

QINGHAI PROVINCE, CHINA (AUGUST 2007)

A trip report by John and Jemi Holmes

Introduction

We were able to join a group of seven Hong Kong birding friends who had already started to make arrangements for this two-week trip;- they were Anthony LO Kar-man, Doris CHU Wing-yee, LAM Chi-wing, Eliza HUI Mei-yu, Lego HO, K.Y.LAU and Carrie MA Ka-wai.

Jemi and I had spent a few days in and around Xining 西宁 before, in the spring of 2005.

The remoteness of many of the birding sites in Qinghai (compared with, say, Sichuan 四川 and Yunnan 云南) means that having one's own "wheels" is relatively important. Buses may be infrequent and overcrowded or there may be no public transport at all to some sites.

Local arrangements in Xining had been started with the consultation of Professor LI Lai-xing 李来兴教授 of Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology, CAS 中國科學院西北高原生物研究所, who was unable to join us on the trip due to other commitments. Prof. LI gave us a briefing on the first evening in Xining about habitat and road conditions. We had the use of three vehicles and drivers. The lead driver, Mr PANG Xiang-dong had spent many years travelling remote corners of Qinghai, firstly with hunters and more lately with Prof. LI and others on wildlife survey work. Having three passengers in each car gave us all plenty of room, especially for the photographers with lots of gear.

For our return journey, rather than backtrack through Maduo 玛多 we took a swing out to the west towards Golmud 格尔木, with the aim of surveying a little-birded area of desert north of the Kunlun Shan. But it didn't really work out, due to roadworks disturbance.

It was an action-packed trip, and hard work for the drivers. In a perfect world more time could be allowed over a route of this length, especially at the woodland sites in the south.

After an eventful 12 days and 3,400kms covered the others went back to Hong Kong.

We revisited a couple of sites near Qinghai Lake and then spent a relatively dull few days at Huzhu Beishan 互助北山, before going on to see the cultural relics near Xian 西安市.



Sites visited:-

- Quarries near km2005, Route 109
- Desert near Chaka 茶卡 Salt Lake 茶卡, km 2238, Route 109
- Rubber Mountain Gully 橡皮山山谷 near km 2189.5, Route 109
- Ha Da Gorge near km 20.5, Qinghai Lake west ring road (Heimahe 黑马河 to Shinahai)
- Er La Pass, km 319, Route 214
- Bayankala Shan Pass 巴颜喀拉山哑口, km 602, Route 214
- Beizha Forest and Ga'er Monastery area (SE of Nangqian)
- Jiangxi Forest Reserve 江西林场 (ESE of Nangqian)
- Huzhu Beishan 互肋北山 130 km northeast of Xining

Best birds

Tibetan Rosefinch, Pink-tailed Rosefinch, Red-fronted and Streaked Rosefinches, Alashan Redstart, White-browed Tit, five species of Snowfinch, Ibisbills, Mongolian Ground Jay, Koslov's (Tibetan) Babax.

"Dips"

We missed both the “Monal Partridges” (Tetraophasis), Tibetan Bunting and Tibetan Sandgrouse, among others. Tibetan Antelope was a mammal “dip” !

References

A Field Guide to the Birds of China – OUP 2000 - by John Mackinnon and Karen Phillipps

Finches and Sparrows – An identification guide – Helm 1993 – by Peter Clement, Alan Harris and John Davis

The Mammalian of China –China Forestry Publishing House 1999 – by SHENG Helin et al.

Tibet Autonomous Region – Gizi Map (Undated) 1:2 000 000 - *includes Qinghai*

Qinghai and Xizang (Tibet), with W Sichuan, China, July 16 – August 14, 2006
By Remco Hofland – Internet Trip Report

Tibet (Xizang and Qinghai Provinces) – China 29 May – 27 June 2005
By George Wagner – Internet Trip Report

And thanks to Ada Chow, Mike Kilburn, Graham Talbot and others who shared their experiences of this area with us beforehand.

Richard Lewthwaite kindly provided a Qinghai bird list which was used as a record template.

ITINERARY

The party assembled in Xining 西宁 over 27th, 28th and 29th July, 2007.

28th July – An outing by taxi to Bei Shan Temple 北山寺

29th July - Final arrivals to Xining 西宁. Evening dinner and briefing with Prof. LI

30th July – Xining 西宁 to Gonghe 共和 via Riyueshan 日月山

31st July – Gonghe 共和 to Maduo 玛多 via Er La Pass

1st Aug. – Maduo 玛多 to Yushu 玉树 (Jyekyundo)

2nd Aug.- Yushu 玉树 to Kandashan 砍达山, Nangqian 囊谦 and Beizha Forest Reserve /Ga'er Lamasery 白扎林场 / 尕尔寺

3rd August – Around Ga'er Lamasery 尕尔寺

4th Aug.- Ga'er Lamasery 尕尔寺 via Baizha 白扎林场 and Nangqian 囊谦 to Jiangxi Forest Reserve江西林场

5th Aug.- Jiangxi Forest Reserve 江西林场 to Yushu 玉树

6th Aug.- a.m. around Yushu玉树, p.m. to Qumalai曲麻莱

7th Aug.- Qumalai曲麻莱 to Golmud 格尔木

8th Aug.- Golmud 格尔木 to Dulan 都兰(through the desert)

