



Field Guides Tour Report

China: Manchuria & the Tibetan Plateau 2013

May 4, 2013 to May 25, 2013
Dave Stejskal & Jesper Hornskov

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



Of the five crane species we saw on the tour, the Red-crowned Crane is probably the rarest in China, though they still are fairly common in Japan. (Photo by guide Dave Stejskal)

Although this was Field Guides' third tour to China with co-leader Jesper Hornskov as our host, this was the first time that we've birded here in May and the first time that we've sampled the riches of "Manchuria" in the n.e. provinces of Jilin and Inner Mongolia. I co-led one of those past tours here with Jesper, but this seemed, to me, to be a completely different tour given the season (those past tours were in September) and the coverage (the inclusion of Manchuria, and the addition of more sites on the Tibetan Plateau in Qinghai Province). There was some overlap this year in coverage with what Jesper and I did on my last tour here - some of the areas around Xining, Koko Nor (Qinghai Lake), Rubber Mountain, Chaka - but I was really impressed with the new bits that were added and I thought that it all made for a wonderful, bird-filled tour of this huge, diverse country.

We started this year's trip off with a short visit to Wild Duck Lake near Beijing before flying north to Ulanhot in Jilin Province - what was once known widely as Manchuria. Most of our birding for the next six days involved birding at the extensive wetland habitats of Momoge Reserve and at the Xianghai Reserve in the province, with a couple of forays into nearby Inner Mongolia. Our focus for visiting at this season was the chance of seeing the critically endangered Siberian Crane, which we saw in numbers at Momoge, the endangered Red-crowned Crane, and the White-naped Crane (listed as vulnerable). We had memorable experiences with all three of these species but we also enjoyed a number of other quality birds in the region, such as the endangered Oriental Stork (nesting at Xianghai), Swan Goose, Baikal Teal, Great Bittern, Eurasian Spoonbill, Pied Harrier, Amur Falcon, Great Bustard, Gray-headed Lapwing, Oriental Plover, Little Curlew, Pin-tailed Snipe, Chinese Gray Shrike, Daurian Jackdaw, Yellow-bellied Tit, Chinese Penduline-Tit, White-browed Chinese Warbler, Pechora Pipit, the critically endangered Rufous-backed Bunting, and a number of other fabulous migrant and resident species.

Then it was off to the highlands in the center of the country in Qinghai Province. Based in the burgeoning city of Xining, we explored some gorgeous forested habitats a short drive from town, enjoying such endemics and specialties as Blue Eared-Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Severtzov's Grouse, Salim Ali's Swift, Rufous-vented and Gray-crested tits, White-browed Tit-Warbler, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Alpine and Gansu leaf-warblers, Hume's Warbler, both Pere David's and Elliot's laughingthrushes, Siberian Rubythroat, six species of redstarts, Chinese Thrush, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Chinese Beautiful and Chinese White-browed rosefinches, Gray-headed Bullfinch, and White-winged Grosbeak.

We entered another world entirely on the high Tibetan Plateau. Amidst snow-covered mountains, vast treeless expanses, and the seemingly boundless Koko Nor, all above 10,000 feet, we pursued some of China's least known birds and mammals. A stop on the slopes of Rubber Mountain yielded the remarkable prize of multiple Przevalski's Rosefinches, a newly-recognized monotypic family found only here. A hike up a juniper-clad canyon brought us our only encounters with the endemic and beautiful Ala Shan (Przevalski's) Redstart. A slow climb up a frozen talus slope above a high mountain pass at over 15,000 feet brought us looks of one of the plateau's least-known and rarest birds - a beautiful male Tibetan Rosefinch. A little farther on - a pair of seldom-seen Tibetan Snowcocks. This magical landscape slowly revealed its many treasures during our stay here, and we thrilled at the sight of Bar-headed Goose, Lammergeier, the huge Saker Falcon, stately Black-necked Cranes, Pallas's Sandgrouse, the gigantic race of Chinese Gray Shrike, Mongolian Ground-Jay, Tibetan Lark, the endemic White-browed Tit and the curious Ground Tit, stunning Wallcreeper, the local Margelanian

Whitethroat, White-backed (Kessler's) Thrush, the striking Robin Accentor, the gorgeous calcarata race of Citrine Wagtail, both Black-headed and Plain mountain-finches, Streaked and Spotted rosefinches, and six species of snowfinches. The mammals here were impressive as well with Tibetan Fox, Pallas's Cat, Gray Wolf, Kiang (Wild Ass), Blue Sheep, Goitered, Tibetan, and the super-rare Przevalski's gazelles, plus four species of endearing pikas being seen by the group during our stay.

Thanks to Shirley for putting the bug in my ear to get this mostly private tour off the ground! Thanks to her, we had gathered a wonderful group of people before we opened it up to our general Field Guides audience to fill the last few remaining spaces, and this just added more wonderful folks to the group! Maybe we can put together another trip somewhere else in China?? Thanks also to my fabulous co-leader for this tour, Jesper Hornskov. It was clear from the start that we couldn't have done this trip without his rock-solid expertise and guidance and I'm eagerly looking forward to the next tour that we can guide together! Thanks to all of you on the tour for your companionship and good cheer throughout this tour, one that had its share of challenges. I look forward to being able to travel with all of you again sometime soon!

--Dave

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

SWAN GOOSE (*Anser cygnoides*) – We saw this rare and declining goose quite well on a couple of days at Xianghai. These birds had only recently arrived from their wintering grounds in e. China and were still settling some of their territorial disputes.

TAIGA BEAN-GOOSE (*Anser fabalis middendorffii*) – This larger species was the more common of the two bean-geese that we saw early on at Momoge.

TUNDRA BEAN-GOOSE (*Anser serrirostris serrirostris*) – Only one flyby this year.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*)

GRAYLAG GOOSE (*Anser anser*) – More common in Qinghai than it was in Manchuria this year. [N]

BAR-HEADED GOOSE (*Anser indicus*) – This beautiful goose was easily seen at Koko Nor in Qinghai. There were even a few active nests on our second visit there at the end of the tour. [N]

WHOOPER SWAN (*Cygnus cygnus*) – At least one pair was seen nesting at the marsh adjacent to Koko Nor. [N]

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – We had this beautiful shelduck almost daily up on the plateau, as long as we were near some water.

