

ITINERARY
CHINA'S SICHUAN PROVINCE
May 30-June 21, 2026



China has a number of endemic "chickens", including the Chestnut-throated Monal-Partridge. These birds are found in a limited range of the Tibetan Plateau in Sichuan and neighboring provinces. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld,

We include here information for those interested in the 2026 Field Guides China's Sichuan Province tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our website)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

A truly fabulous birding adventure that explores the lush forests of the Sichuan Basin across a wide range of elevations, climbs up to the breathtaking mountains at the eastern edge of the Himalayas, and samples the fauna, flora, and culture of the wild Tibetan Plateau.

As we set off from the bustling four-thousand-year-old city of Chengdu, the first place in the world where paper money was widely used, we will quickly leave dense urbanity behind for the next two and a half weeks. We will make our way into some of China's most pristine forests, where the magnitude of the forested landscapes are astonishing. Called by some "China's Lungs" because of these large tracts of forests, Sichuan is within the center of diversity for Rhododendrons, and the wooded mountainsides will be dotted with flowering Rhododendrons of many different shades as we bird our way

through the region. We will gradually wind our way up in elevation towards the Tibetan Plateau. As we approach the mountain passes of the easternmost Himalayas, we will begin our above-treeline birding, and the commanding views amid these stark high elevation landscapes will be unforgettable. Then it is onto the Tibetan Plateau, for a couple of days of birding in this unique and legendary biome, before heading back through the mountains and into the forests. Sichuan is strongly associated with the Giant Panda (which we are very unlikely to see in the wild), and we will bird the reserves created for it, which are true biological wonderlands. For our entire time here we will also be exposed to the fascinating culture of western China, and the mouthwatering cuisine of Sichuan.

It's not only about the vistas offered by enchanted forests and majestic mountains, though - the wildlife is truly phenomenal. We have an opportunity to see up to 15 species (!!) of pheasants, grouse, and partridges, well over 30 species of Old World warblers, more than 10 species of rosefinch, 7 species of redstarts, not to mention such charismatic and emblematic species as Lammergeier, Grandala, Wallcreeper, Ground Tit (formerly known as Hume's Groundpecker), and the monotypic Przevalski's Pinktail, among many others! There is not a culture of hunting on the plateau, so many birds there rarely encounter humans, and can be astonishingly tame, providing some excellent photographic opportunities. The magic of birding on the Tibetan Plateau! We also stand a great chance to see many species of mammal, from the massive Takin to the adorable Plateau Pika, not to mention the distinctive Tibetan Fox (often on the prowl for these cute pikas), and the charismatic Golden Snub-nosed Monkey. If we are truly pure of heart (or just especially lucky), we may even glimpse a Red Panda or a Moon Bear!



In addition to many wonderful birds, we will be watching for some of the mammals that inhabit this part of China, including the unique Red Panda. We had several experiences with this adorable mammal on our 2025 tour. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (up to 5 miles per day), with a mix of roadsides and forest trails, in some cases with moderate elevational change, though a couple of hikes will gain 200 meters in elevation or more (and these are optional). There will likely be at least three boardwalk trails, made out of different materials

