



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**China: Manchuria & the Tibetan Plateau 2014**

May 5, 2014 to May 26, 2014  
Dave Stejskal & Jesper Hornskov

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.*

This was only the second time that Field Guides has offered this itinerary co-led by China expert Jesper Hornskov, and it was a roaring success again! The first half of our tour was spent in the rich wetlands and grassland habitats of northeastern China -- the region formerly known as Manchuria -- before we jetted our way to the west and the high elevations of Qinghai Province. We had a bit of a hiccup at the start of the tour, but we certainly made the best of it. In short order, after hearing the bad news about our flight, we had a bus and were out birding north of Beijing looking at some real gems, as well as getting a look at a section of the renowned Great Wall. Thanks to all for your flexibility and patience!

Then we were off to Manchuria the next morning, making stops at three important reserves during our time there. Momoge Reserve, our first destination, had some water level issues that developed through the spring, but we were still able to locate our prize there, thanks to the scouting efforts of Mr. Li. Our first afternoon in the area found us staring through the scopes at nearly 300 Critically Endangered Siberian Cranes on their way north to the breeding grounds. Fantastic!! The next morning, we enjoyed leisurely looks at the Endangered Rufous-backed (Jankovski's) Bunting at Tumuji Reserve (hardly a reserve at all!). It was a bittersweet sighting since the remaining habitat there was quickly disappearing and the prospects for this beautiful bunting appeared dim indeed.

Then it was off to Xianghai Reserve and more cranes. This time it was Endangered Red-crowned Crane and White-naped Crane (nesting together and rearing a hybrid chick!). We certainly got an eyeful of the Red-crowned! Wonderful, too, was the sighting of an Endangered Oriental Stork attending a newly hatched chick in a nest near our hotel. Perhaps eclipsing the rarity of seeing these two cranes and the stork on the breeding grounds in China was our sighting of a pair (!) of Critically Endangered Baer's Pochards, first found by one of the reserve's biologists a week or so before our arrival. While it's not as rare, chasing down that displaying Oriental Plover near Xianghai was also a lot of fun!

After a brief, but productive, stay overnight in Beijing, we headed to the center of the country and Qinghai Province. We acclimated a bit to the higher elevation that was yet to come by birding some of the mountainous habitats nearby, finding some great birds here before we ascended the Tibetan Plateau. We had to deal with some real weather when we drove up to Koko Nor, hardly being able to make out the shore of this huge lake through the falling snow! The bad weather didn't last long and soon changed for the better when we pushed on to Rubber Mountain just south of the lake, where we found the monotypic Przevalski's Rosefinch at the first spot we tried! The next couple of days saw us searching for a number of specialties in the productive Chaka area, with some of the best finds being the gorgeous and endemic Ala Shan (Przevalski's) Redstart, nesting Mongolian Ground-Jay, a surprise Bearded Reedling, and the shy Przevalski's Partridge. Our newly renovated hotel here really made our stay much more enjoyable than had been the case in the past.

Then it was on to the south and Er La Pass, with our highest elevations of the tour. There weren't as many birds to look for here amid the glorious high-elevation scenery, but what we found was pretty special. We were able to track down another pair of Przevalski's Rosefinches for more looks, as well as a few near-mythical Tibetan Rosefinches on the high slopes. Lammergeiers, Himalayan Griffons, Saker Falcons, and Upland Buzzards plied the skies above the snow-covered peaks while we sought out six species of snowfinches, Bar-headed Goose, Tibetan Snowcock, Black-headed Mountain-Finch, White-winged Redstart, Wallcreeper, Tibetan and Hume's larks, Ground Tit, White-backed Thrush, and Streaked, Chinese Beautiful-, and Great rosefinches, among others. Another stop -- in better weather -- in the Koko Nor area on our way back to Xining gave us better looks at the likes of Black-necked Crane, Whooper Swan, Pallas's Gull, and many other breeding and migrant waterbirds, as well as some fine migrant landbirds such as Scaly, Eyebrowed, Red-throated, and Dusky thrushes, and a lost Striated Heron!

Thanks need to go out to our crews in Manchuria and in Qinghai. All were helpful and good-natured and eager to accommodate us. You can't ask for anything more than that! Thanks also to Jesper Hornskov, my co-leader on this adventure, who arranged every last detail for us, fed us, kept us laughing, and found some fabulous birds for us all! I hope we have many years of tours together ahead of us. And thanks to all of you for your good company, your persistence, your energy, your sense of humor, and your flexibility. Those are all essential qualities for a tour such as this to the wilds of Manchuria and Qinghai! I hope our paths cross again soon on another tour!

--Dave



*This little gem is a White-browed Tit-Warbler, photographed near the town of Wenquan high on the Tibetan Plateau. Neither a tit nor a warbler, this one is more closely related to the Bush-tit of western N. America than it is to the tits or warblers.  
(Photo by guide Dave Stejskal)*

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## 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

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**SWAN GOOSE** (*Anser cygnoides*) – Though never common, there seemed to always be a few pairs of this scarce goose around most days while we birded the wetland habitats in Manchuria.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) – A few of these flew in at the marsh while we were enjoying our lifer looks at Siberian Crane.

**GRAYLAG GOOSE** (*Anser anser*) – These were nesting at Koko Nor by the time we last checked the lake on our final full day. [N]

**BAR-HEADED GOOSE** (*Anser indicus*) – This beautiful, distinctive goose was a regular up on the Tibetan Plateau, where it breeds.

