

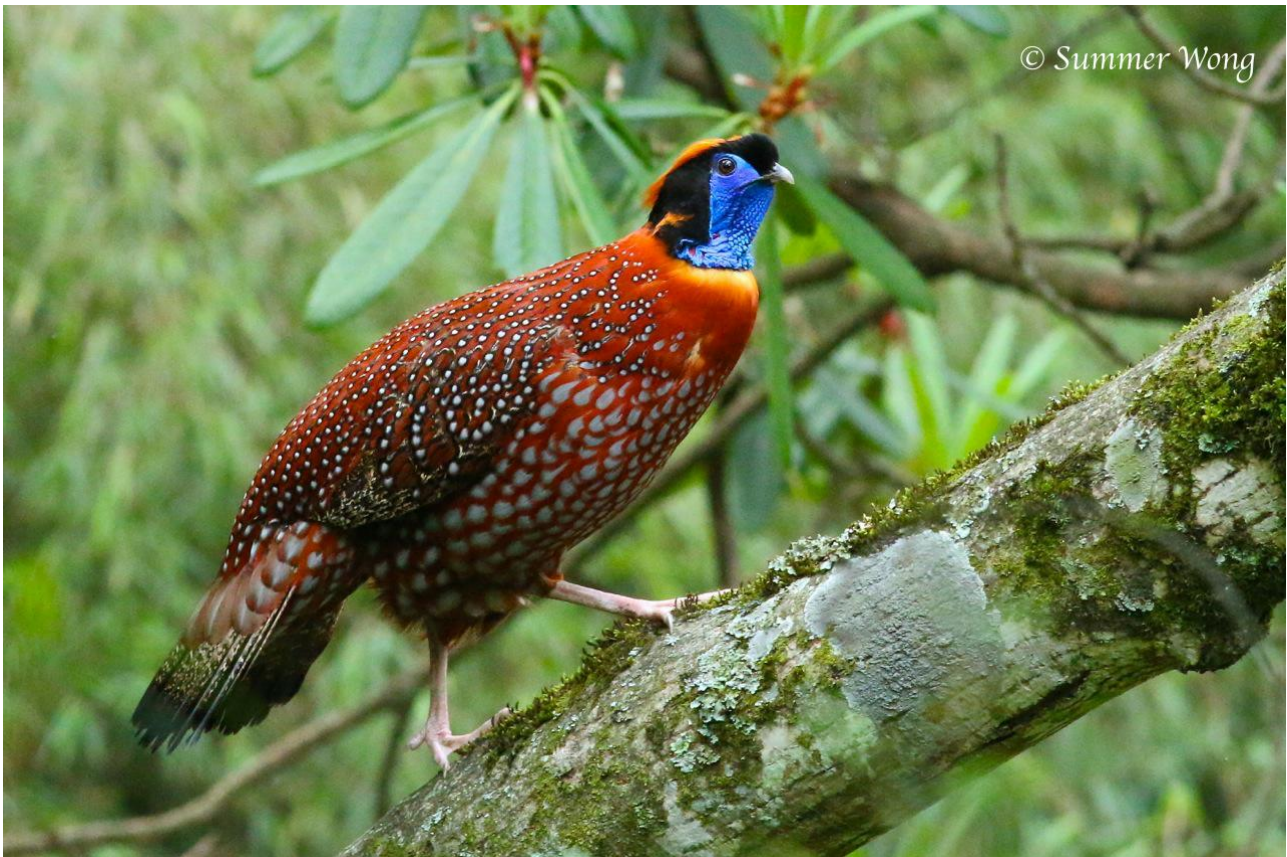
Custom-made Sichuan Bird Tour Report

8th - 25th May 2015

Local bird guide, reported & photographed by : Summer Wong

www.summerwongtours.com summerwong2010@126.com

Participant: Carsten Enevoldsen



As Carsten had been to North & Southeast China and Qinghai for birding years ago, so he had seen many species in China already, on this Sichuan tour he requested to focus on his new species and especially the species he missed on the other China tours, he doesn't want to spend time on the species on the birds he had seen before. So on this trip we only focused on his life list, didn't spend time to look for the birds he had seen before, making sure he can have good viewing and enough time to check the characters of his life list.