COMMON SHELDUCK (*Tadorna tadorna*) – Most of these were seen in Jilin, but we did find a couple of birds at Koko Nor as well.

MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*) – A gorgeous male flew across the little lake just as we were getting set to give up and leave on our first day out of Beijing - it pays to give it a little more time!

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

FALCATED DUCK (*Anas falcata*) – We had several gorgeous males in the shallow ponds at Momoge.

EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*)

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Our most widespread duck on the tour.

EASTERN SPOT-BILLED DUCK (*Anas zonorhyncha*) – A recent split from the Indian Spot-billed Duck to the south. This is the one that has shown up in w. Alaska a few times.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*)

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*) – Including several striking males.

BAIKAL TEAL (*Anas formosa*) – A single female was all that we could find this year at Momoge.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN) (*Anas crecca crecca*)

RED-CRESTED POCHARD (*Netta rufina*) – Only a few of these distinctive ducks at the marshes at Koko Nor this time.

COMMON POCHARD (*Aythya ferina*) – The most common of the diving ducks that we encountered on this tour.

FERRUGINOUS DUCK (*Aythya nyroca*) – That white rump really stands out at a distance, making the i.d. of this one so much easier.

TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*) – Quite a few birds lingering on Koko Nor during our visits there.

COMMON GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*) – A pair near Xianghai was getting a little late for this species.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – A single female in Jilin was a surprise (we made certain that it wasn't a rare Scaly-sided!).

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

PRZEVALSKI'S PARTRIDGE (*Alectoris magna*) – Frustrating to hear this one so many times, especially the close ones! [E*]

VERREAUX'S PARTRIDGE (*Tetraophasis obscurus*) – Calling from the ridge above the Blue Eared-Pheasants. [E*]

TIBETAN SNOWCOCK (*Tetraogallus tibetanus*) – WOWWW!!! We had just started back down to the cars when Jesper gave it one more look, finding a pair of these scarce birds walking across the snowy ridge top. What a nice consolation prize!

DAURIAN PARTRIDGE (*Perdix dauurica*) – We had a few decent looks in Qinghai at this Gray Partridge relative.

BLOOD PHEASANT (*Ithaginis cruentus*) – YESSSS!!!! After a dreadful look across the valley at a pair of these striking birds, we lured a gorgeous male out into view on our side of the valley, giving all fabulous looks!

BLUE EARED-PHEASANT (*Crossoptilon auritum*) – We hadn't all gotten out of the vehicles before we spotted our first pair of these amazing endemic pheasants! We ended up seeing several of these on the steep slopes, and another pair down in the valley that day. [E]

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Except for the very highest valleys and ridges, this one was seen just about everywhere on this tour.

SEVERTZOV'S GROUSE (*Bonasa sewerzowi*) – After a bit of a chase, we ended up seeing this rare and difficult endemic grouse on the opposite hillside. [E]

Gaviidae (Loons)

ARCTIC LOON (*Gavia arctica*) – Four birds overhead in the rain near Xianghai may have represented the first record for Jilin.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – We lost this one after we left Manchuria.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Numerous great views and lots of active nests, especially at Koko Nor. [N]

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Also called the Black-necked Grebe.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

BLACK STORK (*Ciconia nigra*) – A few of these high on the plateau seemed out of place, but they regularly show up here during migration.

ORIENTAL STORK (*Ciconia boyciana*) – One of the rarest and most endangered species in E. Asia, we enjoyed great views in the scope of a pair of these storks attending a nest, while another pair was seen foraging in the wetlands nearby later in the day.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

GREAT CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*) – A few really nice views in Manchuria. The audio was nice, too!

GRAY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*)

PURPLE HERON (*Ardea purpurea*) – The birds in Manchuria were expected, but our bird at Koko Nor represented one of only a handful of records for the plateau.

GREAT EGRET (AUSTRALASIAN) (*Ardea alba modesta*)

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*)

CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN) (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Our only bird was a lost individual at Chaka high on the plateau.

CHINESE POND-HERON (*Ardeola bacchus*) – Most of the birds that I see during the year are in winter plumage, so it was nice to see a few alternate-plumaged adults during the tour.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Mostly flybys on this trip, but we did have a few birds at a pond next to the road on our way to the Meng Ge Mts.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

LAMMERGEIER (*Gypaetus barbatus*) – This huge vulture didn't disappoint on the plateau, giving us numerous great views of birds in flight amidst a spectacular mountain landscape!

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) – Mostly in the forests near Xining. That tiny head is a good mark in flight, separating this one from some of the similar raptors.

CINEREOUS VULTURE (*Aegypius monachus*) – A single imm. bird was spotted high overhead in Chaka as we birded the poplar grove near our hotel.

HIMALAYAN GRIFFON (*Gyps himalayensis*) – This species was rather plentiful in places on the plateau.

SHORT-TOED EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) – This one seems to be a regular in the canyon on the Inner Mongolia border that we visited on our final full day in Manchuria.

BOOTED EAGLE (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – A rather distant individual was spotted flying over the far shore of the marsh at Koko Nor.

STEPPE EAGLE (*Aquila nipalensis*) – The sub-adult bird that some of us saw near Wenquan gave us a super view, but it looked like someone had shot half of its tail and some of its secondaries off!

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Those who visited the Buddhist temple in Wenquan were treated to this spectacular species one afternoon!

EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*) – Also called the Western Marsh-Harrier, we saw one adult female bird coursing over the marshes at Koko Nor on our final visit there.

EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus spilonotus*) – This is the much more expected marsh-harrier species east of the plateau.

PIED HARRIER (*Circus melanoleucos*) – A single female near Xianghai was all that we found this year.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) – About the same size and shape as our familiar Cooper's Hawk.