**WHOOPEER SWAN** (*Cygnus cygnus*) – We had the same pair nesting at the same spot at Koko Nor on last year's tour. [N]

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – Gorgeous - and particularly common and widespread on the Tibetan Plateau, even occupying the smallest of ponds there. [N]

**COMMON SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna tadorna*)

**GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*)

**EURASIAN WIGEON** (*Anas penelope*) – A few very distant birds near Chaka.

**MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

**EASTERN SPOT-BILLED DUCK** (*Anas zonorhyncha*) – Spot-billed Duck was split into two not too long ago. This is the one that occurs farther north and east in Asia and is the one that shows up occasionally in w. Alaska.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*)

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*)

**GARGANEY** (*Anas querquedula*) – A couple of very fancy males at Xianghai were all that we could find this year. This was not the best year for waterfowl, I'm afraid.

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

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** (*Netta rufina*) – Seen on both of our visits to Kok Nor.

**COMMON POCHARD** (*Aythya ferina*) – The most common and widespread of the *Aythya* ducks on this tour.

**FERRUGINOUS DUCK** (*Aythya nyroca*) – At one point, we had four species of 'pochards' in a couple of small ponds at Xianghai Reserve. This wasn't the rarest of the bunch, however.

**BAER'S POCHARD** (*Aythya baeri*) – YESSSSS!!!! I was just about ready to give up scanning that little marshy pond at Xianghai Reserve when this super-scarce duck made a rare appearance. Man, am I thankful that it stuck around for everyone to see! The total world population of this one is likely down in the low 100's - probably due to climate change (drought) and conversion of wetland habitat to farmland.

**TUFTED DUCK** (*Aythya fuligula*) – Excellent looks at this dapper species at Xianghai.

**GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*) – A lone male at Koko Nor was a long way away but it really stuck out from the numerous male Tufted Ducks at that distance.

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**PRZEVALSKI'S PARTRIDGE** (*Alectoris magna*) – That dry canyon near Chaka was the place for this shy endemic partridge, and most ended up seeing it well - including Dana, for whom it was #6000. Congratulations!!! [E]

**VERREAUX'S PARTRIDGE** (*Tetraophasis obscurus*) [E\*]

**TIBETAN SNOWCOCK** (*Tetraogallus tibetanus*) – Those who ventured high above Er La Pass were rewarded with fantastic looks at this high elevation specialist.

**DAURIAN PARTRIDGE** (*Perdix dauurica*) – Our looks were mostly of birds on the wing that had flushed in front of us.

**JAPANESE QUAIL** (*Coturnix japonica*) – A couple of birds, at least, flushed from the tall grass at Tumuji Reserve.

**BLOOD PHEASANT** (*Ithaginis cruentus*) – Most had fine views of this very fancy pheasant in the river valley near Xining. I don't know of any other birds that sport that particular shade of green.

**BLUE EARED-PHEASANT** (*Crossoptilon auritum*) – We didn't have quite the experience with this one that we had last year at this same spot but, still, it was pretty thrilling to see these walking around in the drainage above our parking spot. [E]

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – We had two very different-looking races in Manchuria and in Qinghai.

**SEVERTZOV'S GROUSE** (*Bonasa sewerzowi*) – These weren't very cooperative this year, but some folks got some sort of look before they scrambled away up the hill. [E]

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Including numerous pairs at some stage of the courtship/nesting process. [N]

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

### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**BLACK STORK** (*Ciconia nigra*) – A couple of migrant birds at that ephemeral lake high on the plateau near Chaka.

**ORIENTAL STORK** (*Ciconia boyciana*) – This Endangered species has taken well to nesting on manmade platforms. Great looks of an adult, and chick, at Xianghai Reserve. [N]

### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GREAT BITTERN** (*Botaurus stellaris*) – We heard this widespread species just about everywhere in the extensive marshlands in Manchuria, but we didn't see it until we took a walk to the end of that treeline at Xianghai Reserve. Seems as though the rain brought this one out into view.

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) [N]

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – Particularly common in the marshes at Xianghai Reserve.

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

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*)

**CATTLE EGRET (ASIAN)** (*Bubulcus ibis coromandus*) – Watch for a split of this one into two species.

**CHINESE POND-HERON** (*Ardeola bacchus*) – Surprisingly scarce this year, but it was nice to see the few birds that we had in fine breeding dress.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – We found our only bird in the last place that we would have expected to see it - in the poplar grove near Koko Nor on our last full day of birding! Jesper says it's likely the first record ever for Qinghai Province.

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

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**EURASIAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea leucorodia*) – Quite a few pairs were actively nesting out in the reeds on the lake right in front of Xianghai. [N]

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**LAMMERGEIER** (*Gypaetus barbatus*) – This distinctive shape was not infrequent in the skies above the Tibetan Plateau, but it certainly wasn't common, either.

**HIMALAYAN GRIFFON** (*Gyps himalayensis*) – There was hardly a day in Qinghai when this species was missed.

**SHORT-TOED EAGLE** (*Circus gallicus*) – We saw one member of a very reliable pair in the canyon west of Xianghai. It reaches its northeastern range limits here.

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – We found a migrant in the poplars in Chaka on a couple of days while there.

**STEPPE EAGLE** (*Aquila nipalensis*) – One of these was spotted while we searched the hillsides for the monotypic Przevalski's Rosefinch.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – In the Er La Pass/Wenquan area twice for some.

**EASTERN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus spilonotus*) – Not very common at all in Manchuria this year, but we did have some excellent flyby looks at Momoge.

**PIED HARRIER** (*Circus melanoleucos*) – The best that we had was likely a 1st-year male that flew by the group as we were looking for Rufous-backed Bunting at Tumuji.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – A 'mystery call' that Jesper and I heard at Huzhu turned out to be this species.