9th Aug.- Dulan 都兰 to Niaodao 鸟岛(Bird Island, Qinghai Lake)

10th Aug.- Qinghai Lake to Xining 西宁, debrief with Prof. LI

After the others departed on the 11th August Jemi and I made the following excursions;

13th to 15th Aug. – Back to Bird Island Hotel and revisited hills near Heimahe黑马河

17th to 21st Aug. from Xining 西宁 to Huzhu Bei Shan 互助北山 and back

22nd to 24th Aug. Archaeological sites around Xian 西安, including Terracotta Warriors

25th Aug.- Flew Xian西安 to Shenzhen 深圳, returned to HK

Daily Log

30th July 2007 Xining Binguan, Xining 西宁宾馆, 西宁

(Elev.2170m) – This may not be the most fashionable hotel in the city, but it had Plain (Pere David's) Laughingthrushes in the grounds. We took up our vehicle positions, with Jemi and I sharing with Elisa HUI in car number two. We got the highway west to Huangyuan, then backtracked slightly to km 2005 on the old road, route 109. A track north up the hill took us to two quarries. The upper one of which (elev.2600m) had Wallcreepers that gave nice views, as well as a variety of juvenile redstarts and wheatears.

After lunch we got back on the highway at Huangyuan and turned right a couple of kilometres after the highway toll booths- through "Riyue Village". After driving a few kilometres through farmland, we came to a place where a stream flowed out of the hills (about 3,000m elevation). There we saw Common Rosefinch, and our first Tibetan Ground Tits. White-throated Dipper and White-capped River Chat were also present but we didn't find anything that we didn't see better later in the trip.

Up to Riyueting, the Sun and Moon pagodas at the pass surrounded by prayer flags, and our first views of Little Owl and Plain Mountain Finch. We passed through the town of Daotong He, where several members of the party wanted their photos taken in front of the not-very-historic statue of Princess Wencheng. (Princess “Dubya” was a Tang-dynasty royal who passed this way on the way to Tibet for an arranged marriage.) We stayed at the Hainan Binguan, Dongfeng Lu, Gonghe. (There had been a good roost of birds there in April 2005, but *not* in July 2007 !) We met a group of birders from Taiwan at the same hotel, but failed to quiz them closely about what they’d seen down south.

31st July 2007 Gonghe

South along route 214 the higher plains were dry and sandy. We stopped at km 193 for Horned Lark, Twite, Rufous-necked and Blandford’s (Plain-backed) Snowfinch; our first two of five species of snowfinch seen on the trip.

We spent a couple of hours at the famous Er La Pass (elev. 4260m) (km 319). Tibetan Rosefinches were duly recorded, as well as Henri’s Snowfinch (a recent “split” from White-winged). It was grey and cloudy, but not too cold. However, none of us felt up to the challenge of scaling the nearby peaks to try for Tibetan Sandgrouse.

Afterwards, it was a long afternoon’s driving but at km 373 we saw our first Asiatic Wild Ass, and Tibetan Gazelles soon after. The sun came out and a single wolf was photographed near a fresh gazelle carcass at km 450.

We arrived late at the dreary town of Maduo 玛多, and despite being tired, most people slept only fitfully due to the 4100m elevation.

1st August 2007 Maduo

I surprised myself by properly rolling and folding my sleeping bag and getting it into the bag at the first attempt. We had only to go a few kilometres out of town for the weather to clear. We stopped at the Yellow River Bridge – km486. Common Tern, Pallas’s Gull and three young Upland Buzzards on a nest were the highlights. Xingxinghai, a lake about 5 km further on, held about seventy Bar-headed Geese (including young) and Great Crested Grebe. Black-necked Cranes were seen near km 513 and the road rose gently over the plateau until we got to Bayankala Shan Pass (elev.4825m) - km602- where a team photograph seemed like a good idea.

Around 1400hrs we arrived at the overtly Tibetan town of Qingshui He. While waiting for lunch we watched the locals posing for the tourist cameras. This area is close to the source of the Yellow River, the reason most people visit. There were also horse trials going on nearer Yushu.

As we descended towards Yushu we found a family party of Tibetan Partridges near the roadside. Later, in clear late afternoon sun, lead driver Mr PANG stopped at a site

near Dongfang village he knew for Ibisbill. Sure enough, there they were, to the delight of all. Slightly further upstream we found another pair, close to the Yushu State Buddhism School. After a brief look at the Jyegu Gumpa we checked in at the relatively luxurious Yushu Hotel. The town must have been *a lot* rougher when Petr Koslov passed through in August 1900.

2nd August 2007 Yushu (km 817)

We headed down Route 214 towards Nanqian (km 984). We followed a broad stream through several spectacular gorges and noted more Ibisbills (a total of 17 for the day).

At km 970 we left the main road near a bridge and headed for Kanda Shan. We found that the road was being upgraded here, which was good news for future visitors but the noise and dust was bad news for us. Despite this we wanted to explore, and did so on foot and later uphill by vehicle. We didn't get to near the summit and gave ourselves little chance of seeing the Tibetan (Koslov's) Buntings noted by other birding groups.

We had a very late lunch at a Muslim noodlery in Nanqian and then headed southeast towards Beizha Forest Reserve. We passed a village where they were leaching salt out of the ground. The road followed another ever-widening stream flowing south. Due to the size of our party, we had always known that accommodation at Beizha was going to be out of the question and we had decided to press on another twenty kilometres to Ga'er Lamasery.

