

Trip Report — Taiwan 2025

April 29-May 10, 2025 with Phil Gregory & Jesse Fagan & Arco Huang



Taiwan Liocichla at Xitou by participant Karen Hamblett

This was our fourth run for the revised Taiwan tour, being just the third iteration of the spring trip post-pandemic, with our local organizer Arco being very good and enthusiastic, and knowing the best local sites to visit. The weather was again remarkably kind to us, and we had no significant daytime rain, somewhat to my surprise, whilst temperatures were pretty reasonable even in the mountains. Fog and cold weather at Houhanshan summit was a shame, but at least the mid and lower levels stayed clear and otherwise the lowland sites were all good and nowhere really hot except Kenting on one day.

Arrival day saw some of us just do a bit of local birding near the hotel near the airport, and we set off next day for the mountains at Dasyueshan, taking in the lovely Taiwan Blue Magpie en route plus Black-necklaced and Taiwan scimitar-babblers and nice views of Taiwan Hwamei and Taiwan Barbet.



Taiwan Rosefinch male by participant Karen Hamblett

The mountain was very rewarding, with great views of Swinhoe's Pheasant and Taiwan Partridge, both Rusty and Rufous-crowned laughingthrushes, the tame and confiding White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Taiwan (Steere's) Liocichla, Yellow Tit, skittish Flamecrest, 3 species of fulvetta, a great look at a singing Taiwan Bush-Warbler, the very vocal Yellowish-flanked Bush-Warbler, Taiwan Shortwing, elusive Taiwan Cupwing, Rufous-faced Warbler, and Chestnut-bellied Tit. Reeves' Muntjac or Barking Deer showed well at the summit too.

Guguan Hot Springs came up with Plumbeous Redstart, Brown Dipper, and an unexpected pair of Mandarin Ducks on the river there.

Next came the heights of Hohuanshan in cold foggy weather this year, with lovely looks at Alpine Accentor, Taiwan Barwing, and Taiwan Rosefinch, and beautiful atmospheric montane scenery. The nearby lowlands were mist-free and gave the tame Malay Night-Heron, the distinctive and striking Maroon Oriole, Taiwan Bamboo-Partridge, and unexpected Striped Prinia and Chestnut Munia.



Taiwan Blue Magpie by participant Alice Deutsch, a superb but local endemic.

Yushan finally gave us good looks at Pygmy Cupwing after much effort, and we got onto a showy pair of Golden Parrotbills that were collecting nest material. Taiwan (White-browed) Bush-Robin also showed well here, now split at last and obviously distinct from the mainland Asian birds; same comment applies to the distinctive *owstoni* Spotted Nutcracker, which is now part of Southern Nutcracker. Collared Bush-Robin showed well and we saw an incredible four males, two females, and a chick of Mikado Pheasant by the road on the way in. A 2700-year-old sacred giant *Chamaecyparis* tree at Luilin was also astonishing to see, simply enormous.

Heading south, we got the extreme south-Taiwan endemic Styan's Bulbul quite easily plus a hybrid with Light-vented, then birded some of the lowland areas, being rewarded with Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Oriental Pratincole, Barred Buttonquail, and the endemic *formosanus* taxon of Ring-necked Pheasant.



Pheasant-tailed Jacanas by participant Karen Hamblett

Owling on the tour was productive, with good looks at Collared Owlet in daylight at Dasyueshan, Collared Scops-Owl and Northern Boobook at Firefly Lodge, and two roosting Collared Scops-Owls at Linhoulin Community Park near Hengchun, not forgetting the roosting one at Shimen car park. Some also saw Mountain Scops-Owl at the lodge at the base of Dasyueshan, where the thermal imagers came into their own.

A huge saltpan area at Budai gave a good count of 65+ Black-faced Spoonbills, a bonus Asian Dowitcher, Black-tailed Godwits, Pied Avocet, Curlew Sandpiper, summer plumage Siberian Sandplover, 7 Broad-billed Sandpipers, Caspian, Whiskered, and Little terns. That afternoon came the exciting twitch to the site for Chinese Crested Tern, but sadly we missed it by a couple of days.



Dinner at Firefly Lodge by participant Ann Haverstock

Fairy Pitta was harder this year, but the second site came good where an easy short walk with Acai, the local guide, gave us a great look at this beautiful rarity perched high up and calling. We followed that with some celebratory coffee at the Pitta Café.