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

**COMMON BUZZARD (HIMALAYAN)** (*Buteo buteo burmanicus*) – Our second trip to Huzhu yielded our best looks at this bird, which is split from Common Buzzard by some.

**COMMON BUZZARD (JAPONICUS)** (*Buteo buteo japonicus*)

**UPLAND BUZZARD** (*Buteo hemilasius*) – Other than the Himalayan Griffon, this was our most common and widespread raptor up on the Plateau.

Otididae (Bustards)

**GREAT BUSTARD** (*Otis tarda*) – At least thirteen of these fabulous birds thrilled the group at Tumuji.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

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

**EURASIAN COOT** (*Fulica atra*)

Gruidae (Cranes)

**SIBERIAN CRANE** (*Grus leucogeranus*) – YESSSS!!!! Well, they weren't really very close, but there was no mistaking these fabulous cranes as they fed out in the flooded marsh near Zhenlai! We figured that there were probably about 260 birds out there and we took our time to enjoy what were likely the last of the staging birds in this area this season. Global numbers are probably down to near 3000 birds now, and most of them stop at this critically important reserve on their way north to the breeding grounds in Siberia.

**WHITE-NAPED CRANE** (*Grus vipio*) – Our one gorgeous adult was paired with a Red-crowned Crane at Xianghai Reserve, and they were tending a very young chick - so, make that 1 1/2 White-naped Cranes!

**COMMON CRANE** (*Grus grus*) – We had a couple of dozen at Momoge on our first afternoon there with the above Siberian Cranes and lots of bean-geese that were too far away to i.d., darn it!

**BLACK-NECKED CRANE** (*Grus nigricollis*) – We had no trouble at all finding this magnificent Tibetan endemic breeder this year, with a whopping total of 28 birds seen (including that distant soaring flock of 17 birds)!

**RED-CROWNED CRANE** (*Grus japonensis*) – These fabulous cranes are doing pretty well at Xianghai Reserve and we certainly had some memorable experiences with them there! Another species of Endangered crane on this trip that numbers only in the low 1000's worldwide.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) [N]

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – Only a few around Momoge and Xianghai this year. [N]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER** (*Pluvialis fulva*) – Migrants headed north at Xianghai.

**NORTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus vanellus*)

**GRAY-HEADED LAPWING** (*Vanellus cinereus*) – A common breeder in the Xianghai area.

**LESSER SAND-PLOVER (TIBETAN)** (*Charadrius mongolus schaeferi*) – Several fine looks at alternate-plumaged birds on territory on the Plateau. This subspecies group, sometimes called Tibetan Plover and widely separated geographically from the nominate mongolus subspecies, is sometimes split as a distinct species.

**KENTISH PLOVER (KENTISH)** (*Charadrius alexandrinus alexandrinus*) – Just a couple of birds on the Plateau. Now split from our Snowy Plover in



the New World.

**LONG-BILLED PLOVER** (*Charadrius placidus*) – This was a nice surprise on our afternoon of birding out of Beijing on that first day. This scarce plover breeds on the rocky bars of this river.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius dubius*) – Mostly migrants in Manchuria on this tour.

**ORIENTAL PLOVER** (*Charadrius veredus*) – It wasn't looking very good for this one near Xianghai, but we kept at it and soon heard a wonderful male vocalizing and displaying overhead. Great looks in the drizzle!

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**TEREK SANDPIPER** (*Xenus cinereus*) – A single migrant individual near Chaka.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

**GREEN SANDPIPER** (*Tringa ochropus*) – We just had the one bird near Zhenlai at the start of the tour.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** (*Tringa erythropus*) – We found several fancy alternate-plumaged migrants in the shallow lake near Chaka.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – One day only in Manchuria.

**MARSH SANDPIPER** (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*)

**COMMON REDSHANK** (*Tringa totanus*) – We had these breeding in both Manchuria and on the Plateau.

**WHIMBREL (SIBERIAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) – A couple of migrants at the Oriental Plover spot, and another bird heard at Koko Nor were our only ones of the tour. There's renewed talk of splitting these Old World forms from our birds in the New World, which would probably revert back to the old name of Hudsonian Curlew.

**EURASIAN CURLEW** (*Numenius arquata*) – Breeding in the grassy plains of Manchuria during our visit.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (EUROPEAN)** (*Limosa limosa limosa*) – This large race (or species?) was what we saw on the Plateau near Chaka.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (SIBERIAN)** (*Limosa limosa melanuroides*) – Including about a thousand or more near Zhenlai on Day 2.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – A single bird on the small ephemeral lake near Chaka was a bit of a surprise there.

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris acuminata*) – A few in the wetland where the Siberian Cranes were feeding near Zhenlai.

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** (*Calidris temminckii*) – Our only stint (or 'peep') of the tour.

**COMMON SNIPE** (*Gallinago gallinago*)

**PIN-TAILED SNIPE** (*Gallinago stenura*) – We flushed a few of these from the vast wet fields and marshes near Xianghai. In flight, the underwing looks much more like our Wilson's Snipe and it also lacks the prominent white trailing edge on the secondaries that Common Snipe shows.

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola maldivarum*) – Plenty of these in the open country of Manchuria.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

**BROWN-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*) – A little tricky to separate from the above when they're not airborne.

**PALLAS'S GULL** (*Ichthyaeus ichthyaeus*) – A couple of big, fancy adults were seen at Koko Nor. Also called the Great Black-headed Gull.

**CASPIAN GULL (MONGOLIAN)** (*Larus cachinnans mongolicus*) – A single flyby an Xianghai. Sometimes split as a full species as Mongolian Gull.