We arrived after 2030hrs and all nine birders were allowed to sleep in a large common room while the drivers slept in a room near the vehicles.

3rd August 2007 Ga'er Temple

(Elev.4170m). Jemi and I were out at first light and decided to hitch a lift with one of the lorries going downhill. No sooner had we boarded than through the grubby side window I noticed a round shape moving on a side-track – a Buff-throated Partridge! I clamoured to be let out again, to the driver's bemusement. Jemi continued downhill. On my own I walked back up the hill to view the side path. I saw movement again, but my "Partridge" was only a hare ! (*Note to self: Get new glasses.*)

Downhill I saw a single Giant Laughingthrush, although I heard a lot more. Common, White-browed and Pink-rumped Rosefinches all made an appearance. Overhead were Himalayan Griffons and Lammergeiers. Near a white stone bridge marking a turnoff I met Jemi coming uphill. Her sightings included Rufous-breasted Accentor, White-winged Grosbeak and Chinese Fulvetta.

As the bird activity slowed and it grew warmer, we sat beside a meadow to see Grey-crested, Rufous-vented and Willow Tits nearby. On the slope opposite we saw a

party of Bharal or Blue Sheep. I disturbed a weasel with a smaller mammal in its' mouth.

By prior arrangement the drivers came looking for us at about 1800hrs, and we were relieved not to have to walk back up the hill to the temple. A short drive uphill from the main temple complex we found a confiding party of forty-or-so Blue Sheep.

4th August 2007 Ga'er Temple

Carrie's alarm went off at 0530 and wheels rolled at 0600. After stops to scan unsuccessfully for pheasants and a view of a Lammergeier at nest we arrived at Beizha Forest HQs at 0750. After brief discussion the nine of us split into different parties and agreed to meet further up the road at 1030.



Tibetan Babax

We all had good sessions birding, and all-but-one saw Tibetan (Koslov's) Babax. We rejoined route 914 again and lunched in Nanqian. Back onto route 914 north towards Yushu and then turned right onto a dirt track at about km 922. This descended into a long, broad river valley, flowing southeast. When the road from Kanda Shan is in good repair there is a shortcut from there northeast into this area (*see sketch*). The road junction is near a temple (Zurmang Nangyeltse according to the Gizi map).

We encountered Tibetan Partridges in the broad valley grasslands several times, some with young. We descended into deeper valleys with pine trees on the hillsides and spectacular formations of weathered rock. We arrived at Jiangxi Forest Reserve's "new" HQs but no bedding was available there.

We pressed on to the "old" HQs arriving after dark. We ate food we had brought with us - instant noodles and luncheon meat. Anthony produced a few cans of beer. The

rooms were old fashioned and well-worn, but were perfectly clean and comfortable. We paid RMB 50 per person per night.

5th August 2007 Jiangxi Forest Reserve.

A morning excursion took us back over ground we had covered the previous evening, a trip upriver to the northwest. Highlight was a pair of White-eared Pheasants on the opposite riverbank, with two young. We stopped for an hour while the keener members of the party went thrashing through the wet grass up a hillside. I passed the time during their absence photographing the carpet of blue flowers.



Old-fashioned wooden bridge, Jiangxi Forest Reserve

Later we stopped near a very old-fashioned looking wooden bridge and made short forays up a couple of small ravines. We could have done with more time at this site.

Going back downstream we passed HQs about midday and a pair of Giant Laughingthrushes appeared, to the excitement of those who had missed them previously on the trip. There followed a drive along a picturesque route east along route Y507 to the edge of the Tibetan Autonomous Region itself. There were well-wooded hillsides, a broad stream and few people. As we started to climb the broad grassy valleys northwards to Gela Pass and Yushu (route 803) more Ibisbills and Tibetan Partridge were seen.

In late afternoon we crossed the Gela Pass which, at 4883m, unexpectedly turned out to be the highest point of the trip. We saw a few Brandt's Mountain Finches but scans of the scree slopes for snowcock were unsuccessful. Several members of the party took the opportunity to jog around the stupa and prayer flags three times ! The road descends to a broad plain where we rejoined route 214 thirteen kms south of Yushu.

(An airport is planned for this area, we were told.) It was late when we got to the town again.

6th August 2007 Yushu.

From the Yushu Hotel we went to the modest Princess Wencheng Temple at Baitang, south of town. Kessler's Thrush foraged in the car park. Below a hillside "Sky Burial" site nearby we found a waddling Griffon Vulture in a meadow, it was easily photographed.

After lunch we headed northwest along route 308, counting down the kms from 420 or so. We passed a wetland for Black-necked Cranes and further along Lego HO actually got a photo of a BNC catching a pika. We were passed by a succession of colourful Tibetans on motorcycles, who were on their way to the consecration of a new temple (in the middle of what looked like nowhere) down the road.

We crossed an unremarkable bridge proclaimed to be "The first bridge of the Yellow River". At about 2030 we arrived at Qumulai. The better rooms in town were full due to an imminent horse racing carnival, so we stayed at a place near the bus station.

The bedrooms were acceptably clean, but the public areas were squalid and barely illuminated. Last thing at night I was brushing my teeth at a trough in the passageway when I spied an unwashed Tibetan desperado with a grubby fedora and brown teeth approaching our room. I was somewhat alarmed when he began banging on the door, until I realised that the hand I could barely see in the gloom clutched a large vacuum flask. Not a "desperado" but "room service"!