Our journey back to the airport was enlivened by our only Snowy-browed Flycatcher, very vocal and showy Large Hawk-Cuckoos, plus great looks at Taiwan (Steere's) Liocichla, Red-faced Warbler, and Taiwan Whistling-Thrush at Xitou Nature Education Park in dull showery conditions.

Mammals on the tour: Taiwanese Macaque (*Macaca cyclopis*) Dasyueshan and Tataka; Pallas's Squirrel (*Callosciurus erythraeus*) Dasyueshan, Huben; Maritime Striped Squirrel (*Tamias maritimus*) at Dasyueshan; Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel (*Petaurista alborufa*) at Firefly Lodge; Reeves's Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) at Dasyueshan, Guguan, and Tataka.



Taiwan Macaques at Tataka by participant Karen Hamblett

Next came a visit to the extraordinary Wushang Temple, which was rebuilt after being destroyed by a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in 1999. The ruins are

retained in situ, and the miraculously unscathed Daoist deities duly relocated to the new adjacent site, where there is also an astonishing wooden gallery bridge over the river there, built without nails or screws. We had lunch by the temple and duly bade farewell to Arco here in his home town.

We used a varied assortment of local eating places with primarily local menus, with assorted rice, dumpling and noodle dishes. The food was a highlight in fact, as it was varied, often delicious and best of all served quickly whilst being both hot and fresh. A nice adjunct to the trip, working for the as ever varied dietary preferences and it avoided losing lots of time with elaborate meals.

Following recent research, Taiwan now has 32 endemics with Clements and 34 with the IOC's more progressive checklist, and an extraordinary 56 endemic subspecies, so there is a good haul for listers and many spectacular birds, with Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasant as iconic birds, and Fairy Pitta a great addition. Altogether, it was a great success from the birding point of view, having good views of almost all the endemics, bar Taiwan Thrush which was a ghost bird this year.

Taiwan is a beautiful country, with great scenery, some attractive hotels, enjoyable cuisine and friendly people, with a very interesting culture -- those Daoist temples are something else! A few extra days sightseeing before or after the trip is recommended.

My thanks to Arco and Luna, our local agents, and to Arco the Energizer Bunny for his energetic guiding as well as helping with the complexities of mealtimes, also to Liou our excellent bus driver, and to Sue and Rowan at Sickbill Safaris, and Ruth at Field Guides for their hard work in putting together this very enjoyable fourth iteration of the new Taiwan tour. It was great having Jesse Fagan (Motmot) along on his first SE Asian tour, as a late addition when one participant dropped out. His scope bearing, good spotting, and diligent eBirding were much appreciated. Thanks also to the group for

very good company and a positive attitude to the various intricacies of the tour.

A very fine trip, a nice good-humored group, enjoyable and not too strenuous, with some wonderful birds and gorgeous scenery, and an interesting cuisine to sample too, not forgetting the wonderful Daoist temples, a remnant of historic Chinese culture. Why not join us for 2026?

Itinerary 2025

April 29 and 30 Arrival in Taipei and stayed at City Suites Hotel at Taoyuan.

Day 1 Thurs May 1 Shimen Reservoir near Taipei / Loiyutan / Dasyueshan km 23, km 29, km 32.5 entry gate. Fine conditions and cool nights.

Day 2 Fri May 2 Dasyueshan Km 50, km 43, gate area, km 39 trail, pm km 50 1500-1730. Fine weather.

Day 3 Sat May 3 km 50 0530 till 0730, km 49/ Lodge area/ km 30/ km 23, creek and bridge at km 15 after lunch, then to Guguan. Fine weather but clouding up later. O/n Guguan.

Day 4 Sun May 4 Guguan area/ Suspension bridge/Fushen Farm fields/ Temple of 108 Gods near Puli 1500-1600. Green House Homestay at Puli for 2 nights. Cloudy.

Day 5 Mon May 5 Houhanshan NP- km 24/ summit area at 3200 m or 9500'/ Wuling Farm Forest/Taroko NP visitor Center/ Blue Gate Trail and Cingjing Farm area. O/n Puli Green House. Foggy cold and windy up high, cloudy lower down.

Day 6 Tues May 6 Tataka Visitor Center Yushan NP/ Giant Tree at Lulin / O/n Firefly Lodge at Kwanghua. Overcast.

Day 7 Wed May 7 Firefly Lodge and Kwanghua area/Jacana Reserve at Guantian/Beach at Kenting NP/ Longluan Lake, Hengchun. O/n Riverview. Fine weather, windy as ever in the south.

