



john & jemi

Birding China

December 2006, northeast Yunnan and southern Sichuan Province, China

by John and Jemi Holmes

INTRODUCTION

We were interested to look for White-speckled Laughingthrush *Garrulax bieti* near Muli, Sichuan where Ben King found it in 1989. Jemi was keen also to visit Lugu Lake, a famous site in Northern Yunnan. As Muli and Lugu Lake look close on the map, this seemed a good starting point for a trip. Later we visited Luoji Shan near Xichang in Sichuan and then travelled across country eastwards to Zhaotong in northeast Yunnan, centre of the main wintering sites of the Chinese populations of Black-necked Crane.

This account gives some specific detail of where one might look for *Garrulax bieti* near Muli and some current information about getting to Black-necked Crane wintering sites. In between the trip turned to be more “travel” than “birding”.

ITINERARY

- Dec 6 Left HK via Lowu, flew Shenzhen to Lijiang, Yunnan
- Dec 7 Black Dragon Pool, Lijiang, Yunnan
- Dec 8 Lijiang to Lugu Lake, Yunnan
- Dec 9 Gemu Goddess Cave, Lugu Lake, Yunnan
- Dec 10 Pass between scenic area entrance ~ Km 60, Lugu Lake, Yunnan
- Dec 11 Lugu Lake, Yunnan to Muli, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 12 Muli town, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 13 Km 421- 429 of S216, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 14 Kangwu Lamasery, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 15 Pastureland “912” and a valley near Km 429 Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 16 Muli town, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 17 Muli Lamasery, Taoba, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 18 Muli Lamasery to Shuiluo Village Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 19 Shuiluo Shawan to Waerzhai Lamasery Shawan, Muli county, Sichuan
- Dec 20 Chabulang Dongzi to Muli town, Muli county, Sichuan

Dec 21 KM430 Mahuang Valley Muli county, Sichuan
 Dec 22 Muli to Xichang; Xichang to Luojiang Puge county, Sichuan
 Dec 23 Luojiang, Puge county, Sichuan
 Dec 24 Luojiang, Puge county, Sichuan
 Dec 25 Puge Sichuan to Qiaojia Yunnan
 Dec 26 Qiaojia to Zhaotong Yunnan
 Dec 27 Zhaotong, Yunnan
 Dec 28 Zhaotong to Daqiao Huize County, Yunnan
 Dec 29 Daqiao Huize County and Mashu Qiaojia County, Yunnan
 Dec 30 Mashu Qiaojia County to Kunming Yunnan

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Zhaotong Volunteer Association of Black-necked Crane Protectors [昭通黑颈鹤保护志愿者协会](#)

MAPS:

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ISBN7-80104-934-9

Muli County 2003 (in Chinese) – Chengdu Map Publishing/Govt. of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture - 2003

SITE NOTES and COMMENTS

Lijiang

Yunnan

We arrived around 18:00 at Lijiang airport (from Shenzhen via Kunming) and got the airport bus (RMB 15 each) to the town. It was a clear evening and several Black-shouldered Kites were noted hovering over the darkening fields. We stayed in a binguan (guesthouse) in the old city, there are many to choose from.

In mid-morning we wandered from Lijiang's main square towards Black Dragon Pool Park (BDP). With the stream on our left there are many newly developed touristy bars and restaurants in "traditional" style. A few yards short of the BDP Park southern gate we cut right and headed uphill along a track through an area with some graves beneath secondary pines. We crossed a small ridge and found an area (east of the hill above BDP park) with more graves and larger pine trees. Rufous-vented Yuhina, Bar-tailed Treecreeper and a variety of Tits were seen. We were also treated to the sight of a middle-aged couple driving birds into a mist net near a clearing. They caught two Chestnut-tailed Minlas which were taken away in a cage.

Lugu Lake

Yunnan

Access was easy from Lijiang. We got the 09:30 coach from the central bus station. Lunch break was in Ninglang town around 12:30. When the bus reached the "Lugu Lake Scenic Area" entrance gate someone got on, counted the number of tourists - only seven on the bus - and required us to get off and pay the RMB 80 entrance fee. Most of the passengers appeared to be locals.

After stopping for twenty minutes at a scenic viewpoint – convenient for we tourists but mildly irritating for the majority – we arrived at Luoshui town at about 16:30. Luoshui is the main lakeside settlement in Yunnan province. We decided to get on a 16-seat local bus to Lige village which is 12 km from Luoshui town.

Lugu Lake is a deep lake of 46 sq km, elevation 2690m. There is intense cultivation all the way to the edge of the water, and the hills are mainly covered with secondary pines and a heavily goat-grazed understorey. The lake is the centre of the Mosuo ethnic minority culture. These days this sets the theme for costumed boatmen and other tourist activity.