7th August 2007 Qumulai

We left early and without regret. We continued northwest over a mixture of paved and unpaved roads for 330km. The Kunlun Range, some peaks snow covered, loomed to the south. Like all big mountains, they never seemed to get any closer. There were extensive roadworks as we approached Budongquan on route 109, - the main Golmud to Lhasa road.

Although we saw a few Wild Ass I'm sure many other animals would have been displaced by the roadbuilding activity. We certainly "dipped" on the anticipated Tibetan Antelopes in this area. However, this *was* the only place we saw Saker Falcon. There was also an unusual movement of over fifty Hoopoes near one of the passes and we had a "day count" of 72 for this species.

With storm clouds on the horizon we got our first view of the Golmud to Lhasa railway. An impressive feat of engineering, no doubt, but the fences erected to keep animals off the track would certainly impede the free movement of wildlife. It was raining hard by the time we crossed the Kunlun Pass. We reached Golmud at 2100. A long day for everyone, especially the drivers.

8th August 2007 Golmud.

We headed east toward Dulan along highway 109 through the desert. It turned out to be 334 kms and 18 Mongolian Ground Jay sightings to Dulan.

We stopped to photograph a few. They were generally alert and most pictures were distant. Lunch was taken at a farm area where streams from the Kunlun Mountains have been diverted to grow crops, including wolfberries.

When we finally got there we found that Dulan had some nice-looking hotels, but they were mostly full. We eventually found some comfortable, clean rooms near one of the market halls.

9th August 2007 Doulan.

We headed east down route 109 for Chaka and Qinghai Lake. There was a rumour of bustards in the air, but this seemed to dissipate as we settled for a Daurian Partridge in a roadside field spotted by Mr PANG, the eagle-eyed lead driver.

Following trip report information we stopped east of Chaka town at km 2238 and fanned out for a sweep through the stony desert. Sandgrouse were seen in flight, but not by all members of the party. There had been some recent rain so staking out the larger patches of water seemed less likely to be effective. We had lunch at a grubby truckstop called Dashuiqiao ("Big Water Bridge") then crossed Rubber Mountain Pass. At the pass there were a lot of noisy people wandering around, and hardly a bird in sight.

At km 2189.5 we stopped, following George Wagner's trip report about a good birding gully nearby. An agreement was soon reached to stop for two hours. I marched up, following the stream, and almost immediately found a party of White-browed Tits bathing in the water. I was able to tell the others with the walkie-talkie.

Other "good" birds were Pink-tailed Bunting, Robin Accentor and Alashan Redstart. Streaked Rosefinch and Red-fronted (*puniceus*) Rosefinch were also present. Then we headed for Qinghai Lake, visible in the distance. (Jemi and I returned a week or so later and spent a full day at km 2189.5.)

We turned left at Heimahe and stopped along the west ring road to look at the waterbirds on the lake. We stayed at the fairly luxurious Niao Dao (Bird Island) Hotel (open less than two years) overnight.

10th August 2007 Bird Island Hotel.

We got tickets for Niao Dao (Bird Island) itself. This was a disappointment in August. "Egg Island" – where the Bar-headed Geese breed - was closed. "Cormorant Island" had, yes, some distant Great Cormorants roosting on it. A few distant gulls were visible. Crested and Short-toed Larks were noted.

On the way back to Xining we stopped at a marsh to the east of the lake proper and added Black-necked Grebe and Coot to the Trip List. This brought us to around 155 species for the 12-day trip - but not all birds were seen by everyone, obviously. Back in Xining we settled accounts with the drivers and all had a pleasant meal with them and Professor LI.

Site Comments

Quarries at km 2005, Route 109 near Huangyuan

Only about 50km west of Xining. A track to the north of the road leads uphill to two quarries. In the right season it might be drivable with a tractor or 4WD but in August we found the track damaged by summer rain. Wallcreepers were noted on 30th July and Rusty-necked Partridges on 13th Aug.

Rubber Mountain Gully km 2189.5 Route 109 – near Heimahe

(Wagner 2005) We followed the stream – Wagner’s “Valley C”. Good views of Pink-tailed, Streaked and Red-fronted Rosefinches. White-browed Tit, Alashan Redstart and Tibetan Partridges were also seen. It was certainly a good spot.

Canyon at km 20.5, (Heimahe to Shinahe) west ring road, south of Qinghai Lake

We decided to try this with no previous information. It is 2kms to the mouth of the gully, and about 3kms further to the end of the drivable track. A well-worn footpath leads on to some hermit caves, stupa and prayer flags. A very picturesque area and, despite the grazing, lots of promising habitat. We saw about fifty White-browed Tits but not any of the other sought-after endemics in the time available.

Er La Pass (km 319) Route 214

As you head south, the Tibetan Rosefinches were on the scree to the left of the road, above a quarried area. This was the only place we got good views of Henri’s Snowfinch.

Kanda Shan (turnoff at km 970, Route 214)

In August 2007 the road was being upgraded and log bridges being replaced by concrete bridges and culverts.