After the tour Carsten wrote: Thanks for all the nice pictures. Blackthorn, Temminck's Tragopan and Tawny Fish Owl were among the stars on our trip but I was also impressed by the large number of leaf and bush warblers we saw thanks to your impressive collection of calls!

In this trip we had a great view of **Blackthroat**, but in order to protect the bird I wouldn't mention the exact place where we saw the bird.



Blackthroat © Summer Wong

Day 1 (8th May) Picking up Carsten from airport at lunch time and had lunch in downtown Chengdu then went to China Mobile to apply and buy a Chinese SIM card for Carsten, it's quite complicated to buy a SIM card for a foreigner nowadays, in this branch office they can't sell SIM card to a foreigner so had to take a risk to use my ID card to buy a SIM card for Carsten, anyway we finally got one then headed to Longcanggou. On the way to Longcanggou we got **Ashy-throated Parrotbill**, **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, **Rufous-capped Babbler**, **Swinhoe's Minivet**, **White-browed Laughingthrush**, **Collared Finchbill**, **Black Drongo**, we arrived at Longcanggou before dinner time so we spent the last hour before dinner on the lower area and got a very good and close view of **Common Cuckoo** calling on the top of a tall tree, heard Marten's Warbler calling but hard to get them out and show well to us, our last good bird today was **Sichuan Bush Warbler**.

Day 2-3 (9-10th May) In 2 full days in Longcanggou we mainly focused on parrotbills and successfully got all the target species: **Grey-hooded Parrotbill** which we had a great view on the way up to the top area! On that way we also got a good view of **Chestnut-headed Tesia**, lucky! **Golden Parrotbill** coming together with **Golden-breasted Fulvetta** which was always moving and hiding in the bamboo. A pair of **Brown Parrotbill** were successfully found in the top area after we spotted a **Spotted Bush Warbler** calling on the ground loudly, Carsten checked it carefully and compared it with Sichuan Bush Warbler by his eyes, even though the calling of the two species are totally different, but Carsten always enjoys watching the birds carefully and distinguishing the different characters by binoculars. On the top area we also tried to find Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler, we only heard it far away, can't find it through the thick bamboo, **Sichuan**

Treecreeper was found successfully after one hour hiking. A pair of **Great Parrotbill** showed us well in the second morning, but the **Three-toed Parrotbill** took us hours to search and finally got a pair too!



Grey-hooded Parrotbill



Golden Parrotbill

The unexpected good bird in Longcanggou was definitely the **Golden-fronted Fulvetta**! In the last day in Longcanggou after hard searching for the **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** as it always hiding in the thick and dark bushes, as a glimpse was not enough for Carsten to distinguish the bird, so we spent almost one hour there to try to get a good of the flycatcher, seeing it moving from side to side and crossing the road very quickly, finally Carsten got tired of this bird and gave up to have a steady view of this “stupid” flycatcher, we had our first instant rice lunch on this tour, and Carsten enjoyed his favourite Chinese food “Laoganma” a red chili oil with black beans. As we still have enough time in this afternoon, I suggested to try to look for the Golden-fronted Fulvetta in the lower area, but actually I didn’t have highly expectation for it, as I had never seem it here before, just heard that the Golden-fronted exist here, it turned out this is a great try, we got great view of the Golden-fronted Fulvetta which was popped up on a open brunch of the road side bushes with a big insect in its beak! Standing still there for one minute, but I didn’t bring my camera with me at that moment! Can’t forgive myself for losing such a good chance to photograph it! Carsten was very happy to have such great view of it!

In the first morning when we drove up got good view of a female **Lady Amherst’s Pheasant** on the road side. But for the Temminck’s Tragopan, not even a glimpse of it in the 2 days there, I think mostly because the noisy road construction there. **Emei Shan Liocichla** was spotted singing on a broad leaf tree when we were looking for the Three-toed Parrotbill, **Red-winged Laughingthrush** not a easy bird as it always hiding, but finally got it good view when it popping on the bushes! **Elliot’s Laughingthrush** noisy and everywhere!

