

ITINERARY

**Taiwan**

February 1-12, 2020



*Steere's Liocichla is a small babbler found only in Taiwan. Though it is a range-restricted endemic, it is widespread in the higher elevations on the island. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2020 Field Guides Taiwan 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

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- 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 reading list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing 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

Taiwan, formerly known as Formosa, or "beautiful island," is situated just 100 miles across the Taiwan Straits from Mainland China. The island is relatively small but its mountains are extremely high, reaching nearly 13,000 feet at Yushan (Jade Mountain). They rise straight out of the sea on the east coast, while the west side of the island is a flat and fertile plain, now mostly developed agriculturally with rice paddies. The population is about 23 million, heavily urbanized, and falling due to emigration. It is the central mountains that contain all but one of Taiwan's 15 endemic birds.

Star attractions include the wonderful Swinhoe's and Mikado pheasants, Taiwan Hill-Partridge, the stunning Flamecrest, Collared Bush-Robin, the rare and declining Styan's Bulbul, the elusive Malay Night-Heron (for which Taipei is one of the best localities), Vinaceous Rosefinch, White-browed (Blue) Shortwing, Alpine Accentor, Scaly Thrush, the rare and distinctive endemic taxon of Island Thrush (which is a likely split), and Eurasian Nutcracker. Many Palearctic migrants also overwinter here, and a good selection may be seen, including Red-flanked Bluetail, Pale Thrush, and a wide range of Asian shorebirds.

Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, is still regarded by Mainland China as a renegade province. The country is not officially recognized by many states, which favor China instead because of its enormous political and economic influence. That said, Taiwan is a safe and friendly place to visit, with some rewarding birding and gorgeous mountain scenery. Taroko Gorge and some of the central national parks are candidates for World Heritage listing if political squabbles can be sorted out.

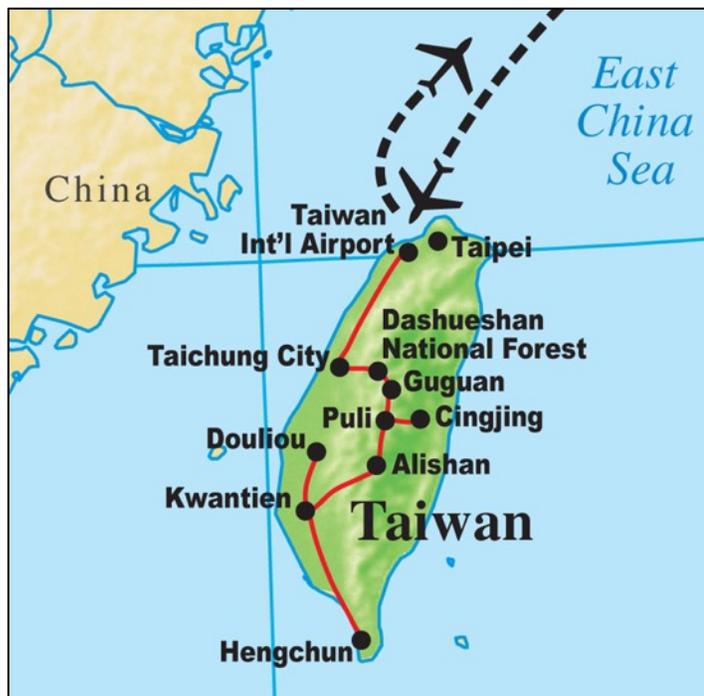
Tourism in Taiwan is in its infancy: overseas visitors are still a bit of a novelty away from the cities. The people are extremely friendly and helpful, and in the cities, many understand English. And the Taiwanese people have a cultural reverence for nature, with sightseeing and nature in general as important recreational interests. Join us for a winter tour to this beautiful and seldom-visited island.

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** Our tour will sample the birds of the lowlands, hill forest, and mountains up to 11000' at Hehuanshan, in what is an outstandingly beautiful island, focusing on the endemics and regional specialties. Taiwan has a temperate climate and early starts are useful, but not as demanding as on tropical tours. Darkness comes around 7 p.m., so long evenings are not a feature, though we will try owling one night and some spotlighting for the spectacular endemic flying squirrel if the weather permits. The longest drive is about 5 hours to get to the mountains, and then the same again another day to get to the coast. Once there, localities are reasonably close by. Roads are generally quite good and the highways are sealed, though Taiwanese drivers are not renowned for their exemplary driving and roads are very narrow in places.

We will take it all slowly. Overall, the pace of this trip is certainly not strenuous and is mostly quite easy, with no really long walks. Trails can be moderately steep, especially at Alishan, where we walk back downhill from the summit through the pine forests on a paved trail, and mud is to be expected at all the mountain sites. Much birding is done from roadsides so a stool can be helpful as we sit and wait. If you are reasonably mobile the trip should be quite manageable and there is no great hurry required. Many of the guesthouses do not have elevators so stairs need to be negotiated at times, though we can usually get help with bags if required.

