



john & jemi

Birding China

English 繁體 简体

Jianfengling National Forest Park, Hainan, China - (October 2007)

by John and Jemi Holmes

INTRODUCTION

In November 2005 we went on a tour of Hainan Island's Nature Reserves following that year's meeting of Chinese Ornithologists in Haikou. The trip included staying at at Jianfengling's Tian Chi Resort adjacent to Ming Feng Gou "Phoenix Valley". We spent only one night there, but were impressed with the combination of decent accommodation and good bird habitat nearby.



Yellow-billed Nuthatch, Jianfengling (Oct 2007)

Jianfengling is the site where Prof. CHENG Hso-tsin and others found the Chinese population of Yellow-billed Nuthatch (*chientfengensis*) as recently as 1963.

Although we spent six days at the equally well-known Bawangling National Nature Reserve on the 2005 trip, Jianfengling was the only place we saw White-winged Magpie. So a return visit to Jianfengling seemed worthwhile.

Hainan has the added glamour of having many bird species that are shared with SE Asia but are difficult to see elsewhere in China. There are many distinctive races of non-migratory birds. Hainan was visited by **Robert Swinhoe** in 1868. After discovering *Urocissa whiteheadi* and other marvels **John Whitehead** died on Hainan in 1899.

ITINERARY

- Oct 17th Left HK via Lokmachau, flew Shenzhen to Sanya (south Hainan) Paid RMB 370 for the two hour Taxi drive to the reserve.
- Oct 18th Birded the “Ming Feng” (Phoenix) boardwalk adjacent to the accommodation
- Oct 19th Birded the “Ming Feng” (Phoenix) boardwalk adjacent to the accommodation
- Oct 20th Tricycle to “Core area”, birded entrance to watchtower and back 0730 to 1750
- Oct 21st Birded around resort buildings and along access road, morning and evening
- Oct 22nd Jemi took tricycle to Arboretum, John to Ming Feng Boardwalk.
- Oct 23rd Birded around accommodation and along access road
- Oct 24th **a.m.** John to access road, Jemi to boardwalk – **p.m.** Taxi back to airport, evening flight to Shenzhen

REFERENCES

- Carey, G.J., (Ed.) (1996) *A biodiversity review of China* Hong Kong: WWF China programme
- Mackinnon, J. and Phillipps,K, (2000) *A field guide to the Birds of China* UK: Oxford University Press
- Viney,Clive, Phillipps,Karen and LAM Chiu-ying (2005) *The Birds of Hong Kong and South China (8th Edition)* Information Services Department, Hong Kong Government (includes Hainan Birds pp234-237)
- Woodward, Tim (2006) *Birding South East China* Privately published, Hong Kong

MAPS:

SouthChina (2005) *Nelles Maps* - Nelles Verlag Gmbh

SITE NOTES and COMMENTS

Hainan is only one hour flying time from Hong Kong and Shenzhen, but only Shenzhen has direct flights to Sanya in the south of the island.

If the island of Hainan had a clock face superimposed on it, Sanya would be at six o'clock, Haikou at one o'clock and Jiangfengling at eight o'clock. The reserve is inland, behind the town of Jianfengling close to the coastal highway. You could get to Jianfengling along the coastal highway in about four hours by bus from Haikou or two hours from Sanya.

But you still would need to hire a taxi or tricycle to get from Jianfengling Town the 15-16km into the reserve and up to the "Tian Chi Resort".



Coastal Highway (left) and Jianfengling "National Forest Park" (right)

Access

The reserve entrance (where the admission fee of RMB 55 is paid) is about three kms uphill from the town. The brand new Park HQs is near the entrance gate, too. From the entrance you must drive about 12 km over a ridge at 1100m elevation and down to a lake at about 800m (*sketch in Woodward 2006, p.144*). The **Arboretum** is about 500m before the lake, on the right. The paths are little-used and overgrown.

When the lake comes into view, turn left *before the lake* and follow the signs to the Tian Chi Resort, about 3km up the paved road (*not marked in Birding South East China*).

Knowing where we wanted to go, we got a taxi all the way from Sanya airport, cost 370 RMB. Journey time was two hours. The same driver came back to collect us for the same price the day we left.