Day 8 Thurs May 8 Hengchun airport fields / Linhoulin Country Park/ Beimen estuary Chinese Crested Tern dip. O/n Grand Earl Hotel at Douliou. Fine weather. Hot and sunny

Day 9 Fri May 9 0600-0830 Huben and Linnei then Pitta Cafe/ Budai Wetlands 1330-1500 O/n Grand Earl Hotel at Douliou. Fine weather.

Day 10 Sat May 10. Xitou Park 0800-1030 / Showery weather. Wushang Temple/ Departures home or on to FG Japan in Spring 2025

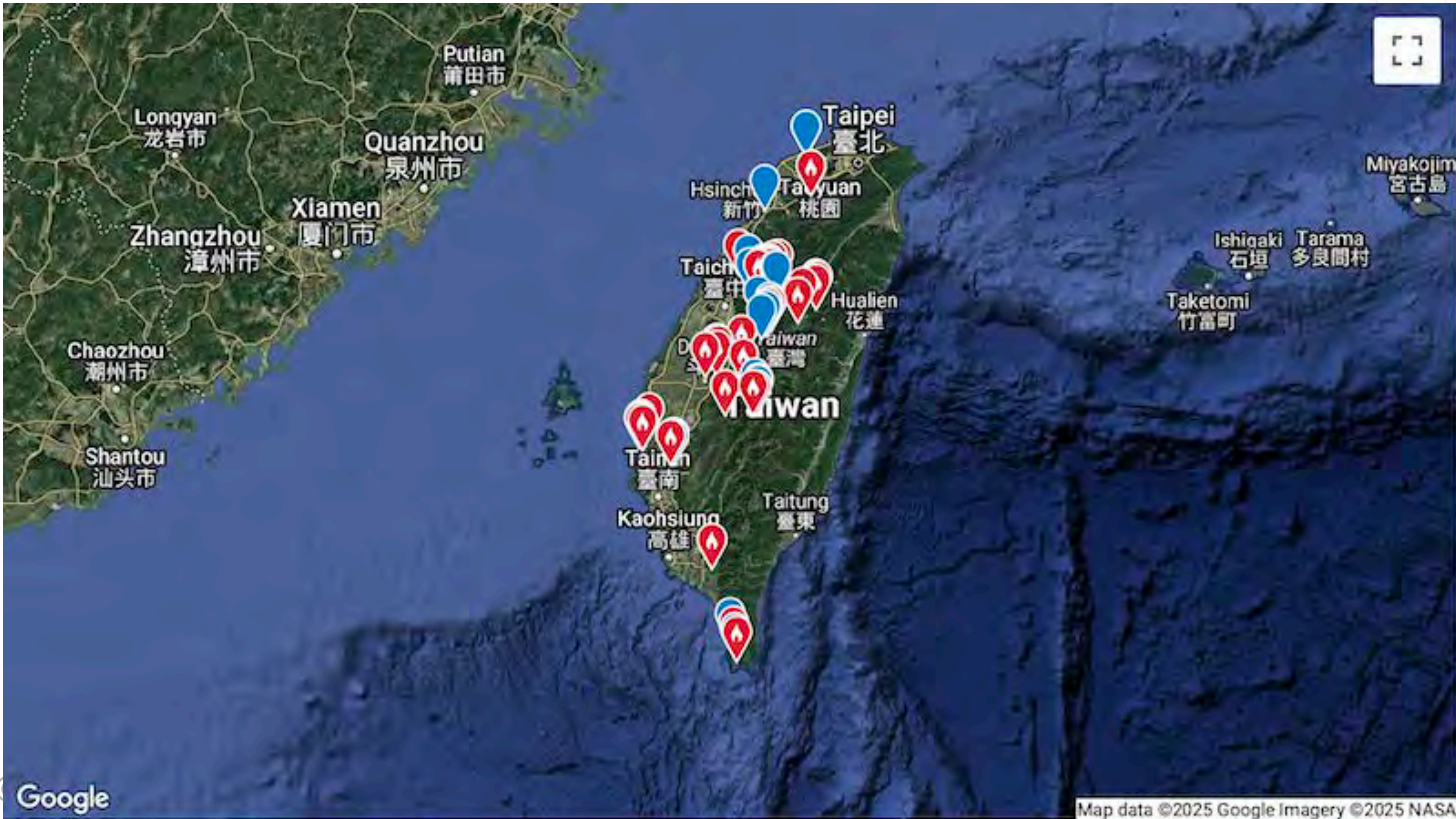
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/365351>

Phil Gregory (aka Sicklebill), Topaz, Queensland, June 2025

Taiwan 2025 Field Guides

30 Apr – 10 May 2025 (11 days) [Link-only](#)



-  **Taiwan**
- [Chiayi County](#) | [Hsinchu City](#) | [Hualien County](#) | [Miaoli County](#) | [Nantou County](#) | [Pingtung County](#) | [Taichung City](#) | [Tainan City](#) | [Taoyuan City](#) | [Yunlin County](#)

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Phil (aka Sicklebill) in Tokyo



...