The lake has thousands of waterfowl, Ruddy Shelduck and Red-crested Pochard the most numerous. There were several hundred Black-headed Gulls and a few Brown-headed Gulls. Tourists get boats out onto the lake and a girl in Mosuo costume throws bread for the gulls. The ducks remain fairly wary of the boats.

We got the cable car up Gemu Goddess Mountain. Elevation at top - 3,360m. Alpine Accentors and White-throated Redstarts were well seen. The cave is quite interesting, subtle lighting highlighting some of the natural rock formations. One could well imagine the cultural importance of the cave to the Mosuo, especially in the days when it was

several hours hike up the mountain to get to it. Nice views of the lake in the late afternoon.

We walked about 4km from the cable car base back to Lige village. Low point of the walk was watching a flock of Black-browed Tits and other small birds and being interrupted by small boys coming up and hurling fistfuls of pebbles at the birds. High point was a single White-tailed Eagle near Lige Village.

We hired a minivan to bird the road between the scenic area entrance and the lake. The high point of the road has an archway at about 3,340m. Nearby we added Grey-crested and Rufous-vented Tits as well as Great Spotted Woodpecker to the trip list.

Some late afternoon waters' edge birding at Sanjia village added Goldeneye, Little Grebe and Little Buntings. It transpired our driver didn't have the requisite papers to carry paying passengers in his vehicle, so we walked along the lake edge while he waited for a party of police on roadblock duty to finish for the day. Then he came along and picked us up again.

Lige village is famous for a picturesque teardrop-shaped island nearby. There are choices of accommodation available (100RMB with lake view, 50 without) and more under construction. Nearby, visitors used to stay at village homestays at the lake edge, but since early 2005 the original Lige village has been demolished and a strip of two-storey rustic-looking inns have been built, a hundred metres back from the lake edge. This change has been effected by local government in the name of protecting the lake water quality but it means the chance to savour the local Mosuo atmosphere and lifestyle at the shores of Lugu Lake has largely gone.

Getting to Muli

Sichuan

There is a new road around the northern edge of Lugu Lake. We hired a minivan to take us to the town on the Sichuan side of Lugu Lake, "Lugu Lake Town". There is an expensive-looking hotel at the edge of "LLT" and signs that the area is being promoted as a tourist draw in Sichuan as well as Yunnan. From "LLT" we got the 11:00 bus southeast to Yanyuan. A few km short of Yanyuan we got off at the road junction at the dusty town of Meiyu (the name means "Peach Blossom Rain"). After a quick lunch, we caught the second-last coach of the day the remaining 92km north to Muli on Route S216. It took about 3 hours to get there.

Busses between Muli and Xichang take about 7 hours. Xichang has an airport and daily flights to Chengdu and Kunming.

From Lijiang if you would like to avoid Lugu Lake, you can get the bus to Ninglang. There are busses from Ninglang to Yanyuan. You could change at either Meiyu or Yanyuan for Muli.

Muli county

Sichuan

The present county town of Muli has been so named since 1962. The original capital of Muli was 80 Km to the northwest, near the present town of Wachang.

Muli was remote enough in the 1930s to merit a “King” when Suydam Cutting passed through in 1932. The legendary Dr Joseph Rock counted the King of Muli as a personal friend.

Muli is still a remote and backward area of Sichuan Province. The town itself sees very few tourists (not necessarily a bad thing!). The Muli Hotel is the best hotel in town, - discount rate is 100RMB a standard room. Public vehicles include busses, minivans and four-wheel drives running daily (well, most days, anyway) to various destinations within the county.

The paved road ends at the northern outskirts of Muli town. The “Main Road” north is just a dusty dirt track.

Mahuang Gou (Leech Valley)

Muli county, Sichuan

This is where Ben King recorded White-speckled Laughingthrush *Garrulax bieti* in April 1989. King was based at the “No. 35 Road repair crew station”. But there is no trace of a place by that name now. Ben King found *G. bieti* in bamboo at elevations of 3100m to 3200 m. Route S216 goes north from Muli town, the km markers count down as you go north.

Km 455 Muli town limits You might expect the road to go 455km north from here, and perhaps it does, but it is only drivable for 156km, that is, to Chabulang town at km298

Km 437 uphill from here is all “ Mahuang Gou” according to locals.

Km 430 There is a metal archway and buildings on both sides of the road. 200 metres up from here the road hairpins left over a stream – and a track goes right, uphill to a meadow, next to the stream. Following the stream about 400m - past the meadow- leads to likely habitat for *G. bieti*. This may be where Ben King surveyed in 1989

Km 429 Going up the road and over a culvert, a path left leads into another gully with bamboo under pines.

Km 423 Turnoff (right) towards Kangwu Liangsi Lamasery and “area 912”.