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*)

**WHITE-WINGED TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – Several very fancy alternate-plumaged birds winging their way over the lakes and marshes at Xianghai.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – So much prettier in this plumage than what I normally see in the winter in Thailand!

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo tibetana*) – This was the common breeding race up on the Plateau.

**COMMON TERN (SIBERIAN)** (*Sterna hirundo longipennis*) – All of the birds in Manchuria appeared to be this distinctive race with black bill and legs.

*Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)*

**PALLAS'S SANDGROUSE** (*Syrhaptes paradoxus*) – WOWW!!! Talk about an eye-full! We had our usual good looks, mostly of flybys, up on the Plateau near Chaka, but the bird we had in the fallow field near Tumuji was really something!

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) [I]

**HILL PIGEON** (*Columba rupestris*) – Tough to tell from the above until they flew.

**ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia orientalis*) – Almost daily on the first half of the tour.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

**SPOTTED DOVE** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) – A recent immigrant to the Chaka area.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**LARGE HAWK-CUCKOO** (*Hierococcyx sparveroides*) – For Jesper and a couple of others on the Beijing hotel grounds on the last morning of the tour.

**INDIAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus micropterus*) – A quick flyover of a very vocal bird at the Beijing Botanical Gardens. By the time we left Beijing, they were all over the city and calling.

**COMMON CUCKOO** (*Cuculus canorus*) – We had some fantastic looks at this one, especially near Kok Nor on the day we drove back to Xining.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**ORIENTAL SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus sunia stictonotus*) – After hearing a few of these earlier, it was super to be able to track down a calling pair in the botanical gardens for some great looks. They don't really sound - or look - like the non-migratory Oriental Scops-Owls that I know from Thailand.

**EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo bubo*) – A quick flyby in the deep canyon on our way to Wenquan was a real thrill!

**LITTLE OWL** (*Athene noctua*) – Joe deftly spotted our first near Tumuji.

Apodidae (Swifts)

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus pekinensis*) – A common migrant throughout much of the trip.

**SALIM ALI'S SWIFT** (*Apus salimalii*) – The birds that we saw well definitely appeared to be this recently split taxon (split from Fork-tailed Swift).

[E]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**COMMON KINGFISHER** (*Alcedo atthis*) – A couple of birds along the river near Beijing on our first day.

**BLACK-CAPPED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon pileata*) – What the...? We couldn't believe our eyes when we spotted one of these flying just off the highway at Er La Pass high on the Tibetan Plateau! Perhaps only the second record for all of Qinghai. Maybe even more surprising was that one of our drivers had seen another at Wenquan - in 1997!

Upupidae (Hoopoes)

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** (*Upupa epops*) – Including a pair busily ferrying food to the young in an unseen nest near Gonghe. [N]

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**GRAY-CAPPED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos canicapillus scintilliceps*) – A very different-looking bird compared to what I know in S.E. Asia.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos major*) – It's now established in all of the poplar groves on the Tibetan Plateau - or so it seems.

**GRAY-FACED WOODPECKER** (*Picus canus*) [\*]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*)

**AMUR FALCON** (*Falco amurensis*) – Not a bad one to have as the most common raptor in Manchuria, eh?

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – A late one near Zhenlai.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – Distantly above a ridge at the Beijing Botanical Gardens.

**SAKER FALCON** (*Falco cherrug*) – A couple of birds this year - one in Manchuria and the other on the Plateau.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*)

Laniidae (Shrikes)

**ISABELLINE SHRIKE (DAURIAN)** (*Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*) – Many fine looks at this one on the Plateau. Recently split from Red-tailed Shrike.

**BROWN SHRIKE** (*Lanius cristatus*) – A couple of migrants in Manchuria.

**GRAY-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius tephronotus*) – We found this one with fair regularity in Qinghai Province, even sharing a poplar grove with a pair of Isabellines and a pair of "Giant" Chinese Gray Shrikes!

**CHINESE GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius sphenocercus*) – Our only bird of the trip was one near Xianghai on our way back from the canyon in Inner Mongolia.

**CHINESE GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius sphenocercus giganteus*) – Good grief! Would someone please split this one? [E]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**EURASIAN JAY** (*Garrulus glandarius*)

**AZURE-WINGED MAGPIE** (*Cyanopica cyanus*) – The best place to see this one on the tour was on the grounds of our Beijing hotel, but we did run into it elsewhere, including up on the Plateau in scattered poplar groves.

**RED-BILLED BLUE-MAGPIE** (*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*) – Briefly for some on the first afternoon near Beijing.

**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica*)

**EURASIAN MAGPIE** (*Pica pica bottanensis*) – This was the distinctive high elevation form on the Tibetan Plateau that seems to be a good candidate for a split. We saw ours near Dulan.

**MONGOLIAN GROUND-JAY** (*Podoces hendersoni*) – A little careful searching yielded a pair of these exchanging places on a hidden nest near Chaka! [N]

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*)

**DAURIAN JACKDAW** (*Corvus dauuricus*) – This regional specialty wasn't nearly as common or widespread as it was on last year's tour.

**ROOK** (*Corvus frugilegus*)

**CARRION CROW** (*Corvus corone*)

**LARGE-BILLED CROW** (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) – This is one that's likely to be split up into multiple species sometime in the future. The birds in Manchuria were likely *C.m. colonorum* and the birds in Qinghai were *C. m. tibetosinensis*

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*)

Panuridae (Bearded Reedling)

**BEARDED REEDLING** (*Panurus biarmicus*) – WOWWW!!! This was certainly one of the more memorable finds of the whole tour! Chaka certainly was not where we were hoping to find this one, but we'll take it! This bird certainly wandered over a bunch of inappropriate habitat to get there.

