

2013 Sichuan Birding Tour from 20th May – 8th June

Reported by Summer Wong

Leader: Frank Lambert

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Participants: Peter and Rosemary Royle, John and Jan Jones, Howard Ackford, Robert Jones and Michael Frost.

20 May After birding in Baihuatan park, we drove from Chengdu to Mt. Emei. In the garden of our hotel, a **Swinhoe's Minivet** was perched on a tree. While clients went to a lake to look for Chinese Bamboo Partridge, our driver Mr. Peng and I happened to see a pair of **Chinese Bamboo Partridges** right at the edge of the car park! I went to the lake to tell the group about the partridges, but it was too late, we tried to find them but in vain. After lunch, we went to a temple area, where we saw a **Rufous-faced Warbler** singing in a treetop, a few **Spangled Drongos** flying around and **Slaty-backed Forktails** at a stream, even one without tail, poor bird! Along the roadside we had **Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler** mixed with **White-browed Laughingthrushes**, **Blue Whistling Thrush**, **Mrs Gould's Sunbird**, **Hwamei**, and Chinese Bamboo Partridge!

21 May Due to the good birding yesterday afternoon, we changed our plan and went to the top of Mt. Emei to look for **Grey-hooded Parrotbill** and succeeded! The other good birds we saw there were **Sichuan Leaf Warbler**, **Bianchi's Warbler**, **Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler**, **Grey-crested Tit**, **White-collared Yuhina**, **Golden Bush Robin**, **Vinaceous Rosefinch**, **Rufous-breasted Accentor**, and on the way down to the cable car station, a **White-bellied Redstart** was attracted by my tape and was seen very well near the road. Lunch on the mountain, then took a sightseeing bus down and changed back to our own bus heading to Laojunshan.

22 May Started early in the morning try to look for Temminck's Tragopan and Lady Amherst's pheasant but in vain. Got another good view of Chinese Bamboo Partridge on the road. On the middle of the mountain we saw **Grey-crowned** and **White-spectacled Warbler**, brief view of **Emei Shan Liocichla**, **Red-winged Laughingthrush**, **White-throated Laughingthrush**, **White-tailed Robin** attracted by tape and hopping around the bushes, a singing **Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon**, **Chinese Blue Flycatcher**, **Grey-headed Parrotbill**, and **Blue-winged** and **Red-tailed Minla** on the same tree.

23 May Spending the whole morning around the middle area, found **Rusty (Buffy) Laughingthrush** and had another good view of White-throated Laughingthrush. Late in

the afternoon, we tried again at the place where the staff in the reserve saw a tragopan in April, waiting there for more than one hour but without even the slightest response.

24 May Tried very early in the morning for the tragopan, in thick fog, which is supposed to be a good weather for tragopans, but still in vain. We were hopeless and drove down, getting good views of a female Lady Amherst's Pheasant and a female **Silver Pheasant** on the road. Then headed to Longcangou.

25 May One and half hour drive to the end of the road up, after breakfast, walking up to the top for the parrotbills. The weather was not good for them, too foggy up there, but got excellent views of **Spotted** and **Brown Bush Warbler**. There were more birds in the lower area. We saw **Dark-sided**, **Ferruginous** and **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher**, **Yellow-browed tit**, **Chinese Fulvetta**, close views of two **Emei Shan Liocichlas** hiding in the bushes, good views of **Golden-breasted Fulvetta**, **Emei Leaf Warbler** and **Martens's Warbler**. Tried a few times around the area for **Temminck's Tragopans** and finally saw a mother with two chicks on the road side!

26 May Drove up earlier than yesterday, trying to see male tragopan, but a bright sunny day was not good for it. Then after breakfast, we tried in the lower area for other important birds: **Russet Bush Warbler**, great views of **Firethroat**, **Great Parrotbill**, **Verditer Flycatcher** and a **Speckled Wood Pigeon** landed on a dead tree.

27 May Before heading to Wolong tried in the lower area for **Golden Parrotbill** and got it with very good views of Chinese Blue Flycatcher again! On the way down, **Spotted Laughingthrushes** were singing and showing nicely! Other birds were **Yellow-bellied Tit**, **Grey-headed Fulvetta**, **Daurian**, **Plumbeous** and **White-capped Redstart** as well as **Black Bulbul**. What a nice morning before leaving! Then a long day drive to Wolong.

28 May Very early departure for **Wood Snipe** on Balangshan, and got good views of it displaying in the sky. A male **Chinese Monal** was flying and calling, no question of the bird of the day! A distant view of **White-eared Pheasant**, many calling **Koklass Pheasants** with none showing, and a **Chestnut-throated Partridge (Verreaux's Monal Partridge)** crossed road as I expected. After breakfast, we tried the top area for Snow Partridge and had very close views of **Tibetan Snowcock**! We also saw **Plain** and **Brandt's Mountain Finches**, **Alpine** and **Rufous-breasted Accentor**, **Snow Pigeon**, **White-tailed Rubythroat**, **Yellow-billed Chough**, **Himalayan Griffon**, **Chinese Babax**, **Buff-throated Warbler**, **Grey-headed Bullfinch**, again Chinese Fulvetta, brief views of **Red-flanked Bluetail**, **Black-browed Tit**, **Rufous-vented Tit**. I spotted a **Golden Pheasant** feeding on the open grass when I just wanted to check a trail I had never been to. I was so excited running down to tell them! Lucky Summer also tried to see a well hidden **Indian Blue Robin** down a slope while the others gave up.

