



john & jemi

*Birding China*

English 繁體 简体

## **Sichuan Province – Qincheng Hau Shan, Tangjiahe and Wanglang NNR, November 2007**

by John and Jemi Holmes

### **INTRODUCTION**

We decided to revisit two sites that we like in Sichuan (Tangjiahe and Wanglang) together with two Hong Kong birding friends. We thought we might spend the last night of the trip at Dujiangyan rather than Chengdu, so Jemi and I decided to get to Sichuan three days early and check out the birding sites near Dujiangyan. In the end, our last night of the trip was at Chengdu.

### **ITINERARY and DAILY LOG**

Nov 6<sup>th</sup> Crossed Border in evening at Lok Ma chau – taxi to Sunway Airport hotel

Nov 7<sup>th</sup> Flew from Shenzhen to Chengdu 07:45 to 09:50; - airport bus and taxi to New South Bus Station

Bus RMB 48 to Dujiangyan 12:20 to 13:50hrs, stayed at “Ginkgo hotel” at Agricultural University, surveyed Lingyan Shan – poor habitat and few birds.

Nov 8<sup>th</sup> Bus to Lingyan Shan cable car base near the Er Wang Temple, then RMB 68 cable car each uphill. But we found that we had got further uphill by taxi the previous evening, and thought the habitat poor. We returned swiftly to Ginkgo Hotel and checked out. Paid Taxi RMB 100 to go to base of Qincheng Shan, and then on another 20km to Shaping, where we paid RMB 20 to enter “Qincheng Back Mountain”. Ignoring a posse of aggressive touts, we got the Jinli cable car to near Youyi Cun (Youyi Village). Found a good mixed flock at high point of footpath between cable car and the “village” itself. Hazy and cloudy weather.

Nov 9<sup>th</sup> Took the upper (Bai Yun) cable car (RMB 70) from Youyi Cun to Baiyun Cun. Spent a few hours around the village. Photo opportunities of Spotted Laughingthrush, and Red-winged Laughingthrush was seen. Back to Youyi Cun in mid-afternoon.

Nov 10<sup>th</sup> Arranged with guesthouse to move our heavier bags back to the Jinli cable car terminal while we birded, and at cable car base, got a minivan (RMB 80) back to Dujiangyan bus station. Buses to Chengdu leave every few minutes. Stayed at Sims Cozy Guest House (noisy due to adjacent construction), stocked up on snacks.

Nov 11<sup>th</sup> Met TAM Yiu-leung and WONG Choi-on early in the morning, they had arrived late the night before. We caught two taxis to Zhao Jue Temple Bus Station. The direct bus to Pingwu departed at 09:00. At 13:15 we got off the bus at Tangjiahe turnoff (about 30km south of Pingwu). Jemi negotiated a minivan for RMB 200 to take us to Reserve HQs.

Admission Y 35 each, rooms in block “B” were RMB 280. Birded around HQs and up river until dark.

Nov 12<sup>th</sup> I thought Ondie and Ah Leung were joining me on the Nature Trail but they had wandered off somewhere. Saw 23 species between 08:15 and 12:30. Best were Golden Pheasants (eight) and Slaty Buntings (pair). Jemi also saw Golden Pheasants upstream from HQs at “Sui Dei Ping” ????. Day List for all four observers was 50 species. In the afternoon a quick trip up the Motianling Valley brought Jemi and I close views of a family of Takin.

Nov 13<sup>th</sup> Mr Wang picked us up and drove us downriver towards the reserve main entrance and then up the other valley towards Motianling. We tried the old path that led to Gansu Province in the days before the area became a reserve. Apart from a couple of good mixed flocks the birding was slow. In late afternoon a Golden Eagle clutching a screaming monkey was memorable. As dusk fell we stopped for Takin and Serow (four) feeding on abandoned terraces.

Nov 14<sup>th</sup> Birded Tangjiahe in the morning and left with Mr Wang at about 11:00hrs. Arrived Pingwu and changed to Mr Hung’s minivan, departing at 15:00hrs. Arrived Wanglang HQs at 17:40hrs. Rooms RMB 200 per night.

Nov 15<sup>th</sup> Ondie and Ah Leung birded uphill from HQs, Jemi and I tried downhill. We got lucky with several Snowy-cheeked and two Barred Laughingthrushes seen. Over 300 Grandala were noted in a flock. Uphill, Ondie and “Ah Leung” had seen Three-barred Rosefinches and White-cheeked Nuthatch. After lunch got vehicle towards Da Cho Ping, and then to Bai Xiong Gou (path to Jiuzhaigou). Driven back to HQs, arriving about 17:00hrs.