Other lifers for Carsten there were **Darjeeling Woodpecker**, **Fire-capped Tit**, **Rufous-vented Tit** which surprised me as it is quite a common bird in China and Carsten missed it in other China tours! As before this tour Carsten never managed to distinguish the “annoying” warblers, so for him all the warblers are lifers! **Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler**, **Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler**, **Brown Bush Warbler**, **Aberrant**

Bush Warbler, Bianchi's Warbler, Kloss's Leaf Warbler, Claudia's Warbler, Emei Leaf Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Buff-barred Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler.



Darjeeling Woodpecker



Fire-capped Tit

Day 4-7 (11-14th May) Drive from Longcanggou to Balangshan and spent 3 full days there. Game birds are the high light there, **Chinese Monal** which was disturbed by the Chinese photographers chose other ways to go up to the mountain top instead of the original route. We stayed far away from it but got very good view of it through the telescope. A pair of **White-eared Pheasant** feeding on the lower slope around 20 meters away from our feet, very close view! A pair of **Tibetan Snowcock** walked up from lower slope and alone the concrete road fence while another pair calling from the up slope! **Snow Partridge** took us some time to spot, near the top we got good view of a pair through the telescope, but when we drove down I heard another pair calling loudly from the up slope seems like not far away so we stopped and had another great viewing of this pair around 25 meters! **Temminck's Tragopan**, only had view of a few female running up to the slope after hearing our steps.

Other great birds on the top area are **Red-fronted Rosefinch**, 2 pairs of them feeding on the grass and rocks. Male **Grandala** feeding on the grass. **Wallcreeper** nesting on the rock cliff. On the foot of the mountain we got **Slaty Bunting** singing on a bush a bit far away from us but luck it was on a open stick so that we still have good view of it. **Barred Laughingthrush** not easy but we finally got a pair playing and chasing each other, move too fast to photograph them! **Sooty Tit** and **Rusty-breasted Tit** were surprise for us there as the altitude is quite low. **Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler** which was missed in Longcanggou showed well here. A female **Chestnut Rock Thrush** scared me when I passed by it's nest it shot out 1 meter away in front of me! And stopped on a brunch and seating there for a long time! **Firethroats** were singing and chasing each other, a male one seating in the thick tall bushes, but at least we got a window to have great view of it because it was just seating under the sunshine, making it's throat shining like on fire! **White-backed Woodpecker** and **Crimson-breasted Woodpecker** feeding on the same dead tree. **Fujian Niltava** was spotted a few times singing and hiding on the trees. Indian Blue Robin showed well. **Buff-throated Warbler** cooperatively singing on the top of the bushes. **White-browed, Dark-breasted, Common Rosefinch** quite easy there. **White-browed Fulvetta** was showing well while we were looking for the

Chinese Fulvetta. Usually we will look for White-tailed Rubythroat, but Carsten had seen it before in Qinghai, so we didn't try to look for it on this trip.



Chinese Monal



Barred Laughingthrush



Firethroat

Day 8-10 (15-17th May) Early morning birding in Balangshan had great view of **Giant Laughingthrush**, **Pink-rumped Rosefinch**, **Sichuan Tit**, then headed to Maerkang, on the way it was raining and windy, tried hard to find **Long-tailed Rosefinch** and waited long time until it showed well to Carsten, Carsten always wanted to spend as much time as possible to get good view of the target birds. There we also got lots of **Hodgson's Redstart**, and **Yellow-streaked Warbler**, **Hill Pigeon**, **Crag Martin**, **Blue Rock Thrush**.

In Maerkang area, we got our main target bird: **Chestnut-throated Partridge**, so excited, two groups in two sides of the valley kept calling to each other in the early morning. **Koklass Pheasant** was happen to crossing the road when we drove up. **Blood Pheasants** showed well too, crossing the road. **Chinese Fulvetta**, **Collared Grosbeak**, **White-winged Grosbeak**, **Three-banded Rosefinch** was a highlight too, both male and female showed well to us! Sichuan Jay tortured us, spent all the rest of the time to try to get it but in vain, only the Giant Laughingthrush imitated it's calling make us frustrating.



