



john & jemi *Birding China*

English 繁體 简体

## **Huanggang Shan (Wuyi Shan), Jiangxi Province      September 2007**

by John and Jemi Holmes



*Cabot's Tragopan (male) Huanggang Shan Sept 2007*

### **INTRODUCTION**

John first went to Wuyi Shan in 1986, when he saw a female – but not a male Cabot's Tragopan. As female pheasants are only “half a tick” Cabot's Tragopan remained unfinished business for twenty years ! (A comparison between the 1986 trip and this 2007 trip appears in HKBWS newsletter 204.)

Together with Ruy and Karen Barretto, we engaged the services of the capable Mr LIN Jian-sheng of Nanchang who usually explores Huanggang Shan entirely on the Jiangxi side of the border.

We spent four and a half days driving up and down the track to the summit at of Huanggang Shan (2157 m), and walking sections of the track on foot. The hillsides are so steep that there are very few side paths one can explore.

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks are due to **Richard Lewthwaite** for his draft trip list which provided a template onto which our sightings were written. Many thanks, too, to the Barrettos for their diligence

in completing the list, and for the copious quantities of homemade cake they shared during the evening callovers.

## ITINERARY

- Sept 17<sup>th</sup> Left HK via Lowu, flew Shenzhen to Nanchang (Jiangxi)
- Sept 18<sup>th</sup> Picked up at 08:00 at the Seven Stars Hotel, Nanchang – driven to Reserve HQs (900m elevation) arrived at dusk
- Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 06:00 start, drove up the track to Huanggang Shan, wet and windy near the top (tropical storm on Fujian side), at misty summit (2157m) in mid-afternoon.
- Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 06:00 start at HQs returned 12:30, out again at 14:30 returned 18:15 (after dark)
- Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 05:30 start until mid-afternoon on the mountain, turned around at edge of shrubland, 1850m
- Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> Another early start, most of the day on the mountain, max. elevation again 1850m
- Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> At daybreak a final drive (turned around at a fenced-off pine at 1750m), returned to HQs and packed, departing for Nanchang at 11:00 hours, arriving at the airport around 17:30.

## REFERENCES

- Carey, G.J., (Ed.) (1996) *A biodiversity review of China* Hong Kong: WWF China programme
- LaTouche, J.D.D. (1934) *A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China* Taylor and Francis, London
- Mackinnon, J. and Phillipps, K., (2000) *A field guide to the Birds of China* UK: Oxford University Press
- SHENG Helin et.al. (1999) *The Mammalian of China* China Forestry Publishing House, Beijing
- Woodward, Tim (2006) *Birding South East China* Privately published, Hong Kong

## MAPS:

**Central China (2005) Nelles Maps** - Nelles Verlag GmbH (*Not very accurate, but should at least point you in the right direction.*)

## SITE NOTES and COMMENTS

Huanggang Shan is the highest peak of the area generally known as Wuyi Shan, a range of mountains that forms the border between Jiangxi to the west and the coastal province of Fujian to the east. It is one of the most interesting places for east China birding, because the forested slopes hold isolated populations of many birds. Some of these are SE China endemic species such as Cabot's Tragopan and Elliot's Pheasant. Local "races" of species such as Coal Tit, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Green Shrike Babbler, Rosy Pipit and Streak-throated Fulvetta – to name but five - add to the potential interest.

Like a lot of China, the hills of Fujian/Jiangxi have been underwatched until very recently; - a conspicuous species like Sultan Tit was recorded in 2004 for the first time since the 1920s (at Longxi NR, further south).

Mammals may be seen at Wuyi, such as Wild Boar and Tufted Deer.

**J.D.D. LaTouche** (Author of "A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China") stayed at Kuatun on the Fujian side of these hills in the 1920s. **Pere Armand David** (most famously, describer to science in 1879 of the Giant Panda) surveyed Kuatun in October and November 1873.