Nov 16<sup>th</sup> At 07:30 to path below HQs, but no sign of Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush. At 08:40 driven towards Bai Xiong Gou, stopping for big group of Blood Pheasants crossing the road. A kilometre from the end of the road, Jemi found a bright autumn-plumage White-browed Tit Warbler. Arrived boardwalk at 11:00 where Great Parrotbill and Crested Tit Warblers were seen.

The Great Parrotbills responded vigorously to Ondie’s whistled imitation of their call. At 16:45 we were picked up wandering downhill and driven back to HQs, the woods were mostly quiet.

Nov 17<sup>th</sup> It started to snow, getting heavier as we were due to leave at 10:30. Coal Tits and Rusty-breasted Tits were photographed foraging in the pine trees at reserve HQs. “Ah Leung” photographed Three-toed Parrotbills, but the rest of us missed them. Mr HUNG’s minivan took about 2 ½ hours to get to Pingwu, and we caught the 14:20 direct bus back to Chengdu. Due to roadworks, the highway southbound was closed. With the other diverted traffic we reached Chengdu at 19:45, well after dark.

Nov 18<sup>th</sup> Ondie and “Ah Leung” visited Du Fu’s cottage, Jemi and I caught up on some paperwork. Flew back to Shenzhen in mid-afternoon.

## 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

SHENG Helin et.al. (1999) *The Mammalian of China* China Forestry Publishing House, Beijing

**MAPS:**

***Central China* (2005) Nelles Maps - Nelles Verlag GmbH**

## SITE NOTES and COMMENTS

### Qincheng Hou Shan – the “back” mountain

Good secondary forest at middling elevations (1,500 to 1,800m), the path between the lower cable car and Youyi village had some good birds, even though it was hazy so close to Chengdu and the plains.

#### Access

We got a taxi from Dujangyan for RMB 100. There are some upmarket hotels near the imposing entrance gate of Qincheng Shan (the “front” mountain is a “World Heritage Site”). Turning left the road continues about 15km to Shaping where RMB 20 is paid to enter the “back” mountain. A few kms further up the hill is a small town and the base of the lower cable car.

We stayed at Youyi Cun (Village) which is at the base of the higher cable car. There are many guesthouses to choose from, and more being built all the time.

The upper cable car goes more *across* the mountain than up it. There are more places to stay near the upper cable car terminal, Baiyun Village. Summer (May-September) would be high season, outside these times there should be plenty of beds).

### Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve



Situated in the Min mountains, most of Tangjiahe’s birding is between 1500m and 2,000m. Endemics include Golden Pheasant and Slaty Bunting. TJH is a good site for mammals such as Takin and Chinese Muntjac. Rusty-throated Parrotbill was rediscovered at Tangjiahe after an absence of twenty years in June 2007.

(Bjorn Anderson has successfully “twitched” these parrotbills; - his pdf trip report can be downloaded from [www.travellingbirder.com](http://www.travellingbirder.com).) The parrotbill site requires a hike several hundred metres uphill at the end of the Motianling road (the right hand fork), which we didn’t have the time or the equipment for on this visit.

### Access

The direct bus for Pingwu leaves Chengdu’s Zhao Jue Temple bus Station at 09:00. If you tell the driver or his co-driver “Tangjiahe” they’ll know where to drop you off, the junction is about 30km downriver from Pingwu. Minivan drivers hang around at the road junction. We paid RMB 200 to one of them to be taken to Tangjiahe HQs. The road to Qingxi was under construction and a bit muddy in Nov. 2007.

### Wanglang National Nature Reserve



Most of the birding was from 2,500m (at HQs) to almost 3,000m at the Bai Xiong Gou boardwalk, which is near the Reserve’s boundary with Jiuzhaigou. (marked “Iron Roof House” on the sketch). The habitat includes a lot of bamboo under pines, and some open logged-out areas with scrub. There is good secondary broadleaf woodland next to the river below HQs. Min Shan Chinese endemics include Sooty Tit, Rusty-breasted (Pere David’s) Tit, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush and Spectacled Parrotbill.

### Access

Pingwu is the County Town. You can get either the direct bus from Chengdu’s Zhao Jue Temple Bus Station (09:00) or one of many buses from Mianyang to Pingwu. However,

you need to hire a taxi or minivan to get to the reserve, which is northwest of Pingwu town about 130 km (90km to Baima township, and 40km from there to the reserve). Wanglang is marked on the 2005 edition of the Nelles “Central China” map, but not as a Nature Reserve.

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

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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. Abbreviations: Qincheng Shan QCS, Tangjiahe TJH, and Wanglang WL.

