



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

CHINA *The Tibetan Plateau & Migrants on China's East Coast*

1st - 20th October 2007



Henderson's Ground-Jay and Tibetan Scenery



All photos by David Shackelford

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Top 10 birds of the tour as voted by participants:

1. Black-necked Crane
2. Tibetan Snowcock
3. Red-crowned (Japanese) Crane
4. Wallcreeper
5. Mongolian (Henderson's) Ground-Jay
6. Lammergeier
7. White-naped Crane
8. Pallas's Sandgrouse
9. Crested Tit-Warbler
10. Przevalski's Rosefinch



Group Photo on the Tibetan Plateau

Tour Summary

With the break of dawn in the misty mountains covered with broad spruce forest near Xining, provincial capital of northeast Tibet, we could see the silhouettes of literally hundreds of migrant Red-throated Thrushes spiraling through the air above us while the melodious songs of the endemic Pere-David's and colorful Elliot's Laughingthrushes serenaded us from the surrounding buckthorn scrub. The cold bite of winter above 2,000 meters kept us alert with a flurry of snowflakes at the higher altitudes as we sifted through noisy mixed flocks hosting both Chinese and spectacular Przevalski's Nuthatches, Gray-headed Bullfinch, the little-known Gansu Leaf-Warbler, striking White-throated Redstart, and unbelievable sunlit views of the outrageous Crested Tit-Warbler. Already migration was in full swing as streams of raptors crested the mountain ridge and soared overhead including Greater Spotted Eagle, Oriental Honey-Buzzard, swift Eurasian Sparrowhawk, stately Northern Goshawk, and the recently recognized Himalayan Buzzard. Both Chestnut and the handsome Kessler's Thrushes put on a show before we ventured to the nearby gravel slopes locating a flock of attractive Rosy Pipit, Godlewski's Bunting, noisy but entertaining flocks of Red-billed Chough, and the local pale race of the Sinai Rosefinch.

Eager to continue into the Tibetan highlands, we loaded our gear into our off-road 4x4 vehicles and ascended onto the vast plateau, a culturally unique region known for its harsh history to match its winter climate. As the sky cleared before us giving way to the cerulean expanse of Koko Nor, the largest lake in China and situated over 3,000 meters in altitude, we could no help but be taken aback by the surrounding ice and snow-covered mountain peaks that surrounded us. Distracted by the abrupt motion of a fleeing Woolly Hare and nearby prowling Red Fox we were soon charmed by the charismatic foraging actions of numerous Hume's Groundpecker, tiny Pere David's and White-rumped Snowfinches, and a calling Chinese Gray Shrike that posed nicely in the scope. The surrounding wetlands teemed with waterfowl and migrant waders such as striking Red-crested Pochard, Temminck's Stint, attractive Bar-headed and Graylag Goose, Chinese Spot-billed Duck, and a vagrant Little Curlew peculiarly mixed with a flock of oblivious Northern Lapwings. Of course the highlight for everyone was observing a stunning pair of regal Black-necked Cranes attending a single young that sheltered close to its parent's sides. With a population estimated at less than 6,000 individuals, these magnificent cranes are one of the spiritual creatures for the people of the area and are pictured alongside many of their deities in the monasteries of the region.

Hardy pastoral sheep herders able to resist the acrimonious wind ambled over the extensive plains with clusters of shaggy yaks following close behind as we set out into the depths of desert-like conditions. We enjoyed scope views of agile Goitered Gazelle feeding on the open plains as we paced through stunted thickets and barren gravel terrain locating the delicate Desert Finch, attractive Blanford's Snowfinch that were often chased away by eager Black-lipped Pika scurrying to another burrow, and with effort we found a gorgeous flock of more than forty Pallas's Sandgrouse that we scoped at length and watched fly gracefully over the barren wilderness. Traditionally dressed Tibetans prostrated themselves at the roadside during an arduous pilgrimage southwards to the holy city of Lhasa in a spiritual journey that may take many weeks to months as we continued scanning through the desolate habitat eventually located the fabulous Henderson's Ground-Jay, one of only five species of unique terrestrial jays found only in western Asia and the Middle East.

Hiking through the juniper and willow-clad slopes west of Koko Nor we managed crippling scope views of both Tibetan and stunning Przevalski's Partridge as several massive Red Deer sporting extraordinary antlers galloped over the steep ridge after first pausing for marvelous observation. We located the unique Tibetan form of both Common Magpie and Chinese Gray Shrike, both likely to be split in the future, as well as flocks of Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Brown Accentor and electric White-browed Tit-Warbler darting through the undergrowth, both Chinese Beautiful and Eastern Great Rosefinches showing well, and remarkable views of a confiding Alpine Weasel that seemed to be equally intrigued by us! Raptors performed unconcernedly at eye level including huge Himalayan Griffon and Cinereous Vulture, multiple views of the powerful Saker Falcon, Steppe Eagle, and unbeatable views of soaring and perched Lammergeier showing off its immaculate features. We even managed fantastically close scope views of the male Przevalski's Rosefinch, a rare taxonomically challenged species recently placed in its own monotypic family. Just when we thought things could not get any better after encountering Himalayan Marmot and Gansu Pika scurrying over the mountain slopes we were thrilled to find a huddle of eight Tibetan Snowcock sunning on an open rock face yielding unobstructed scope views for nearly an hour!

Finalizing our acclimatization process by ascending to more than 4,000 meters above sea level we found ourselves waking to a winter wonderland of freshly fallen snow while warming ourselves with hearty meals and burning yak dung in our iron stoves before setting out into the highest peaks of the tour south of Koko Nor. The montane scenery was simply breathtaking along our journey winding over lofty passes and around sheer corner bends as we located the droll White-throated Dipper plodding along a swift river, both White-winged and Tibetan Snowfinches, vivid Ala Shan Redstart, the rare endemic Roborovski's Rosefinch, and memorable views of two restless Wallcreeper flashing audacious red and white patterning in the wing as they foraged on the edge of a sheer precipice. Mammals were no less astounding with amazing views of several quick Gray-flanked Tibetan Fox hunting on the plains, hundreds of graceful Tibetan Gazelle, and Tibetan Wild Ass perfectly positioned against the towering ice-laden mountains in the background. The occasional smell of smoke in the air reminded us of the nomadic Tibetan herders that set up temporary tent camps scattered over the terrain while even near our own basic accommodation we found flocks of accommodating Brandt's Mountain-Finch and the gaudy colored Guldenstadt's Redstart. During one terrific final ascent into the mountains at nearly 5,000 meters we clambered over the rocks and scanned carefully into the distance locating a herd of powerful Blue Sheep including several intimidating mature rams and a single very rare Pallas's Cat that we scoped at length before it disappeared silently into a knoll of jagged boulders. Sitting on the mountainside that evening we concluded our adventures through the Tibetan Plateau watching the late afternoon sun fade through the clouds and over the horizon far below.