BLACK KITE (BLACK-EARED) (*Milvus migrans lineatus*)

COMMON BUZZARD (HIMALAYAN) (*Buteo buteo burmanicus*) – A couple of birds near Xining. There's been talk of splitting this Himalayan form out as a distinct species.

COMMON BUZZARD (JAPONICUS) (*Buteo buteo japonicus*) – This form has been split by many European taxonomists, but the Americans haven't caught on yet.

UPLAND BUZZARD (*Buteo hemilasius*) – We recorded this one almost daily up on the plateau, but most memorable was the one carrying the snake near Chaka! [N]

Otididae (Bustards)

GREAT BUSTARD (*Otis tarda*) – Although they were rather distant, it was still a thrill to see these huge birds displaying in the remnant grasslands on the Jilin/Inner Mongolia border.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*) [*]

BROWN-CHEEKED RAIL (*Rallus indicus*) – This one was recently split from the above species and is the bird that some of us saw near Beijing that first day and near Xianghai.

BAILLON'S CRAKE (*Porzana pusilla*) – We watched this little rail fly out over the water from the close bank, but it magically disappeared after it landed.

EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Now split from our familiar Common Gallinule in the New World.

EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) [N]

Gruidae (Cranes)

DEMOISELLE CRANE (*Anthropoides virgo*) – Three birds appeared in the sky outside our lunch restaurant on the shores of Koko Nor for our only encounter of the trip. Our fifth species of crane on the tour!

SIBERIAN CRANE (*Grus leucogeranus*) – YESSS!!!! Jesper and I were sweating bullets that first afternoon as we looked for this one at Momoge, but we finally found a group of seven at about the midpoint around the reserve. Whew! But that wasn't all that we found - we ended up seeing several large flocks on the wing during the next couple of days, and we likely saw more than 300, or about 10% of the world population, of these critically endangered cranes before we moved on.

WHITE-NAPED CRANE (*Grus vipio*) – This gorgeous, extremely rare crane was paired with the rather dissimilar, but equally rare Red-crowned Crane at Xianghai, and we watched both take turns on the eggs in their nest out in the middle of the wet field. Numbering only in the mid-1000's, this and the Red-crowned Crane are declining due to habitat loss in n.e. Asia. [N]

BLACK-NECKED CRANE (*Grus nigricollis*) – Not as rare as the cranes we saw in Manchuria earlier in the trip, but still quite rare overall and declining. We had at least four pairs of these - three at Koko Nor, and another near Chaka - but our best looks were of the pair along the shoreline of Koko Nor on our final visit there. [N]

RED-CROWNED CRANE (*Grus japonensis*) – This beautiful crane may be the rarest overall of the five cranes we saw, but it's not as vulnerable as the Siberian. It seems to be doing just fine in Japan, but the population on the continent is seriously in trouble. Our afternoon encounter with this one at Xianghai was truly memorable! [N]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

NORTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*) – Pretty much gone from the scene after we left Manchuria. [N]

GRAY-HEADED LAPWING (*Vanellus cinereus*) – The same is true of this vulnerable species. [N]

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – A few here and there - I suspect the bulk of the migrants came through in April.

LESSER SAND-PLOVER (TIBETAN) (*Charadrius mongolus schaeferi*) – This was the breeding race of this species that we saw so well at Chaka and at Koko Nor on our second visit there. There's some thinking that these Tibetan birds ought to be split from the more northerly mongolus group - they'd likely be called Black-fronted or Tibetan Plover (Sand-Plover?), *C. atrifrons*, if they are split, so keep track of this one.

LESSER SAND-PLOVER (MONGOLIAN) (*Charadrius mongolus mongolus*) – The first two birds that we saw at Koko Nor were likely this race since they had white foreheads and black bands separating the rufous breast from the white throat.

KENTISH PLOVER (KENTISH) (*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*) – This Old World form was recently split from our New World Snowy Plover.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*) – All of ours were migrants in Manchuria.

ORIENTAL PLOVER (*Charadrius veredus*) – Jesper spotted one of these scarce plovers out in the short grass steppe between Momoge and Xianghai and, after a long walk away from the road, we all enjoyed great scope views and looks overhead as it displayed!

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) – A very close relative of our own Black-necked Stilt (and sometimes treated as conspecific). [N]

PIED AVOCET (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) – We had just a handful of these striking shorebirds in Manchuria and on the plateau near Chaka.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – The Old World counterpart of our Spotted Sandpiper.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*) – Just like our Solitary Sandpiper, but with a white rump.

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*) – It was great to see my first alternate-plumaged bird after seeing so many winter birds over many years in Asia! The last of our 29 species of shorebirds on this trip.

COMMON GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*)

MARSH SANDPIPER (*Tringa stagnatilis*) – Quite a few of these distinctive shorebirds in Manchuria.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*)

COMMON REDSHANK (*Tringa totanus*) – This was my first experience seeing these beautiful shorebirds singing and displaying on the breeding grounds!

LITTLE CURLEW (*Numenius minutus*) – This was one that many of us had hoped to see, and our wish came true at Momoge on our final morning there when we spotted a migrant group of about 20 birds in the rolling grassy habitat. This is the closest that we'll get to seeing the Eskimo Curlew, I'm afraid.

WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN) (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – There's been more talk of splitting the two Old World forms of this bird from our New World hudsonicus race of Whimbrel, so watch for that. Ours would likely revert to Hudsonian Curlew, as it was called many years ago.

EURASIAN CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*) – Quite a few pairs were on breeding territories out in the flat grassy habitats of Manchuria.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (EUROPEAN) (*Limosa limosa limosa*) – This was the larger race that we saw at Koko Nor. Some taxonomists split these two races as separate species, so the Americans might go that route eventually, too.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (SIBERIAN) (*Limosa limosa melanuroides*) – Loads of beautiful breeding-plumaged birds in the shallows at Momoge.

RED-NECKED STINT (*Calidris ruficollis*) – We found a couple of really nice-looking alternate adults at the small lake up on the plateau near

Wenquan.