Beizha Forest Reserve/Ga’er Monastery (turnoff at km 1017, Route 214)

Road upgrading in progress here too. The availability of accommodation may improve with the building work going on at both places. (Wagner 2005 referred to the monastery as “Dou’r”. I am assured it should be “Ga’er”) Close views of Lammergeiers, Tibetan Babax and Pink-rumped Rosefinch were highlights.

Jiangxi Forest Reserve (turnoff eastwards at roughly km 920, Route 214)

Access also possible via Kanda Shan when the road is finished. Like Beizha, valleys of pine-clad hills where the Tibetan Plateau starts to break up. We all saw White-eared Pheasant here. The best habitat seemed to be between the “old” HQs and eastwards to the border with the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The “new” HQs (where there was no available accommodation) is about forty minutes drive upstream to the northwest from the “old” HQs.

Huzhu Beishan (about 130km northeast of Xining) (John and Jemi only)

We didn't see any Pheasants or Grouse here in August 2007 (although we saw both on a daytrip in April 2005).

Huzhu Pass (elev. 3,470m): At km 36, northeast of Huzhu town, a new stone tablet announces HZBS in English as a "National Geopark". The Chinese inscription clarifies that this is a reference to the geology of the area. There is a new viewing platform at about km 37. In April 2005 we saw Blue-eared Pheasants from the road. In August 2007, just sheep were seen.

However, this time Jemi found family parties of White-browed Tit Warblers in the scrub on the Huzhu side of the pass. This is a summer grazing area, so perhaps the best time to see things like pheasants is before the shepherds return to occupy the pastures with their livestock.

Huzhu Bei Shan Park: Entrance at km 101 on Route 302

A lot of tourist lodges have been built in the last couple of years. There are many types to choose from, but weekends in summer can be busy. The main season seems to be from early May to mid-October. We stayed two nights at Baihualing (RMB 100 for two nights for us with a separate room for the driver). For two nights at the rather smart "Cai Lun Dou" near the main entrance our room was RMB 120 per night, the driver's RMB 48.

Zhalong Gorge: (km 86.5 on Route 302) 14kms southeast of HZBS entrance

After you turn off route 302, the side road goes south through 9km of farmland. Entrance fee to Zhalong Gorge is RMB 28. Nine kilometres further in is a small carpark (elev.2780m). Most visitors walk 2km straight up this valley to a waterfall. There is a paved path and several waterfalls "enhanced" by human stonework on the way. A better area for birding seems to be another path to "Quan Ying" – "Eagle's Nest", a valley which runs roughly east/west starting from a few hundred metres downhill from the waterfall area car park. There were fewer people here and a good variety of broadleaf, pine and buckthorn. We saw Brown Accentor, White-browed Rosefinch, White-throated Dipper, phylloscs and a variety of redstarts in Quan Ying valley.

end of narrative

Bird Species List (Species numbers follow Mackinnon and Phillipps)

These are mainly what we saw, rather than reports from the group as a whole. Some significant records by other observers are mentioned with their initials.

0008 大石雞 Przevalski's Partridge (Rusty-necklaced Partridge) *Alectoris magna*
Km 2005, rt 109 – several family parties of over 40 individuals 13/Aug

0012 高原山鶉 Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*
In family parties in wide river valleys, mostly near Yushu (and four seen Rubber Mountain Gully 14/Aug)

- 0028 血雉 Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*
Single seen at Beizha Forest 04/Aug
- 0043 白馬雞 White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*
A pair at Jiangxi Forest Reserve with two young 05/Aug
- 0050 雉雞 Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Single male near Qinghai Lake 12/Aug
- 0074 斑頭雁 Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*
Seventy (incl. ten juvs) on Xingxinghai, near Maduo 01/Aug family parties on suitable plateau wetlands elsewhere, including Qinghai Lake itself
- 0079 赤麻鴨 Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
Pairs and family groups scattered on upland peat bogs
- 0098 赤嘴潛鴨 Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*
Noted on Qinghai Lake itself
- 0099 紅頭潛鴨 Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*
Qinghai Lake
- 0114 普通秋沙鴨 Goosander *Mergus merganser*
Female with several young near Yushu 01/Aug Also 3 noted Jiangxi Forest Reserve 05/Aug
- 0131 大斑啄木鳥 Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Pair noted near Bei Shan Temple , Xining 29/July
- 0143 灰頭綠啄木鳥 Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*
Single juv near Huangyuan 30/July
- 0163 戴勝 Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Common, max day count 72 on 07/Aug
- 0189 鷹鵒 Large Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveriioides*
Two between Dulan and Chaka 09/Aug
- 0193 大杜鵑 Common Cuckoo (Eurasian Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus*
Three between Gonghe and Maduo 31/July and 01/Aug others here and there
- 0220 普通樓燕 Common Swift *Apus apus*
Canyons between Yushu and Nanqian, also noted near Rubber Mountains
- 0221 白腰雨燕 Pacific Swift (Fork-tailed Swift) *Apus pacificus*
Relatively common, noted in the dozens most days
- 0222 小白腰雨燕 House Swift *Apus affinis*
46 near Qinghai Lake on 09/Aug the only note made
- 0233 鵂鶂 Eurasian Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*
Single seen near Ga'er Lamasery 03/Aug (MKW)

0263 原鴿 Rock Dove *Columba livia*
Around Xining 30/July

0264 岩鴿 Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*
Seen by the dozen most days

0265 雪鴿 Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*
14 in a canyon south of Yushu (km 890) on 02/Aug