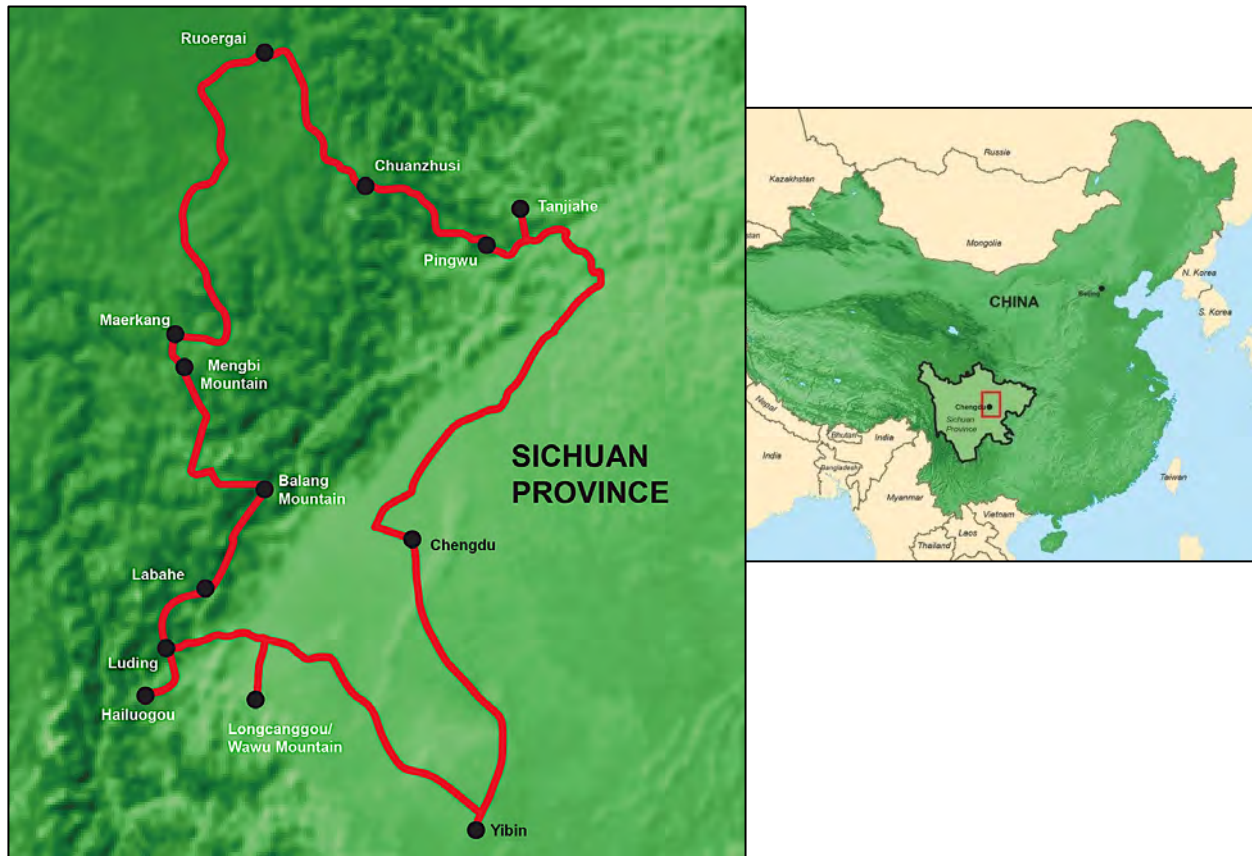
(metal in one case, wood in another, synthetic material in another), and these may be slippery depending on the temperature and weather. In a couple of instances, we will be on trails for a couple of miles. Many of the trails that feature inclines, deal with this by having staircases built into the trails. We will also be doing some walking, but not strenuous walking, at our higher elevations.

- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We have several long drives on this tour, and the roads in some places are winding. We are also at over 10,000' feet in elevation for several nights. Participants should be able to step up (and step down) to get into and out of our vehicles. Some of our lodgings may be fairly basic, but most are of a good standard for the region.
- **PACE:** Most mornings will have an early breakfast (set for 5:30-6:30 a.m.), followed by a drive to the birding area. We will bird until lunch time, sometimes enjoying a picnic meal. Normally, we bird after lunch or else continue traveling to our next destination.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 30s at night in the highest elevations to potentially the 80s F during the day in some of the lower elevations. Rain showers are always a possibility, and you will especially want to have sunglasses and sunblock at the high elevations, as the sunshine can be extremely harsh up here. The weather on the plateau itself can be windy and rainy/snowy, much like winter in the US (though it can also be pleasant).
- **ELEVATION:** We reach elevations of up to 14,500 feet on this tour, and spend at least four nights at an elevation of about 11,500 feet.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** We will endeavor to find indoor public toilets as frequently as possible, but participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on some sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day, or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations (as we do often on this tour).

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities and fitness level, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.



The Chinese Fulvetta is a rather plain endemic, but it has a certain cuteness about it, especially when framed with flowers. Photograph by participant Kristin Tucker.