TEMMINCK'S STINT (*Calidris temminckii*) – Those bright white outer tail feathers are a great mark in flight for this one.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*) – A few of these with the other shorebirds at Momoge on our final morning there.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Several of these were consorting with the above Sharp-taileds on our final morning at Momoge.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*) – A couple of fancy males at Momoge.

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago gallinago*) – It looked like the vast majority of snipe that we saw at Momoge were this species.

PIN-TAILED SNIPE (*Gallinago stenura*) – We saw just a few snipe at Momoge with all-dark underwing coverts, pointing to this species.

EURASIAN WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*) – Certainly one of the strangest sightings on the tour was when we saw one of these flying across the very dry wadi in the mountains near Chaka one afternoon. Where the heck was this guy going?

Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE (*Glareola maldivarum*) – We saw these beautiful birds daily in Manchuria and near Beijing at the start of the tour.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Very common in the Manchuria region at the start of the tour, but very few after that at Koko Nor.

BROWN-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*) – A common breeder at Koko Nor.

PALLAS'S GULL (*Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus*) – We actually saw very few of these at Koko Nor, but the ones we did see, we saw well. Also called the Great Black-headed Gull.

CASPIAN GULL (MONGOLIAN) (*Larus cachinnans mongolicus*) – A couple of quick flybys at the reservoir near Xianghai. This used to be lumped with the Yellow-legged Gull.

LITTLE TERN (*Sternula albifrons*) – The Old World counterpart of our Least Tern.

BLACK TERN (EURASIAN) (*Chlidonias niger niger*) – Seeing a couple of these at Koko Nor on our final visit there was a real surprise for that locale - they normally don't occur that far east in the Old World.

WHITE-WINGED TERN (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – We never really got the look that we wanted when we saw them fly by at Xianghai.

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – Lots of breeding-plumaged birds, especially in Manchuria.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo tibetana*) – This was the race we found at Koko Nor.

COMMON TERN (SIBERIAN) (*Sterna hirundo longipennis*) – All of the birds we had in manchuria appeared to be this distinctive race (which shows up in w. Alaska annually).

Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

PALLAS'S SANDGROUSE (*Syrhaptus paradoxus*) – We even got a couple of youngsters accompanied by an adult in the scope! [N]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

HILL PIGEON (*Columba rupestris*) – Mostly on the plateau and looking a lot like the familiar Rock Pigeon.

ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia orientalis*)

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

SPOTTED DOVE (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – Only in the Beijing area on this tour.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*) – This species had arrived in force in the Gonghe area by the time we arrived there on Day 14.

Strigidae (Owls)

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*) – We had fleeting looks at this widespread species in the poplars near Xianghai. I was a little surprised we never saw this one near Chaka.

Apodidae (Swifts)

COMMON SWIFT (*Apus apus pekinensis*) – The number of migrants that we recorded at Koko Nor on both of our visits there was really impressive!

PACIFIC SWIFT (*Apus pacificus*) – A few migrants in the Xianghai area only. This species, formerly known as the Fork-tailed Swift, was recently split into four species. This one winters as far south as Tasmania.

SALIM ALI'S SWIFT (*Apus salimalii*) – This was one of the four species split from Fork-tailed, this one being a Chinese breeding endemic. Whether this split stands scrutiny is uncertain. [E]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

COMMON KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*) – The birds at Wild Duck Lake on our first day of birding were busy sorting out their breeding territories.

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

EURASIAN HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*) – Almost daily in Manchuria at the beginning of the tour.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

EURASIAN WRYNECK (*Jynx torquilla*) – Tonya spotted one of these migrant birds near Momoge late one afternoon and it turned out to be our only Wryneck of the trip.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos major*) – We had a few really nice looks at this one. A fabulous bird if you're a Yank and haven't birded much in the Old World!

GRAY-FACED WOODPECKER (*Picus canus*) – Excellent looks near Gonghe of this very widespread species.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*)

- AMUR FALCON** (*Falco amurensis*) – We had our fill of these gorgeous little falcons in the heart of their breeding range in the n.e.
- EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – Our best was the bird being mobbed by magpies in the juniper woodland near Chaka.
- SAKER FALCON** (*Falco cherrug*) – Everyone scored a terrific view of this whopper of a falcon on the plateau. Highly prized for the falconry trade, the numbers of this one throughout its range are being rapidly depleted.
- PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*)

Laniidae (Shrikes)

- RUFOS-TAILED SHRIKE (DAURIAN)** (*Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*) – Our best look at this small shrike was in the poplar grove at the gulag near Chaka. Also called Isabelline Shrike by some.
- BROWN SHRIKE** (*Lanius cristatus*) – Only a few in Manchuria.
- GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius tephronotus*) – This was the most common and widespread shrike on the plateau.
- CHINESE GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius sphenocercus*) – This was the smaller, nominate race that we encountered in the first half of the tour.
- CHINESE GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius sphenocercus giganteus*) – This is the larger of the two races that we saw on the plateau. Besides being notably larger, this one lacks the white supercilium of the nominate birds, is darker above, and also lacks any white at all at the base of the secondaries. Sounds like a very plausible split in the future, to me. [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

- EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*) – Just one bird on our Severtzov's Grouse hike near Xining.
- AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE** (*Cyanopica cyanus*) – Very few on this tour - best seen on the grounds of our Beijing hotel.
- BLUE MAGPIE** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*) – We had one from the bus as we headed to Wild Duck Lake near Beijing on our first day of birding.
- EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica*)
- EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica bottanensis*) – The only spot where we had this very green race was in the Dulan Mts. near Chaka.
- MONGOLIAN GROUND-JAY** (*Podoces hendersoni*) – We walked and walked in the desert near Chaka and eventually found a pair (likely nesting) right back where we had parked the cars. DOH!
- RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – Almost daily on the plateau and near Xining.
- DAURIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus dauuricus*) – We saw this local specialty daily in Manchuria.
- ROOK** (*Corvus frugilegus*) [N]
- CARRION CROW** (*Corvus corone*)
- LARGE-BILLED CROW** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – I suspect that the race we saw on the tour was *C.m. colonorum*. There's been much recent talk of splitting Large-billed Crow into several species, so you all should keep track of which races you see.
- COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) [N]