Flying eastward to the bustling modern city of Beijing home to nearly twenty-five million people, we shifted gears into warmer weather at sea level and began the journey to the fabled Happy Island. Located in the north Yellow Sea east of Beidaihe, this small island serves as a critical stopping point for literally tens of thousands of Siberian and Manchurian birds streaming southwards on their annual migration to favored wintering grounds in Southeast Asia and beyond. After ferrying to the island we found our comfortable cabins ideally facing the shoreline where the endangered Saunder's and Relict Gulls mixed with an abundance of waterfowl and waders as well as numerous shy Baikal Teal, a single flock of globally threatened Oriental Stork, and hundreds of sleek Amur Falcons streaming by overhead!

A combination of favorable winds and clear skies mixed with diverse habitats such as grasslands, boggy marsh, two small woodlands, and extensive coastline afforded us a migration movement of birds that was at times absolutely beyond belief. While walking on the scrubby embankments we were literally wading through uncountable numbers of Red-flanked Bluetail, Pallas's Leaf-Warbler, Coal Tit, and Brambling while finding scarcer birds such as Chinese Penduline-Tit, the retiring Japanese Quail, Bearded Reedling recently placed in its own monotypic family, the little-known Marsh Grassbird, outrageous Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Short-eared Owl, both Chestnut-eared and Japanese Reed-Buntings, and several gorgeous views of Great Bittern. Each morning during our five day stint on the island a profusion of larks, pipits, wagtails, snipe, tits, thrushes, and buntings would perform overhead in symphony as we set out searching for newly arrived avian visitors. Inside the woodland we searched diligently for undergrowth species finding Gray-backed and the attractive Dusky Thrush, tiny Asian Stubtail, the furtive Rufous-tailed Robin and skulky Bluethroat, Siberian Accentor, and the smart Tristram's Bunting among others. One of the rarest birds we found was a single elegant Varied Tit, a new record for the province, while sorting through no less than an impressive fourteen species of buntings as well as other surprises such as a flushed Baillon's Crake, two amazing Long-eared Owls, the cryptically patterned Scaly and Eyebrowed Thrushes, and Chinese Yellow-billed Grosbeak. Undoubtedly the cranes rank as one of the most charismatic and beautiful bird families of the world, and we enjoyed multiple views of an incredible four species of cranes while on the island including more than thirty White-naped, a single Common Crane feeding along the shore, a vagrant Sandhill constituting only the fourth record for all of China, and numerous Japanese Red-crowned Cranes that we scoped on several occasions to observe their fascinating behavior and later watched flying in formation into the sunset, a sentimental but appropriate ending to such an unforgettable visit to this migration hotspot of Asia.

Returning to the mainland, we set out early the following day to the celebrated Great Wall of China. Mostly the remains from the ancient Ming Dynasty during an era of tremendous construction, the Great Wall is a series of sandstone and earthen fortifications built between the 5th century BC and the 16th century to protect the northern borders of the Chinese Empire during the rule of successive dynasties. The world's longest human-made structure stretching more than four thousands miles, we climbed along the top of the wall soaking in the visual grandeur of this magnificent formation while finding a cooperative covey of Chukar, the playful Pere-David's Rock-Squirrel, several fantastic Red-billed Blue Magpie, a pair of Pallas's Rosefinch, and obtained outstanding views of the unique but retiring Chinese Hill Warbler. Continuing southwards on our return journey to Beijing we enjoyed a final day sightseeing nearby marveling at the splendor of the Forbidden City and great Summer Palace, both overwhelmingly extravagant reminders of the nation's overseeing emperors in an era long since past. At the conclusion of the tour we celebrated a final farewell dinner while reminiscing about our adventures shared together traveling through the scenic riches of China and across the vast Tibetan Plateau. In total we recorded nearly three hundred species of birds and twenty species of mammals while creating countless unforgettable memories with good friends on a journey that will undoubtedly live fondly with us the rest of our lives.



Black-necked Crane pair and the Great Wall of China

Annotated List of Bird Species recorded

Grebes *Podicipedidae*

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

We found this widespread species daily on Happy Island with up to a dozen per day.

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

Observed on three occasions while on the Tibetan Plateau with up to ten birds scoped in a day.

Black-necked (Eared) Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

Found in similar areas as Great Crested Grebe with up to eight birds scoped in a day.

Cormorants *Phalacrocoracidae*

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Several hundred seen on the Tibetan Plateau with up to 1500 daily on Happy Island.

Ducks, Geese & Swans *Anatidae*

Graylag Goose

Anser anser

Found on two different days at a wetland near Koko Nor with up to twenty-five individuals together.

Bar-headed Goose

Anser indicus

About two hundred birds total seen while exploring the Tibetan Plateau along the edge of water.

Common Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Living up to their name, we found more than two thousand birds observed daily on Happy Island.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Seen throughout the trip with our largest numbers of several hundred on the Tibetan Plateau.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Up to forty birds on several days on the Tibetan Plateau with small numbers encountered on Happy Island.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas Penelope*

Seen in scattered numbers and sights throughout the tour in wetlands.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Several hundred on the Tibetan Plateau and later several thousand daily on Happy Island on the settling tanks.

Chinese Spotbill *Anas zonorhyncha*

About thirty birds seen first in a wetland near Koko Nor followed by up to seven hundred birds daily on Happy Island often flying in large flocks.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Several hundred birds seen on numerous days throughout the tour.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Smaller numbers overall compared to Northern Shoveler but encountered regularly throughout the tour.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

A total of four birds scoped on three occasions on the Tibetan Plateau followed by a single bird on Happy Island.