Km 419 High point of road (about 3,600m) next to a pile of prayer stones a grass track contours left. It was a popular area for hunters in times past, according to our driver. Judging by the lack of sizeable birds, perhaps it is popular with hunters in “times present” as well.

Muli Lamasery near Wachang

Taoba , Muli county, Sichuan

We hired an old model Beijing Jeep with driver for the four days and three nights that we went out to Wachang, Shuiluo and Chabulang. The cost was RMB 2,300. The ground can be covered on the bus, but public transport is so infrequent one could easily get stranded. An overloaded 4WD went off the road south of Chabulang on Dec 19th with fatal results. This resulted in extra police vigilance for the few days we were there, and would have made it even harder to get picked up along the road.

Wachang means “roof tile factory”. The factory is still in business. There is a comfortable guesthouse in Tibetan style by the bus stop. The town itself has been built from stones taken from the original town of Muli nearby. The communists destroyed the original capital in the 1950s in reprisal for resistance to their authority.

Muli Monastery is about 2 Km uphill from Wachang town. There is a daily bus from Muli town to Wachang. The remains of the monastery buildings (re-built after the fifties but trashed again during the cultural revolution) stand near the buildings in use today.

There is a brand new guesthouse (opened in December 2006) at the temple site. RMB 30/person. We rose early to watch yak butter tea being prepared for the monks in prayer session. We were invited to sit inside the temple hall, which we did.

Uphill from the temple there were good numbers of birds, - about thirty Brown-breasted Bulbuls and a dozen Crested Finchbills – Muli must be at the extreme north-east of the range of the latter species.

There is a pony/hiking track from Wachang south to Lugu Lake. The locals believe that promised road improvements will make this drivable in two or three years time. We asked around at the Lugu Lake end of the road, too. You can't drive right through yet.

We saw several boys with catapults outside Wachang Town. Catapults were also seen at Shuiluo and below Waerzhai Lamasery. We saw a party of Common Pheasants stoned and catapulted by passers-by (all male) on the main road. Although hunting is officially banned, Muli County seems to be a bad area for casual persecution of wildlife.

Shuiluo

Muli county, Sichuan

From km 342 on the “main road” we went west – up an even smaller track - over a 4,000m pass and down to Shuiluo. Some hikers start from Shuiluo to go to Yading. The lower hill slopes near the river are very bare.

The “Main Road” near the Shuiluo turnoff

There are patches of good habitat along higher parts of the road. Between bare areas of hillside there are stands of mature spruce pine and rhododendron. We didn't see much bamboo understorey at the 3,000 to 3,300m elevations (i.e. potential *Garrulax bieti*

habitat.) We noted a large flock of rosefinches and Alpine Accentors, as well as Giant and Elliot's Laughingthrushes. This was a good area for Wallcreepers (4-5 daily) but they were very shy. We stayed one night in Shuiluo village, dining on instant noodles and sleeping in a guestroom above a very old fashioned-looking shop. Mains power was intermittent, and the village did not use a generator.

Waerzhai Lamasery near Chabulang

Shawan, Muli county, Sichuan

After a right turn across the river at km309 (i.e. 154km north of Muli town), the temple is a one-hour drive up a narrow muddy track. Above 3,000m there was more than an inch of snow on the ground and a couple of inches had settled on the higher parts of the road.

The temple was atmospheric in the snow. Large-billed Crows and Daurian Jackdaws were in big trees near the ruin of the main building. Godlewski's Bunting and Brown Accentors foraged beneath the prayer flags. There was a well-fed and good-natured mastiff gambolling around. Jemi saw a Common Pheasant near the gatehouse.

We left around 17:30 and it was after dark by the time we got to the end of the drivable road at km298. According to our Muli County map the road goes through to Daocheng, but everyone we asked said 4-wheeled vehicles could not get through. You can hike or ride a pony to Daocheng in the right season, though.

We patronised Chabulang's best (no-star) guesthouse. It was clean enough, with toilets and bathroom at one end of the building. There was a restaurant at street level.

Note: There is a daily bus from Muli town to Chabulang town (area zone 3)

Muli to Xichang

Sichuan

Three buses a day leave Muli for Xichang between 08:00 and 08:30 in the morning - 55RMB. We arrived at Xichang around 15:30 and were soon on a local bus heading south-east to Luojuishan town about 65km away along route S213.

Luojuishan Town

Puge county, Sichuan

A lot of new guesthouses have been built in Luojuishan in a decorative style that is supposed to reflect Yi minority culture. The wall paintings and carved reliefs look very like "Native American" -- thunderbirds and so on.