About the Birding Areas

Wawushan/Labahe/Erlangshan—Ensnored in Erlangshan National Park, Labahe National Nature Reserve features dense mixed deciduous and bamboo forests, which in addition to having a great variety of birds to glean through, has some excellent mammal possibilities as well. This is one of our better chances to track down the difficult-to-see Red Panda, and there are other mammals on offer, including Tibetan Macaque, Chinese Serow, two species of Giant Flying-Squirrels, and theoretically even Chinese Leopard Cat or Hog Badger, if we get very lucky. The forest here also gives us more opportunity to see Lady Amherst's Pheasant and Temminck's Tragopan, as well as Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, and Three-toed Parrotbill. The slopes of Erlang Mountain lie not too far away to the SW of here, and has only begun to be explored by birders relatively recently, but the jewels of this place are already evident, with Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Barred Laughingthrush, Firethroat, Black-headed Greenfinch, Rufous-tailed Babbler, and a slew of other birds. Wawushan, meanwhile, will involve a couple of scenic cable car rides: first up to our accommodation, and then another to the very top of the forested mountain. Wawu Mountain is a great spot for Red Panda, and we stand some chance of finding one here, along with several highlight birds, including Great, Three-toed, Brown, and Gray-hooded parrotbills, Red-winged and Black-faced Laughingthrush, and some chance of the locally scarce Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Sichuan Thrush, and Sichuan Treecreeper.

Balangshan Mountain—Known as “the top of the panda kingdom,” Balang Mountain (Balangshan) is the ethnic demarcation line between the Sichuan Basin and the Tibetan Plateau, and it is also one of the most scenic and fascinating birding areas in China. We will spend a couple of days exploring the mountain from the vegetated valleys and lower slopes all the way up to the open highlands around the pass (4,500 m, our highest elevation of the tour). Balangshan Pass will be our highest elevation of the tour, and the scenery will be breathtaking. This mountain road is sometimes the site of a “cloud ocean,” where you emerge in the peaks above the cloud layer that covers the valleys. The high elevations could provide us with such avian bounty as the neon blue Grandala, the primeval-looking Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier), cryptic Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, Alpine Accentors, Plain and Brandt's Mountain-Finches, Wallcreeper, and plenty more highlights. The endemic Chinese Monal and Firethroat can also be had on the mountain, and the supporting cast of montane species will keep us entertained throughout our time here.



*The gorgeous Grandala breeds in the high elevations, and we'll likely find these dazzlers on Balangshan.
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

Mengbi Mountain—Standing tall in the mountains just south of Maerkang is mighty Mengbi Mountain. We will spend a full day birding through a wide elevational swathe along the road that goes over the mountain, starting our morning near the pass at around 4,000 meters, and working our way down from there. This high elevation virgin forest is home to plethora of wonderful possibilities, with two of our principal targets being the reclusive Sichuan Jay and the alternately shy or gregarious Chestnut-throated Monal Partridge (Verreaux's Partridge). In addition to these two endemic headlines, the slate of possibilities will include (but not be limited to!) a wide array of charismatic species from Blood Pheasant and Crested Tit-Warbler to Three-banded Rosefinch, the little known Przevalski's Nuthatch and the range restricted Crimson-browed Finch.

Tibetan Plateau—As we move through the mountains from Chengdu, we will leave the layered conifer-laden slopes behind, and emerge into the vast expanse of the legendary Tibetan Plateau. The scale of the plateau's grasslands is mindboggling, and in addition to the herds of cultivated Yaks, we will be in prime territory for a swath of charismatic wild mammals. Ridiculously adorable Plateau Pikas may be abundant, with Himalayan Marmots interspersed, and Tibetan Wolf and the bizarre looking one-of-a-kind Tibetan Fox will be trying to outwit them, trying to turn them into their next meal. Meanwhile, on the bird front, the roadsides are likely to provide us with Himalayan Griffon, Upland Buzzard, Saker Falcon, Daurian Jackdaw, Siberian Stonechat, and Amur Falcon, and the endangered Black-necked Crane among others. Our excursions to the forests and lakes of the plateau could provide us with Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared-Pheasant, Black Woodpecker, White-cheeked Nuthatch, the very localized Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Sichuan Tit, both White-browed and Crested Tit-Warblers, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Siberian Rubythroat, Sichuan and Alpine Leaf-Warblers, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Bar-headed Goose, Graylag Goose, Red-crested Pochard, and Ferruginous Duck. We'll also seek Black-necked Grebe and Great Crested Grebe, Great Bittern, Little Ringed Plover and Lesser Sand Plover, Brown-cheeked Rail, nesting "Tibetan" Common Tern, Rufous-necked and White-rumped snowfinches, White-browed Tit, Robin Accentor, Tibetan Partridge, the massive (for a lark) Tibetan Lark, Salim Ali's Swift, and many other goodies. We also have a good chance of seeing the Przevalski's Pinktail (Pink-tailed Rosefinch – newly elevated to its own monotypic family).