Alaudidae (Larks)

**TIBETAN LARK** (*Melanocorypha maxima*) – The biggest lark of them all.

**MONGOLIAN LARK** (*Melanocorypha mongolica*) – Very distinctive with that flashy wing pattern - which reminded me a lot of the Chocolate-vented Tyrant of Patagonia.

**HUME'S LARK** (*Calandrella acutirostris*) – Very similar to the next species, but completely lacks streaking on the chest and it usually sports a thin, black horizontal bar on the sides of the chest.

**LESSER SHORT-TOED LARK (ASIAN)** (*Calandrella rufescens cheleensis*) – We saw these carrying food to a hidden nest at Tumuji. [N]

**CRESTED LARK** (*Galerida cristata*)

**SKY LARK** (*Alauda arvensis*)

**ORIENTAL SKYLARK** (*Alauda gulgula*) – Recorded every day once we got up onto the Plateau.

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris elwesi*) – It sounds like Horned Lark is going to undergo some taxonomic splitting sometime soon. According to Jesper, this race (endemic to the Tibetan Plateau) is a likely candidate for a split.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*)

**PALE SAND MARTIN** (*Riparia diluta*) – Not uncommon once we got up onto the Plateau. A rather recent split from Bank Swallow (Sand Martin).

**EURASIAN CRAG-MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*)

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*)

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) [N]

**ASIAN HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon dasypus*) – We had a number of these with our first Salim Ali's Swifts.

*Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)*

**MARSH TIT** (*Poecile palustris*) – Nesting on the grounds of our Beijing hotel. [N]

**SONGAR TIT** (*Poecile songarus affinis*) – Easy to find in the spruce forests near Xining. A lifer for a few months only for most of you since the Clements checklist just recently lumped Songar Tit with Willow Tit.

**WHITE-BROWED TIT** (*Poecile superciliosus*) – We pulled these in from a long way off on Rubber Mountain for some super views! [E]

**RUFOUS-VENTED TIT** (*Periparus rubidiventris*) – This very distinctive tit was another easy bird in the spruce.

**YELLOW-BELLIED TIT** (*Periparus venustulus*) [E\*]

**GRAY-CRESTED TIT** (*Lophophanes dichrous*) – Right where we found 'em last year!

**JAPANESE TIT** (*Parus minor*) – We used to call this one Great Tit before it got split into three. Seen from Inner Mongolia west to Gonghe.

**GROUND TIT** (*Pseudopodoces humilis*) – We saw this strange bird many times on the Plateau. Formerly called the Hume's Groundpecker. [E]

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**CHINESE PENDULINE-TIT** (*Remiz consobrinus*) – This one is expanding its range to the northeast. [E]

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**WHITE-BROWED TIT-WARBLER** (*Leptopoeile sophiae*) – We finally nailed this gorgeous bird near Wenquan. Closer to our Bushtit than it is to any warbler, the calls of this one remind me of a few things that Bushtit does.

**CRESTED TIT-WARBLER** (*Leptopoeile elegans*) – We worked hard for our looks at this beautiful little endemic at Dongxia! [E]

**SILVER-THROATED TIT** (*Aegithalos glaucogularis vinaceus*) – Recently split from Long-tailed Tit, we had excellent looks at this one late in the afternoon near Gonghe. [E]

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**PRZEVALSKI'S NUTHATCH** (*Sitta przewalskii*) – We had a couple of fine looks at this endemic nuthatch in the spruce forests near Xining. Split from the similar White-cheeked Nuthatch to the s.w. of this one. [E]

**SNOWY-BROWED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta villosa*) – Also called the Chinese Nuthatch by some authors, this was found side-by-side with the above species near Xining.

*Tichodromidae (Wallcreeper)*

**WALLCREEPER** (*Tichodroma muraria*) – A male was seen at a distance for a short time in the canyon near Chaka by most folks, and another more cooperative female bird was found along the creek in Wenquan by those who went for a post-dinner walk there one evening.

*Certhiidae (Treetreepers)*

**EURASIAN TREETREEPER** (*Certhia familiaris*) – Singing quite a bit in the spruce forests near Xining.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**EURASIAN WREN** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – If you've never seen "Winter" Wren in the Old World before this tour, then this one was a lifer!

*Cinclidae (Dippers)*

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** (*Cinclus cinclus*) – It took a bit of searching along the stream near Xining, but we found a pair of these foraging after not too long. We never did find the nest this year, though. [N]

**BROWN DIPPER** (*Cinclus pallasii*) – This was one of our 'bonus' birds in the hills north of Beijing on our first afternoon of birding together. The adult that we found was busily feeding at least a couple of newly-fledged juveniles. [N]

*Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**LIGHT-VENTED BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus sinensis*) – At our Beijing hotel and at the Beijing Botanical Gardens.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**GOLDCREST** (*Regulus regulus*) – These seemed to be more common this year than last.

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)*

**DUSKY WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*) – The birds that we found in Manchuria were clearly this species, but what the birds are in Qinghai is unclear (they may be referable to Smoky Warbler *P. fuligiventer*).

**ALPINE LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus occisinesis*) – A recent split from Tickell's Leaf-Warbler and it was just about everywhere we went in Qinghai. [E]

**YELLOW-STREAKED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus armandii*) – A common bird of the understory in the scrubby hillsides in eastern Qinghai.

**RADDE'S WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus schwarzi*) – We found several migrants in Beijing.

**BUFF-BARRED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus pulcher*) – This one had just returned to the mixed spruce/birch forests near Xining from the wintering grounds in S.E. Asia.