 **166**

Species Observed























 **62**

























Checklists
























LIFERS 
























Species Observed





















[Show all details](#)
























4	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	▶  2
26	Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	▶  2
5	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	▶  1
4	Taiwan Partridge	<i>Arborophila crudigularis</i>	▶  1
5	Mikado Pheasant	<i>Syrnaticus mikado</i>	▶  1  3
2	Ring-necked Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	▶  1
2	Swinhoe's Pheasant	<i>Lophura swinhoii</i>	▶  2  2
15	Taiwan Bamboo-Partridge	<i>Bambusicola sonorivox</i>	▶  8
17	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i> *	▶  2
1	Ashy Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba pulchricollis</i>	▶  1
10	Oriental Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	▶  5
37	Red Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	▶  7
12	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	▶  6
2	Asian Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	▶  2
11	White-bellied Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron sieboldii</i>	▶  2
1	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	▶  1
4	Large Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx sparveroides</i>	▶  2
2	Oriental Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus optatus</i>	▶  2
3	Savanna Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>	▶  2
10	Silver-backed Needletail	<i>Hirundapus cochinchinensis</i>	▶  1

























9	Pacific Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	▶  2
26	House Swift	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>	▶  4
12	Eurasian Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	▶  6
8	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	▶  1
1	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	▶  1
1	Ruddy-breasted Crake	<i>Zapornia fusca</i>	▶  1
98	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	▶  4
150	Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	▶  1
39	Pacific Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	▶  2
1	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>	▶  1
1	Siberian Sand-Plover	<i>Anarhynchus mongolus</i>	▶  1
1	Greater Sand-Plover	<i>Anarhynchus leschenaultii</i>	▶  1
10	Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>	▶  3
1	Greater Painted-Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	▶  1
15	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	▶  1  3
50	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	▶  1
1	Asian Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	▶  1
7	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	▶  5
9	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	▶  1
27	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	▶  2
7	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>	▶  1
75	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	▶  1
60	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	▶  1

50	Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	▶  1
2	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	▶  1
16	Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	▶  1
6	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	▶  3
3	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	▶  2
35	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	▶  3
1	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	▶  1
36	Great Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	▶  2
7	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	▶  3
74	Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	▶  2
2	Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Botaurus cinnamomeus</i>	▶  1
1	Yellow Bittern	<i>Botaurus sinensis</i>	▶  1
12	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶  8
5	Malayan Night Heron	<i>Gorsachius melanolophus</i>	▶  3
35	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	▶  4
1	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	▶  1
9	Eastern Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>	▶  5
59	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  5
1	Medium Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	▶  1
1	Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	▶  1
2	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  2
3	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	▶  3
2	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	▶  1

8	Crested Serpent-Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	▶  5
6	Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>	▶  2
2	Crested Goshawk	<i>Lophospiza trivirgata</i>	▶  2
2	Besra	<i>Tachyspiza virgata</i>	▶  2
1	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	▶  1
3	Mountain Scops-Owl	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>	▶  2
6	Collared Scops-Owl	<i>Otus lettia</i>	▶  3
1	Collared Owlet	<i>Taenioptynx brodiei</i> Sensitive	▶  1
1	Northern Boobook	<i>Ninox japonica</i>	▶  1
6	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	▶  5
36	Taiwan Barbet	<i>Psilopogon nuchalis</i>	▶  12
4	Gray-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus canicapillus</i>	▶  3
1	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>	▶  1
1	Fairy Pitta	<i>Pitta nympha</i> Sensitive	▶  1
11	Gray-chinned Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>	▶  7
4	White-bellied Erpornis	<i>Erpornis zantholeuca</i>	▶  3
2	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	▶  2
3	Maroon Oriole	<i>Oriolus traillii</i>	▶  2
14	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	▶  6
7	Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	▶  3
5	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	▶  3
3	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	▶  3
4	Taiwan Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa caerulea</i>	▶  2