0028 Blood Pheasant *Ithaginis cruentus*

*16/11 Party of 30 or so disturbed on track to Baixiongou, WL (2680m)*

0050 Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

*14/11 Single in farmland, road between Qingxi and junction of Route 205 to Pingwu*

0051 Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

*Seen daily at Tangjiahe 12-14/11, max count 8 near Nature Trail on 12/11*

0089 Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

*Eleven seen on the new reservoir between Wanglang HQs and Baima town, 17/11*

0096 Common Teal *Anas crecca*

*Five on new reservoir between Wanglang HQs and Baima town, 17/11*

0120 Speckled Piculet *Picumnus innominatus*

*Singles seen with mixed flocks at Qincheng Shan and Tangjiahe*

0122 Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopus canicapillus*

*Two on the Nature Trail, Tangjiahe, 12/11*

0128 Crimson-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus cathparius*

*Three on the Nature Trail, Tangjiahe, 12/11 singles at Wanglang, 15-17/11*

0131 Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*

*In ones and twos near Tangjiahe HQs, 12-14/11*

0148 Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*

*Daily at QCS and TJH, heard more often than seen*

0179 Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris*

*Two noted along river between Tangjiahe HQs and reserve entrance*

0247 Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei*  
*Heard at Qincheng "Back" mountain on 10/11*

0488 Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

0492 Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

0500 Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*  
*One of a pair taking a squealing baby monkey was "nature in the raw" at TJH, 13/11*

0621 Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*  
*08/11 Pair seen from cable car, Linyang shan, Dujiangyan*

0626 Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*  
*At TJH HQs feeding on fruit (six) also seen at QCS*

0636 Common Magpie *Pica pica*  
*Seen from Chengdu to Pingwu bus, 11/11*

0640 Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*  
*Six seen Tangjiahe 13/11*

0648 Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*  
*Up to 12 around TJH HQs*

0687 White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*  
*Single at Wanglang (2,500m)*

0688 Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*  
*Noted on River below Jinyi (lower) cable car, QCS.*

0700 Scaly Thrush *Zoothera dauma*  
*Two on Nature Trail, TJH on 12/11*

0709 Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*  
*Noted at WL (up to 20) and more commonly at TJH; up to 30 on Nature Trail 12/11*

0773 Orange-flanked Bush Robin *Tarsiger cyanurus*  
*Up to six daily at all woodland sites visited*

0786 White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*  
*Up to three daily at Wanglang (2,500m +)*

0789 Blue-fronted Redstart *Phoenicurus frontalis*  
*Singles here and there at both TJH and QCS*

0790 White-capped River Chat *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*  
*Notably at Youyicun, QCS, where one was taking food scraps from a kitchen drain*

0791 Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

*Common on streams at all places visited*

0795 Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*

*A flock of 300+, photographed by Jemi feeding on orange (Buckthorn ?) berries, Wanglang*

0796 Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri*

*Single on Nature Trail, Tangjiahe, 12/11*

0799 White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus leschenaulti*

*TJH ???*

0832 Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europea*

*Up to 4 with mixed flocks at Tangjiahe 12-14/11, hard to differentiate from Chestnut-vented there*

0838 White-cheeked (Przewalski's) Nuthatch *Sitta leucopsis*

*Seen and photographed by Ondie WONG just uphill from Wanglang HQs, max day count 3*

0844 Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris (khamensis?) "hodgsoni" ???*

*Two to three daily at Wanglang*

0844.3 Sichuan Treecreeper *Certhia tianqianensis*

*Up to four daily at QCS and TJH. Not seen at WL*

0848 Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Two daily noted at drains for food scraps Qincheng Shan, 7-9/11*

0855 Rusty-breasted Tit *Parus (poecile?) davidi*

*Parties 5-10 daily at Wanglang, not shy, but fast-moving...*

0858 Rufous-vented Tit *Parus rubidiventris*

*Six at Motianling, Tangjiahe on 13/11 (2000m) and ten+ at Wanglang most days (2,500m)*

0859 Coal Tit *Parus ater*

*Six seen at Wanglang HQs, 17/11*

0860 Yellow-bellied Tit *Parus venustulus*

*Two seen with a mixed flock Tangjiahe, on 13/11, also noted lower down at Qincheng "Back" mountain*