We paid RMB20 to get a minivan the 11km to the grand entrance carpark. The ticket office had closed (17:30) but they let us in anyway. We were driven about five kilometres uphill to the hotel at the cable car base, an ambitious-looking glass and marble block. We passed a busload of staff heading downhill, which should have forewarned us.

Luojishan Resort - elevation 2600m

Puge county, Sichuan

The receptionist's furrowed brow was a sign of bad news. The restaurant was closed but they would re-open the souvenir shop so we could buy some instant noodles. (Oh, goody!) There were 28 guest rooms on two floors, but we were the only guests. I'm sure the place would be popular in summertime to escape the heat. In late December it was freezing cold. The hot water and warm air were turned off. Eventually the staff found extra quilts and a heater fan. After negotiation we paid RMB 200 (a "discount rate"!) for a chilly nights rest. The hillsides around were mainly very bare grassland, long ago logged out and still grazed by goats. There were few birds. The ubiquitous Elliot's Laughingthrush could be heard in the distance.

Luojishan Summit - elevation 3,500-3,700m

Puge county, Sichuan

The cableway rises about 900 metres. Claimed to be one of the longest in China, it is certainly one of the most expensive at RMB 140 for the round trip. Operating from 09:30 to 17:30, it takes 45mins to get to the top.

All the bamboo habitat is on the slope below the upper cable car terminal. I actually got Brown Parrotbill (with White-throated Redstarts and Rufous-vented Tits) as a "cable-car tick". It was below freezing at the summit plateau – we saw Spotted Nutcrackers and Grey-crested Tits. We had a long tramp with our baggage along a snow-covered boardwalk and pathway to the hotel. It was the most expensive room of the trip at RMB 280 a night, but at least the double-glazed windows made it warmer than at the lower end of the cable car.

At the summit a small lake has been dammed and made larger with a boardwalk built round it. Trails go beyond this through the mainly secondary pines past picturesque small lakes.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, we walked around the trail, having it to ourselves before the first daytrippers arrived at about 10:30. Largely undistracted by birds we took about 3 hours to do the circuit. Highlight was a party of 10 Blood Pheasants in the snow near Water Grass Lake.

A single company has developed Luojishan since 2004 with cable car, trails, accommodation and so on. The map on the admission ticket (we bought them on the way out) shows some trail extensions that haven't actually been built yet. The summit area might have some interesting breeding birds in the right season, but access to the bamboo habitat looks difficult. I wouldn't recommend making a detour in your China birding trip for this place.

Luojishan Puge county, Sichuan to **Qiaojia** Yunnan

We got a local bus from Luojishan to Puge, passing busy small towns with many people in Yi minority costume. Having rejected the accommodation in Puge town, we had a comfortable night at Puge Hot Springs (RMB 138), about 5 Km from town. On Christmas day we got another bus to near the provincial border and then shared a taxi across the Jinshajiang (major tributary of the Yangtse) back into Yunnan Province.

After checking the bus schedule, we had to stay at Qiaojia town a night. We found a decent hotel (RMB 80) in a busy place at the edge of the province. It seems that they don't get many foreign visitors.

Qiaojia to Zhaotong,

Yunnan

A 06:20 "sleeper" or 06:50 "normal" bus is the choice for this 220km journey . We took the latter for what turned out to be an eleven-and-a-half hour ride. We soon caught up with the "sleeper" bus which had left Qiaojia late. This northeast finger of Yunnan Province really does look like a forgotten corner of southwest China. In mid-afternoon we got held up by a breakdown at a small town called Baogunao and we took some photos of the colourful market traders.

Zhaotong

Yunnan

We both received the same message on our mobiles, "Welcome to Zhaotong, home of the Black-necked Cranes" (in Chinese) when we got into the Zhaotong area. However, there is precious little information on how to get to see these cranes for a first time visitor.

Details of a winter 2001/2002 survey by the International Crane Foundation and Yunnan's Forestry Department are detailed in Oriental Bird Club Bulletin no.37 (June 2003). We knew that Dashanbao (a National Nature Reserve) was the place with the greatest crane numbers. Jemi's putonghua enquiries revealed only that the Zhaotong Tourist Association doesn't provide any information, and that a local tour company had ceased running tours to the site. The two-star hotel we stayed could let us have the contact of a guesthouse in Dashanbao, and the hotel could find us a vehicle to hire to take us there for RMB 500. However, the driver admitted he had never been to Dashanbao before.

There is a public 18-seat bus leaving Zhaotong's western bus yard at 07:30 daily to Dashanbao town, the fare is RMB 25 each. The bus yard looks like a scene from "Mad Max". The journey over rough roads was said to take four hours. Once you get to Dashanbao town, you still have to get several km north to the official guesthouse with an official viewpoint for the official crane view. The cranes also can be found on Tiaodunhe reservoir 跳墩河 south of Dashanbao town. The cranes can spread themselves over a wide area. You really need your own "wheels" at Dashanbao to cover the ground. Quite

a lot of Chinese photographers go there in winter, so it may be possible to get a lift with them, but you shouldn't depend on it.