29 May On the way up to the top of Balangshan, Frank spotted a Koklass Pheasant on the road side, a good start for the day! On the top we tried and succeeded to see **Grandala**, **Red-fronted Rosefinch**, **Streaked Rosefinch**, **Snow Partridge** and again Tibetan Snowcock. In the lower area we saw a **Giant** and a **Barred Laughingthrush**, which alerted me by its calling and was found in bushy roadside habitat, a lucky mountain for Summer! We saw a **Scaly Thrush** on a little trail, also heard **White-browed Bush Robin** and Firethroat. Frank was successful in finding **Slaty Bunting**.

30 May This day we drove to the other side of the mountain, on the way we had **Common**, **Dark-breasted**, **White-browed**, **Pink-rumped**, and **Beautiful Rosefinch**, again Plain and Brandt's Mountain Finches, excellent views of White-tailed Rubythroat, **Elliot's Laughingthrush**, Giant Laughingthrush, **Hill Pigeon**, Snow Pigeon, and a **Three-banded Rosefinch** gave a quick showing for Howard. A **White-cheeked Nuthatch** was singing on the top of a pinetree for a long time! Also a very nice view **Sichuan Tit**!

31 May A quick breakfast in the hostel, after which we headed to Maerkang. On the way we saw Hill Pigeon, **Long-tailed Rosefinch**, **Wallcreeper**, which we had missed in Balangshan, **Yellow-streaked Warbler** and **Blue Rock Thrush**. Lunch in the garden of a Tibetan family, then birding on Mengbishan. The weather was nice for birds, **Sichuan Jay** and **Crested Tit Warbler** were showing very well. After hearing the call of **Blood Pheasant**, Frank tried to make it show to the clients and succeeded! Good views of White-eared Pheasant this time. A **Long-tailed Thrush** was singing on the top of a pine tree, with great views through the telescope!

1 June We started early but it was snowing in the mountain area, so we stayed in the lower area as the birds were forced there by the snow. We had good views of a pair of Three-banded Rosefinches, **Slaty-backed Flycatcher**, **White-throated Dipper**, **Goldcrest** and again Crested Tit Warbler. A Chestnut-throated Partridge was showing and calling on a rock, we got amazing views of it, no question bird of the day!

2 June From Maerkang to Ruoergai. We welcomed breakfast with yak yoghurt and honey! On the high plateau we saw **Azure-winged Magpie**, **Daurian Jackdaw**, **White-browed Tit**, **White-browed Tit Warbler**, **Dusky Warbler**, **Saker Falcon** together with its chicks at a nest, **Tibetan Snowfinch**, **Ground Tit**, **White-rumped Snowfinch**, **Rufous-necked Snowfinch**, **Black-necked Crane**, **Upland Buzzard** and **Chinese Grey Shrike** near the nest.

3 June Early start for **Blue-eared Pheasant** which Janet spotted perched on a tree! And **Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush**, **Chinese Grouse**, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Chinese Blue Flycatcher and **Godlewski's Bunting**. After lunch went to Flower Lake for waterbirds, getting good and close views of **Tibetan Lark** near the lake.

4 June On the way to Jiuzhaigou, we saw **Siberian Rubythroat**, Dusky Warbler, **Siberian Stonechat** and **Eurasian Jay**. Checked in at the hotel first and then headed to see **Spectacled Fulvetta** near the national park.

5 June Quick breakfast in the hotel, then tried to catch the first sightseeing bus into the park. I tried to get help from the bus organizers, and they kindly arranged a bus to the robin place before 9 o'clock. Spending the whole morning looking for the rare and shy **Rufous-headed Robin** but only heard it. Good news was that we tried to see Indian Blue Robin, **Sichuan Treecreeper**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, and Frank spotted a **Chinese Nuthatch** while we just tried to board a bus! Then had lunch in a Tibetan village where we also saw **Sooty Tit**. Then back to Reed Lake looking for **Spectacled Parrotbill**, which did a great show for us, lovely birds! An unexpected **Brown Dipper** was perched on a rock along the river outside the park!

6 June Tried again for Rufous-headed Robin. The nice staff of the park sent us to the place. Spent half of the day searching for it and finally managed to see it! After that less than half a day of sightseeing in the rest part of the park, with a wonderful landscape and colorful lakes!

7 June Breakfast at the hotel, then drove back to Chengdu. On the way we saw **Collared Crow**, **Brown-breasted Bulbul** and **Collared Finchbill**. Unexpectedly, near a gas station, we saw a lot of birds, like **Red-billed Starling**, Rufous-faced Warbler, Black Bulbul, **Grey-capped Greenfinch**, **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, **Black-naped Oriole**, **Black-winged Cuckooshrike**, **Chinese Grosbeak**, **White-rumped Munia** and **Speckled Piculet**.