Alaudidae (Larks)

- TIBETAN LARK** (*Melanocorypha maxima*) – We didn't find that many of these giant larks on the tour this year, but our looks near Chaka were superb.
- MONGOLIAN LARK** (*Melanocorypha mongolica*) – That huge area of white on the trailing edge of the wing in flight makes this one a pretty easy i.d. Most of our looks were on the plateau.
- HUME'S LARK** (*Calandrella acutirostris*) – Perhaps the plainest of our eight species of larks on this tour, this one is restricted to the mostly high elevation open habitats in c. Asia.
- LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK (ASIAN)** (*Calandrella rufescens cheleensis*) – The birds we saw on the tour are sometimes split out as a separate species, the Asian Short-toed Lark (*C. cheleensis*). Our best looks were in Manchuria this year.
- CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*) – This very widespread Old World species was seen quite well at the start of our hike in the Gonghe valley.
- SKY LARK** (*Alauda arvensis*) – This species enjoys a huge range across the Palearctic region and was the only skylark that we encountered in Manchuria.
- ORIENTAL SKYLARK** (*Alauda gulgula*) – Exceptionally common on the plateau.
- HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

- BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*)
- PALE SAND MARTIN** (*Riparia diluta*) – A recently split species, this was the 'common' sand martin on the plateau, though we never saw that many. It always looks paler than the above species and it's really difficult to discern a breast band on perched birds.
- EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) – We encountered a couple of big flocks of these swallows near Xining.
- BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*)
- RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – We never saw this one after we left Manchuria.
- COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – A couple of birds seen by some with some migrant Pacific Swifts in Manchuria.
- ASIAN HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon dasypus*) – Similar to the above species, but with dusky underwing coverts.

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

- MARSH TIT** (*Poecile palustris*) – A pair of these were busily gathering nesting material in the canyon near Horqin. [N]
- SONGAR TIT** (*Poecile songarus*) – A rather recent split from the Willow Tit. We had our best looks in the spruce & poplar forests near Xining. [N]
- WHITE-BROWED TIT** (*Poecile superciliosus*) – We had a tough time trying to find this Chinese endemic species, but a little bit of a recording of its song in the wind did the trick! [E]
- RUFOS-VENTED TIT** (*Periparus rubidiventris*) – These were singing from the treetops all over the place in the spruce woodland near Xining, and it took a little patience to get a look.
- YELLOW-BELLIED TIT** (*Pardaliparus venustulus*) – This highly migratory species apparently has spread to the n.e. in China recently and we found several feeding flocks in the poplars and willows of Manchuria. This one is likely the ancestral species of the Elegant & Palawan tits of the

Philippines. [E]

GRAY-CRESTED TIT (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – Again, a little snippet of its song worked wonders in our ability to see this one near Xining.

GREAT TIT (JAPANESE) (*Parus major minor*) – Whether you call it Eastern Great Tit or Japanese Tit, this one is going to be split soon from the Great Tits to the west and the south.

GROUND TIT (*Pseudopodoces humilis*) – This bird had very uncertain affinities (it was long classified as a jay) until it was shown pretty conclusively that it's a tit - the largest in the world. [EN]

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

CHINESE PENDULINE-TIT (*Remiz consobrinus*) – The latest thinking has what was once just called Penduline Tit divided into four ecologically very similar species. Ours was the easternmost of the four species. [EN]

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

WHITE-BROWED TIT-WARBLER (*Leptopoecile sophiae*) – This gorgeous little bird, a relative of our Bushtit and not a warbler at all, made a couple of appearances for the group up on the plateau.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

PRZEVALSKI'S NUTHATCH (*Sitta przewalskii*) – This one is the endemic split from the more westerly White-cheeked Nuthatch of the Himalayas. We ended up getting scope views of this delightful bird for everyone. [E]

SNOWY-BROWED NUTHATCH (*Sitta villosa*) – Another name for this one is the Chinese Nuthatch. We found these in the same forests where we found the above species, but they didn't associate with one another.

Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)

WALLCREEPER (*Tichodroma muraria*) – WOW!!! Our afternoon walk into the dry canyon near Chaka produced only a few highlights for us, but this certainly ranks near the top! Great looks as we were walking back to the cars!

Certhiidae (Trecreepers)

EURASIAN TRECREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*) – The song of this one is much more warbler-like than our Brown Creeper in N. America. Nice looks in the scope!

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

EURASIAN WREN (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – Since the Winter Wrens in N. America were split from this one, this bird near Xining ended up being a lifer for most on the tour. The call notes, I thought, were quite like those of our Pacific Wren.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER (*Cinclus cinclus*) – We couldn't have asked for any better looks at this striking and endearing species. [N]

Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

LIGHT-VENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus sinensis*) – A few on our first day of birding out of Beijing.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – Super looks near Xining and very much like our Ruby-crowned Kinglet in many respects.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

DUSKY WARBLER (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*) – Most of the birds we saw were migrants headed north. It was nice to hear a few of them sing - a first for me.

ALPINE LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus occisinesis*) – A recent split from Tickell's Leaf-Warbler and quite prevalent in all types of scrub on the plateau. [E]

YELLOW-STREAKED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus armandii*) – Quite similar to both Dusky and Radde's warblers, the song and the habitat best distinguish this one from those two.

RADDE'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus schwarzi*) – A single migrant bird seen by a couple of folks near Horqin.

BUFF-BARRED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus pulcher*) – A couple of birds for some folks on our Severtzov's Grouse hike near Xining. If you've been to Thailand, this one is a common winterer on Doi Inthanon.

PALLAS'S LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus proregulus*) – One of the most common migrant passerines from Beijing north to Manchuria on this trip.