Dashanbao is high, (3,200-3,300 metres elevation) and is the favoured wintering crane site for Chinese photographers with "Black-necked Cranes-in-the-snow" photos in mind.

Caohai - "Sea of Grass" (Weining county)

Guizhou

We toyed with the idea of going to Caohai, the National Nature Reserve in neighbouring Guizhou Province. I had visited in winter 1990 and 1991 (see OBC Bulletin 19). We (a group of Hong Kong birders) got an overnight train from Kunming to Liupanshui in Guizhou Province and were driven to Caohai by Guizhou Environmental Protection Department officials. In those days Weining county was closed to foreigners and official permission to go there had to be obtained. In 1991 we were aware that there were cranes in Yunnan near Zhaotong, but had no information about getting to the sites.

Now, in 2007, there is an airport at Zhaotong. Flights from Kunming depart daily at 11:40 and 11:50, arriving Zhaotong around 13:00.

There is also a new railway through Zhaotong to Caohai. Zhaotong railway station is about 11km east of town. We got a taxi (RMB 25) out there to check the timetables and returned to town on the route no. 1 bus (RMB 1/person). Train L235 leaves Zhaotong at 07:25, arrives Caohai at 08:49. Train 8617 leaves Zhaotong at 15:13; arrives Caohai at 17:35.

Meeting Dr Sun De-hui at Zhaotong

the founder of the "Zhaotong Volunteer Association of Black-necked Crane Protectors"
Zhaotong, Yunnan

Jemi's persistence paid off when she tried reception at the New Century Hotel, the third of the three decent-looking hotels in Zhaotong. Miss Ng, a staff member there, turned out to be a member of the "Zhaotong Volunteer Association of Black-necked Crane Protectors" (ZVABNCP) and she arranged a meeting with Dr SUN De-hui, the founder of the association. Dr Sun is a keen photographer, and most of the photographs he showed us in a couple of Black-necked Crane site promotional leaflets were taken by him. (We hadn't come across any leaflets in town during our enquiries.)

It transpired Dr Sun was planning to go to Daqiao the following day. He showed us some brochure photos of Black-necked Cranes he had taken there previously, so we decided to join him. The original suggestion to get there was to take a sequence of buses, but we'd had enough of those. It was agreed that if he could arrange to hire a vehicle to get there we would pay.

Daqiao

Huize county, Yunnan

We were picked up at 09:00hrs. Zhaotong's streets were wet and snow was falling. We were glad we weren't getting a "Mad Max" bus to snowy Dashanbao. We followed the main Zhaotong to Kunming road -cobbled on this section- for about 140km then turned west at an unmarked junction for about 30km of dirt roads. At Daqiao town we rejoined a paved road that runs parallel to the reservoir (marked on the Nelles South China map). Buses from Kunming to Mashu and Qiaojia pass through Daqiao town. There are frequent minivans from the county town of Huize to Daqiao.

A few km beyond (northwest of) Daqiao town we found a typical government entrance archway and a sign inviting us to buy tickets (RMB 20) for the scenic area. A rustic guesthouse was about 400 metres down a track towards the waters' edge, the "Crane View Guesthouse" (Sign in Chinese only).

After we had had lunch and let the driver go, we walked to the water and saw our first pair of Black-necked Cranes feeding on corn put out by Dr Sun's followers. Daqiao (a Provincial Nature Reserve, elevation 2,700m) is higher than Zhaotong, but any trace of snow or rain had disappeared.

The northwest corner of the reservoir – Lijiawan – was where most of the birds were. It was a 45 minute walk from the guesthouse. As well as the waterfowl, Dusky Thrush, Brown-breasted Bulbuls, Spotted Doves, Oriental Turtle Doves and two Hoopoes were noted. It was good to see some relatively tame birds near the villages. We were driven back to the Crane View Guesthouse by another photographer, Mr Yang, accompanied by his daughter.



Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis* – Lijiawan (evening)

We returned for sunrise at Lijiawan the following morning, but it was a bit cloudier than ideal.

Mashu

Qiaojia county, Yunnan

In mid-morning we went north to Mashu in Qiaojia county, about 11km from Daqiao. We stopped to photograph both Black-necked and Common Cranes on the way. A flock of about 100 Black-necked Cranes were feeding in the fields. We were told that this flock roosted in a small reservoir behind Mashu village at night.

We had lunch with another Black-necked Crane protection association volunteer. After viewing the night roost reservoir behind the village, we decided to return at dawn the following day.