Tangjiahe —Tangjiahe Nature Reserve is a large (40,000 hectare) protected area of hill forest (the land area of the preserve is 96% covered in forest) that is renowned as one of the best places for mammals in all of China, but it is also excellent for birding, and we should see an excellent array of both mammals and birds here. The rivers host Brown Dipper and Crested Kingfisher, and the evergreen forests are a refuge to the elusive but spectacular Golden Pheasant. Other birds here are Sichuan Leaf-Warbler, the range restricted and poorly known Zappey's Flycatcher, Speckled Wood-Pigeon,

Mountain Bulbul, White-collared Yuhina, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, the skulky Blue Whistling-Thrush, Indian Blue Robin, Rufous-capped Babbler, Rufous-faced Warbler, Sooty Bushtit, and there is also a chance at the fantastic Temminck's Tragopan. We may even see some raptors, such as Oriental Honey-buzzard, migrating over the ridge here on their way to northern breeding grounds. The mammals mentioned above include Tibetan Takin, a large ungulate reminiscent (and related to) Muskox, which is restricted to just this region. In addition, mammals like Reeves' Muntjac, Tibetan Macaque, Chinese Goral, Wild Boar, Tufted Deer, and Serow are all possible. It is also one of the best places in China to look for Moon Bear (Asiatic Black Bear), and people have even seen the ever-elusive Giant Panda here (though this is a very difficult animal, and seldom seen in the wild).



*The Giant Laughingthrush is a near-endemic that we'll seek in the mountains.
Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.*

Itinerary for China's Sichuan Province

Days 1-3, Sat-Mon, 30 May-1 Jun. Departure from US; arrival in Chengdu. Most flight schedules will depart the US mid-day on Day 1 and arrive in Chengdu mid-afternoon on Day 3. Upon arrival, on 3 June, you will be met by a representative from our hotel or ground agent and escorted to our nearby hotel in Chengdu. We will meet for dinner at 6:30 PM. Night of Day 3 in Chengdu (500 m elevation).

Day 4, Tue, 2 Jun. Chengdu birding, drive to Yibin (~4 hours/295 km) After an early breakfast and checkout from our hotel in Chengdu, we'll start heading south for the foothills, but will make a stop or two at birding sites in or on the outskirts of town for an introduction to the avifauna of the region. A few of the possibilities will be Chinese Bulbul, the gregarious White-browed Laughingthrush, the gaudy Red-billed Leothrix, Chinese Grosbeak, the unique Collared Finchbill, and maybe even a flock of the endearing Vinous-throated Parrotbills. After lunch, we will continue our drive south to Yibin, several hours to the south. Depending on our timing, there may be time for a little local birding when we arrive. Night in or near Yibin.

Day 5, Wed, 3 Jun. Yibin We will continue our birding in earnest. The local community has set up a couple of bird blinds (hides), where it is possible (though of course, not guaranteed) to get better views of some high profile species than we might otherwise get. These include Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Temminck's Tragopan, Chinese Bamboo-Partridge, and Buffy Laughingthrush. There is also the possibility of Sichuan Partridge and Silver Pheasant, neither of which is likely elsewhere on our route. Other birds that we may see in the area, either inside or outside the blinds, include Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Chinese Babax, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, Golden Parrotbill, and more. Night in or near Yibin.

Day 6, Thu, 4 Jun. Yibin to Wawu Mountain (~4 hours/250 km). After one more morning of birding around the area, we will drive to Wawu Mountain. We will downsize our luggage to smaller bags that you can carry up to a half mile, and then we will leave our bus behind for two nights, and take a cable car up the mountain to check in at our hotel. Wawu Mountain is a fantastic area, with a star-studded avian cast. It is particularly rich in range restricted parrotbills, which include Gray-hooded, Three-toed, Great, Brown, and Golden! We will spend two nights here, searching for these, as well as plenty of other delightful hill forest species, and if we are lucky, perhaps even a Red Panda (this is one of the best places in the world to see these amazing animals)! Also possible are Red-winged Laughingthrush, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, the very skulky Emei Shan Liocichla, and plenty more. Night at Wawu Mountain (~2000 m).



The Gray-hooded Parrotbill is endemic to a limited range in the montane forests of Sichuan. We saw nine parrotbill species on our 2025 tour, and we hope to do as well in 2026! Photograph by participant Kevin Watson.