Chestnut-throated Partridge

Day 11-12 (18-19th May) On the way from Maerkang to Ruogai, it's great place for many good birds: Black-necked Crane, White-browed Tit, White-browed Tit Warbler, Tibetan Partridge, Tibetan Snowfinch, Przevalski's Rosefinch, Plain Laughingthrush, but all these birds Carsten had seen them in Qinghai already, so we just passed by and no stop to look for them, the only target he needs on the way is **Chinese Grey Shrike**, and we got it finally! The next day we focused on the Blue-eared Pheasant and Chinese Grouse, eventually got a pair of **Blue-eared Pheasant** feeding on the grass, but the Chinese Grouse tortured us too and no show. There we also got great view of some nice small birds: **Przevalski's Nuthatch**, **Maroon-backed Accentor**, Sichuan Tit, **Crested Tit Warbler**, **White-bellied Redstart**, **Black Woodpecker**, **White-throated Redstart**, **Siberian Rubythroat**, **Chinese Song Thrush**, **Alpine Leaf Warbler**, **Hume's Leaf Warbler**, Giant Laughingthrush imitating Sichuan Jay again made us frustrating, **White-cheeked**

Laughingthrush was a highlight too, flew straight to us, feeding the sprouts on the high bushes. As other high plateau birds Carsten doesn't need in the flower lake area, so we spend the whole day in the forest, he quite enjoyed having a nap in the shadow of the pine trees after lunch! In the late afternoon and early morning had both tried to look for the Chinese Grouse but only we got a glimpse of a pair Chinese Grouse ran into the bushes in front of me, but a glimpse is not enough for Carsten to count it as a lifer, so we needed it in the next destination.



Sukatschev's Laughingthrush



Przevalski's Nuthatch

Day 13-14 (20-21st May) In Jiuzhaigou area we had great birding experience, the first highlight is the **Chinese Grouse** which was spotted feeding the sprouts of the small bushes on the edge of the pine trees! **Spectacled Fulvetta** and **Chinese Baxbax** showed well to us too.

Inside the park we got our main target bird **Rufous-headed Robin** in the early morning just after we arrived at the spot, not even hard searching for it! But before we saw it, it's quite funny : We arrived at there and saw another group were there already, I heard the robin was calling, but I thought it probably the other group was playing the tape, when we met, we talked then we both laughed, as they thought I was playing the tape, but actually no body playing tape at all, it's the robin calling! Just after that a few minutes then I spotted the robin was on the ground near the board walk, I mentioned it likes crossing the board walk under neath then it was spotted again on the other side of the board walk! Carsten had very good view of it, and he said he can't believe he saw it! There we also got **Sichuan Treecreeper**, Indian Blue Robin, Himalayan Bluetail, Bianchi's Warbler. Finish the robin so early so we spent the afternoon for sightseeing in the park meanwhile still got some other good birds: **Spectabled Parrotbill**, Rusty-breasted Tit, **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, Maroon-backed Accentor, Elliot's Laughingthrush is like pet bird in the park, feeding on the board walk, not afraid of tourists at all!



Sichuan Treecreeper



Maroon-backed Accentor

Day 15-18 (22-25th May) Tangjiahe is the best place for **Temminck's Tragopan**, and we got great view of it as expected, it was sleeping on a tree, then flew to a big open brunch and walking slowly up! The best moment had ever got for the tragopan! **Golden Pheasant** was easily spotted on the road side from the hotel to the Tony Fish Owl place in late afternoon. We got two **Towny Fish Owls** sleeping on the cliff tree near the river, but it was staying straight up from the road, so not easy to watch it through the telescope as you can see from the picture of Carsten kneels on the ground to watch it through the telescope! **Spotted Laughingthrush** was heard but sounds like different from the one in Longcanggou, but it was still attracted by the call from Longcanggou and showed well to us! **White-throated Laughingthrush** is quite common in that time. Great Parrotbill, Sooty Tit, Rusty-breasted Tit, Golden-breasted Fulvetta showed well again.