GANSU LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus kansuensis*) – This endemic breeder was very common in the highland forest habitats near Xining. To date, the winter range of this one is unknown. [E]

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) – A.k.a. the Inornate Warbler.

HUME'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus humei*) – Very common in the highland forests near Xining.

GREENISH WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – Some in the group saw a couple of recently arrived individuals on territory in the spruce forests near Xining on our final day of birding.

GREENISH WARBLER (TWO-BARRED) (*Phylloscopus trochiloides plumbeitarsus*) – One of these put in a brief appearance at the canyon near Horqin on our final day of birding in Manchuria.

CLAUDIA'S LEAF-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus claudiae*) – A recent split from Blythe's Leaf-Warbler, this one was seen by a few folks at Wild Duck Lake just before we got back on the bus.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

ORIENTAL REED-WARBLER (*Acrocephalus orientalis*) – On our first day of birding at Wild Duck Lake near Beijing.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

SPOTTED BUSH-WARBLER (*Bradypterus thoracicus*) – About half of the group got one of these returning migrants in the highland spruce forest near Xining on our final day of birding.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

ZITTING CISTICOLA (*Cisticola juncidis*)

Sylviidae (Sylviids, Parrotbills and Allies)

MARGELANIC WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia margelanica*) – This is a relatively recent split from the Small (Desert) Whitethroat to the west in c. Asia. We had super views of this one in the poplars near Gonghe.

WHITE-BROWED CHINESE WARBLER (*Rhopophilus pekinensis*) – This one proved very difficult to see well, but quite a few folks ended up seeing it pretty well on the grounds of our hotel in Xianghai. A near-endemic, occurring outside of China only in N. Korea.

VINOUS-THROATED PARROTBILL (*Paradoxornis webbianus*) – On our first day of birding at Wild Duck Lake near Beijing.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes)

PERE DAVID'S LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax davidi*) – This endemic laughingthrush really didn't behave all that well for us in the forests near Xining. [E]

ELLIOT'S LAUGHINGTHRUSH (*Garrulax elliotii*) – This was one of the most common voices in the highland forests near Xining and we ended up with multiple great views of this endemic. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

WHITE-BELLIED REDSTART (*Luscinia phaenicuroides*) – Both groups ended up with excellent views of this newly-arrived breeder in the forests near Xining on our final day of birding.

BLUETHROAT (*Luscinia svecica*) – Most saw a couple of migrants just as the rain started near Xianghai.

SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT (*Calliope calliope*) – We all had fantastic looks of males on territory near Xining. This one is always a high priority for visiting birders!

RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL (*Tarsiger cyanurus*) – Most, if not all, caught up with an adult male before it was all over. Also called the Orange-flanked Bush-Robin in some guides.

TAIGA FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula albicilla*) – We had several fine males with nice gorgets in Manchuria. A split from the Red-breasted Flycatcher of the w. Palearctic.

SLATY-BACKED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hodgsonii*) – For a lucky few folks on the final day near Xining.

BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – Our best were on the first day we found them with the Blue Eared-Pheasants near Xining.

PLUMBEOUS REDSTART (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – This and the White-capped Redstart vied for our attention along the stream near where we enjoyed our picnic lunch near Xining.

WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – Also known as the River-chat, a name that I much prefer.

ALA SHAN REDSTART (*Phoenicurus alaschanicus*) – Multiple fantastic views of this gorgeous endemic redstart in the juniper woodland near Chaka! We were calling this one the Przevalski's Redstart. [E]

HODGSON'S REDSTART (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – A Daurian Redstart look-alike, we had a very cooperative male in the scrub on our Severtzov's Grouse hike near Xining.

WHITE-THROATED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus schisticeps*) – It's tough to pick a favorite redstart among the nine species of *Phoenicurus* that we saw on this tour, but this one's right up there!

WHITE-WINGED REDSTART (*Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*) – Our last of nine *Phoenicurus* of the tour!

BLACK REDSTART (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – Once we got into the range of this one, it was common as dirt.

DAURIAN REDSTART (*Phoenicurus aureus*) – We all had a super scope study of a singing male in the canyon near Horqin on our final day of birding in Manchuria.

BLUE ROCK-THRUSH (*Monticola solitarius philippensis*) – A single bird near Horqin was all we found this year. This race, along with *M.s. pandoo* & *M.s. madoci* farther south, are likely to be split from birds to the west in Europe and the Middle East. There's also talk of splitting either *pandoo* or *madoci*, or both, from *philippensis*, so keep track of your Blue Rock-Thrush races!

SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN) (*Saxicola maurus maurus*) – Really common in certain habitats on the first half of this tour, this form is now again recognized as distinct from the Stonechats to the west.

DESERT WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe deserti*) – We had fabulous looks on a couple of occasions near Chaka.

ISABELLINE WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe isabellina*) – Pretty common and very vocal on our morning walk through the grasslands near Chaka.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

CHESTNUT THRUSH (*Turdus rubrocanus*) – This was the common thrush in the highland spruce forests near Xining.

WHITE-BACKED THRUSH (*Turdus kessleri*) – This attractive thrush was seen very well in the scrub above treeline on our way to Wenquan. Also known as Kessler's Thrush.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus atrogularis*) – We found a couple of subadult migrants in the poplar groves near Chaka. The complete lack of rufous or red tones in the plumage of these birds separate this one from the next in analogous plumages.

RED-THROATED THRUSH (*Turdus ruficollis*) – We all had great views of a cooperative bird in the same poplar grove as the above species. A lucky few also got to see an adult male come in for a second or two in the canyon near Horqin. This and the above were treated as the same species for many years as the Dark-throated Thrush.

DUSKY THRUSH (*Turdus eunomus*) – One immature bird in the small grove of trees near our hotel in Chaka looked to be this species. We had another bird at Wild Duck Lake at the start of the tour that appeared to be an intergrade between this and the dissimilar Naumann's Thrush. The two have been treated as the same species in years past.