Day 7, Fri, 5 Jun Wawu Mountain. After a little birding and some breakfast at our mid-mountain hotel, we will take the first public cable cars higher up the mountain, to the plateau at the top, and spend the whole day here searching for the highlight birds like Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Golden Parrotbill, Great Parrotbill, Three-toed Parrotbill, and Red-winged Laughingthrush, as well as keeping a sharp eye out for Red Panda. Lunch will be up here at the top, though we will be back down at our lodging for dinner. Night at Wawu Mountain (~2000 m).

Day 8, Sat, 6 Jun. Wawu Mountain to Luding (~3hours/150 km). Depending on how the birding at Wawushan has gone, and what we have still to see, we may do some birding before we bid farewell to Wawu, and commence our drive west to Luding, to put us in position for some excellent birding around Erlangshan, at a birding location that has been only relatively recently explored by birders. If there is any time, we may have an opportunity to do a bit of afternoon birding. Night in Luding (1,300 m).

Day 9, Sun, 7 Jun. Luding-Erlangshan-Hailuoguo. We will have an early departure this morning, and take boxed breakfast and lunch with us, so that we can maximally enjoy the lush, bamboo-filled, forest of Erlangshan (Erlang Mountain), which has only recently begun to be explored regularly by birders. Possibilities here include Temminck's Tragopan, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Firethroat, Rufous-tailed Babbler, Streaked Barwing (rare), a fun selection of rosefinches, and the endemic Barred Laughingthrush. While searching for these specialties, we'll also surely be sorting through scores of other birds, which may include Brown Parrotbill, White-browed and Gray-hooded Fulvetta, Black-browed Bushtit, Fire-capped Tit, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Chestnut-flanked White-eye, and Gray-crested Tit. After our birding time here has wound down, we will drive on to Hailuoguo Glacier Forest Park, where the next day's birding will take place. Night at Hailuoguo (~2450 m).

Day 10, Mon, 8 Jun. Hailuogou-Labahe. We will spend the better part of the day birding this jaw-droppingly scenic nature reserve in the shadow of Sichuan's highest mountaintop. There are a good selection of species here that we can also see elsewhere, but it is perhaps the best place on our route to find Pere David's Tit, Sichuan Treecreeper, and Rufous-vented Yuhina, and there is even the possibility of the scarce Streaked Barwing here. Other species that we may see here are Maroon-backed Accentor, Vinaceous Rosefinch, Green Shrike-Babbler, Yellow-bellied Fairy-Fantail, and perhaps the shy Blue-fronted Robin. Today's birding will likely involve a park bus, and may also involve another cable car ride to higher elevations. After our birding time here has wound down, we will drive on to Labahe National Nature Reserve, where the next day's birding will take place. Night near Labahe NNR (~2,000 m).



The lovely Golden Bush-Robin is a small flycatcher we'll look for when we visit Labahe. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Day 11, Tue, 9 Jun. Labahe NNR. We will spend all day exploring the rich habitat of Labahe NNR, which in addition to having a great variety of birds to glean through, has some excellent mammal possibilities as well. While the difficult-to-see Red Panda is possible (but never likely!) at several places, this is one of our better chances, and there are other mammals on offer, including Tibetan Macaque, and theoretically even Chinese Leopard Cat or Hog Badger if we get very lucky. A night excursion could also net us the Red Giant Flying Squirrel among some other nocturnal mammals. We have more chances here for Lady Amherst's Pheasant and Temminck's Tragopan, as well as Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Southern Nutcracker, and Three-toed Parrotbill. Night near Labahe NNR (~2,000 m).

Day 12, Wed, 10 Jun. Labahe NR to Wolong (~4.5 hours/300 km). We may spend a bit of time this morning continuing to explore Labahe NNR, looking for species we have yet to see, before departing. We will then have a longish drive to Wolong, the heart of Giant Pandadom on Earth. The Wolong Giant Panda Reserve covers an enormous amount of land in this region, but the animals are virtually impossible to see in the wild, even given concerted effort for that singular goal. In lieu of that, we hope to arrive in time to visit the Giant Panda Base at Wolong, and spend some time looking at these amazing, adorable, and endearing animals. We may also have a chance for some birding nearby, with our first opportunity to see Golden Pheasant potentially in the cards. Night near Wolong (~1700 m).