0278 灰斑鳩 Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia deocacto*
In suitable habitat around Xining and Dulan

0304 黑頸鶴 Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*
Up to eight daily, high marshy plains near Maduo and Yushu

0324 骨頂雞 Common Coot *Fulica atra*
500 on marshes east of Qinghai Lake

0326 毛腿沙雞 Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*
Four seen distantly (not at all by J&JH) near km 2238, Chaka 09/Aug (MKW)

0343 紅腳鶺 Common Redshank *Tringa nebularia*
A few near Xingxinghai 01/Aug, and 18 NW of Yushu on 06/Aug

0349 林鶺 Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Noted at the edge of Qinghai Lake

(a number of other waders were ID'd and counted by the people with 'scopes at the shores of Qinghai Lake)

0385 (袁鳥)嘴鶺 Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*
A lot of suitable stream habitat, with 14 noted on 02/Aug alone, Yushu to Nanqian road.

0400 鳳頭麥雞 Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Marshes near Maduo (MKW) on 01/02 Aug

0422 漁鶺 Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
Common and breeding around Qinghai Lake, max count 77 on 09/Aug

0423 棕頭鶺 Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
Common and breeding around Qinghai Lake, 11(?) the max count

0440 普通燕鶺 Common Tern *Sterna hirundo (tibetana)*
21 noted 01/Aug near Maduo, over 50 at Marshes east of Qinghai Lake 09/Aug

0461 黑鳶 Black-eared Kite *Milvus (migrans) lineatus*
Surprisingly scarce, one or two noted here and there on the plateau

0468 鬍兀鶺 Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*
Seven the highest day count near Er La Pass, but present in single figures elsewhere too, such as Beizha.

0470 高山兀鷲 Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*
Commonest large raptor by far, 38 between Yushu and Beizha 02/Aug. 50+ at sky burial site near Yushu 05th/Aug

0494 大鵟 Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*
Common

0500 金鵬 Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
Max count five between Yushu and Beizha on 02/Aug

0508 紅隼 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Commonest at relatively low elevations such as between Xining and Riyue Pass.

0512 燕隼 Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
Single near Huangyuan, 29/July

0514 獵隼 Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*
Three between Qumulai and Golmud 07/Aug

0520 鳳頭鸕鶿 Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Dozens at Xingxinghai near Maduo and on Qinghai Lake

0522 黑頸鸕鶿 Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
60 at marsh east of Qinghai Lake 09/Aug

0531 鸕鶿 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Four at Xingxinghai near Maduo, hundreds at Qinghai Lake

0614 紅尾伯勞 Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
A few near Xining 30/July

0616 棕背伯勞 Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*
Two noted near Jiangxi Forest Farm (MKW)

0617 灰背伯勞 Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*
Commonest shrike of the area especially in the south

0630 灰喜鵲 Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus*
Near the Big Goose Pagoda, Xian

0636 喜鵲 Common Magpie *Pica pica*
Highest count 30 on 4th August, Jiangxi Forest (should be race *bottanensis*?)

0637 黑尾地鴉 Henderson's Ground Jay (Mongolian Ground-Jay) *Podoces hendersoni*
18 between Golmud and Dulan on 08/Aug

0639 褐背擬地鴉 Hume's Ground Jay (Hume's Groundpecker) *Pseudopodoces humilis*
Common and widespread

0641 紅嘴山鴉 Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
Up to 20 recorded daily at the edge of the plateau

- 0644 達烏里寒鴉 Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauricus*
Highest daily count 55 near Ga'er Monastery (MKW)
- 0648 大嘴烏鴉 Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchus*
The common corvid of areas like Beizha and Jiangxi
- 0651 渡鴉 Common Raven *Corvus corax*
Noted near Ga'er
- 0672 黑卷尾 Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Singles near Xining and farmland south of Yushu
- 0687 河鳥 White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*
Near Riyue Village, 2 on stream between Jiangxi Forest and Yushu
- 0699 長尾地鵯 Long-tailed Thrush *Zoothera dixonii*
Max count three at Jiangxi Forest 05/Aug (MKW)
- 0710 棕背黑頭鵯 Kessler's Thrush *Turdus kessleri*
Common, young noted at Beizha and Jiangxi Forests
- 0729 烏鶇 Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*
Singles at Beizha and Jiangxi
- 0766 黑胸歌鶇 White-tailed Rubythroat *Luscinia pectoralis*
Single near accommodation Huzhu Beishan on 18/Aug
- 0773 紅脇藍尾鶇 Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus rufilatus*
Single at Jiangxi Forest 05/Aug
- 0780 賀蘭山紅尾鶇 Przevalski's Redstart (Ala Shan Redstart) *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*
At Rubber Mountain Gully single males 09/Aug and 14/Aug
- 0783 赭紅尾鶇 Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Commonest (up to 50) between Xining and Maduo
- 0785 黑喉紅尾鶇 Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
On the plateau and also near Jiangxi and Beizha Forests
- 0786 白喉紅尾鶇 White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*
Up to 8 daily around Beizha/Ga'er 03&04/Aug
- 0787 背紅尾鶇 Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus*
Lower elevations than some other Redstarts, 10 noted between Xining and Huangyuan 30/July
- 0788 紅腹紅尾鶇 Guldenstadt's (White-winged) Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*
Single near Qumulai 07/Aug
- 0789 藍額紅尾鶇 Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*
Noted near Beizha 03&04 Aug

