locations; that are possible, subject to availability.

There are also possible extensions which can be added on pre or post the tour (subject to availability); such as visiting Rouergai (a well known place for Pallas's cats and Chinese mountain cats); Tangjiahe (excellent for a range of species including Sichuan takin, Reeve's muntjac, Tufted deer etc); it may also be possible to combine this tour with other destinations in China for mammals or birds. If you are interested in other destinations then we recommend you contact us for more information to work through a tailored tour for you.

Prices (2020 season):

Group Tour (14 nights)

£3,695 per person

*single supplement £375

Private Tour Prices Available

Overview

Day 1:	Yushu
Day 2:	Yushu / Kanda Mountain
Day 3:	Kanda Mountain / Angsai
Days 4-7:	Angsai
Day 8:	Angsai / Yushu
Days 9-10:	Zhidoi
Day 11:	Budongquan / Kekexili
Day 12:	Wild Yak Valley
Day 13:	Wild Yak Valley / Zhidoi
Day 14:	Zhidoi / Yushu



Tour Information

Introduction

China is not necessarily a country that makes you think of pristine ecosystems and safari holidays, however this is incorrect. There are many places in China that are full of wildlife incredible ecosystems that can be explored; this tour explores one of the least visited in the world, not just China. This itinerary will visit the Tibetan Plateau and associated mountainous ecosystems of the Chinese province, Qinghai. This rugged and sparsely populated area is home to large numbers of iconic and endangered species such as snow leopards, wild yak, Tibetan antelope, Himalayan brown bear, Tibetan wolves among many others.

Over the last decade or so the snow leopard has gone from a species which was deemed impossible to see in the wild, to an animal which is now regularly encountered. This is mostly done in the wonderful Himalayan national park of Hemis in Ladakh India. Having been at the forefront of the eco-tourism in Ladakh and specifically for snow leopards since 2010 Royle Safaris is looking for other areas which offer similar or better snow leopard sightings. This is down to two reasons; the first is wanting to spread ecotourism around to other areas which are in need of it and also to reduce the human impact on the fragile Himalayan ecosystem of Hemis National Park (due to unregulated tourism and increasing numbers of people visiting during the winter months). This search for another reliable snow leopard location led us to explore the Tibetan Plateau and finding our locations in Qinghai.

For the last 2-3 years the sightings of snow leopards here have steadily increased and an average of numerous sightings per trip has resulted in us organising this specific high altitude mammal watching tour. We are very confident that the snow leopard sightings and regularity of the sightings here is at least what it is in Ladakh. But in addition to the snow leopards this itinerary visits areas which are very good for Tibetan antelope, wild yak, Alpine musk deer, white-lipped deer, Tibetan wolves, Tibetan foxes, kiang and other mammal species of the Tibetan Plateau. But we also have found quite reliable locations for Himalayan brown bear and even Eurasian lynx in recent months.

You will be experiencing rural China and technically Tibetan culture and everything from the food, culture, architecture you will encounter will differ from the typical Chinese imagery that most people have when they think of the superpower that China is nowadays and the ultra-modern cities.

This is a unique tour that explores part of China that are rarely visited, to get a good idea of what to expect we recommend you read through the below information. We have outlined a detailed itinerary for the entire trip. However due to weather conditions the route and activities may vary once we get there, although we will endeavour to stick to the stated itinerary as much as possible.

All in all we believe that this tour offers a fantastic overview of the Tibetan Plateau and the wildlife that inhabits the 'roof of the world'.

Itinerary

Day 1 **Yushu**

Arrival & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in the city (TBC)

Food:

Dinner is the only meal included today and is served at the hotel or nearby café.

Transportation:

Private vehicle.

Today we recommend you arrive early today (or even the day before) so we can spend the majority of the day looking for wildlife around Yushu. So the plan is to have collected everyone by midday and then we can leave the city and start looking for wildlife on the outskirts of the city in some locations known for mammals and birds. We will try and find species such as McNeil's deer, White-lipped deer, Alpine musk deer, blue sheep, Glover's pika and there is already a possibility of snow leopard here. As far as interesting bird species go we may see ibisbill here.

Day 2 **Yushu / Kanda Mountain**

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in Nangquan (TBC)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private vehicle.

Today will be a second day exploring the well known locations on the outskirts of the city for wildlife before departing and travelling to Kanda Mountain. It is around the mountain that we have had some success with Eurasian lynx in the recent past and we hope this continues. Snow leopards are also known from here and so we could get both high altitude cat species here today.



Day 3 **Kanda / Angsai**

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Homestay

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private vehicle.

This morning will be spent around Kanda Mountain with Eurasian lynx our main priority here. We will then depart from Kanda Mountain and head towards Angsai this is an area being protected by the ShanShui NGO and with great success. The wildlife range of wildlife here is staggering and with 5 species of cats recorded from here (with the possibility of Chinese mountain cat also present) the place is aptly named for his population and reliability of seeing snow leopards. Spotlighting is not permitted in the valley so this afternoon / evening when we arrive we will start looking until nightfall and then have dinner.

Days 4-7 **Angsai**

Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Homestay

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private vehicle.