CHINESE THRUSH (*Turdus mupinensis*) – This endemic thrush was certainly one of the best birds that we found in the spruce forest near Xining on our first morning there. [E]

Sturnidae (Starlings)

DAURIAN STARLING (*Sturnia sturnina*) – We missed it in Manchuria during our visit there (they hadn't yet arrived), but we found a vagrant in

Chaka, marking one of only a scant few records for the Tibetan Plateau.

WHITE-CHEEKED STARLING (*Sturnus cineraceus*) – We found it in both Manchuria and on the plateau.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

ROBIN ACCENTOR (*Prunella rubeculoides*) – Our best area for this striking accentor was in the scrubby dune habitat near Wenquan.

RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR (*Prunella strophiatea*) – This was one of the most common voices in the highland forests near Xining.

SIBERIAN ACCENTOR (*Prunella montanella*) – A couple of us got on a lone migrant hanging out with the numerous buntings on our way back from the Rufous-backed Bunting reserve in Manchuria.

BROWN ACCENTOR (*Prunella fulvescens*) – This accentor seemed to be quite tolerant of a variety of habitats from forest edge to dry desert canyon.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) – We never saw another after we left Manchuria.

CITRINE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla citreola*) – We had at least two races of this gorgeous wagtail on the tour, with gray-backed birds (n nominate race?) and the stunning black-backed race *calcarata*.

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – The least common wagtail seen on the tour.

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*) – Most of ours were the black-backed race *leucopsis*.

RICHARD'S PIPIT (*Anthus richardi*) – This big pipit was seen very well on the first day of birding at Wild Duck Lake.

BLYTH'S PIPIT (*Anthus godlewskii*) – A single bird at Wild Duck Lake on Day 1 was seen well as it skulked through the grass.

ROSY PIPIT (*Anthus roseatus*) – We enjoyed super scope looks of a couple of different breeding-plumaged males on the plateau.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Our most common and widespread pipit on the tour.

PECHORA PIPIT (*Anthus gustavi*) – We had just one of these, and not very well. Definitely a BVD!

RED-THROATED PIPIT (*Anthus cervinus*) – The only ones we saw were on our first day at Wild Duck Lake. And what a look it was!

WATER PIPIT (*Anthus spinoletta*) [*]

AMERICAN PIPIT (SIBERIAN) (*Anthus rubescens japonicus*) – This race, which breeds in n.e. Asia, has paler legs and more streaking on the underparts than our familiar races in N. America.

Urocynchramidae (Przevalski's Rosefinch)

PRZEVALSKI'S ROSEFINCH (*Urocynchramus pylzowi*) – YESSSS!!!! This was THE target birds for some folks (wink, wink, Harlan!) and we came away with stellar views on our way to Chaka. Most of us even got to see a male or two display! This bird has long been an enigma for taxonomists, spending time with the Fringillidae, then with the Emberizidae. Recent (2000) genetic work argues pretty convincingly that it belongs in its own family, the Urocynchramidae. [E]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

PINE BUNTING (*Emberiza leucocephalos*) – The juniper country near Chaka was the place for this gorgeous bunting, a close relative to the Yellowhammer.

GODLEWSKI'S BUNTING (*Emberiza godlewskii*) – A close relative of the Rock Bunting farther west.

MEADOW BUNTING (*Emberiza cioides*) – Great looks right on the grounds of our hotel in Xianghai.

RUFIOUS-BACKED BUNTING (*Emberiza jankowskii*) – Currently listed as Endangered, but it's almost certainly Critically Endangered. The number of known sites for this one are down to just a few and there may be as few as about 250 individuals left - pretty scary! After some tromping around near Xianghai, we ended up with super scope views of a singing male. Also called the Jankowski's Bunting. [E]

TRISTRAM'S BUNTING (*Emberiza tristrami*) – We had several of these handsome buntings with a few of the mixed flocks of migrant buntings in Manchuria.

YELLOW-BROWED BUNTING (*Emberiza chrysophrys*) – Just a few of these as well with the above mixed flocks.

LITTLE BUNTING (*Emberiza pusilla*) – This was clearly our most common and widespread bunting on the tour.

YELLOW-THROATED BUNTING (*Emberiza elegans*) – This fancy bunting showed well a few times during our Manchuria birding on the first half of the tour. Our first were at Wild Duck Lake near Beijing.

CHESTNUT BUNTING (*Emberiza rutila*) – We uncovered two adult males with a mixed bunting flock on a rather dreary day at Momoge. These sure brightened our day!

BLACK-FACED BUNTING (*Emberiza spodocephala*) – We had a couple of races on the tour, with most of our birds in Beijing and Manchuria being nominate *spodocephala* and the one bird seen at Koko Nor being the much greener *sordida*.

PALLAS'S BUNTING (*Emberiza pallasi*) – Most of these were female-types, but a few folks did see a couple of nice males. Also called the Pallas's Reed-Bunting.

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*) – A few female-type birds seen with some of the migrant buntings.

PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte nemoricola*) – Our best was the pair on the ground in front of the group at the scrubby dunes near Wenquan. This and the next species are quite different from the *Leucosticte* rosy-finches that we know in N. America.

BLACK-HEADED MOUNTAIN-FINCH (*Leucosticte brandti*) – Great looks in the scopes of a bird foraging at the rim of the cut in the bank above our picnic breakfast spot at Er La Pass.

MONGOLIAN FINCH (*Bucanetes mongolicus*) – We found a bunch of these just over the little ridge at the mouth of the wadi that we hiked near Chaka. They were amazingly confiding!

GRAY-HEADED BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula erythaca*) – We heard a number of these in the spruce forest near Xining, but only saw a few. We did watch a pair of these at close range feeding in one of the roadside shrubs, and everyone came away with a super look.

COMMON ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) – Several migrant birds in Manchuria only. The first of our six species of *Carpodacus* rosefinches on this tour.

CHINESE BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus davidianus*) – We found this one in many of the same places and habitats where we found the

next species. They seemed to be most common below treeline.