*This tour can be combined with **Winter Japan, Jan 17-Feb 1, 2020.***

## Itinerary for Taiwan



**Day 1, Sat, 1 Feb.** Depart LAX for Taiwan.

**Day 2, Sun, 2 Feb. Arrival in Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE).** We will stay at a hotel which is close to the airport of Taoyuan City (the TPE international airport locate at Taoyuan City) or Taichung City. Then we can have more time to do birding at Dashueshan Forest Recreation Area (the main key site for birding).

**Day 3, Mon, 3 Feb. Head to Dashueshan National Forest Recreation Area.** We will begin birding in earnest this morning, and head to the Dashueshan National Forest Recreation Area where we have 2 full days to explore the whole area. The lower areas of this wonderful mountain are home to Taiwan Barbet, Taiwan Hwamei, Rufous-capped Babbler, Collared Finchbill and Gray Treepie. As the road slowly winds its way up higher, a few stops along the way could result in our first Japanese White-eye, Brown Dipper, Plumbeous Water-redstart, Gray-cheeked Fulvetta, and Vivid Niltava. Our birding will be spent mainly around the 2,000 meter altitude.

Our tour to this beautiful island is focused on the many endemics that reside in Taiwan, and this mountain range is home to many. Besides our first chance to see Taiwan Partridge and Swinhoe's Pheasant, we should easily pick up Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Whistling-thrush, White-eared Sibia, Collared Bush-robin, Taiwan Yellow Tit, Flamecrest, Taiwan Yuhina, Taiwan Barwing, Taiwan Cupwing and

Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush. Other species present include Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Yellowish-bellied Bush-warbler, Brown Bullfinch, Dusky Fulvetta, and both Green-backed and Black-throated Tits. This is also our first chance of finding the stunning Mikado Pheasant. Some stands of bamboo are home to Golden Parrotbill (an endemic Taiwan subspecies, and potential split as Taiwan Parrotbill), whilst nearby areas have the distinctive, Black-necklaced Scimitar-babbler (split from Rusty-cheeked) and Spotted Nutcracker (of the *owstoni* race and a potential split as Taiwan Nutcracker). At higher altitudes (2,600 meters) we will look for White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Taiwan Fulvetta (split from Streak-throated Fulvetta), Rusty Laughingthrush and Taiwan Bush-warbler (split from Russet Bush-warbler). Night at Dashueshan National Forest

**Day 4, Tue, 4 Feb. Full day birding at Dashueshan.** There are also chances of White-backed Woodpecker, Scaly Thrush, White-tailed Robin, Vinaceous Rosefinch and other high elevation species. Night at Dashueshan National Forest Recreation Area.



*The colorful Taiwan Barbet is another range-restricted endemic that we'll find in the higher elevations near Guguan.  
Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

**Day 5, Wed, 5 Feb. Dashueshan to Guguan.** After some final birding in the Dashueshan area, we will visit Guguan, which is good for the uncommon Taiwan Varied Tit, and an excellent site to find the stunning Taiwan Blue Magpie, Maroon Oriole, Taiwan Bamboo-partridge (split from Chinese Bamboo-partridge), Taiwan Barbet, Collared Finchbill and Gray-capped Woodpecker. Night at Guguan.

**Day 6, Thu, 6 Feb. Guguan to Puli.** After morning birding at Guguan, we will proceed to the Puli area. We will overnight at a birder-owned homestay in Puli, a mellow lowland agricultural town surrounded by flooded fields of water-bamboo and other crops. We will do birding around Puli, focusing on wading birds, shorebirds, and seeking a look at Greater Painted-snipe. Night at Puli.

**Day 7, Fri, 7 Feb. Puli – Cingjing – Hehuan Shan – Puli.** We will cross the Hehuanshan pass, at 3,275m the highest road in East Asia, to the Cingjing area. Away from the forest, areas of cultivation, tea gardens and scrub hold Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, Striated Prinia and Vinous-throated Parrotbill. As we cross the pass, where there are magnificent mountain views on a clear day, we will stop to look for another endemic, the drably-colored Taiwan Bush-robin and we will also hope to find Alpine Accentor and the beautiful Vinaceous Rosefinch. Another star bird of the area is the endemic Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush. Other species we may well encounter include Besra, Collared Owlet, Oriental Cuckoo, Gray-capped and White-backed Woodpeckers, Large Cuckooshrike, Eurasian Nuthatch, Eurasian Jay, Brown Bullfinch, White-bellied Green-pigeon, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Taiwan Barwing, Flamecrest, Taiwan Cupwing, and Taiwan Shortwing. Night at Puli.

**Day 8, Sat, 8 Feb. Puli – Yushan National Park (Tataka Recreation Area) – Alishan.** We will head for Yushan National Park (Tataka Recreation Area) in the early morning. Tataka Recreation Area (2,600m) in Yushan National Park is another excellent site for more mountainous specialties. This is good site to find the stunning Mikado Pheasant, plus both Swinhoe's Pheasant and the very shy Taiwan Partridge may be found, whilst nearby areas have the distinctive Black-necklaced Scimitar-babbler (split from Rusty-cheeked), and Spotted Nutcracker. Collared Bush-robins and White-whiskered Laughingthrushes are everywhere here, and Yushan is also a good place for the shy Taiwan Wren-babbler and Taiwan Bush-warbler. We will also look for Taiwan Fulvetta (split from Streak-throated Fulvetta), Rusty Laughingthrush and other high elevation species. Then, we will visit the lower elevation of Alishan, with chances of White-backed Woodpecker, Taiwan Yuhina, Taiwan Barwing, Taiwan Sibia and Taiwan Laughing-thrush. Our destination is Kwanghua village (1,000 meters). Night at Firefly Lodge, Kwanghua.



