

Taiwan

THE BEAUTIFUL ISLE

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



The exquisite Mikado Pheasant is endemic to the forests that cloak Taiwan's mountainous spine © Brian Small, Limosa

2019 **Thursday 14th - Wednesday 27th November (14 days)**

Small group tour with Colin Bushell & local guide

2020 **Sunday 15th - Saturday 28th November (14 days)**

Small group tour with Brian Small & local guide

Our autumn tour to Taiwan will introduce you to some of the loveliest parts of the 'Beautiful Isle', with the emphasis on finding its endemic birds of hill and forest. From sublime Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasants stalking through mist-laden oriental woodlands, to exotic Taiwan Blue Magpies cavorting in the subtropical canopy, Taiwan boasts 31 endemic birds - all but one of which were seen on our 2018 tour. November also adds alluring winter visitors and East Asian specialities, including many waders, the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill - and in 2018, Japanese Thrush and Ryukyu and Japanese Robins!

- Birding on subtropical Taiwan - one time Formosa, the 'Beautiful Isle'
- Up to 31 Taiwan endemic birds - and more than 60 endemic subspecies - to be found
- Exquisite Mikado and Swinhoe's Pheasants, and Taiwan Partridge to look for
- Collared and White-browed Bush Robins, Flamecrest, Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Yuhina
- Good range of wintering East Asian waders - plus the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill
- Migrants... Daurian Redstart, Siberian Rubythroat, Eyebrowed Thrush, Black-faced Bunting
- Small group tour - maximum 10 participants
- Expertly led by Limosa guides and a specialist Taiwanese bird tour guide

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Taiwanese bird tour guide
- Return flights - London Heathrow to Taipei
- 11 nights accommodation in Taiwan, staying at good tourist hotels and forest lodges
- All main meals - with drinking water provided during the day
- Minibus transport
- All excursions, entry fees, tour based tips and taxes

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Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2:** We fly London Heathrow-Taipei, arriving on Day 2. Night Taipei
- Day 3:** Morning visit to Yangmingshan National Park before heading south. Night Dongshi
- Days 4-5:** We explore the forests of Guguan before moving up to bird the tranquil hill forests of Dasyueshan and Anmashan. Dasyueshan (2 nts)
- Day 6:** A further morning at Dasyueshan, then descend to Taiwan's west coast wetlands for Black-faced Spoonbill. Night Putai
- Day 7:** We visit Putai wetlands for waders and Ba Zhang estuary for Chinese Egret and Saunders's Gull. We then head to the southernmost tip of Taiwan, home to the endemic Styan's Bulbul. Night Kenting
- Day 8:** After birding Longluan Lake and Kenting, we return north to the Tainan wetlands via Yingda Eco Farm. Night Chiayi.
- Days 9-10:** Inland to explore the mountain forests of Alishan National Park, in central Taiwan. Alishan (2 nts)
- Day 11:** We continue through the interior mountains to reach the highland forests at Qingjing. Night Qingjing
- Day 12:** We drive up to the high passes at Hehuanshan and Wuling (3275m / 10,740ft), before travelling on to Taiwan's north coast. Night Keelung
- Day 13:** A chance to look for migrants at the coast and to visit forests close to Taipei. Evening departure from Taipei to London
- Day 14:** Morning arrival London

Tour Overview

Christened 'Isla Formosa' - the 'Beautiful Isle' - by early Portuguese sailors, Taiwan sits astride the Tropic of Cancer. It measures less than 250 miles from top to toe, and just 89 miles across. Yet its dramatic mountainous spine, deep cut forested valleys and broad coastal plain are home to a remarkable 31 endemic bird species -

not to mention more than 60 endemic subspecies (including several potential 'splits' waiting in the wings!) In November, we can also expect to encounter a good range of East Asian specials, including migrants and winter visitors.

Much of our time will be spent exploring Taiwan's well-protected forests, mainly in the mountains, where the amazing birdlife includes an excellent collection of southern Chinese hill birds - many of which are better seen here than anywhere on the mainland - along with 15 or more of the endemic species found only Taiwan. We will also enjoy some time in the bird-rich lowland forests, haunt of the exotic Taiwan Blue Magpie and the recently split Taiwan Barbet, along with many others. A visit to the coastal lowlands will add a wide selection of wetland birds – shorebirds abound and we have good chances of seeing the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill (well over 500 were recorded on our November 2018 tour), along with Chinese Egret and Saunders's Gull.

Our birding begins in the north of Taiwan, around the capital Taipei, perhaps watching Malayan Night Herons indulging in a bizarre tug of war with giant earthworms and familiarising ourselves with common lowland species such as Light-vented Bulbul and Brown Shrike.

Heading south to Taichung, we then swing inland and climb up onto the mountainous ridge that runs the length of Taiwan. Birding at elevations up to 2000m (6500ft), the deciduous and evergreen forests at Basianshan, Dasyueshan and Anmashan are home to most of the island's endemic birds and we'll spend time here looking for them. Oft shrouded in a delicate mist, the unspoiled upland forests shelter such delights as Taiwan Yuhina, Flamecrest and Steere's Liocichla, as well as the trickier Taiwan Cupwing and Taiwan Shortwing – on our November 2018 tour, we also saw a white-headed Taiwan Thrush (recently 'split' from Island Thrush).