Baikal Teal *Anas Formosa*

Although touch to scope on the water, we found reasonable numbers of this bird on a daily basis mixed with large numbers of Common Teal. Up to 180 birds were estimated on a single day on Happy Island.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Abundant during the tour with up to three thousand birds on Koko Nor.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

About five hundred birds seen on the lake of Koko Nor.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Small numbers encountered at several wetland sites throughout the tour.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

About two hundred birds first scoped on Koko Nor with smaller numbers found on several occasions while birding Happy Island.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Fifty birds first scoped on Koko Nor and later we found four more on Happy Island.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Up to a dozen birds found almost daily while exploring the Tibetan Plateau.

Storks Ciconidae

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

A single flock of nine birds cruised over Happy Island one mid-day on their journey southwards.

Oriental White Stork *Ciconia boyciana*

We were very fortunate to find a flock of seventeen individuals that landed on Happy Island and afforded amazing scope views on two consecutive days of this globally threatened species.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

We found a single huddle of eleven birds that were scoped at length along the shoreline of Happy Island.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Eurasian Bittern*Botaurus stellaris*

We enjoyed great flight views of this difficult species on three occasions at dawn and dusk while birding Happy Island.

Black-crowned Night-Heron*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Scattered sightings on the Tibetan Plateau followed by daily encounters with a large roost on Happy Island.

Chinese Pond-Heron*Ardeola bacchus*

A single bird seen well in a wetland on the Tibetan Plateau.

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus coromandus*

Surprisingly small numbers with only three scattered sightings during the tour.

Gray Heron*Ardea cinerea*

Up to thirty birds seen on several occasions near water on the Tibetan Plateau followed by numerous encounters on Happy Island.

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

Only three birds seen during the tour, all on Happy Island in reed beds.

Great Egret*Ardea alba*

Two sightings on the Tibetan Plateau followed by two birds on Happy Island.

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Good numbers encountered daily on the muddy shores of Happy Island.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites Accipitridae**Oriental Honey Buzzard***Pernis ptilorhynchus*

A movement of thirty birds during our first day birding near Xining with two scattered sightings thereafter.

Black Kite*Milvus migrans*

Five birds total all seen near Xining.

Lammergeier*Gypaetus barbatus*

Absolutely amazing views of this impressive species almost daily on the Tibetan Plateau both in flight and perched.

Himalayan Griffon*Gyps himalayensis*

We found up to twenty-five of these massive birds daily on the Tibetan Plateau.

Black Vulture*Aegypius monachus*

Three birds total seen cruising over the high slopes of the Tibetan Plateau.

Eastern Marsh Harrier*Circus spilonotus*

Small numbers on the Tibetan Plateau followed by daily sightings of migrant birds on Happy Island.

Hen Harrier*Circus cyaneus*

Similar numbers and locations during the tour as Eastern Mash Harrier.

Japanese Sparrowhawk*Accipiter gularis*

Up to three birds seen daily on Happy Island with memorable scope views of several individuals.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk*Accipiter nisus*

Up to ten birds seen almost daily throughout the tour with or largest numbers found daily on Happy Island.

Northern Goshawk*Accipiter gentilis*

Great views of this species on numerous occasions both on the Tibetan Plateau and on Happy Island.

Gray-faced Buzzard*Butastur indicus*

A single unexpected bird found flying over Happy Island.

Common Buzzard*Buteo Buteo*

Small numbers seen almost daily during the tour with a high of forty-five birds during one day on Happy Island and four of the Himalayan race of this species found in the mountains near Xining.

Greater Spotted Eagle*Aquila clanga*

Two birds first seen in the mountains near Xining followed by a single migrant bird found cruising over Happy Island during mid-day.

Steppe Eagle*Aquila nipalensis*

Five birds total seen well on two occasions while scanning the horizon on the Tibetan Plateau.

Golden Eagle*Aquila chrysaetos*

Two sightings of four birds total seen exceptionally well, especially on the hike to find the Pallas's Cat.

Booted Eagle*Hieraetus pennatus*

Scattered birds seen almost daily while on the Tibetan Plateau.

Falcons & Kestrels *Falconidae***Lesser Kestrel***Falco naumanni*

A single bird observed in flight over Happy Island.

Common Kestrel*Falco tinnunculus*

Commonly found daily throughout the tour in good numbers.

Amur Falcon*Falco amurensis*

What a beautiful bird to watch in flight! We found this migrant species daily on Happy Island with up to three hundred birds estimated during a single day.

Merlin*Falco columbarius*

One bird, probably the same individual, seen hunting three days in a row on Happy Island.

Eurasian Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

Scattered sightings throughout the tour with a high of six birds in one day on Happy Island.

Saker Falcon*Falco cherrug*

A magnificent falcon that we found on several occasions in the Tibetan Plateau with a grand high of twenty-one birds on the day we scoped the Tibetan Wild Ass.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

Found daily on Happy Island with an average of three birds each day.

Pheasants and Partridges *Phasianidae***Tibetan Snowcock***Tetraogallus tibetanus*

Simply amazing scope views of eight birds on the top of a rocky outcrop west of Koko Nor followed by further views coming down from the lofty Er La Pass.

Chukar*Alectoris chukar*

Eight birds scoped at length while walking along the Great Wall of China.

Przevalski's Partridge*Alectoris magna*

About fifteen of these localized birds seen exceptionally well along the roadside west of Koko Nor.

Tibetan Partridge*Perdix hodgsoniae*

We were fortunate to have about ten minutes watching these entertaining birds calling and feeding on the steep slopes of Rubber Mountain.

Japanese Quail*Coturnix japonica*

Flushed daily from the tall grasses of Happy Island with a high of eleven birds in a single day.

Common Pheasant*Phasianus colchicus*

First seen in the pastoral fields near Xining followed by daily encounters on Happy Island.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae***Baillon's Crake***Porzana pusilla*

A single bird flushed from rank grass on Happy Island.

White-breasted Waterhen*Amaurornis phoenicurus*

One bird was seen along the drainage dike near our accommodation on Happy Island.

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Only two birds total found on Happy Island.

Common Coot

Fulica atra

Up to a thousands birds on Koko Nor with scattered numbers elsewhere on the Tibetan Plateau.

Cranes Gruidae

Demoiselle Crane

Anthropoides virgo

Sixteen of these cranes heading south to wintering ground in western India were located but not relocated for everyone in grassland on the Tibetan Plateau.