### Access

You may fly to Wuyi Airport in Fujian Province from either Hong Kong or Shenzhen, but this will place you in the Wuyi Scenic area, about 40km to the east of the Nature Reserve. Permission to access the Fujian areas of the Nature Reserve and a vehicle to get you around would still need to be found. Chris Champion and Graham Talbot did it this way in 2001. Their Trip Report is at

[http://www.surfbirds.com/trip\\_report.php?id=292](http://www.surfbirds.com/trip_report.php?id=292)

These days the easy (but by Chinese standards, not cheap) way is to contact LIN Jian-sheng of Nanchang (Mobile 138-0700-1872). He charges Hong Kong birders RMB 800 per day for his minivan, and RMB 200 per person per day for food and lodging. Clients also have to pay for the Toll Roads (about RMB 250 between Nanchang and Wuyi.) But Mr LIN has sharp eyes and a wealth of experience leading birdwatchers at Wuyi and elsewhere. He is a get-up-early "can do" kind of guy. Longer trips could include Poyang Lake (close to Nanchang) in the winter, and Wuyuan (nine hours north of Wuyi) in the spring for Pied Falconet and Yellow-throated Laughingthrush.

We birded from the highways across the lowlands and entered the hills beyond the Erhu Academy near Zi Xi town. The road winds through the hills and passes two reservoirs before getting to the Jiangxi HQs of Wuyi National Nature Reserve (900m elevation).

### Huanggang Shan site description

The accommodation is at the Jiangxi Reserve HQs village (Xikeng) at 900m elevation. A fast-flowing river runs behind the guesthouse. The road ascends to about 1180m where you turn right to enter Fujian Province, or continue left past a barrier for about fifteen kilometres (marked as km12 to km 27) along a track to get to the summit of Huanggang Shan (2157m.) Features include a building from where honey is sold (23.5km) and the end of the treeline at 25km (1850m elevation). The road passes in turn through broadleaf, pine, bamboo and montane grassland.

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

(Many of our photos taken at Wuyi Shan can be viewed at the Oriental Bird Club's  
"Oriental Bird Images" website)

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## SPECIES LIST

Species number and English names mainly according to Mackinnon, J. and Phillipps, K. (2000) *A field guide to the Birds of China*. Where "splits" have occurred the China Bird Reports, 2003, 4 & 5 are followed. The *Garrulax* laughingthrushes are now split into several families, for simplicity I have retained the Mackinnon and Phillipps names.

0023 White-necklaced (Rickett's Hill) Partridge *Arborophila gingica*  
Heard 21/9 and brief fly-by below (UTV, really)

0027 Chinese Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola thoracica*  
20/9 A female and several juveniles seen at the barrier (1180m)

0033 Cabot's Tragopan *Tragopan caboti*  
Seen every day between km 18 and km 23, fourteen in total, including five adult males

0040 Silver Pheasant *Lophura nythemera*  
23/9 Three females and a juvenile just above the barrier (1200m) (km12)

0046 Elliot's Pheasant *Syrnaticus ellioti*  
21/9 two females and a male on the road near km 20 (1680m)

0050 Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*  
23/9 Single at the edge of the highway on the plains

0090 Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*  
Seen on 18/9 and 23/9 on the reservoir between the reserve and the plains, max count 9

0120 Speckled Piculet *Picunmus innominatus*  
22/9 Single seen, around km 25 in mixed flock

0148 Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*  
19-23/9 heard daily on Huanggang Shan, twice seen – near accommodation and just below the barrier (about 1150m).

0163 Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

0169 Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*  
23/9 Three noted between HQs and reservoir the day we left

0171 Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*  
Singles along river near accommodation

0176 White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*  
18/9 and 23/9 max two noted on wires over farmland on the plains

0177 Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*  
23/9 Single noted near reservoir as we left

0179 Crested Kingfisher *Ceryle lugubris*  
19-23/9 singles noted along the stream beside the accommodation; one seen on wire over the reservoir

0180 Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*  
Noted over water bodies from the highway on the plains, max count 3 on 18/9

0183 Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis*  
23/9 Five noted along reservoir road