41	Gray Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>	▶  11
11	Oriental Magpie	<i>Pica serica</i> *	▶  3
2	Southern Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga hemispila</i>	▶  2
11	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	▶  5
6	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	▶  2
1	Chestnut-bellied Tit	<i>Sittiparus castaneiventris</i>	▶  1
9	Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>	▶  5
1	Taiwan Yellow Tit	<i>Machlolophus holsti</i>	▶  1
1	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	▶  1
2	Striped Prinia	<i>Prinia striata</i>	▶  2
10	Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	▶  5
17	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	▶  9
4	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	▶  1
1	Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	▶  1
1	Taiwan Bush Warbler	<i>Locustella alishanensis</i>	▶  1
5	Taiwan Cupwing	<i>Pnoepyga formosana</i>	▶  2
4	Gray-throated Martin	<i>Riparia chinensis</i>	▶  3
81	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo javanica</i>	▶  11
39	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▶  5
43	Asian House-Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	▶  3
19	Eastern Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	▶  4
129	Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	▶  16
7	Collared Finchbill	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>	▶  5

94	Light-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	▶  17
5	Styan's Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus taivanus</i>	▶  2
7	Rufous-faced Warbler	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>	▶  6
1	Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis fortipes</i>	▶  1
9	Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis acanthizoides</i>	▶  3
11	Black-throated Tit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>	▶  2
4	Taiwan Fulvetta	<i>Fulvetta formosana</i>	▶  2
2	Golden Parrotbill	<i>Suthora verreauxi</i>	▶  1
1	Vinous-throated Parrotbill	<i>Suthora webbiana</i>	▶  1
48	Taiwan Yuhina	<i>Yuhina brunneiceps</i>	▶  7
29	Swinhoe's White-eye	<i>Zosterops simplex</i>	▶  10
8	Rufous-capped Babbler	<i>Cyanoderma ruficeps</i>	▶  5
11	Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus musicus</i>	▶  6
4	Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Erythrogenys erythrocnemis</i>	▶  1
10	Dusky Fulvetta	<i>Schoeniparus brunneus</i>	▶  5
18	Morrison's Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe morrisonia</i>	▶  6
10	White-whiskered Laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron morrisonianum</i>	▶  3
28	White-eared Sibia	<i>Heterophasia auricularis</i>	▶  9
13	Taiwan Barwing	<i>Actinodura morrisoniana</i>	▶  3
16	Taiwan Liocichla	<i>Liocichla steerii</i>	▶  8
6	Taiwan Hwamei	<i>Garrulax taewanus</i>	▶  3
6	Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus ruficeps</i>	▶  1
3	Rusty Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus poecilorhynchus</i>	▶  2


6	Flamecrest	<i>Regulus goodfellowi</i>	▶  3
5	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	▶  2
1	Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>	▶  1
1	Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i> *	▶  1
4	Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i> *	▶  3
13	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i> *	▶  5
7	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i> *	▶  3
11	Crested Myna	<i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>	▶  3
2	Ferruginous Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa ferruginea</i>	▶  1
3	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i> *	▶  2
10	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i> *	▶  6
1	Taiwan Vivid Niltava	<i>Niltava vivida</i>	▶  1
12	Taiwan Shortwing	<i>Brachypteryx goodfellowi</i>	▶  2
7	Taiwan Whistling-Thrush	<i>Myophonus insularis</i>	▶  6
12	White-tailed Robin	<i>Myiomela leucura</i>	▶  7
4	Taiwan Bush-Robin	<i>Tarsiger formosanus</i>	▶  1
15	Collared Bush-Robin	<i>Tarsiger johnstoniae</i>	▶  2  4
1	Snowy-browed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hyperythra</i>	▶  1
18	Plumbeous Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus fuliginosus</i>	▶  3
1	Plain Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum minullum</i>	▶  1
1	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>	▶  1
9	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	▶  3
1	Chestnut Munia	<i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>	▶  1

- 1

Alpine Accentor

Prunella collaris

▶




1
- 2

Russet Sparrow

Passer cinnamomeus

▶




1
- 61

Eurasian Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

▶




9
- 1

Gray Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

▶




1
- 2

Eastern Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla tschutschensis

▶




1
- 6

White Wagtail

Motacilla alba

▶




3
- 6

Taiwan Rosefinch

Carpodacus formosanus

▶




2
- 3

Taiwan Bullfinch

Pyrrhula owstoni

▶



2


HYBRIDS


- 1

Light-vented x Styan's Bulbul (hybrid)

Pycnonotus sinensis x taivanus

▶






1
- 1

Chinese x Taiwan Hwamei (hybrid)

Garrulax canorus x taewanus

▶



1