White-naped Crane

Grus vipio

We enjoyed exceptional views of thirty-five birds total along the shores of Happy Island – a gorgeous bird.

Sandhill Crane

Grus canadensis

Most unexpected, we found a single vagrant bird mixed in with other cranes on Happy Island; one of very few records of this species for China.

Common Crane

Grus grus

Dwarfed by the proceeding species, a single bird was present on Happy Island for two consecutive days.

Black-necked Crane

Grus nigricollis

Absolutely brilliant encounters with seventeen birds total over four separate days on the Tibetan Plateau including flight views, calling, and brief courtship displays.

Red-crowned Crane

Grus japonensis

One of the world's most beautiful birds, we found up to thirty birds almost daily during our stay on Happy Island.

Buttonquails Turnicidae

Yellow-legged Buttonquail

Turnix tanki

A single bird flushed briefly from the grasslands on Happy Island.

Oystercatchers Haematopodidae

Eurasian Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Up to thirty birds counted daily on the muddy shores of Happy Island.

Avocets & Stilts Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

One or two birds found daily on Happy Island in muddy habitat.

Pied Avocet

Recurvirosta avosetta

Three birds first encountered on the Tibetan Plateau followed by up to a thousand birds enjoyed on several occasions while birding Happy Island.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus Vanellus

Good numbers seen on several occasions throughout the tour with up to eighty-five birds in a single day on Happy Island.

Pacific Golden-Plover

Pluvialis fulva

Seen twice on short grass and muddy areas along a wetland near Koko Nor with thirty and twenty birds total.

Black-bellied (Gray) Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Up to three hundred birds counted in the collection of waders along the muddy shores of Happy Island.

Snowy (Kentish) Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Small numbers found along the shores of Koko Nor followed by daily sightings of up to six hundred birds on Happy Island.

Sandpipers and Allies *Scolopacidae*

- Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*
A single bird was seen flushing from the dense undergrowth along a forested mountain near Xining.
- Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*
Found in small numbers along wetland edges throughout the tour.
- Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*
Two birds first seen near Koko Nor followed by a further sighting of two birds on Happy Island.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*
Three birds seen in the mudflats along Happy Island.
- Little Whimbrel** *Numenius minutus*
A surprise individual was seen with a small flock of Pacific Golden-Plovers at a wetland near Koko Nor, one of few records of this uncommon species on the Tibetan Plateau.
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
Up to six hundred birds found daily probing in the mud on the shores of Happy Island.
- Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*
Small numbers seen along the muddy banks near the jetty of Happy Island.
- Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
We encountered good numbers of this migrant species along Koko Nor and again on Happy Island with up to one hundred birds in a single day.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*
Scattered birds on the Tibetan Plateau followed by daily sightings on Happy Island.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
Up to ten birds were seen on several days during our stay on Happy Island.
- Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris*
Ten birds total were seen along the muddy shores of Happy Island.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*
Three birds were scoped on Happy Island amongst a host of other waders.
- Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*
Five birds were seen through the scope in the same area as the Red Knots.
- Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
A few birds were found along the wetland edges near Koko Nor.
- Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*
Two birds were first found on the Tibetan Plateau followed by good numbers of more than fifty birds during two days on Happy Island.
- Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*
Six birds total were seen along the shores of Koko Nor on the Tibetan Plateau.

Couriers & Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

- Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum*
A single bird was seen flying near us along the dike on Happy Island.

Gulls *Laridae*

- Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris*
Fairly common at Happy Island where we found up to seventy birds daily.
- Mew (Common) Gull** *Larus canus*
Only a single bird picked out of a host of other gulls on Happy Island with the use of a scope.
- East Siberian (Vega) Gull** *Larus vegae*
Up to forty birds during our first day on Happy Island followed by smaller numbers thereafter.

Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull*Larus (fuscus) brunnicephalus*

A single bird identified as this species out of a confusing complex of other similar gulls.

Greater Black-headed (Pallas's) Gull*Larus brunnicephalus*

Seen regularly on the Tibetan Plateau with up to 150 birds seen on our first visit to Koko Nor.

Brown-headed Gull*Larus brunnicephalus*

Seen regularly on the Tibetan Plateau near water with up to thirty birds seen in a single day.

Common Black-headed Gull*Larus ridibundus*

A few scattered birds on the Tibetan Plateau before we found large numbers on Happy Island with up to 150 birds in a single day.

Saunders's Gull*Larus saundersi*

A very localized species, we enjoyed great sightings of up to ten birds daily.

Relict Gull*Larus relictus*

Another very localized species, we found this bird each time we scanned the shores of Happy Island and on one diligent count found exactly ninety-four birds total.

Terns *Sternidae***Gull-billed Tern***Sterna nilotica*

Single birds seen on several occasions while birding on Happy Island.

Caspian Tern*Sterna caspia*

Fairly common on Happy island where we watched up to fifty birds daily.

Whiskered Tern*Chlidonias hybrida*

Three birds watched flying along the surface of the water at Koko Nor in the Tibetan Plateau.

Sandgrouse *Pteroclididae***Pallas's Sandgrouse***Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

Exactly forty-six birds on the Tibetan Plateau first flushed off the ground and then relocated for unforgettable scope views.

Pigeons & Doves *Columbidae***Hill Pigeon***Columba rupestris*

Seen only during the first portion of the tour where we found up to fifty birds daily in the mountains.

Oriental Turtle-Dove*Streptopelia orientalis*

First seen near Xining followed by daily sightings of up to fifty birds on Happy Island.

Eurasian Collared-Dove*Streptopelia decaocto*

Small numbers of up to fifteen birds on three consecutive days were found near Koko Nor.

Cuckoos & Coucals *Cuculidae***Chestnut-winged Cuckoo***Clamator coromandus*

A bit of a surprise, several of us were afforded spectacular views of this uncommon and shy migrant on Happy Island.

Typical Owls *Strigidae***Little Owl***Athene noctua*

We enjoyed several excellent sightings throughout the Tibetan Plateau.

Long-eared Owl*Asio otus*

We were fortunate to find two migratory birds in the woods on Happy Island that flushed from a day roost and flew to a visible perch.

Short-eared Owl*Asio flammeus*

We had nice flight views of a single bird on Happy Island that flushed from our feet in a grassy area.