For the next 4 full days we will explore this wonderful valley in its entirety. The range of wildlife here is among the most diverse in the Tibetan plateau and along with snow leopards there are leopards, Eurasian lynx, Pallas's cat, Indochinese leopard cat all recorded from here. Other than cats we hope to see Himalayan brown bear, woolly hare, Glover's pika, mountain weasel, Himalayan marmot, white-lipped deer, Alpine musk deer, Tibetan fox, red fox and blue sheep whilst here. On the bird side of things we may see white-eared pheasant, buff-throated partridge, Tibetan partridge, golden eagle, saker falcon, lammergeyer, Himalayan griffon and steppe eagle.

In the last few years the rate of sightings of snow leopards here has been incredible and rival sightings in number, frequency and distance anywhere in the world. Of course we hope this continues into the future and we will put in as many hours into trying to see these and other species, we cannot guarantee anything as they are wild animals.

Day 8 **Angsai / Yushu**

Wildlife Watching & Travelling

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in the city (TBC)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

This morning we will have a last chance to see animals in this area before leaving to drive back to Yushu. We will arrive in the later afternoon and have the rest of the day to rest at the hotel.

Days 9-10 **Yushu / Zhidoi**

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in Zhidoi (TBC)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

On the morning of day 9 will leave Yushu and travel to Zhidoi County, our locations here are focused on a new set of mammals including Tibetan (or Himalayan) wolf – which is newly described as a distinct species -, Tibetan fox and Tibetan gazelle as well as pikas, marmots and other species. We will spend the afternoon looking for wildlife and if local conditions allow we will spotlight here for nocturnal species too.

Then the full day of day 10 will be spent exploring the region around Zhidoi County looking for wildlife and once again if we can, we will go out spotlighting after dark. Also known from around Zhidoi County are snow leopards, so there are further chances to see this awesome species here as well.



Day 11 **Budongquan / Kekexili Desert**

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Homestay

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

This morning we will leave Zhidoi and drive towards the Kekexili Desert and in particular Budongquan. This region has once again a different set of mammal species and our main targets this afternoon will be kiang, Tibetan antelopes and wild yak. These species have been hit hard by poaching and hybridisation (in the case of the wild yak) and so they are now only found in large numbers far away from any large human settlements, which is why we have to come all of this way to see them. But the good news is that these animals are reliable here and often seen in good numbers.

Also found around here are woolly hare, various pika species (including Koslov's pika and plateau pika) and possibly jerboas too. If local conditions allow we will spotlight around here after dark.

Day 12 **Wild Yak Valley**

Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Homestay

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

Today is a full day exploring probably the best place in the world to see wild yaks. But as well as yaks we will look for all manner of other mammal species, and birds and other wildlife. This is a full day looking for wildlife and then if possible spotlighting after dark too.

Day 13 **Zhidoi**

Travelling

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in Zhidoi
(TBC)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

Today is the start of our long journey back home. We will spend most of the day on the road and travel back to Zhidoi for the night. We will do some wildlife watching from the road as we go along.

Day 14 **Yushu**

Travelling

Accommodation:

3/4* Hotel in the
city (TBC)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the hotel or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

Today is our second day of travelling back towards the city of Yushu, we arrive back in the city in the afternoon and the rest of your final night is free for your leisure.

Day 15 **Departure**

Travelling

Accommodation:

NA

Food:

Breakfast will be served at the hotel and is the only meal included today.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle.

This morning you will be taken to the airport in time to catch your return flight home.



Your tour and all Royle Safaris services end upon transfer to the airport

Please note that the itinerary stated above is correct as our planned intentions for the tour. However adverse weather conditions and other local considerations can necessitate some modifications of the itinerary during the course of the tour; any changes will be made to make the best of the time, weather conditions and other constraints forced upon us and all changes will be made in conjunction with our terms and conditions.

Tour Inclusions

Absolutely everything mentioned in the above itinerary is included (except where it is expressly mentioned as an optional extra).

- All accommodation as mentioned above or of a similar standard as mentioned.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary; please note that some lunches and dinners are not included when staying in cities in this itinerary.
- Bottled mineral or purified (boiled) water will be provided throughout and on request.
- Private vehicles for all transfers.
- English speaking local drivers and guides with years of experience in working in the areas we are travelling.
- Royle Safaris zoologist escort where available.
- Expert mammal guides.
- All fuel, tolls, taxes and other expenses relating to driving.
- All wildlife watching and cultural activities as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Entrance fees and permits to all locations for wildlife watching mentioned.
- Field guides will be available for reference whilst on the trip.

Tour Exclusions

Nearly everything you will need is included in the price you have already paid for the tour. However there are some things not included.

- International flights to and from the tour start and end points.
- Travel insurance including any fees that result from emergency medical or evacuation needs.
- Visa fees for entering the country(s).
- Vaccinations and any medication are not included.
- Any food other than the meals provided and mentioned in the above itinerary; please note that some lunches and dinners when staying in Chengdu are not included in this itinerary
- Some meals will include a drink (such as juice, tea & coffee at breakfast) but most soft drinks and alcohol are an extra expense.
- Any items of a personal nature are not included, such as souvenirs, medication, toiletries, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips are also not included. There is no hard and fast rule for tipping in China. However we would appreciate it, if you have been happy with the service of the guides then please tip a little something at the end of the complete excursion. For local guides we hire for individual activities please tip individually and also if there are tip boxes in restaurants, camps, lodges and hotels then these are generally used for tipping all of the staff.
- Any departure taxes which may be due when leaving are not included (but may be included in the cost of your flights).

Please refer to our Terms & Conditions (<http://www.royle-safaris.co.uk/terms-conditions/>) before booking any trips – email or paper copies of Terms & Conditions can be provided if needed