Day 13, Thu, 11 Jun. Balangshan Mountain. Not only is Balang Mountain (Balangshan) the ethnic demarcation line between the Sichuan Basin and the Tibetan Plateau, it is also rightly heralded as one of the most scenic and fascinating birding areas in China. We will spend a couple of days exploring the mountain from the vegetated valleys and lower slopes all the way up to the open highlands around the pass (4,500 m, our highest elevation of the tour). Balangshan Pass will be our highest elevation of the tour, and the scenery will be breathtaking. The high elevations could provide us with such avian bounty as the neon blue Grandala, the primeval-looking Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier), cryptic Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, Alpine Accentors and plenty more highlights. The endemic Chinese Monal and Firethroat

can also be had on the mountain, and the supporting cast of montane species will keep us entertained throughout. Night near Balang Mountain (~3500 m). ****The summit was closed to most visits this summer, and if it remains closed next summer, we may visit a different spot, in Kangding, for the same targets.***

Day 14, Fri, 12 Jun. Balangshan area to Maerkang (LONG DRIVE). Today's itinerary will depend on how the day before went, and we will likely spend a little more time in the area before bidding farewell to mighty Balangshan Mountain, and heading north on a long drive to Maerkang. This will mostly be a driving day, but we will make a brief stop or two to stretch our legs and perhaps try for a couple of birds, including, potentially, Long-tailed Rosefinch. Night in Maerkang (2,600m).

Day 15, Sat, 13 Jun. Mengbi Mountain. Standing tall in the mountains just south of Maerkang is mighty Mengbi Mountain. We will spend the day birding through a wide elevational swathe along the road that goes over the mountain, starting our morning near the pass at around 4,000 meters, and working our way down from there. This high elevation virgin forest is home to plethora of wonderful possibilities, with two of our principal targets being the reclusive Sichuan Jay and the alternately shy or gregarious Chestnut-throated Monal Partridge (Verreaux's Partridge). In addition to these two endemic headliners, the slate of possibilities will include (but not be limited to!) a wide array of charismatic species from Blood Pheasant and Crested Tit-Warbler to Three-banded Rosefinch, the little known Przevalski's Nuthatch and the range restricted Crimson-browed Finch. Night in Maerkang (2,600 m).



*The Three-banded Rosefinch is representative of another group of birds that we'll watch for — the rosefinches.
Photograph by participant Kevin Watson.*

Day 16, Sun, 14 Jun. Maerkang to Ruorgai (~5.5 hours/320 km) (2700m to 3500m). We will have some more time in the morning to opportunistically try for species we may still need in the area, before embarking on our long drive. We will snake our way up higher, and then out of, the mountains, and the layered conifer-laden slopes will give way to the vast expanse of the Tibetan Plateau. Our arrival on the Tibetan Plateau will get us our first opportunities to see a great array of mammals, including unconscionably adorable Plateau Pikas speckled across the landscape, Himalayan Marmots coming out of dens, the one-of-a-kind Tibetan Fox, Hog Badger, and even Tibetan Wolf. And as this IS a birding tour after all, we will also be keeping a sharp eye out for Himalayan Griffon, Upland Buzzard, Saker Falcon, Daurian Jackdaw, Siberian Stonechat, and Amur Falcon, among others.

As we head north across the plateau, through country great for Upland Buzzards, Saker Falcons, and Plateau Pikas, we will make a couple of birding stops to look for such iconic species as Black-necked Crane, the monotypic Przevalski's Pinktail (Pink-tailed Rosefinch), White-browed Tit, Robin Accentor, Tibetan Partirdge and more. Night in Ruorgai (3,500 m).

Day 17, Mon, 15 Jun. Tibetan Plateau. We will start off with a hike through a pleasant wooded ravine in the Baxi Forest, a virgin forest on the edge of the plateau. Here, in addition to good general birding in some great forest, we'll have chances to see another wide array of great species, including another shot at Chinese Grouse, our first real chances of Blue Eared-Pheasant, Black Woodpecker, White-cheeked Nuthatch, the very localized Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Sichuan Tit, both White-browed and Crested Tit-Warblers, and Slaty-backed Flycatcher. The ravine is also excellent habitat for the striking Siberian Rubythroat, which we have a chance to track down singing its melodious song as it skulks around the brushy river bank. Amid the din of Sichuan Leaf Warbler song, we will search for Alpine Leaf-Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler, and Godlewski's Bunting, and perhaps also White-winged Grosbeak and Chinese White-browed Rosefinch.