- 0790 白頂溪鶇 White-capped Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*
Common on suitable watercourses
- 0791 紅尾水鶇 Plumbeous Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*
Near Riyue Village 30/July and at Huzhu Beishan 19/Aug
- 0804 黑喉石(即鳥) Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*
Between Xining and Maduo up to 6, also near Riyue Village
- 0810 白頂(即鳥) Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*
Near Huangyuan 30/July and near Rubber Mountains 08&09/Aug
- 0811 漠(即鳥) Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
In the deserts obviously, mostly near Golmud (10 on 08/Aug)
- 0812 沙(即鳥) Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*
Near Huangyuan on 30/July and around Dulan 08&09/Aug
- 0838 白臉鵙 Przevalski's Nuthatch (White-cheeked Nuthatch) *Sitta (leucopsis) przewalskii*
Pair seen singing from treetops Huzhu Beishan 18/Aug
- 843 旋壁雀 Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*
Three near Huangyuan 30/July
- 844 旋木雀 Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*
This or "Sino-himalayan..." at Beizha 03/Aug and Huzhu Beishan 19/Aug
- 0848 鷓鴣 Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Ones and twos daily Huzhu Beishan 17-21/Aug
- 0853 褐頭山雀 Songar Tit (Willow Tit) *Parus (montanus) songarus*
Up to 12 daily at Beizha, Ga'er and Jiangxi Forests 03-05/Aug Also at Huzhu Beishan 17-21/Aug
- 0854 白眉山雀 White-browed Tit *Parus superciliosus*
Rubber Mountain Gully 08/Aug and 14/Aug, max count 50 in km 20.5 gorge nr Qinghai Lake 15/Aug
- 0858 黑冠山雀 Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*
Fairly common at Beizha & Ga'er 03&04/Aug
- 0859 煤山雀 Coal Tit *Parus ater*
Up to 5 noted Beizha, Ga'er and Jiangxi 03-05/Aug
- 0861 褐冠山雀 Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous*
Up to 10 noted daily Beizha, Ga'er and Jiangxi Forest Reserve 03-05/Aug
- 0862 大山雀 Great Tit *Parus major*
Noted between Xining and Huangyuan 30/July
- 0878 崖沙燕 Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
The telephone wires near Xingxinghai had dozens of either this or the next species on 01/Aug

878.9 Pale Martin *Riparia diluta tibetana*
See 878

0880 岩燕 Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris*
At differing altitudes if suitable crags were present

0882 家燕 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Not noted at all - !!!

0884 金腰燕 Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*
Over farmland near Yushu and further south 02 & 04 Aug

0887 烟腹毛脚燕 Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*
Up to 30 noted various dates around Yushu

0939 斑胸短翅莺 Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*
Seen from the lookout km37 Huzhu Beishan Pass road

0970 花彩雀莺 White-browed Tit Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*
At least three family parties (15-18 indivs) scrub on Huzhu side of the pass, km 36 - 21/Aug

0971 凤头雀莺 Crested Tit-Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*
Seven at Beizha Forest 05/Aug (MKW)

0975 褐柳莺 Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
Pair seen Rubber Mountain Gully 09/Aug

0977 黄腹柳莺 Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
Noted (up to 6) Beizha (03/Aug) and Rubber Mtn (09/Aug)

0980 棕眉柳莺 Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*
Noted at Beizha / Ga'er

0982 橙斑翅柳莺 Buff-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*
Single (?) at Beizha, relatively common at Huzhu Beishan 17-21/Aug

0985 淡黄腰柳莺 Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*
Maximum 14 at Beizha

0987 四川柳莺 Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus sichuanensis*
Also at Beizha (MKW)

0989 淡眉柳莺 Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei mandellii*
Also at Beizha (MKW)

0991 暗绿柳莺 Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
Also at Beizha (MKW)

0994 乌嘴柳莺 Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*
Heard and seen at Huzhu Beishan 17-21/Aug

- 1025 山噪鵲 Pere David's (Plain) Laughingthrush *Garrulax davidi*
In the grounds of the Xining Binguan, and behind the Temple at Bei Shan (max.12)
- 1031 大噪鵲 Giant Laughingthrush *Garrulax (Ianthocincla ?) maxima*
Noted in single figures at Beizha and Jiangxi Forest Reserves
- 1041 橙翅噪鵲 Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*
Common in suitable woodland habitat
- 1086 棕草鵲 Kozlov's Babax (Tibetan Babax) *Babax koslowi*
Beizha Forest 04/Aug, up to 15 in total. Parents seen feeding young. Quite shy
- 1110 高山雀鵲 Chinese Fulvetta *Alcippe striaticollis*
Two by Jemi near Ga'er on 03/Aug the only record
- 1164 長嘴百靈 Tibetan Lark *Melanocorypha maxima*
Only noted from Gonghe to Maduo area
- 1170 亞洲短趾百靈 Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*
Near Bird Island, Qinghai Lake 10/Aug
- 1171 鳳頭百靈 Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*
Three near Bird Island Hotel, 10/Aug
- 1175 角百靈 Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*
Up to 50 daily in dry, desert areas
- 1198 樹麻雀 Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Common near human habitation throughout
- 1199 石雀 Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
20+ noted on the Gonghe side of Riyue Pass, 13/Aug
- 1200 白斑翅雪雀 White-winged (Henri's) Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis henrici*
A few at Er La Pass for this recent "split" 31/Aug
- 1201 褐翅雪雀 Adam's Snowfinch (Tibetan Snowfinch) *Montifringilla adamsi*
Up to 30 near Gonghe and at Rubber Mountain Pass (09/Aug)
- 1202 白腰雪雀 White-rumped Snowfinch *Montifringilla taczanowskii*
High passes near Bayankala (31/July) and at the mouth of the 20.5 km gorge (15/Aug)
- 1204 棕頸雪雀 Rufous-necked Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda ruficollis*
The commonest snowfinch we saw – up to 100 some days
- 1205 棕背雪雀 Blanford's Snowfinch (Plain-backed Snowfinch) *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*
Only in the desert near km 193 route 214 – family party 31/July
- 1207 白鶺鴒 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba leucopsis*
Commoner in the lowlands