0861 Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous (wellsi)*

*Up to 10 daily at Wanglang, in pines with other tits*

0862 Great Tit *Parus major*

*With mixed flocks at QCS 7-9/11*

0864 Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*

*Noted mainly with mixed flocks QCs, 7-9/11*

- 0870 Yellow Browed Tit *Sylviparus modestus*  
*Noted at Wanglang, two – three daily, with mixed flocks*
- 0873 Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*  
*Widespread, from the scrubby hillsides near Dujiangyan at 500m to WL at 2,500m, max 15 daily*
- 0876 Sooty Tit *Aegithalos fuliginosus*  
*Parties of up to 20 at Tangjiahe, where it was most numerous, and Wanglang*
- 0889 Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*  
*Seen and photographed near HQs at Wanglang, 15/11 (2,500m)*
- 0892 Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques*  
*Farmland near Qingxi (o/s Tangjiahe) and inside reserve near entrance*
- 0936 Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides*  
*Single skulking in streamside grass, Motianling, Tangjiahe 13/11*
- 0970 White-browed Tit Warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*  
*Five noted at Baixionggou, Wanglang on 16/11*
- 0971 Crested Tit Warbler *Leptopoecile elegans*  
*Four counted in pines near Baixionggou boardwalk, 16/11 (2,900m)*
- 0984 Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*
- 1014 White-throated Laughingthrush *Garrulax albogularis*
- 1032 Spotted Laughingthrush *Garrulax ocellatus*  
*Small parties seen at Qincheng "Back" mountain, 9-10/11*
- 1037 White-browed Laughingthrush *Garrulax sannio*  
*Parties of up to 7 at Qincheng Shan 8-10/11*
- 1041 Elliot's Laughingthrush *Garrulax elliotii*  
*The common laughingthrush at Tangjiahe and Wanglang, heard all the time !*
- 1044 Black-faced Laughingthrush *Garrulax affinis*  
*Up to 15 daily at TJH and WL, but not as common as 1041*
- 1047 Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus*  
*Two seen near village at upper terminal of upper Qincheng Shan cable car, 10/11*
- 1059 Streak-breasted Scimitar-babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*  
*Ones and twos with mixed flocks at Qincheng Shan, group of 7 noted, 10/11 at QCS*
- 1076 Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps*  
*With mixed flocks at QCS and TJH – 1,500m to 2,000m elevation*
- 1088 Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*  
*With mixed flocks at QCS and quite common at TJH near the river 8-14/11*

1091 White-browed Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius flaviscapis*  
*Pairs seen at Youyicun, QCS, 8/11 and with mixed flock at TJH riverside 13/11 (both sites about 1,500m)*

1092 Green Shrike Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus*  
*Up to five daily with mixed flocks at Tangjiahe, 12-14/11*

1105 Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis*  
*Flocks of up to 20 seen daily at QCS, also at TJH in smaller numbers*

1111 Spectacled Fulvetta *Alcippe ruficapilla*  
*Four noted near Youyicun, QCS 8/11*

1118 Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*  
*Up to 30 daily at QCS, almost as common at TJH*

1131 White-collared Yuhina *Yuhina diademata*

1138 Great Parrotbill *Conostoma oemodium*  
*Up to four seen on Baixiongou boardwalk, WL on 16/11 (2,900m)*

1139 Three-toed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis paradoxus*  
*A party of five photographed in the snow by Tam Yiu-leung at Wanglang HQs 17/11 (2,500m)*

1144 Spectacled Parrotbill *Paradoxornis conspicillatus*  
*Party of six near xxxxxxxx footpath, (2,000m) at TJH, about 15 near Baixiongou, WL on 15/11*

1145 Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus*  
*Flock of 30-40 near village above "Bai Yun" upper cable car, Qincheng Shan, also at several at roadside, TJH*

1229 Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophciata*  
*Singles noted at Tangjiahe 12-14/11, and Wanglang 15-17/11*

1234 Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*  
*Noted in single figures at Tangjiahe and at Wanglang (– between 1500m and 2,900m !)*

1246 Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis spinoides*  
*Thirty on overhead wires between Qingxi (near TJH) and Pingwu turnoff 14/11*

1271 Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus*  
*Single female near TJH HQs, 13/11*

1275 Three-banded Rosefinch *Carpodacus trifasciatus*  
*Single male, seen and photographed just up from WL HQs*

1290 Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*  
*A party of eight seen daily near Wanglang HQs 15-17/11*

1297 White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carnipes*  
*Pair noted from boardwalk, Baixionggou, Wanglang, on 16/11*

1313 Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*  
*Up to four noted in grass and weeds near both Tangjiahe (1,400m) and Wanglang HQs (2,500m)*

*(June – 2008 Some of these sites, and access to them has been affected by the May 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake. Youyi Cun and other parts of Qingcheng Hou Shan (near Dujiangyan) are reportedly seriously damaged. Access to Tangjiahe and Wanglang is via Mianyang, also in the earthquake area. Our deepest sympathy goes to all those people seriously affected. )*

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