In the afternoon it will be back to open lands of the Tibetan Plateau, where we will visit Flower Lake, an enormous wetland rich in wildlife. Waterfowl may include Bar-headed Goose, Graylag Goose, Red-crested Pochard, and Ferruginous Duck. Black-necked Grebe and Great Crested Grebe, Little Ringed Plover and Tibetan Sand Plover, Brown-cheeked Rail, nesting "Tibetan" Common Tern, and plenty of other water-attendant species should be around as well, maybe even complemented by a Pallas's Gull or Great Bittern. Salim Ali's Swift could be patrolling the skies over the water, and adjacent open lands peppered with Rufous-necked and White-rumped snowfinches and the massive (for a lark) Tibetan Lark. Night in Ruorgai (3,500 m).



We'll visit Flower Lake on the Tibetan Plateau, to look for wetland birds. In 2025, we were privileged to see this adult Black-necked Crane with two small colts. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Day 18, Tue, 16 Jun. Ruorgai to Chuanzhusi (~2 hours/140 km). Our morning schedule will once again depend on how the day prior went, and it's good to give ourselves multiple opportunities at the birds of the Tibetan Plateau, given the unpredictable weather here. Eventually we will start winding our way west and off the plateau, the open country giving way once more to the forested upper slopes. Birding in the vicinity of Chuanzhusi will be dependant on the time of our arrival. Night in Chuanzhusi (3,000 m).

Day 19, Wed, 17 Jun. Chuanzhusi to Pingwu. (~3 hours/90 km). We'll have a very early departure this morning, in order to search for the rare endemic Sichuan Wood-Owl (formerly called Père David's Owl) around Gongganglin. As dawn breaks and the light grows (hopefully having connected with the owl), we will turn our attention to other species such as the shy but outrageously beautiful Crested Tit-Warbler, Three-banded Rosefinch, White-cheeked Nuthatch, Siberian Rubythroat, Collared Grosbeak, and perhaps even the timid Chinese (Severtov's) Grouse. We will spend much of the day in the vicinity of Chuanzhusi, and drive to Pingwu in the afternoon – likely making one or a few stops for some higher elevation birds as we crest the pass to the east of town, and perhaps looking for things like Collared Crow, White-cheeked Nuthatch, Maroon-backed Accentor, Gray-crested Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, and other characters. It is a 3 hour drive, and we will arrive in time for check-in and dinner. Night in Pingwu (1,500 m).

Day 20, Thu, 18 Jun. Pingwu to Tangjiahe NNR (via monkey site). We will leave early in the morning in search of the unique Golden Snub-nosed Monkey. This endangered arboreal monkey is endemic to mountains in a small portion of Southwestern China, and we will head to one of their strongholds in the hopes of connecting with striking primates! This hike will involve a vertical gain of 200 meters over the course of 1 mile, though it is all on a built boardwalk, with plenty of stairs. A stick may be appropriate if it has been rainy and the boardwalk is slick. The animals themselves are acclimated to the presence of humans, and stay in a relatively small area where their diet is supplemented by the locals. After our monkeying (and birding, which can be quite good here!), we will head more or less directly to Tangjiahe. Upon entering the nature reserve, we may have another stop or two for birds and wildlife before we get to our lodging in the heart of this picturesque park. Night in Tangjiahe (1,200+ m).

Day 21, Fri, 19 Jun. Tangjiahe. Tangjiahe is well-known as one of the best places for mammals in all of China, but it is also excellent for birding, and we should see an excellent array of both mammals and birds here. The rivers host Brown Dipper and Crested Kingfisher, and the evergreen forests are a refuge to the elusive but spectacular Golden Pheasant. Other birds here are Sichuan Leaf-Warbler, the range restricted and poorly known Zappey's Flycatcher, Speckled Wood-Pigeon, Mountain Bulbul, White-collared Yuhina, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, the skulky Blue Whistling-Thrush, Indian Blue Robin, Rufous-capped Babbler, Rufous-faced Warbler, Sooty Bushtit, and we can even potentially have our first shot at the fantastic Temminck's Tragopan. We may even see some raptors, such as Oriental Honey-buzzard, migrating over the ridge here on their way to northern breeding grounds. As for mammals, we are likely to see some (perhaps even groups of) Tibetan Takin, a large ungulate reminiscent of (and related to) Muskox, which is restricted to just this region. In addition, animals like Reeves' Muntjac, Tibetan Macaque, Chinese Goral, Wild Boar, Tufted Deer, and Serow are all possible. It is also one of the best places in China to look for Moon Bear (Asiatic Black Bear), and people have even seen the ever-elusive Giant Panda here (though this is very unlikely). Night in Tangjiahe (1,200+ m).