Swifts Apodidae**Common Swift***Apus apus*

Six birds were seen flying over the city of Beijing during our final day of the tour.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis*

We enjoyed multiple views of this attractive species twice along the canals of Happy Island.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

Common and conspicuous with up to six seen almost daily throughout the tour.

Wrynecks, Piculets & Woodpeckers Picidae**Great Spotted Woodpecker***Dendrocopos major*

A single bird was found in a small woodland near Happy Island.

Gray-faced Woodpecker*Picus canus*

We heard this species calling while walking along the Great Wall of China.

Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae**Ashy Minivet***Pericrocotus divaricatus*

Heard calling multiple times in the woodland on Happy Island and we had two sightings of ten and two birds on separate days.

Shrikes Laniidae**Chinese Gray Shrike***Lanius sphenocercus*

An attractive shrike and quite noisy, we had great views of this species on many occasions both on the Tibetan Plateau and again on Happy Island.

[Tibetan Gray Shrike]*Lanius (sphenocercus) giganteus*

A single bird was scoped at length in a small juniper-covered valley in the mountains west of Koko Nor.

Crows, Jays & Magpies Corvidae**Azure-winged Magpie***Cyanopica cyanus*

Up to thirty birds were seen daily in the surroundings of Beijing.

Red-billed Blue-Magpie*Urocissa erythrorhyncha*

We enjoyed spectacular views of this attractive species along the forested area surrounding the Great Wall of China.

Common Magpie*Pica pica*

A few birds were seen towards the beginning of the tour near Xining followed by up to one hundred birds daily on Happy Island.

[Tibetan Magpie]*Pica [pica] bottanensis*

A localized subspecies of Common Magpie likely to be split in the future, we found several birds in a forested site south of Koko Nor.

Mongolian (Henderson's) Ground Jay*Podoces hendersoni*

We first had scope views of three impressive individuals actively feeding on the dry plains of the Tibetan Plateau followed by crippling close views of two more birds the following day.

Ground Tit (Hume's Groundpecker)*Pseudopodoces humilis*

A charismatic bird with a hop in its step, we found this bird both common and confiding on the Tibetan Plateau with up to thirty birds daily.

Red-billed Chough*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Common on the Tibetan Plateau where we found this species in good numbers daily.

Daurian Jackdaw*Corvus dauuricus*

Four birds first seen by some near Xining followed by thirty birds flying on a thermal near Beidaihe.

Rook*Corvus frugilegus*

A single bird was seen flying over Happy Island.

Carrion Crow*Corvus corone*

We found scattered numbers on Happy Island with up to fifty birds daily.

Large-billed Crow*Corvus macrorhynchos*

Up to two hundred birds first found near Xining with another sighting of about thirty birds on Happy Island.

Common Raven*Corvus corax*

Found only in the higher areas of Er La Pass on the Tibetan Plateau where we found up to fifteen birds daily.

Tits & Chickadees Paridae**Great Tit***Parus major*

First found in a forested area near Xining followed by daily sighting of up to thirty birds daily on Happy Island.

Yellow-bellied Tit*Parus venustulus*

An attractive endemic, we located up to fifteen birds daily in the forested portions of Happy Island.

Rufous-vented Tit*Parus rubidiventris*

About twenty birds total were seen on the slopes of a mountainous forest near Xining.

Coal Tit*Parus ater*

Only observed on Happy Island where we found up to twenty-five birds daily.

Marsh Tit*Parus palustris*

Three birds were seen at length on Happy Island.

Songar Tit*Parus songarus*

Up to twenty birds were found daily in the forested surround area of Xining.

White-browed Tit*Parus superciliosus*

A beautiful and localized species, we found small scattered numbers in the mountain scrub on the Tibetan Plateau with a high of six birds in a single day.

Varied Tit*Poecile varius*

Highly unexpected and one of very few records for northeastern China, we were pleased to obtain amazing views of a single vagrant on Happy Island.

Penduline Tits Remizidae**Chinese Penduline-Tit***Remiz pendulinus consobrinus*

Impressive numbers of up to two hundred birds were found daily on Happy Island in the reed beds.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**Sand Martin***Riparia riparia*

A single bird was seen on Happy Island near the salt pans.

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

Up to one thousand birds were seen daily on Happy Island.

Eurasian Crag-Martin*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Eight individuals were seen soaring over Rubber Mountain on the Tibetan Plateau.

Red-rumped Swallow*Cecropis daurica*

Up to thirty birds were encountered almost daily during our time exploring Happy Island.

Long-tailed Tits Aegithalidae

Long-tailed Tit*Aegithalos caudatus*

Up to a dozen of these beautiful birds were seen on Happy Island.

White-browed Tit-Warbler*Leptopoeile sophiae*

We enjoyed scattered sightings of this stunning bird on many occasions throughout the Tibetan Plateau in dense scrub.

Crested Tit-Warbler*Leptopoeile elegans*

Five gorgeous birds including two spectacular males were found in a high forested area near Xining.

Larks/Sparrowlarks *Alaudidae***Mongolian Lark***Melanocorypha mongolica*

Only a single bird was seen by some near a small pool in the Tibetan Plateau.

Tibetan Lark*Melanocorypha maxima*

Three birds were first found followed by excellent views of about thirty birds scoped in open habitat on the Tibetan Plateau.

Hume's Short-toed Lark*Calandrella acutirostris*

Three birds were seen in flight calling as they flew past on the Tibetan Plateau.

Asian Short-toed Lark*Calandrella cheleensis*

More common than the proceeding species but tricky to see on the ground, we found in excess of fifty birds on two consecutive days on the Tibetan Plateau.

Eurasian Skylark*Alauda arvensis*

This species was found in good numbers daily on Happy Island with up to one hundred birds each day.

Oriental Skylark*Alauda gulgula*

Common on the Tibetan Plateau with up to thirty birds daily.

Horned Lark*Eremophila alpestris*

Even more common than the proceeding species with up to three hundred birds seen daily.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae***Chinese Hill Warbler***Rhopophilus pekinensis*

Seven birds were seen exceptionally well in the stunted scrub along the Great Wall of China.

Chinese Bulbul*Pycnonotus sinensis*

Up to forty birds were seen on a daily basis while birding on Happy Island.