*The Malay Night-heron is widespread in eastern Asia, but one of the best places to see it is Taiwan.  
Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.*

**Day 9, Sun, 9 Feb. Alishan – Kwantien, Tainan – Long Luan Tan Lake – Hengchun.** After some final birding at Kwanghua village, we drive to Kwantien, Tainan, to a small reserve where several pairs of Pheasant-tailed Jacanas reside. After some very productive birding, we will begin the drive to the southernmost tip of Taiwan – Hengchun. Hengchun should produce the endemic Styan's Bulbul, which is quite common here. The evening will see us birding at Long Luan Tan Lake, which is part of the Kenting National Park, where a good couple of hours could produce White-breasted Waterhen, Striated Heron, plenty of wintering ducks and waders and other wetland species. It is also a good area to check for migrants such as thrushes, buntings and pipits. Night at Hengchun.

**Day 10, Mon, 10 Feb. Hengchun –Inda Farm, Pingtung – Huben – Douliou.** After we tick the Styan's Bulbul, we will drive to a private farm in Pingtung. The woodland and forest edge in this area will be our best chance to see Black-naped Oriole. We may also encounter Maroon Oriole, Whistling Green Pigeon, Taiwan Barbet, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, and Lesser Coucal. Then, we will head for the Huben area after lunch. Huben is another good birding site for lowland endemics. We will be looking for Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler, Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler, Gray-cheeked Fulvetta, Emerald Dove, White-bellied Yuhina, and Maroon Oriole. Night at Douliou.

**Day 11, Tue, 11 Feb. Douliou – Aogu and Budai Wetlands – Douliou.** We will spend today searching the seemingly endless ponds, mudflats, drainage ditches and coastal lagoons of the expansive Aogu and Budai Wetlands for Black-faced Spoonbill, Black-winged Kite, Eastern Marsh Harrier, and plenty of wintering ducks and waders and other wetland species. Scrubby embankments could hold Golden-headed and Zitting cisticolas, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, and Long-tailed Shrike. Night at Douliou.

**Day 12, Wed, 12 Feb. Douliou – Xitou Nature Education Area – TPE.** We will spend some time birding at Xitou Nature Education Area in the morning for resident Scaly Thrush and other mid-elevation birds. Then, we will head north to Taoyuan International Airport (TPE) for flights home.

## About Your Guide

**Phil Gregory** was born in the UK and became a birder when the steam engines were scrapped and birding offered a way to travel and look for wonderful things. The quest for birds has led to many forays in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific. He and his wife, Sue, worked as teachers for eight years in Nigeria and Zambia, and for seven years in Papua New Guinea. Since 1997 they have lived in Australia.

Phil's major interests are field identification, vocalizations, and the geographic distribution of birds. He is also a writer with assorted contributions to many reference books including *Handbook of Birds of the World* and a forthcoming *Field Guide to the Birds of New Guinea*. He has also published and now maintains two on-line checklists, one for the birds of Australia and its island territories and the other for New Guinea and associated islands. Phil and his wife, Sue, run the well-known Cassowary House, a birding and nature lodge situated in a great birding spot in the rainforest at Kuranda, near Cairns in the far north of Queensland. Look for Phil guiding Field Guides tours to Oman, Japan, Cambodia, Ghana, Uganda, and Madagascar.

*"Phil Gregory was outstanding, not only acoustically and visually when finding birds, but also when it came to logistics and relating to individual tour participants and taking care of their special needs." D.S., Madagascar, Mauritius & Reunion*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Phil's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$5150 from Taipei**

**DEPOSIT: \$500 per person**

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** October 4, 2019

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$795**

**LIMIT: 8**

## Other Things You Need to Know

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

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** All hotels and guest houses are en-suite and should be quite comfortable for our needs. They range from the relatively simple rustic style to quite nice western hotels in the major cities.

**DOCUMENTS:** US citizens will need a current passport to enter Taiwan. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Taiwanese 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. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** 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 rental cars and 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.**

**INTERNET** Available only in the larger cities.

**LANGUAGE** English is not widely spoken away from the cities.

**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.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$5150 for one person in double occupancy from Taipei. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 11, all meals from breakfast on Day 3 through lunch on Day 12, 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 **single supplement** for the tour is \$795. 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, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$500** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by October 4, 2019. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 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.

**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.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (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 the 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 airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

**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, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (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 travellers 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 from us a brochure 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. **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 with InsureMyTrip ([www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com)) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. Please let us know if you have any questions about this. If you purchase the insurance within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. 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 reverse side of 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility 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.**

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