Day 22, Sat, 20 Jun. Tangjiahe to Chengdu. (~4.5 hours/330 km). Depending on how we've done and what there is realistically left to see, we will do some birding around Tangjiahe before hitting the road back towards Chengdu. We will have some stops on the way back for leg stretches, and potentially for opportunistic birding, and arrive in Chengdu by evening for our final dinner. Night near Tianfu airport. (500 m elevation).

Day 23, Sun, 21 Jun. Departure for the US.

About Your Guide

Doug Gochfeld was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, where his interest in birds was sparked at a young age (he participated in his first CBC at the age of 7), thanks to his father.

His extensive travels as a working birder have taken him all over the world, and he spent parts of four years as a guide-in-residence on St. Paul Island, in Alaska's Pribilof Islands, interpreting the island's natural wonders, from the abundance of breeding birds to the wayward migrants from Asia and the lush summer flora, for a variety of visitors. He now leads all over the world for Field Guides. His robust interest in the birds and culture of East and Southeast Asia has brought him to lead a broad spectrum of tours across these fascinating regions, and the Himalayan region has a particular hold on his heart. You can also find him exploring, through the lens of bird guiding, Australia, Mexico, New Guinea, Israel, Alaska, and locales beyond and in between.

Doug has served on various statewide and national bird records committees, and has been a regular leader at birding festivals throughout the USA. He has worked in Alaska, Suriname, and Brazil studying the breeding and wintering ecology of shorebirds, which hold a special place in his heart. His strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and patterns of distribution, and he's always excited to share his enthusiasm in, and knowledge of, these subjects and much more (even beyond birds!) on his tours, whether close to home or halfway around the world.

"Doug kept everyone in mind for getting to see the birds, we enjoyed the time with him, and we really appreciated this daily eBird lists with detailed, interesting commentary/notes. Doug's eBird reports are a treasure!"
B.M., Vietnam

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Doug's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Your Field Guides leader will be accompanied throughout the tour by a **local guide**.

Financial Information

FEE: \$8695 from Chengdu

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$800

DEPOSIT: \$875

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: December 1, 2025

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is **Caroline Lewis**. Caroline will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD: Accommodations throughout are for the most part quite good. There will perhaps be one or two hotels without heat in the room, but this hotel would have heated blankets, which are more than sufficient. There will also be one hotel without an elevator, though we can always have someone available to assist you with your bags, should it be necessary.

All meals and tea are provided throughout the tour. As a rule, evening meals will generally be taken at our hotels, while breakfast and lunch may be in rather basic restaurants or taken as a picnic from our ground agent's stock of provisions as appropriate to maximize time spent in the field. Food in this region is both tasty and nourishing – for sure something to look forward to on this tour. It is great, and easily customizable to be friendly for people who avoid dairy and gluten. It is somewhat meat heavy, but good options are always available for vegetarians as well. Some snacks will be available for the times in between the main meals, but feel free to bring some pre-packaged/wrapped snacks if you have any types that you are particularly attached to.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport (validity must be more than 6 months with at least 2 blank visa pages) and a visa are necessary for US citizens to enter China. Prepare the required documents by referring to the [Requirements and Procedures for Chinese Visa Application](#). We will forward visa instructions at the appropriate time. When you receive your passport from the Chinese consulate with your new Chinese visa inside, please check to see if the dates of your visa coincide with the dates of your entire stay in China.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Chinese consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please check with your tour manager for the best flights from your home to Chengdu. Airfare for the round-trip flight from the US to Chengdu is not included in the tour fee. Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$8695** for one person in double occupancy from Chengdu. The fees include all lodging from Day 3 through Day 22, all meals from dinner on Day 3 through breakfast on Day 23, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Chengdu, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$800**. Singles are available throughout. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$875** per person, or see fieldguides.com/payment-options/ for our Payment Options.

Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by December 1, 2025**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

NCP 7/2020

7/23 DG

11/23 peg; 11/24 peg-backmatter updated

09/13/25 DG