In late afternoon we returned to Lijiawan, where another of Dr Sun's volunteers, a teacher in the local school, had set things up so that Dr Sun could address the children on the subject of Black-necked Cranes.

The following morning (30th Dec.) we arrived at the small reservoir near Mashu before dawn and enjoyed the ambience as mist drifted over the hills and the cranes bugled away as they woke up.



Leaving around 10:00 we had a bowl of noodles and collected our stuff, then were driven all the way to Huize town. Coaches to Kunming depart every hour. We arrived at 12:45, said goodbye to Mr Yang and Dr Sun (who had to get back to Zhaotong) and got the 13:00 coach to Kunming. The southern part of the route is along the new road, with some tunnels and spectacular views. We arrived in Kunming at 18:20.

The “Zhaotong Volunteer Association of Black-necked Crane Protectors”

Dr Sun and his “Volunteer association of BNC protectors” are well-known in Yunnan Province, having been active for about fifteen years. He has been the subject of numerous newspaper articles and television interviews. He appears to have galvanised this group of like-minded people to act to help the cranes where it counts. The sincerity and enthusiasm he had instilled in all the members we met – people from a wide variety of backgrounds - was impressive. Dr Sun is surveying Yunnan for new wintering BNC sites. Meanwhile, at the more established areas, his associates put out corn and chopped

potatoes for the cranes. Feeding is concentrated in three periods;- when the cranes first arrive, if it snows heavily, and shortly before they depart for their breeding grounds.

Dr Sun is the man all the Chinese photographers call to find out where the cranes are and what the weather is like at the various crane sites. He, in turn, can get first-hand reports from his network of volunteers all over the area. The welfare and overall numbers of Black-necked Cranes are being constantly monitored. The whole operation is run on a shoestring budget, and donations are welcome! Dr Sun's mobile number is (86) 137-0860-2145. It would be better to get a putonghua speaker to call. The volunteers have a website: <http://www.hjhbh.com/>

If you need any more details of any part of this report,
don't hesitate to get in touch: johnjemi -AT- netvigator.com

Name in English	Simplified Chinese
Baogunao	包谷埫
binguan	宾馆
Black Dragon Pool	黑龙潭
Caohai, Weining County	草海, 威宁县
Chabulang, Dongzi	茶布朗, 东子
Daocheng	稻城
Daqiao Huize	大桥, 会泽
Dashanbao	大山包
Gemu Goddess Cave	格姆女神洞
Huize	会泽
Jinshajiang	金沙江
Kangwu Lamasery	康坞大寺
Kunming	昆明
Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture	凉山彝族自治州
Lige, Lugu Lake	里格, 泸沽湖
Lijiang	丽江
Lijiawan	李家湾
Liupanshui, Guizhou	六盘水, 贵州
Lowu	罗湖
Lugu Lake	泸沽湖
Luoji Shan	螺髻山
Mahuang Valley	蚂蝗沟
Mashu	马树
Meiyu	梅雨
Mosuo ethnic minority	摩梭少数民族
Muli	木里
Muli Lamasery	木里大寺
Ninglang	宁蒗
Pastureland 912	9 1 2 牧场
Puge	普格
Qiaojia County	巧家县
Sanjia village	三家村
Shenzhen	深圳
Shuiluo, Shawan	水洛, 沙湾

Shuiuo Village	水洛村
Sichuan	四川
Sun De-hui	孙德辉
Tiaodunhe	跳墩河
Wachang	瓦厂
Waerzhai Lamasery	瓦尔寨大寺
Xichang	西昌
Yading	亚丁
Yanyuan	盐源
Yunnan	云南
Zhaotong	昭通
Zhaotong Volunteer Association of Black-necked Crane Protectors	昭通黑颈鹤保护志愿 者协会

SPECIES LIST

Species number according to Mackinnon, J. and Phillipps, K. (2000) *A field guide to the Birds of China*

0028 Blood Pheasant *Ignathis cruentus*

14/12 -25 seen near Kangwu Liangsi, Muli. 24/12 – 10 at the summit plateau of Luojishan

0050 Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

19/12 Single near Chabulang Temple, 20/12 party of three crossing the road near km380 (Muli-Wachang), and narrowly avoiding getting stoned to death by passing motorcyclists.

0074 Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

28-30/12 500+ in Daqiao area

0079 Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

8-10/12 Over two thousand on Lugu Lake. 28-30/12 200+ in Daqiao area

0089 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

28-30/12 Up to 100 in Daqiao area

0090 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*

28-30/12 - biggest single flock 40. Not seen well enough to differentiate between “Chinese” and “Indian” spotbill.