019? Cuckoo sp. *Cuculus sp.*  
23/9 single seen near the barrier

0274 Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*  
Noted on the way across plains one each on 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>

0276 Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*  
Common on wires over plains farmland, max count 24 on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept

0313 White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*  
Single noted near a stream on the plains 18/9

0323 Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*  
Single noted on reservoir as we departed 23/9

0380 Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*  
Two noted on plains pond as we returned to Nanchang, 23/9

0402 Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*  
Noted in twos and threes from the highway, max count 10 on 23/9

0446 Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*  
On the outskirts of Nanchang 18/9, 22 noted

0459 Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*  
Singles near reservoir 18/9 and 23/9

0461 Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*  
Can't believe we missed this !

0496 Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*  
A pair near the reservoir between HQs and the plains. As far east as they go on the mainland !

0508 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*  
Two noted from the highway 23/9

0518 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A few on water bodies here and there

0531 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
Single flyby noted 23/9

0535 Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*  
In small numbers on the plains, max count 20 on 23/9

0539 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*  
Two on the outskirts of Nanchang, 18/9

0542 Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*  
Eleven on 23/9 from the highway

0544 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*  
By far the commonest egret of plains farmland, 180 counted on 23/9

0545 Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*  
18/9 Eight noted, mainly near Nanchang

0552 Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*  
Single noted, 18/9

0555 Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*  
Two dropping into reeds, 18/9

0609 Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*  
Pair noted on 20<sup>th</sup> inside the nature reserve, around km 23

0616 Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*  
Most common over farmland on the plains 18/9 and 23/9 max 17

0621 Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*  
Five noted at around km 23 (inside Nature Reserve) on 23/9

0626 Red-Billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*  
Noted in hill countryside between HQs and the plains, max 5 on 23/9

0632 Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*  
19/9 two seen

0636 Black-Billed Magpie *Pica pica*  
Only 2 seen on 18/9 the high count

0648 Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*  
No record of this one, either.

0662 Swinhoe's Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis*  
23/9 Two in reservoir area below HQs

0663 Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus*  
18/9 Six noted in treetops near the Erhu Academy, Zi Xi town.

0672 Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*  
Max 22 noted over plains farmland, on 23/9

0673 Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*  
Single noted with the Rusty Laughingthrush flock on 21/9 (1800m, km 24.5)

0688 Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasi*  
Ones and twos along river behind accommodation

0692 Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*  
Max day count six inside nature reserve on 19/9 at road edges

0707 Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula*  
Only two noted over farmland on 18/9

0745 Blue and white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*  
Two first-year birds noted 21/9, presumably passage migrants !

0778 Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*  
Singles noted 18/9 and 23/9 near villages between HQs and reservoir

0791 Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*  
Up to eight noted daily, river behind accommodation (900m) and singles as high as 1650m

0798 Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*  
Max two noted daily in reserve area, near accommodation

0800 Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*  
Max three daily inside reserve, higher elevations than 0798

0807 Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*  
Huanggang Shan summit grasslands, single figures daily

0815 Red-billed Starling *Sturnus sericeus*  
Max count 56 over plains farmland, 23/9

0823 Black-collared Starling *Sturnus nigricollis*  
Max count 4 on 23/9, plains farmland

0829 Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*  
Common in lowlands, 35 on 23/9 the max count

0832/3 Eurasian/Chestnut-vented Nuthatch *Sitta europea/nagaensis*  
Up to four of these daily in the mists around 1750m elevation. Not seen well enough by me to differentiate, but RB was positive we'd had both

0859 Coal Tit *Parus ater*  
The local race *kuatunensis* – max count 12 on 22/9

0862 Great Tit *Parus major*

Highest count 3 on 20/9

0865 Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*

Max count 17 on 21/9

0870 Yellow-browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus*

Max 20 on 23/9 between kms 18 and 25

0873 Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*

Big 50+ component of a mixed flock below barrier on summit road 23/9

0882 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Max count 32 over plains on 23/9

0884 Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

6 or 7 seen near entrance to Reserve, both 18/9 and 23/9.