Getting away

If you don't have your own vehicle, there is an express bus from Jianfengling Town to Haikou at 13:00hrs daily. To get to Sanya, you should go out to the coastal highway and flag a bus down.

Jiangfengling “National Forest Park”

The core area (800 to 950m) of Jianfengling is one of the best areas of tropical forest in south China. It is a reliable site for Ratchet-tailed Treepie. It was originally designated a reserve in 1957. Away from the core area the reserve area now sprawls over a range of hills with an artificial lake in the middle. There are some tourist resorts of differing prices, and cultivation (pear orchards) on the flatter ground. Much of the original habitat is damaged.



However, the 1.9 km-long boardwalk around “Ming Feng” (Phoenix) Valley near the “Tian Chi Resort” provides easy access to fine secondary woodland (elevation 900 to 1050m) with a few relict primary forest trees here and there. The last few hundred metres of the access road may turn up some good birds, too. The White-winged Magpies are forest-edge birds, and were seen along the access road twice, but NOT from the boardwalk in the woodland.

Jianfengling (JFL) compared to Bawangling (BWL)

We spent six days at Bawangling in November 2005. BWL is home to the world’s rarest primate, the Hainan Gibbon, all 11 of them. The Reserve staff are naturally very protective of these, and not very visitor-oriented. They usually insist visitors are escorted all the time. There is no accommodation in BWL Nature Reserve itself, you must stay in Bawang town about 20km distant, or at a resort hotel another 7 kms out of Bawang town the other way, i.e. 27 km from the reserve. So you need the use of a daily car or taxi (expensive) to get to the birding habitat, or to ride there and back on a motorcycle (tiring at best, dangerous at worst).

(To be fair to Bawangling, we saw some birds there we missed at Jianfengling, such as Red Junglefowl, Blue-winged Minla and Large Woodshrike.)

At Jianfengling, if you stay at the Tian Chi Resort (we paid RMB100 per night), you can see some of the specialty birds from right outside the rooms and most of the other woodland stuff along the boardwalk. You are free to potter along by yourself at will, and you should have a quiet couple of hours in the morning before the first bunch of day trippers turn up to tramp around the boardwalk. Even in the middle of the day, in October the number of other visitors was not many. The peak season – as for all these hill resorts - should be May to September.

You would need to organise your transport into and out of Jianfengling “National Forest Park” itself, but you won’t need a car on a daily basis. The accommodation also has an open-air restaurant.

If you need any more details of any part of this report,
don’t hesitate to get in touch: [johnjemi -AT- netvigator.com](mailto:johnjemi-AT-netvigator.com)

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.

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- 0024# HAINAN PARTRIDGE *Arborophila ardens*
Two 18/10 and three 19/10 seen beneath a fruiting tree, Ming Feng boardwalk
- 0040# SILVER PHEASANT *Lophura nycthemera whiteheadi*
Two (including adult male) near boardwalk 19/10. At first I thought a white fluffy cat had got into the woods !
- 0122# GREY-CAPPED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos canicapillus swinhoei*
Pair seen around accommodation, singles from the boardwalk
- 0137# LESSER YELLOWNAPE *Picus chlorolophus longipennis*
Single on 20/10 in core area
- 0138# GREATER YELLOWNAPE *Picus flavinucha styani*
Two (a pair?) seen from accommodation at Tian Chi Resort
- 0148# BAY WOODPECKER *Blythipicus pyrrhotis hainanus*
Up to three daily, more often heard than seen
- 0154# BLACK-BROWED (Chinese) BARBET *Megalaima (oorti) faber*
Common, 10 – 20 daily seen or heard in woodland
- 0165# RED-HEADED TROGON *Harpactes erythrocephalus hainanus*
Pair noted from boardwalk 19/10, male in core area 20/10
- 0176# WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER *Halcyon smyrnensis*
Max count 4 between Jianfengling Town and Sanya Airport 24/10
- 0177# BLACK-CAPPED KINGFISHER *Halcyon pileata*
Max 3 on telephone wires between JFL and Sanya Airport 24/10
- 0181# BLUE-BEARDED BEE-EATER *Nyctyornis athertoni brevicaudata*
A pair noted 100m down access road from accommodation, singles seen in primary forest trees around edge of the woods, heard regularly
- 0218# ASIAN PALM SWIFT *Cypsiurus balasiensis*
In ones and twos most days, but 50 at Aboretum on 22/10 and 20+ on 24/10 from Tian Chi Resort
- 0227# SPOTTED SCOPS OWL *Otus spilocephalus*
Single heard, evening of 21/10
- 0232# COLLARED SCOPS-OWL *Otus lettia umbratilis*
Singles heard, 21/10 and 23/10
- 0247# COLLARED OWLET *Glaucidium brodiei*
Heard just after sunrise most days, and often in late afternoon
- 0248# ASIAN BARRED OWLET *Glaucidium cuculoides persimile*
Only heard on 23/10
- 0276# SPOTTED DOVE *Streptopelia chinensis*