0093 Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

28-30/12 A few dozen at Daqiao

0096 Common Teal *Anas crecca*

28-30 Dozens in Daqiao area

0098 Red-crested Pochard *Rhodonessa rufina*

9-11/12 Over 1,500 at Lugu Lake

0099 Common Pochard *Athya ferrina*

9-11/12 About 10 noted on Lugu Lake, probably many more

0103 Tufted Duck *Athya fuligula*

9-11/12 300+ at Lugu Lake

0110 Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
9-11/12 40+ on Lugu Lake

0114 Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*
9/12 - Single at Lugu Lake. 14/12 - 24 on frozen lake near Kangwu Liangsi 28-30/12
– about 15 at Daqiao.

0131 Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Singles at Lugu Lake pass entrance gate, and on pass to Suiluo,
Muli county – both above 3,000metres

0163 Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
24/12 – single from bus near Puge, 29/12 – two near lake edge, Daqiao

0171 Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
10/12 A pair near Lige, Lugu Lake, 30/12 single near Mushu, Daqiao

0176 White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*
24/12 – two from the bus near Puge, sw Sichuan

0264 Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*
Noted on rocky, hilly areas, especially the road to Suiluo, Muli county

0274 Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
28/12 – 13 noted near edge of Daqiao reservoir

0276 Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
28/12 - 8 noted in bushes around villages near Daqiao

0302 Common Crane *Grus grus*
28-30/12 60+ in the Daqiao area

0304 Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*
28-30/12 150+ in the Daqiao area

0324 Common Coot *Fulica atra*
8-10/12 200+ at Lugu Lake 28-30/12 150+ around Daqiao reservoir

0343 Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
28/12 - Single near Lijiawan, Daqiao

0348 Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
28-30/12 – 8 mainly near Lijiawan, Daqiao

0400 Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
28-30/12 20+ near Lijiawan, Daqiao

0423 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
9-11/12 10-12 at Lugu Lake

0424 Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*
8-10/12 - about 600 at Lugu Lake, 28-30/12 - about 30 near Lijiawan, Daqiao

- 0459 Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*
6/12 Five between Lijiang airport and the town
- 0461 Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*
22/12 Two from the bus between Yanyuan and Xichang
- 0465 White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*
9/12 – single over Lige, Lugu Lake
- 0478 Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
14/12 – single near lake at Kangwu Liangsi
- 0486 Besra *Accipiter virgatus*
18/12 – single near Suiluo, Muli county
- 0492 Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
Here and there
- 0494 Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*
23 and 24/12 – singles at Luoji shan
- 0508 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
17-20/12 Singles along the dry valleys along the Muli/Wachang/Chabulang Road
- 0518 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
10/12 – single noted at Lugu Lake, 30/12 – pair near Mushu, Daqiao
- 0531 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
28-29/12 – party of 7 on Daqiao reservoir
- 0535 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
26-30/12 - noted on broad watercourses and flooded paddies around Zhaotong and Daqiao
- 0539 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
A few noted around Daqiao reservoir, 28-30/12
- 0547 Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
29/12 – two seen in daytime near Mushu, Daqiao. There appears to be a roost of them in the pines behind Mushu village
- 0616 Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*
Singles on wires between Lijiang Airport and the town, 6/12
- 0617 Grey-Backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*
A few noted near Lugu Lake and Daqiao reservoir, 2,600-2,800 metre elevation
- 0626 Red-Billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
12-21/12 Common in Mahuang gou, near Muli. Also 29/12 near Mashu, Daqiao
- 0636 Black-Billed Magpie *Pica pica*

Common: - numerous near Mashu, 29/12

0640 Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*
10+ near the summit of Luojishan

0641 Red-Billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
14/12 – around the temple ruins Kangwu Liangsi 8-10

0644 Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauurica*
11/12 – about a dozen noted from the bus near Yanyuan, 28/12 – six between Daqiao and Mushu

0647 Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
29/12 small party noted near Daqiao.

0648 Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
Widespread

0665 Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*
20/12 – party of 20 near km380 on Muli-Wachang Road probably this species

0687 White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
11-21/12 – singles on the river in Mahuang gou, Muli

0693 Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
22/12 – two noted in the bare hills between Yanyuan and Xichang

0707 Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Several noted here and there

0717 Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni*
24/12 – single near summit of Luojishan, 28/12 – 12+ near Crane View Guest House, Daqiao

0778 Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*
26/12 – noted near villages in Zhaotong County from the bus

0785 Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
12-21/12 – regularly seen in the bare hills near Muli

0786 White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*
9/12 – Gemu Mountain near Lugu Lake, 23/12 three at Luojishan

0787 Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus*
24/12 – near Puge and Qiaojia

0789 Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*
11-21/12 – regular in Muli county

0790 White-capped Water Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*
12-21/12 – seen daily on the stream through Mahuang Gou, and on suitable streams elsewhere