0898 Chinese Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis*

Max 7 on 18/9, - a lowland species

0892 Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques*

Max 6 daily near accommodation at Reserve HQs

0910 Chestnut Bulbul *Hemixos castanotus*

22/9 max count 12 on the reserve road up the mountain

0911 Mountain Bulbul *Hypsipetes maclellandii*

Highest daily tally 9 on the 20/9

0922 Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Singles in HGS summit grassland

0925 Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonica*

Max count 5 on 18/9 near Erhu Academy

0929 Asian Stubtail Warbler *Urosphena squamiceps*

3 in dwarf bamboo at about 1800m (25 km)

0933 Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*

In low scrub at about 1300m, 3 seen on 21/9

***(In often misty conditions 20-30 phylloscopus warblers were seen daily, most remained unidentified)***

0978 Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus subaffinis*

Max 2 in montane grassland on 22/9 – (1850m +)

0997.2 Goodson's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus goodsoni fokiensis*

In ones and twos in broadleaf mixed species flocks

0988 Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Single noted on 19/9 near HQs (900m)

0998.1 Ogilvie-Grant's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus ogilvie-granti*  
Singles on 21/9 and 22/9 (km 25)

1002.1 Bianchi's Warbler *Seicercus valentini*  
Two noted on 20/9

1004 White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis*  
Max noted was 2 on 21/9, commoner than 1002.1

1006 Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castacineps*  
Several daily, max count 16 on 20/9 – with mixed flocks

1008 Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*  
Max 6 on 21/9

1017 Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*  
Max count 6 on 22/9 – about 1500m elevation

1027 Moustached Laughingthrush *Garrulax cineraceus*  
Seen in 2s and 3s almost daily from 1200m to 1500m elevation

1034 Rusty Laughingthrush *Garrulax poecilorhynchus*  
Large noisy flock of 30 seen on 21/9 around 1800m (km 24) heard also on 22/9

1036 Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*  
Single noted between HQs and the reservoir on 23/9

1056 Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*  
Heard 20 and 21/9 – mid elevations, 1500-1600m.

1059 Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*  
Max 4 seen in reserve on 20/9

1068 Pygmy Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla*  
Heard daily up mountain in reserve area 1200-1800m elevation

1072 Spotted Wren Babbler *Spelaeornis formosus*  
Single on 21/9 in dwarf bamboo at 1850m

1076 Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*  
Max 6 seen daily in Reserve area

1088 Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*  
Common in mixed flocks, highest count 19 on 19/9

1091 White-browed Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius flaviscapis*  
Five, 2 pairs and an immature noted on 22/9 with mixed flocks

1092 Green Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus*  
Singles noted on 20/9 and 23/9 at about 1600m on the former and 1340m on the latter date

1112 Streak-throated Fulvetta *Alcippe cinereiceps*  
Noted 21/9 (Max 11) and 22/9 above 1800m, in the open grassland

1118 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*  
Common in mixed flocks, 12 high count on 20/9

1127 Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps*  
Two large flocks noted at about km22, 51 in total (23/9)

1134 Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta*  
3 on 20/9 near barrier (1200m), 12 on 23/9 below HQs, 850m

1135 White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zanthaleuca*  
Single figures noted daily with mixed flocks, max count 10 on 20/9

1141 Grey-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis gularis*  
21/9 high count of 17 at about 1400m

1152 Golden Parrotbill *Paradoxornis verreauxi*  
30 noted on 21/9 in bamboo above 1800m

1198 Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*  
Common near human habitation

1207 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*  
Widespread in lowlands up to six daily

1212 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*  
Singles noted near HQs 19/9 to 23/9

1218 Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*  
Up to six seen in HGS summit grasslands on the days visited

1240 Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*  
Common at the margins of lowland rice cultivation, max 120 counted on 23/9

1246 Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica*  
Fifty + noted on 18/9 on wires over plains farmland

1288 Brown Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*  
Heard almost daily on summit road, seen only on 22/9

Mammals – Wild boar below barrier (1100m) on 21/9  
Tufted Deer on 20/9 and 21/9 at edge of scrubland (1850m)



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