**PALLAS'S LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus proregulus*) – A pretty common migrant in the Beijing area, but the bird we found at Chaka was a surprise.

**GANSU LEAF-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus kansuensis*) – Very common in the spruce and mixed forest near Xining. [E]

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

**HUME'S WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus humei*) – A common voice in the spruce forest near Xining, but the bird we found near Chaka (likely nominate *humei*) was a good find there.

**ARCTIC WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus borealis*) – One near Koko Nor on our way back to Xining was our only one of the trip.

**GREENISH WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) – Some folks may have gotten this bird in the Huzhu Valley on our second try.

**GREENISH WARBLER (GREENISH)** (*Phylloscopus trochiloides obscuratus*) – This one was mostly heard as a migrant in the Beijing area. The Clements Checklist just recently split this form from the Greenish Warbler.

*Sylvidae (Sylvids)*

**MARGELANIC WHITETHROAT** (*Sylvia margelanica*) – We found a pretty cooperative bird in the valley near our hotel in Gonghe. This is about as far east as this one occurs.

*Paradoxornithidae (Parrotbills, Wrenit, and Allies)*

**WHITE-BROWED CHINESE WARBLER** (*Rhopophilus pekinensis*) – Great looks for those who were out in the hotel gardens early at Xianghai. This one was recently split into two, so we'll be calling it the Beijing Babbler instead of White-browed Chinese Warbler or Chinese Hill Warbler from now on!

**VINOUS-THROATED PARROTBILL** (*Sinosuthora webbiana*) – A couple of great looks in the Beijing area.

*Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)*

**CHESTNUT-FLANKED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops erythropleurus*) – Briefly for some on our first afternoon near Beijing.

*Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)*

**PERE DAVID'S LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Ianthocincla davidi*) – This skulker popped out nicely a couple of times in Inner Mongolia and then again in Qinghai. [E]

**ELLIOT'S LAUGHINGTHRUSH** (*Trochalopteron elliotii*) – A very common voice in the forested habitats in eastern Qinghai. We saw this one really well on our first afternoon near Xining. [E]

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa sibirica*) – If you walked the grounds of our hotel in Beijing on that last morning, you likely saw this migrant there. Also called the Siberian Flycatcher.

**ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa latirostris*) – A couple of migrants only in the Beijing area (everybody got the one at the Botanical Gardens).

**GRAY-STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa griseisticta*) – A few of us got on this migrant in the gardens of our Beijing hotel on that last morning.

**SIBERIAN BLUE ROBIN** (*Larvivora cyane*) – For those who walked the grounds of the Beijing hotel on the morning that we flew to Xining, this was one of your rewards.

**BLUETHROAT** (*Luscinia svecica*) – A rather surprising find in the remaining fragmented habitat at Tumuji - and an adult male no less!

**SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT** (*Calliope calliope*) – We had a couple of fine looks at this gorgeous songster in the spruce forests near Xining.

**RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL** (*Tarsiger cyanurus*) – Once you learn the song and calls of this one, it's amazing just how common they are in the proper habitat near Xining! Great views!

**TAIGA FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula albicilla*) – Most of our migrants were found in Manchuria, but we did have a few near Koko Nor on our way back to Xining. A relatively recent split from the Red-breasted Flycatcher of the W. Palearctic.

**KOREAN FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula zanthopygia*) – Also called the Yellow-rumped Flycatcher, some folks were able to get on an adult male at the Beijing Botanical Gardens.

**NARCISSUS FLYCATCHER (GREEN-BACKED)** (*Ficedula narcissina elisae*) – Another prize in the gardens of our Beijing hotel on the morning that we flew to Xining. This one was recently split from the Narcissus Flycatcher and is a Chinese endemic breeder.

**BLUE-FRONTED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus frontalis*) – If you like redstarts - and I'm talking about the REAL redstarts, not those warblers that we call redstarts in the New World - then this is the trip for you! We found ten species of *Phoenicurus* redstarts on this one again this year.

**PLUMBEOUS REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus fuliginosus*) – Also called the Plumbeous. This one is a widespread species throughout the highlands of s. Asia.

**WHITE-CAPPED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*) – A few wonderful views in Qinghai this year. This one used to be called the River Chat; a name that I much prefer.

**ALA SHAN REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus alaschanicus*) – This was the last of our ten species of redstarts and arguably the sexiest of the bunch! Good thing we found it before it started to snow! Also called the Przevalski's Redstart. [E]

**HODGSON'S REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*) – Very similar to the Daurian.

**WHITE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus schisticeps*) – As far as looks go, this one is a very close second to the Ala Shan.

**WHITE-WINGED REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*) – This species usually occurs at the highest elevations on this tour. Also called the Gldenstadt's Redstart.

**BLACK REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) – All over the place on the Plateau.

**DAURIAN REDSTART** (*Phoenicurus aureoreus*) – We had our best looks in the canyon in Inner Mongolia during the first half of the tour.

**RUFOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – A couple of different territorial males in the canyon near Chaka. This one occurs west all of the way to the Iberian Peninsula.

**SIBERIAN STONECHAT (SIBERIAN)** (*Saxicola maurus maurus*) – Very common in open country in Manchuria on this tour.

**PIED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) – Nice looks from the bus on our way into the canyon in Inner Mongolia.

**DESERT WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe deserti*) – In the dry desert near Chaka, where it's outnumbered by the next species.

**ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe isabellina*) – Seeing an adult feeding a couple of downy chicks on the ground south of Gonghe was a nice treat. [N]

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*



**SCALY THRUSH (WHITE'S)** (*Zoothera dauma aurea*) – That poplar grove near Koko Nor was a real jack pot for us, producing great views of a couple of these normally skulking thrushes, among other species.