- 0791 Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*
See 0790
- 0799 White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus leschenaulti*
15/12 – single seen up the gully from km429 marker. 20/12 – single on road near km 420
- 0804 Common Stonechat – *Saxicola torquata*
28-30/12 noted especially at field edges around Daqiao reservoir
- 0807 Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*
- 0821 White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*
28/12 - A few near Lijiawan, Daqiao
- 0829 Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*
29/12 – 20+ near Mashu village, Daqiao
- 0833 Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *Sitta nagaensis*
20/12 – single seen km380 between Muli and Wachang
- 0837 Yunnan Nuthatch *Sitta yunnanensis*
Heard in pines east of Black Dragon Pool Park, Lijiang
- 0843 Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*
17-20/12 – 4-5 daily along bare and rocky road edges, Muli/Wachang/Suiluo... Smart enough to be shy
- 0844 Eurasian Tree-Creeper *Certhia familiaris*
10/12 – near Lugu Lake in a mixed flock, 24/12 ditto at summit area of Luojishan
- 0845 Bar-tailed Treecreeper *Certhia himalayana*
7/12 – a pair with a mixed flock near BDP Park, Lijiang
- 0848 Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Widespread, if not common, near Lugu Lake, Mahuang gou and Luojishan
- 0858 Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*
Seen in several areas, spruce above 3,000m
- 0859 Coal Tit *Parus ater*
24/12 – single near summit plateau of Luojishan
- 0861 Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous*
Widespread in upland –above 3,000m – areas
- 0862 Great Tit *Parus major*
Common-ish
- 0864 Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*
Widespread in uplands

- 0873 Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*
7/12 – hillside behind BDP park, Lijiang
- 0875 Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti*
-see 858 and 861
- 0880 Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris*
13/12 – 20+ at km444 near Muli the biggest count
- 0882 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
missed this one !
- 0889 Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
7/12 – pines near BDP Park, Lijiang, and 9/12 near Lugu Lake, and 14/12 in the way to Kangwu Liangsi
- 0891 Crested Finchbill *Spizixos canifrons*
17/12 – several noted above Muli Lamasery, Wachang
- 0897 Brown-breasted Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous*
Quite common in mid-elevation areas visited
- 0923/4/5 White-eye sp. *Zosterops*
25/12 – heard at Puge Hot Springs, but not seen
- 0984 – Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*
Here and there....
- 1031 Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax maximus*
15-21/12 – Two or three daily in Mahuang gou, near Muli, 20/12 - pass between Suiluo and Wachang
- 1037 White-browed Laughingthrush *Garrulax sannio*
29/12 – several at Lijiawan village, Daqiao
- 1041 Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*
Upland areas such as upper areas of Mahuang gou, Luojishan and on the way to Daqiao.
- 1044 Black-faced Laughingthrush *Garrulax affinis*
15/12 – three in the gully near km429, Mahuang gou
- 1056 Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*
13/12 – three near Kangwu Liangsi Temple – very shy
- 1109 White-browed Fulvetta *Alcippe vinipectus*
15-21/12 – Mahuang gou, near Muli, 23-24/12 – summit plateau of Luojishan
- 1123 Black-headed Sibia *Heterophasia melanoleuca*
12-21/12 – twos and threes in Mahuang gou, Muli
- 1131 White-collared Yuhina *Yuhina diademata*
17/12 – At the km419 pass between Muli and Wachang

1140 Brown Parrotbill *Paradoxornis unicolor*
23/12 – four from the cable car, Luojishan

1197 Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
9/12 – 6 near Lige, Lugu Lake, with 15 Tree Sparrows

1198 Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Common near habitation

1207 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Widespread in lowlands

1212 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Single near stream, Mahuang gou

1218 Olive-Backed Tree Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
10/12 – fields beside Lugu Lake 8 - 10

1226 Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*
9/12 – 15 near walkway outside cave at Gemu Mtn, Lugu Lake. 18/12 60+ at pass
between Wachang and Suiluo

1229 Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiata*
7/12 – 8 in the hills behind BDP Park, Lijiang

1231 Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*
19/12 – 8 to 10 at Chabulang Temple in the snow

1234 Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*
21/12 – party of 8+ near km430 Mahuang gou, Muli

1244 Brambling *Fringilla montefringilla*
28/12 -350 in two flocks near Daqiao

1246 Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*
29/12 – a flock of about 200 near Lijiawan, Daqiao

1268 Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*
19/12 – 50+ pass above Suiluo

1277 White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura*
19/12 – bleating call heard at pass between Suiluo and Wachang

1290 Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*
24/12 – three seen, summit of Luojishan

1306 Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*
Seemed to be the commonest bunting on dry bushes and scrub on this trip

1313 Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
10/12 – 12 in fields at the edge of Lugu Lake

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Mammals – Himalayan Striped Squirrels at the upper areas of Luojishan

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