Marsh Grassbird (Japanese Marsh-Warbler)*Megalurus pryeri*

A single individual of this impossible skulker was seen rather well by everyone in rank grass on Happy Island.

Asian Stubtail (Short-tailed Bush-Warbler)*Urosphena squamiceps*

Two birds were seen sneaking near the ground in dense undergrowth on Happy Island.

Lanceolated Warbler*Locustella lanceolata*

Two of thee difficult migratory birds were seen eventually very well by everyone in rank grass on Happy Island and a nearby wooded site on the mainland.

Black-browed Reed-Warbler*Acroceph. bistrigiceps*

We enjoyed up to six birds daily showing well in the tall grasslands on Happy Island.

Common Chiffchaff*Phylloscopus collybita*

A single vagrant bird was seen well in a grove of trees on the Tibetan Plateau.

Dusky Warbler*Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Found daily on Happy Island with up to six birds seen and heard in the low undergrowth each day.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus affinis*

Fairly common in the vegetated areas surrounding Xining with up to eight birds sighted in a single day.

Yellow-streaked Warbler*Phylloscopus armandii*

More often heard than seen, we found up to five birds our first day birding a wooded mountainside near Xining.

Radde's Warbler*Phylloscopus schwarzi*

Small numbers were seen almost daily during our time birding on Happy Island.

Gansu Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus kansuensis*

Very localized and poorly known, we found this species in the vegetated areas surrounding Xining with up to fifteen birds daily.

Chinese Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus yunnanensis*

This species was only heard in the same area where we found the Gansu Leaf-Warbler.

Pallas's Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus proregulus*

Abundant on Happy Island where we encountered up to three hundred birds daily in every habitat.

Yellow-browed Warbler*Phylloscopus inornatus*

We found smaller numbers of this species on Happy Island with up to ten birds daily.

Hume's Leaf-Warbler*Phylloscopus humei*

Scattered sightings throughout the tour with our largest numbers of three birds found while birding a wooded mountainside near Xining.

Desert Lesser Whitethroat*Sylvia minula*

We were fortunate to find a single individual of the subspecies *margelanica* while birding in the dry scrub of the Tibetan Plateau.

Babblers Timaliidae**Pere David's Laughingthrush***Garrulax davidi*

Pleasantly cooperative with fifteen birds our first day birding near Xining followed by further views near the Great Wall of China.

Elliot's Laughingthrush*Garrulax elliotii*

Found in the same areas as the above species, we had great views of up to twenty-five vocal birds on two separate days.

Bearded Tit Timaliidae**Bearded Tit***Panurus biarmicus*

Now recognized by the IOU as a unique monotypic family, we enjoyed views of this reed-loving specialty both at the wetlands in southeastern Koko Nor and again on Happy Island where we obtained scope views of two calling individuals.

Parrotbills Panuridae**Vinous-throated Parrotbill***Paradoxornis webbianus*

Forty birds total were seen in an active flock along the Great Wall of China.

White-eyes Zosteropidae**Chestnut-flanked White-eye***Zosterops erythropleurus*

Fairly common on Happy Island where we found about thirty birds daily.

Japanese White-eye*Zosterops japonicus*

Ten birds total were seen on Happy Island on one day only.

Kinglets Regulidae**Goldcrest***Regulus regulus*

We first found about twenty-five birds in the forested areas near Xining followed by small numbers on Happy Island.

Wrens Troglodytidae

Winter Wren*Troglodytes troglodytes*

Three birds total were seen skulking in the undergrowth on Happy Island.

Nuthatches Sittidae**Snowy-browed Nuthatch (Chinese) Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*

Six of these beautiful birds were seen in the forested mountain slopes near Xining.

White-cheeked [Przevalski's] Nuthatch *Sitta leucopsis*

Occupying the same habitat as the preceding species but much less common, we had great views of two birds after some intensive searching.

Wallcreeper Tichodromidae**Wallcreeper***Tichodroma muraria*

Always a crowd pleaser, we had crippling views of two birds along a steep rocky ledge along a swift flowing stream on the Tibetan Plateau.

Creepers Certhiidae**Eurasian Treecreeper***Certhia familiaris*

Three birds were first found in the forested areas near Xining followed by another individual that turned up on Happy Island.

Starlings Sturnidae**Crested Myna***Acridotheres cristatellus*

Six birds were seen while sightseeing in Beijing.

White-cheeked Starling*Sturnus cineraceus*

One bird was first seen while beginning our explorations of the Tibetan Plateau followed by up to eighty birds daily on Happy Island.

Thrushes Turdidae**Scaly (White's) Thrush***Zoothera aurea*

Two birds were seen very well the first day of our tour near Xining followed by outrageous views again of one bird scoped and watched at length on Happy Island.

Gray-backed Thrush*Turdus hortulorum*

Small numbers were encountered daily of this attractive but shy thrush.

Chestnut (Gray-headed) Thrush*Turdus rubrocanus*

We found up to a dozen of these attractive birds on two consecutive days in the forested areas near Xining.

White-backed Thrush*Turdus kessleri*

A real stunner, we had great scope views of this species on several occasions with up to twenty birds watched at length in a coniferous area west of Koko Nor.

Eyebrowed Thrush*Turdus obscurus*

We found two birds on two consecutive days in the forested areas of Happy Island.

Black-throated Thrush*Turdus atrogularis*

Single birds were seen mixed with the red-throated subspecies on three occasions during the tour including our first day birding near Xining.

[Red-throated Thrush]*Turdus ruficollis*

More than three hundred birds were seen in the forested areas near Xining on several days followed by scattered sightings on the Tibetan Plateau.

Dusky Thrush*Turdus naumanni*

We found scattered numbers of this migrant on Happy Island with up to twenty birds in a single day. Eventually everyone had great scope views.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae***Bluethroat***Luscinia svecica*

Three birds total were seen skulking in the undergrowth on Happy Island.

Red-flanked Bluetail*Tarsiger cyanurus*

Small numbers were first seen in scattered locations on the Tibetan Plateau followed by up to 150 birds daily on Happy Island, one of the most common birds on the island.

Rufous-tailed Robin*Luscinia sibilans*

One bird was seen by some of us while it skulked through the dense undergrowth on Happy Island.

Ala Shan (Przevalski's) Redstart*Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

In total we found fifteen of these beautiful endemics in scrubby mountainous habitat on the Tibetan Plateau.