- 1207 白鶺鴒 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alboides*
Commoner on the Tibetan Plateau itself
- 1210 黃頭鶺鴒 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
High count 3 on 06/Aug near Qumulai ? (MKW)
- 1212 灰鶺鴒 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
A couple at Beizha Forest 03/Aug, several at Huzhu Beishan 17-21/Aug
- 1218 樹鶺鴒 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
Also noted Beizha and Huzhu Beishan
- 1222 紛紅胸鶺鴒 Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
Single on 30th July near Huangyuan (overlooked elsewhere?)
- 1228 鶺鴒岩鶺鴒 Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*
Passes south of Maduo and notably, Rubber Mountain Gully on 09/Aug
- 1229 棕胸岩鶺鴒 Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophciata*
Noted at Beizha/Ga'er on 03/Aug
- 1231 褐岩鶺鴒 Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*
Several at Rubber Mountain Gully, singles elsewhere
- 1246 金翅雀 Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*
A few of this or the next species seen near Xining (not by me)
- 1249 黃雀 Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
See 1246
- 1254 黃嘴朱頂雀 Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*
Present in healthy (up to 200) numbers around Qinghai Lake and Rubber Mountains
- 1256 林嶺雀 Plain Mountain Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*
A few at Er La Pass 31/July
- 1257 高山嶺雀 Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti*
Well seen on this trip, highest count 12 south of Yushu on 02/Aug
- 1267 普通朱雀 Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Max day count 10 at Beizha/Ga'er on 03/Aug
- 1268 紅眉朱雀 (Chinese) Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus (pulcherrimus) davidianus*
Up to 10 daily at both Beizha/Ga'er and Jiangxi Forest Reserves
- 1269 曙紅朱雀 Pink-rumped Rosefinch *Carpodacus eos*
I confess I'm still struggling to tell 1268 and 1269 apart
- 1277 白眉朱雀 (Chinese) White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura*
Seen south of Yushu, also at Beizha/Ga'er Single figures, bleating call
- 1279 擬大朱雀 Streaked Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides*

Near Rubber Mountain Gully on 09 & 14/Aug (pair ?)

1281 紅胸朱雀 Red-breasted Rosefinch *Carpodacus puniceus*
Single male at Rubber Mountain Gully 09/Aug

1282 藏雀 Roborovski's Rosefinch (Tibetan Rosefinch) *Kozlowia roborowskii*
Four at Er La Pass 31/July

1290 灰頭灰雀 Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*
Single near Xining, around in family parties at Huzhu Beishan

1297 白斑翅擬蜡嘴雀 White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*
A pair behind Beishan Temple, Xining on 29/July max count 6 at Jiangxi Forest Reserve
05/Aug

1299 朱鷗 Przevalski's Rosefinch (Pink-tailed Bunting/Rosefinch) *Urocynchramus pylzowi*
We must have overlooked any females/juvs – only one male in view at any one time

1303 白頭鷗 Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephala (fronto)*
Singles at Rubber Mountain Gully 09/Aug and 14/Aug

1306 戈氏岩鷗 Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*
Quite widespread, max 5 at the km 2005 quarries rt109

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Mammal sightings

Wolf *Canis lupus* – Singles near Maduo 31/July and 01/Aug

Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata* – Two separate singles near Bayankala Shan, a third near
Qingshui He 31/July and 01/Aug

Himalayan Weasel *Mustela sibirica* – Single animal chased off by Tit Warbler
parents at Huzhu Pass 21/Aug

Alpine (Pale) Weasel *Mustela altaica* – Single seen at Kanda Shan, near Nanqian

Asiatic Wild Ass *Equus hemionus* – A total of thirty seen, largest party was seven

Bactrian Camels *Camelus ferus* – Two groups of a dozen-or-so in the desert between
Golmud and Doulan (domesticated..?)

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata* – If not common, certainly widespread on the
plateau grasslands, over 100 seen

Blue Sheep (Bharal) *Pseudois nayaur* – Quite common around Beizha/Ga'er Also
seen on a hill top south of Yushu (km866) at the Ga Lai Ga 尕拉尕山 pass 4504m

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus* – a few around the temple at Bei Shan, Xining

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana* – Widespread in suitable alpine grasslands

Black-lipped Pika *Ochotna curzoniae* – The commonest pika seen.

Large-eared Pika *Ochotna macrotis* – Only observed at quarries near km 2005, route 109 – very rufous

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus* - Fairly common at near Ga'er monastery

(Some of the photos taken on this trip can be viewed at the OBC's Oriental Bird Images website)

Any queries on this report are welcome, Email us at : johnjemi@netvigator.com