8+ between Jianfengling Town and Sanya Airport

0293# MOUNTAIN IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula badia*
Heard, 19,20 & 23/10. Unidentified fly-by pigeons possibly this species

0459# BLACK-WINGED KITE *Elanus caeruleus*
Two near Sanya Airport 24/10

0475# CRESTED SERPENT-EAGLE *Spilornis cheela*
Singles in flight near accommodation, 18 and 19/10

0482# CRESTED GOSHAWK *Accipiter trivirgatus*
Single in flight over core area, 20/10

0483# SHIKRA *Accipiter badius*
Single at rest photo'd by Jemi at Arboretum

0508# COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*
Single in open country seen from highway, 24/10

0512# NORTHERN HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*
Single in flight over Tian Chi Resort, 23/10

0518# LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Up to four noted on the lake daily

0535# LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*
10 or so in open country near highway, Jianfengling to Sanya

0542# LARGE EGRET *Casmerodius albus*
One or two in paddies, seen from highway

0544# CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*
30+ in paddies viewable from coastal highway

0547# BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*
The only one seen was being offered for sale (to eat, presumably) at the roadside, 24/10, near Sanya

0604# SILVER-BREASTED BROADBILL *Serilophus lunatus polionotus*
Single seen in Arboretum, 22/10

0609# ORANGE-BELLIED LEAFBIRD *Chloropsis hardwickii lazulina*
A pair noted daily at the accommodation, noisily defending the contents of a fruiting tree

0616# LONG-TAILED SHRIKE *Lanius schach*
Up to six noted in open areas near the lake

0627# WHITE-WINGED MAGPIE *Urocissa whiteheadi whiteheadi*
7 and 8 noted near edge of woods on 22/10 and 23/10 respectively

0632# GREY TREEPIE *Dendrocitta formosae insulae*
Up to 6 noted in the core area, 20/10

0635# RATCHET-TAILED TREEPIE *Temnurus temnurus*
Single at edge of woods near accommodation on 19/10, two in core area on 20/10

0660 BLACK-WINGED CUCKOOSHRIKE *Coracina melaschistos*
Singles with woodland mixed flocks

0664# GREY-THROATED MINIVET *Pericrocotus solaris*
Noted daily on Ming Feng Boardwalk, max count 6

0667# SCARLET MINIVET *Pericrocotus flammeus fraterculus*

Six to ten noted daily, at edge of the woods

0670# WHITE-THROATED FANTAIL (FLYCATCHER) *Rhipidura albicollis*
Singles noted most days

0672# BLACK DRONGO *Dicrurus macrocercus*
Fifty + noted over open country from coastal highway 24/10

0675# BRONZED DRONGO *Dicrurus aeneus*
3 to 7 daily in woodland, usually with other species

0678# GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO *Dicrurus paradiseus johni*
Three noted on 19/10 and 20/10 from Ming Feng boardwalk

0679# BLACK-NAPED MONARCH *Hypothymis azurea*
Two noted on 23/10 about fifty metres down road from accomodation

0696# ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH *Zoothera citrina aurimacula*
Two noted 18/10 and three seen and photographed 23/10 from boardwalk. Not obviously different from the Guangdong race "melli", but I assume "aurimacula" is the only race on Hainan – I could be wrong

0697# SIBERIAN THRUSH *Zoothera sibirica*
Max count 12 on 22/10, feeding on fig tree above boardwalk, and on forest floor beneath (passage migrants ?)