CHINESE WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus dubius dubius*) – This was our first rosefinch in Qinghai Province and it proved to be one of the most common below treeline. White-browed Rosefinch was recently split into two, with this one being a Chinese endemic. The other, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch (*C. thura*), occurs farther to the south. [E]

TIBETAN ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus roborowskii*) – This was certainly one of the rarest birds of the tour and those who made the hike above Er La Pass in the cold early hours of the morning were rewarded with fantastic looks. It's just known from a handful of sites in this region of the Tibetan Plateau and it's rare at all of those sites, so consider yourselves lucky! Also known as Roborovski's Rosefinch and it seems to me to be misplaced in the genus *Carpodacus* (used to be in the monotypic genus *Kozlowia*). [E]

STREAKED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus rubicilloides*) – We found several of these large rosefinches above treeline between Chaka and our dune site south of Wenquan. Also known as the Eastern Great Rosefinch.

SPOTTED ROSEFINCH (*Carpodacus severtzovi*) – Nicely seen at the little reservoir s. of Wenquan where we had a picnic breakfast before heading to the dunes. A recent split from the Great Rosefinch.

LONG-TAILED ROSEFINCH (*Uragus sibiricus*) – This was our surprise find at Wild Duck Lake on the first day of birding. This pair lingered here particularly late after a decent winter invasion of the species to the region. Long thought to be the closest relative of Przevalski's Rosefinch.

ORIENTAL GREENFINCH (*Chloris sinica*) – Oriental "Brownfinch" would be more appropriate! [N]

EURASIAN SISKIN (*Spinus spinus*) – The spruce forest near Xining was best for this widespread species.

TWITE (*Carduelis flavirostris*) – Up on the plateau only.

HAWFINCH (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) – A few of us had a couple of migrants in Manchuria.

WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK (*Mycerobas carnipes*) – This one came in for some great looks in the forest near Xining. Curiously, some of the calls of this one are extremely similar to calls of the Giant Nuthatch!

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus bactrianus*)

EURASIAN TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*)

ROCK PETRONIA (*Petronia petronia*) – Just a handful on the plateau. [N]

TIBETAN SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla henrici*) – Our best looks at this one, now split from the White-winged Snowfinch to the west. This was the last of our SIX species of snowfinches on this tour! Also called Henri's Snowfinch. [E]

BLACK-WINGED SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla adamsi*) – Seen only in the little canyon where we recorded our first Lammergeier on our way to Wenquan.

WHITE-RUMPED SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla taczanowskii*) – If you found the Black-lipped Pika colony, you were sure to find this endemic snowfinch with them (they nest in the pika burrows). A near-endemic, occurring also in extreme n. India and in n. Nepal.

PERE DAVID'S SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla davidiana*) – There were in short supply this year, but we all had super views. This one also likely nests in pika burrows. [N]

RUFOUS-NECKED SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla ruficollis*) – Maybe the most commonly encountered snowfinch on the plateau this year.

BLANFORD'S SNOWFINCH (*Montifringilla blanfordi*) – Distant, but good views of a few birds near Chaka this year.

MAMMALS

GLOVER'S PIKA (*Ochotona gloveri*) – Glover's Pika was Jesper's best guess on this distinctive little guy in the juniper woodlands near Chaka. [E]

CHINESE RED PIKA (*Ochotona erythrotis*) – We found one of these at very close range just before we found the Glover's above. [E]

BLACK-LIPPED PIKA (*Ochotona curzoniae*) – We ended up seeing 100's of these on the slopes and in the sandy flats on the plateau.

GANSU PIKA (*Ochotona cansus*) – Great views of at least one of these in the spruce forest near Xining. [E]

WOOLLY HARE (*Lepus oiostolus*) – Especially common in the Chaka area.

HIMALAYAN MARMOT (*Marmota himalayana*) – We found these almost daily on the plateau and outside of Xining.

DAURIAN GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus dauricus*) – This was the ground-squirrel that we saw next to the road at Momoge.

PERE DAVID'S ROCK SQUIRREL (*Sciurotamias davidianus*) – From the bus on our way to Wild Duck Lake near Beijing on the first day. [E]

NORWAY (BROWN) RAT (*Rattus norvegicus*) – A little too common.

RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*) – It was especially entertaining watching the individual hunting in the marsh at Koko Nor.

TIBETAN SAND FOX (*Vulpes ferrilata*) – A couple of these were seen through the scopes as they hunted for pikas at the base of the mountains at the first big Black-lipped Pika colony that we stopped at. Another was seen by some at Er La Pass.

GRAY WOLF (*Canis lupus*) – While a bunch of us were at the saddle above Er La Pass, a few other folks down below at the highway spotted a single wolf just behind our perch on the saddle. We later saw the fresh tracks when we turned around to head down to the vehicles, realizing just how close this animal was to us without being seen at all by us.

PALLAS'S CAT (*Felis manul*) – While that wolf was right behind us, the group at the saddle was trying to get on this scarce cat spotted on the opposite hillside. It disappeared before everyone could get a look through the scope, darn it!

KIANG (*Equus kiang*) – Another name for the Wild Ass that we saw on our way south from Wenquan.

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*) – Jesper called this one Gansu Red Deer (*C.e. gansuensis*). We all had nice views at the Przevalski's Rosefinch spot.

SIBERIAN ROE DEER (*Capreolus pygargus*) – Seen by some near Xining at our Blue Eared-Pheasant spot.

GOITERED GAZELLE (*Gazella subgutturosa*) – A very distant view across the valley near Chaka.

GOA (*Procapra picticaudata*) – This was what we were calling Tibetan Gazelle. It was the most common antelope of the trip up on the plateau.

PRZEVALSKI'S GAZELLE (*Procapra przewalskii*) – We were very lucky to spot a small group of these endangered mammals. There may only be about 300 or so left in the wild. [E]

BLUE SHEEP (*Pseudois nayaur*) – Finding that single youngster near Chaka was fun, but I'm glad everyone got to see the big herd of 40+ on the hills south of Wenquan. Called the Bharal on the checklist.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 290 bird taxa and 20 mammal taxa