Black Redstart*Phoenicurus ochruros*

A single female was seen near Rubber Mountain on the Tibetan Plateau.

White-throated Redstart*Phoenicurus schisticeps*

A stunning species when the male is seen well, we found this bird on three days while birding on the Tibetan Plateau with six birds on one day west of Koko Nor.

Daurian Redstart*Phoenicurus auroreus*

We found this confiding species on a daily basis while on Happy Island with up to six birds each day.

White-winged (Guldenstadt's) Redstart*Phoenicurus erythrogaster*

Once we made the rocky mountains south of Koko Nor we found this bird in good numbers with up to fifteen birds on three consecutive days.

Blue-fronted Redstart*Phoenicurus frontalis*

Located in scattered areas across the Tibetan Plateau with up to six birds on several days.

Plumbeous Redstart*Rhyacornis fuliginosa*

Only one single bird seen along a river drainage channel near Xining.

White-capped Water-Redstart*Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*

Two birds seen well coming off the Tibetan Plateau and near Xining.

Common Stonechat*Saxicola torquatus*

Found in good numbers in the grassland on Happy Island with up to six birds each day.

Desert Wheatear*Oenanthe deserti*

Only one bird found along our route driving west from Koko Nor.

Asian Brown Flycatcher*Muscicapa dauurica*

One bird was seen by some participants on Happy Island.

Red-throated Flycatcher*Ficedula albicilla*

One late migrant bird was seen well on Happy Island.

Dippers *Cinclidae***White-throated Dipper***Cinclus cinclus*

Three birds total were seen very well and scoped at length along a swift flowing mountain stream on the Tibetan Plateau.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

We located nearly two hundred birds in a small grove of trees, this migratory subspecies *bactrianus* migrates south from Russia.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow*Passer montanus*

Located in large numbers throughout the tour with up to five hundred birds daily.

Rock Sparrow*Petronia petronia*

Scattered numbers found on the Tibetan Plateau with one large flock of an estimated 1500 birds on one day near a dam.

Henri's Snowfinch*Montifringilla henrici*

Found on three consecutive days south of Koko Nor with up to fifty birds in a single day.

Himalayan Snowfinch*Montifringilla adamsi*

We enjoyed great looks at this localized species on three different days on the Tibetan Plateau with close to forty birds on two occasions.

White-rumped Snowfinch*Onychostrut. taczanowskii*

Seen almost daily on the Tibetan Plateau in appropriate habitat with up to fifty birds daily.

Pere David's Snowfinch*Pyrgilauda davidiana*

Seen on three occasions while on the Tibetan Plateau with a high of fifteen birds total at our first sighting.

Rufous-necked Snowfinch*Pyrgilauda ruficollis*

A beautiful denizen of the Tibetan Plateau where this species was common with up to two hundred birds almost daily.

Blanford's Snowfinch*Pyrgilauda blanfordi*

More localized than some of the other Snowfinches, we had great views of this species on three days of the tour with a high of twenty birds in a day.

Accentors *Prunellidae***Alpine Accentor***Prunella collaris*

A single bird was seen near our accommodation near the shores of Koko Nor.

Robin Accentor*Prunella rubeculoides*

Pleasantly common on the Tibetan Plateau with up to ten birds seen well almost daily.

Rufous-browed Accentor*Prunella strophiata*

Seen in small numbers on four days of the tour with a high of ten birds in the mountain scrub near Xining.

Siberian Accentor*Prunella montanella*

Five birds total first seen on Happy Island and then found again in a small wooded area on the mainland across the channel.

Brown Accentor*Prunella fulvescens*

Found in small numbers almost daily while on the Tibetan Plateau with a high of seven birds in a single day.

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae***[Western Yellow Wagtail]***Motacilla flava*

One bird was seen well while ascending the Tibetan Plateau near Koko Nor.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail*Motacilla tschutschensis*

We found this species daily on Happy Island with an average of six birds daily.

Citrine Wagtail*Motacilla citreola*

Ten and fifty birds found on two separate days while birding on the Tibetan Plateau.

Gray Wagtail*Motacilla cinerea*

We had three scattered sightings during the tour with a high of three birds on a single day while birding on Happy Island.

White Wagtail*Motacilla alba*

Found in good numbers both on the Tibetan Plateau and in large numbers on Happy Island where we watched up to sixty birds daily.

Richard's Pipit*Anthus richardi*

First seen while ascending the Tibetan Plateau followed by several scattered sightings on Happy Island.

Blyth's Pipit*Anthus godlewskii*

We had good looks at one bird on the Tibetan Plateau as well as a few flyovers best identified by call.

Olive-backed Pipit*Anthus hodgsoni*

We found this migratory species throughout the tour in reasonable numbers with a high of fifteen birds in a day on Happy Island.

Red-throated Pipit*Anthus cervinus*

Always seen in flight, we found several pairs flying over Happy Island giving a distinctive flight call.

Rosy Pipit*Anthus roseus*

Twelve birds were seen well our first day while birding the mountain slopes near Xining.

Buff-bellied Pipit*Anthus rubescens*

Large numbers were encountered only on Happy Island where we found up to 150 birds daily.

Water Pipit*Anthus spinoletta*

We first had great scope views of this species on a grassy slope on the Tibetan Plateau followed by scattered sightings thereafter during the tour.

True Finches *Fringillidae***Brambling***Fringilla montifringilla*

We found a single bird flying over the Tibetan Plateau followed by up to three hundred birds almost daily on Happy Island.

Oriental Greenfinch*Carduelis sinica*

Only four birds seen on one day in a scrubby mountain gully on the Tibetan Plateau.

Eurasian Siskin*Carduelis spinus*

Up to forty-five birds seen on three consecutive days on Happy Island.

Twite*Carduelis flavirostris*

This little migrant was common on the Tibetan Plateau where we watched up to two hundred birds daily.

Plain Mountain-Finch*Leucosticte nemoricola*

A total of six birds were found on the Tibetan Plateau with our best views from our lodge south of Koko Nor.

Brandt's Mountain Finch*Leucosticte brandti*

Seen on three consecutive days while birding the Tibetan Plateau, we found up to twenty birds feeding near our lodge south of Koko Nor.

Desert Finch*Rhodospiza obsoleta*

Three stunning individuals perched long enough in a small grove on the Tibetan Plateau for great scope views.