**EURASIAN BLACKBIRD** (*Turdus merula mandarinus*) – Nice looks at the Beijing Botanical Gardens. These Chinese birds will likely be split off some day.

**CHESTNUT THRUSH** (*Turdus rubrocanus*) – This handsome species is a common bird in the spruce forests near Xining.

**WHITE-BACKED THRUSH** (*Turdus kessleri*) – We did very well with this distinctive thrush in Qinghai. Also called Kessler's Thrush.

**EYEBROWED THRUSH** (*Turdus obscurus*) – Our best looks were at the poplar grove near Koko Nor.

**BLACK-THROATED THRUSH** (*Turdus atrogularis*) – Most got a look at this migrant at the Chaka poplar grove one evening.

**RED-THROATED THRUSH** (*Turdus ruficollis*) – This and the above were once lumped as Dark-throated Thrush (the two interbreed fairly regularly).

Another denizen of the Chaka poplar grove, but not seen by all there. Everyone caught up with it in the poplar grove near Koko Nor.

**DUSKY THRUSH** (*Turdus eunomus*) – Most of us got decent looks of a fancy male in the Koko Nor poplar grove.

**CHINESE THRUSH** (*Turdus mupinensis*) – A few of these endemic thrushes were up in the treetops singing near Xining. [E]

#### *Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**CRESTED MYNA** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*) – In and around Beijing. [I]

**DAURIAN STARLING** (*Sturnia sturnina*) – For the second year in a row, we had a vagrant individual in the Chaka poplar grove - well west of its normal range in China.

**RED-BILLED STARLING** (*Sturnus sericeus*) – A couple of birds showed briefly in the Beijing Botanical Gardens.

**WHITE-CHEEKED STARLING** (*Sturnus cineraceus*) – Found from the Beijing hotel grounds all of the way up to the Chaka poplar grove on the Tibetan Plateau.

#### *Prunellidae (Accentors)*

**ROBIN ACCENTOR** (*Prunella rubeculoides*) – Always around treeline or above.

**RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR** (*Prunella strophiatea*) – One of the most attractive accentors, this one's found in forest and scrub just below treeline (for the most part). Also called the Rufous-browed Accentor – a better name since Robin Accentor has a rufous breast, too!

**BROWN ACCENTOR** (*Prunella fulvescens*) – Usually the most common accentor in the most desolate of habitats at high elevations.

#### *Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla tschutschensis*)

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla citreola*) – We saw a number of these smart-looking wagtails, including the Tibetan breeding form *M.c. calcarata* with its distinctive black back.

**GRAY WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla cinerea*)

**WHITE WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla alba*) – Almost all (if not all) of ours were the subspecies *leucopsis*.

**RICHARD'S PIPIT** (*Anthus richardi*) – Excellent views of the (normally) big pipit in Manchuria, where it breeds. Jesper and I, after some research conducted by Jesper after the tour, have concluded that our potential Blyth's Pipit in Wenquan one evening was instead a Richard's. So sorry to be the bearer of bad news!

**ROSY PIPIT** (*Anthus roseatus*) – A few of these up on the Plateau and in the mountains near Xining. Calling it 'Rosy' is a bit of a stretch on some birds!

**OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT** (*Anthus hodgsoni*) – Breeding in the mountains near Xining, where it routinely sat in the top of a small conifer and sang it's little heart out. Sometimes called the Olive Tree-Pipit.

**RED-THROATED PIPIT** (*Anthus cervinus*) – A couple of flyovers in Manchuria.

**WATER PIPIT** (*Anthus spinoletta*) – A single bird was spotted near Dulan as it worked a bare hillside where we saw our first Ala Shan Redstart.

**AMERICAN PIPIT (SIBERIAN)** (*Anthus rubescens japonicus*) – This Asian breeding race sometimes strays to W. Alaska and the West Coast of N. America.

#### *Urocynchramidae (Przevalski's Rosefinch)*

**PRZEVALSKI'S ROSEFINCH** (*Urocynchramus pylzowi*) – YESSSS!!!!!! You all showed remarkable patience waiting until Day 11 before we saw this bird at Rubber Mountain - but it sure was worth it! We all had super views of both males and females, and some of us even got to see a male display and sing right in front of us! Our 'back up' site also held a nice pair for us, just to remind us of what a super little bird this is! [E]

#### *Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**PINE BUNTING** (*Emberiza leucocephala*) – These handsome buntings weren't on territory where we usually see them near Dulan, but we eventually did get a couple of migrant males in and near Chaka, with great looks at our last bird.

**GODLEWSKI'S BUNTING** (*Emberiza godlewskii*) – Very similar to the Rock Bunting farther to the west.

**MEADOW BUNTING** (*Emberiza cioides*) – I still have a fabulous mental image of that first bird singing from the grass next to the river on that first afternoon north of Beijing!

**RUFIOUS-BACKED BUNTING** (*Emberiza jankowskii*) – This poor bird is apparently hanging on by a thread, and it looked like that thread was about to break! The 'reserve' where we found this vanishing bunting had shown signs of very recent cutting and burning, and I wouldn't be surprised if there is no habitat left on our return in 2016. The word of this bird's decline is just barely out there - I hope it's not too late. [E]

**YELLOW-BROWED BUNTING** (*Emberiza chrysophrys*) – A couple of migrants in Manchuria, with a nice scope look at Xianghai.