0700# SCALY THRUSH *Zoothera dauma*
Single seen along access road to accommodation on 23/10

0740# SNOWY-BROWED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hyperythra hyperythra*
Single adult photographed by Jemi at the Tian Chi Arboretum 22/10

0753# HAINAN BLUE-FLYCATCHER *Cyornis hainanus*
Two noted from boardwalk on 22/10 and 23/10

0755# PALE BLUE FLYCATCHER *Cyornis unicolor*
Three noted from boardwalk on 18/10 the only record

0778# ORIENTAL MAGPIE-ROBIN *Copsychus saularis*
Two noted in open country near the lake 22/10

0799# WHITE-CROWNED FORKTAIL *Enicurus leschenaulti*
Noted in ones and twos near stream behind accomodation

0815# SILKY STARLING *Sturnus sericeus*
30+ noted over paddy fields from coastal highway 24/10

0840# YELLOW-BILLED NUTHATCH *Sitta solangiae chienfengensis*
Up to five daily, - preferred the relict primary forest trees, often with Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

0871# SULTAN TIT *Melanochlora sultanea flavocristata*
Four on 19/10 from the boardwalk the highest count

0882# BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*
Not noted ????

0898# CHINESE BULBUL *Pycnonotus sinensis hainanus*
Over thirty noted at orchard edges downhill from accomodation, fifty + noted at woodland edges near lake and arboretum – the distinct Hainan Black-headed race

0906# PUFF-THROATED BULBUL *Alophoixus pallidus pallidus*
6, 8 12 noted daily at woodland edges, JFL

0910# CHESTNUT BULBUL *Hemixos castanonotus*

6 on 24/10 the highest count, down the road from Tian Chi Resort

0911# MOUNTAIN BULBUL *Hypsipetes mccllellandii*
30 + on 19/10 the highest count

0921# YELLOW-BELLIED PRINIA *Prinia flaviventris*
Singles noted in trackside grassland, core area and near orchards

0988# YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*
Max day count 4, roadside vegetation downhill from accomodation

0999# HAINAN LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus hainanus*
2 – 3 daily at woodland edges, JFL

1008# RUFOUS-FACED WARBLER *Abroscopus albogularis*
Single seen in core area, 20/10

1020a# RUSTY-CHEEKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH *Garrulax castanotos castanotos*
Heard or seen frequently in woods near accommodation, biggest flock seen 20 +

1022# BLACK-THROATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH *Garrulax chinensis monachus*
As 1020a, but biggest group was about 10

1059# STREAK-BREASTED SCIMITAR BABBLER *Pomatorhinus ruficollis nigrostellatus*
Common around accommodation clearing, 12 the highest count on 18/10

1066# EYEBROWED WREN-BABBLER *Napothera epilepidota hainanus*
Max count daily only 3, but well seen and photographed beside the Ming Feng boardwalk

1076# RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER *Stachyris ruficeps*
Up to 10 daily in various mixed flocks

1079# SPOT-NECKED BABBLER *Stachyris striolata swinhoei*
A very prominent babbler on Hainan, max count 20 on 22/10

1091# WHITE-BROWED SHRIKE-BABBLER *Pteruthius flaviscapis lingshuiensis*
Up to 3 daily in woodland mixed flocks

1115# DUSKY FULVETTA *Alcippe brunnea arguta*
Forming single-species groups of up to 12 and noted from the boardwalk most days

1118# GREY-CHEEKED FULVETTA *Alcippe morrisonia rufescentior*
Commoner than 1115 and 50+ noted on 23/10

1135# WHITE-BELLIED YUHINA *Yuhina zantholeuca*
Noted daily, highest count 20 on 18/10

1141# GREY-HEADED PARROTBILL *Paradoxornis gularis hainanus*
A flock of 22 noted at the woodland edge in the core area on 20/10

1188# FORK-TAILED SUNBIRD *Aethopyga christinae*
Two noted in Core Area 20/10 and four in the arboretum 22/10

1207# WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba leucopsis*
Up to four noted daily around accommodation

1212# GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*
Up to three daily near accommodation

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