Common Rosefinch*Carpodacus erythrinus*

We found small numbers scattered over Happy Island with no more than three birds sighted in a day.

[Chinese] Beautiful Rosefinch*Carpodacus pulcherrimus davidianus*

Scrubby gullies throughout the Tibetan Plateau produced up to ten birds on several days including excellent scope views of the stunning males.

Pale (Sinai) Rosefinch*Carpodacus synoicus*

We had fantastic scope views of both male and female birds, eight in total, on the dry leeward slopes near Xining.

Pallas' Rosefinch*Carpodacus roseus*

We had brief views of a pair that perched atop a rocky slope along the Great Wall of China near Beidaihe.

White-browed Rosefinch*Carpodacus dubius*

We found this species on two occasions while birding near the Tibetan Plateau with twenty birds first sighted on the forested slopes near Xining.

Streaked (Eastern Great) Rosefinch*Carpodacus rubicilloides*

This brilliant Rosefinch was seen on three occasions on the Tibetan Plateau with our best views of close to thirty birds scoped on Rubber Mountain.

Spotted Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus severtzovi*

Four birds total were seen on the Tibetan Plateau with outrageous close views of one bird south of Koko Nor on the power line outside of our restaurant.

Tibetan (Roborovski's) Rosefinch *Carpodacus roborowskii*

We first scoped seven of these very rare rosefinches on the saddle of Er La Pass and later found one more female in the high snow several days later at site nearby.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Fifteen of these widespread birds were sighted in the montane forest near Xining just after having found the Gray-headed Bullfinch.

Gray-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca*

Four birds were seen while searching for the Przevalski's Nuthatches near Xining.

Chinese Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria*

A single passage migrant was seen on Happy Island.

Japanese Grosbeak *Eophona personata*

We found one migrant bird in a garden temple in the city of Beijing visiting a water source.

White-winged Grosbeak *Mycerobas carniceps*

Six birds were scoped in a forested area near Xining while enjoying our morning coffee.

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Fringillidae*

Przevalski's Rosefinch *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Previously known as Pink-tailed Bunting, we had crippling views of this very rare monotypic family on two occasions. First we located two females and one male on Rubber Mountain that were never especially cooperative. Later at a scrubby site south of Koko Nor we had amazing encounters with nine individuals total including prolonged scope views of the glorious male.

Buntings & Allies *Emberizidae*

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

We found this migrant on three occasions while birding Happy Island including lengthy scope views.

Eastern (Godlewski's) Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia godlewskii*

Seen on four separate occasions throughout the tour, we had scope views on the Tibetan Plateau and further views while birding along the Great Wall of China.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*

One bird was first seen near Xining followed by two more birds on the day we drive to Beidaihe.

Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*

Small numbers found in the wooded areas of Happy Island with a maximum of four birds found in a single day.

Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata*

A few birds seen mixed with other buntings on three separate days on Happy Island.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

One bird seen our first day near Xining followed by numerous birds on Happy Island with more than thirty birds daily.

Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys*

Smaller numbers than the preceding species daily on Happy Island with a maximum of twenty birds seen in one day.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

About ten birds found daily in the scrub on Happy Island.

Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans*

Fluctuating numbers present on Happy Island daily with a maximum of forty birds sighted on a single day.

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*

Only one bird seen in open scrub on Happy Island.

Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila*

A few birds first seen on Happy Island followed by excellent views of two stunning birds in a forested area across the channel from Happy Island on the mainland.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

Present in large numbers on Happy Island with up to fifty birds seen daily.

Pallas's Bunting *Emberiza pallasii*

Also present in large numbers on Happy Island but preferring more grassy habitat than the preceding species.

Japanese Reed (Ochre-rumped) Bunting *Emberiza yessoensis*

Pleasantly common this year on Happy Island with at least five birds and up to ten individuals present each day in grassy habitat.

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Small numbers were found in reed beds on Happy Island with a maximum of nine birds seen in a single day.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

This species was heard flying over Happy Island at a great height.

Annotated List of Mammal Species recorded

In order seen:

Chinese Field Mouse *Apodemus draco*

A single individual was seen in the cultivated field near Xining.

Chinese Hare *Lepus sinensis*

We found single animals near Xining and again daily on Happy Island.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Two animals were seen first in the mountain forest near Xining and again once on the Tibetan Plateau.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus*

We found up to five animals each day on the Tibetan Plateau.

Black-lipped Pika *Ochotona curzoniae*

Numerous on the Tibetan Plateau with up to two hundred animals every day.

Gansu Pika *Ochotona cansus*

Six animals total with our best views on Rubber Mountain.

Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticaudata*

More than five hundred total animals were seen on one day driving south from Koko Nor.

Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*

Three of these rare antelopes were scoped in an open area west of Koko Nor.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*

We found fourteen total animals including some truly magnificent stags in a juniper forest west of Koko Nor.

Himalayan Marmoset *Callithrix penicillata*

Three animals total were found in the same area as the Red Deer.

Alpine Weasel *Mustela altaica*

A cute and charismatic animal, we had great views on two occasions on the Tibetan Plateau.

Tibetan Gray Hamster *Cricetulus alticola*

One animal was seen running through the dense grass tussocks at the edge of a wetland near Koko

Nor.

Tibetan Fox

Vulpes ferrilata

A total of five of these beautiful animals were found while exploring the Tibetan Plateau.

Stoliczka's Mountain Vole

Alticola stoliczkanus

Three animals total were seen well south of Koko Nor.

Tibetan Wild Ass

Equus kiang

We had memorable views of several groups of these rare animals totaling 112 on the Tibetan Plateau south of Koko Nor.

Blue Sheep

Pseudois schaeferi

While scanning for the Pallas's Cat one afternoon we were fortunate to pick up seven of these magnificent sheep scampering up a steep mountainside including some huge adults.

Pallas's Cat

Otocolobus manul

Just when we were about to give up we found one of these very rare cats silently sneaking through the rocky mountainside. We excitedly scoped it for more than half an hour!

Brown Rat

Rattus norvegicus

Several animals were found in (!) our accommodation on Happy Island, although attempts were made thereafter to safely remove these little critters.

Pere David's Rock Squirrel

Sciurotamias davidianus

We found four animals scurrying along the Great Wall of China.

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