**LITTLE BUNTING** (*Emberiza pusilla*) – Very often the most common *Emberiza* on the tour.

**YELLOW-THROATED BUNTING** (*Emberiza elegans*) – We found a group of migrants in the poplars next to the river on our first afternoon north of Beijing.

**BLACK-FACED BUNTING** (*Emberiza spodocephala*) – One of our most common buntings in Manchuria.

**PALLAS'S BUNTING** (*Emberiza pallasii*) – We found a few territories out in the remnant grassland at Tumuji. Sometimes called Pallas's Reed-Bunting.

#### *Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)*

**BRAMBLING** (*Fringilla montifringilla*) – A couple of birds along the shore of the lake at Xianghai were a nice surprise.



- BLACK-HEADED MOUNTAIN-FINCH** (*Leucosticte brandti*) – A big flock of these on the hillside above our lunch stop was a pleasant diversion before the rain settled in.
- MONGOLIAN FINCH** (*Bucanetes mongolicus*) – Not as evident as in other years, but we did eventually get some great looks in the poplars near Chaka, especially.
- GRAY-HEADED BULLFINCH** (*Pyrrhula erythaca*) – Including a couple of very fancy males near Xining.
- CHINESE BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus davidianus argyrophrys*) – We finally got a nice pair of these on our way to Wenquan. The latest Clements update places this race with Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch instead of Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, following Tietze, et al. 2013.
- CHINESE WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus dubius dubius*) – Quite common in the spruce forests near Xining. [E]
- TIBETAN ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus roborowskii*) – This was one of the 'biggies' that we were looking for at the pass and it took some hiking before we found it. The group that hiked the pass a couple of days later were lucky enough to find an adult male! This rare bird is known from just a handful of sites on the Plateau. [E]
- STREAKED ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus rubicilloides*) – Once we found 'em, we found a bunch of 'em.
- SPOTTED ROSEFINCH** (*Carpodacus severtzovi*) – The bird that we were calling Spotted Rosefinch was just recently re-lumped with Great Rosefinch to the west.
- ORIENTAL GREENFINCH** (*Chloris sinica*) – From Manchuria west to the Plateau.
- EURASIAN SISKIN** (*Spinus spinus*) – A couple of these flew by very briefly in the canyon in Inner Mongolia.
- TWITE** (*Carduelis flavirostris*) – We had some big numbers near Chaka.
- YELLOW-BILLED GROSBEAK** (*Eophona migratoria*) – In the Beijing area only on this tour.
- WHITE-WINGED GROSBEAK** (*Mycerobas carnipis*) – A couple of fantastic looks at this big grosbeak, especially in the Huzhu Valley.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

- EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*)
- ROCK PETRONIA** (*Petronia petronia*)
- TIBETAN SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla henrici*) – We found this local snowfinch on a couple of occasions, perhaps most memorably at the pass on Rubber Mountain. Also called Henri's Snowfinch and a split from White-winged Snowfinch. [E]
- BLACK-WINGED SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla adamsi*) – Best seen on our drive from Gonghe to Wenquan. Another name for this one is, unfortunately, Tibetan Snowfinch.
- WHITE-RUMPED SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla taczanowskii*) – We found these at the big Plateau or Black-lipped Pika colonies up on the Tibetan Plateau.
- PERE DAVID'S SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla davidiana*) – We found a couple of these at a spot where we had them a year ago near Gonghe. One of the tougher snowfinches to find at this season and the last of our six species of snowfinches on this tour!
- RUFOUS-NECKED SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla ruficollis*) – Another species of snowfinch that's tied to pika colonies, this was the most common and widespread species of *Montifringilla* on the tour.
- BLANFORD'S SNOWFINCH** (*Montifringilla blanfordi*) – After walking around in the desert for a couple of hours looking for this one (and finding it), wouldn't you know that we'd find one right next to the vehicles at one of our rest stops on our way to Gonghe!

## MAMMALS

- AMUR HEDGEHOG** (*Erinaceus amurensis*) – Seen by Jesper and a couple of others on the grounds of our Beijing hotel on that final morning.
- PLATEAU PIKA** (*Ochotona curzoniae*) – Also called the Black-lipped Pika, this was abundant in quite a few spots high on the Tibetan Plateau.
- GANSU PIKA** (*Ochotona cansus*) – This species needs some brushy cover, unlike the above species. [E]
- TOLAI HARE** (*Lepus tolai*) – I suspect that this is what we really saw in Manchuria and called European Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*). Most taxonomists now split this form off as a good species.
- WOOLLY HARE** (*Lepus oiostolus*) – Good numbers of these were seen out in the grasslands near Chaka.
- HIMALAYAN MARMOT** (*Marmota himalayana*) – We saw lots of burrows in the mountains near Xining and on the Plateau, but we saw relatively few of these big marmots.
- DAURIAN GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Spermophilus dauricus*) – A few along the roadsides near Xianghai.
- TIBETAN DWARF HAMSTER** (*Cricetulus tibetanus*) – The folks who climbed above Er La Pass on our way back to Gonghe found this little guy on their hike.
- RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – A couple of very close encounters.
- KIANG** (*Equus kiang*) – We didn't have these very close to the group, but the looks in the scope were very good. We were also calling it the Tibetan Wild Ass on the tour.
- RED DEER** (*Cervus elaphus*) – Distantly at Xianghai.
- GOA** (*Procapra picticaudata*) – We had multiple sightings of this one while up on the high Tibetan Plateau. Also called the Tibetan Gazelle.
- BHARAL** (*Pseudois nayaur*) – We all had some very close individuals in the rain near Wenquan and then the folks who made the final assault on Er La Pass had another fabulous close encounter. Also called the Blue Sheep.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 283 bird taxa and 13 mammal taxa