Spotted Laughingthrush



White-throated Laughingthrush

More photos from this Sichuan tour:





a pair of Snow Partridge





Blackthroat



Temminck's Tragopan



Blood Pheasant from Maerkang



Blood Pheasant from Ruoergai



fe. Temminck's Tragopan



fe. Golden Pheasant



Chestnut-throated Partridge



Tibetan Snowcock



Tawny Fish Owl



Elliot's Laughingthrush



Plain Laughingthrush



Giant Laughingthrush



Great Parrotbill



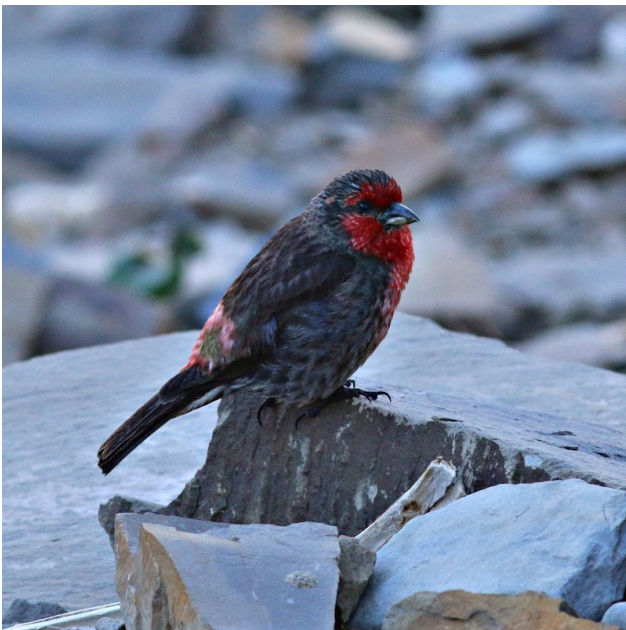
Brown Parrotbill



Three-Banded Rosefinch



Firethroat



Red-fronted Rosefinch



fe. Red-fronted Rosefinch



White-browed Rosefinch



fe. White-browed Rosefinch



Wallcreeper



Apline Accentor



Chinese Fulvetta



Golden-breasted Fulvetta



Grandala



Wallcreeper



Maroon-backed Accentor



Eurasian Nuthatch



Crested Tit Warbler



Siberian Rubythroat



Sichuan Tit



Rusty-breasted Tit



Sooty Tit



Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler



White-bellied Redstart



fe. White-winged Grosbeak



Buff-barred Warbler



Baikar Bush Warbler



Aberrant Bush Warbler



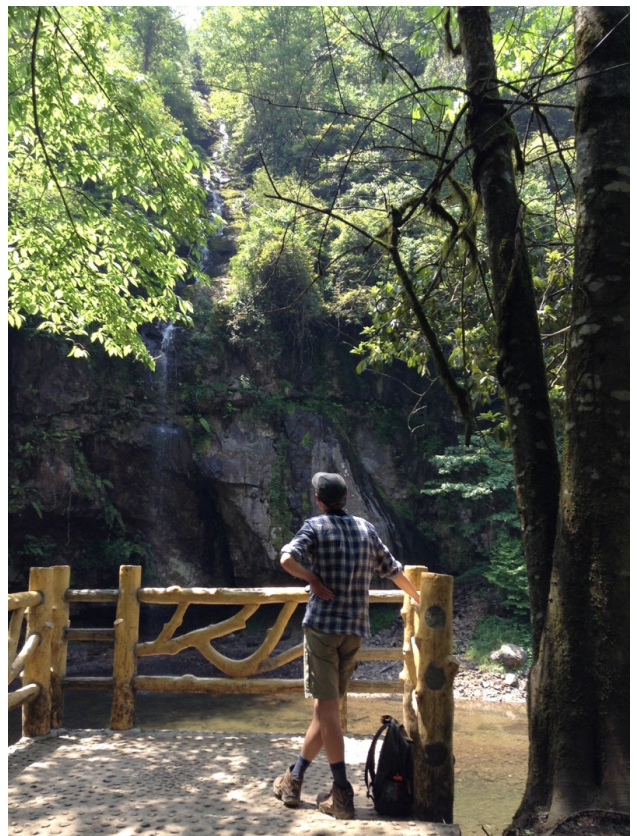
Sichuan Bush Warbler



Buff-throated Warbler



Yellow-streaked Warbler



Food and Scenery in Longcanggou



Restaurant food and field lunch



Restaurant food in Tangjiahe and on way back to Chengdu



Restaurant dinner and field lunch in Balangshan



Scenery on tour



Watching Tawny Fish Owl



Baby monkey on the car window



Look what we found in forest !