Taiwan's two endemic pheasants are very special prizes that will lure us deeper into the forest. Swinhoe's Pheasant - described by some as the most beautiful bird in the world - haunts the deciduous tracts, while the magnificent

Mikado Pheasant stalks the cooler evergreen woodlands. Here the delightful White-whiskered Laughingthrush is common - and very tame! Dropping back down on to the coastal plain, the wetlands near Tainan (on Taiwan's west coast) are famous for wintering flocks of rare Black-faced Spoonbills as well as wintering and passage waders that throng the coastal mudflats and marshes there. Pacific Golden Plover, Marsh Sandpiper, and Red-necked and Long-toed Stints are among the most numerous waders here.

November is not just a terrific month for seeing almost all of Taiwan's endemic birds, it's also a time when migrants from Northern Asia will be arriving. While some will spend the winter here, for others Taiwan is merely a stepping stone en route to their winter quarters in the Philippines and Borneo. The island's spectacular north coast can be productive and makes an ideal place to conclude our travels. Eyebrowed, Pale, Dusky and Naumann's Thrushes, Siberian Rubythroat, Olive-backed Pipit and Black-faced and Yellow-throated Buntings were among migrants seen on our visit there in 2017, while in 2018 we encountered Ryukyu and Japanese Robins, plus Brown-backed and Japanese Thrush!

As a destination, Taiwan not only possesses a great avifauna but a host of other delights: the Taiwanese people are friendly and welcoming, the scenery is often superb and the country has all the benefits of a thriving economy, a well-developed infrastructure... and an excellent field guide! With 31 endemic birds to be found, many endemic subspecies poised for 'upgrading' and the thrill of birding along the busy 'East Asian Flyway', there is so much to look forward to.

Our November 2019 and 2020 tours will be Limosa's fourth and fifth autumn tours to Taiwan in the company of our resident English-speaking Taiwanese bird guide, 'KC'. The 2019 trip will be guide Colin Bushell's third visit to Taiwan for Limosa, and the 2020 departure will be guide Brian Small's second visit there.

Travel to Taiwan with Limosa and discover the bountiful birdlife of the 'Beautiful Isle'!

Daily Itinerary

Days 1 - 2

FLY LONDON TO TAIPEI

Our autumn birdwatching tour to Taiwan begins with an Cathay Pacific overnight flight from London Heathrow to Hong Kong and onward connection next day to Taiwan. We'll be met on arrival in Taiwan by 'KC', our resident local guide, and transfer the short distance into Taipei.

Depending on flight schedules, there may be time for a brief visit to the Botanical Gardens, for a gentle introduction to some common lowland species. Birds to expect include Spotted Dove, Light-vented Bulbul, Oriental Turtle Dove, Japanese White-eye and perhaps a Taiwan Scimitar Babbler or Taiwan Barbet. With care we might also locate a Crested Myna amongst the more common Javan before heading to our city hotel for dinner. *Night Taipei*

Day 3

YANGMINGSHAN NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH TO DONGSHI

Our main targets this morning will be Malayan Night Heron and the gorgeous Taiwan Blue Magpie - Quianshan Park, on the slopes of Yangmingshan National Park being one of the most reliable spots to see this localised cobalt blue endemic. Joined by Grey Treepies they sweep in, then off again in noisy parties.

We will also hope to get our first views of Taiwan Whistling Thrush and should find a tame Malayan Night Heron or two - seemingly undaunted by the presence of local residents performing Tai Chi in the park! The night herons feed on the island's giant earthworms and, if one is found, a tug of war begins with the heron heaving backwards with all its weight to lever the worm a few more inches out of the ground. Such contests can last for 10-15 minutes, until the two-foot long worm is finally extracted. Watching the night heron swallow the worm can last just as long - a sight not to be missed!

Leaving Taipei, we drive south this afternoon to our overnight stop at Dongshi, on the lower mountain slopes east of Taichung. A spot of late afternoon birding by a river might well produce our first Taiwan Hwamei. *Night Dongshi*

Day 4**GUGUAN & DASYUESHAN**

After an early breakfast in Dongshi, we swing south following the incised valley into the hills where we'll begin our exploration of the forests that still cloak the lower slopes of Taiwan's scenic mountainous spine.

We start at Guguan, near the Baxianshan National Forest. Its mix of evergreen and broad-leaved woodlands include stands of Taiwan Red Pine, Red and Green Maples, and Taiwan Incense Cedar, while Taiwan White Pine grows along the higher ridges. This fine landscape hosts many key bird species and we have a second chance of Taiwan Blue Magpie. The forested slopes of the gorge are one of the best places to see Chestnut-bellied Tit (recently split from Varied Tit), so it's worth the journey to see this attractive endemic.

At these lower altitudes we are likely to encounter Collared Finchbill, Pacific Swallow, Taiwan Scimitar Babbler and Rufous-capped Babbler, while the diminutive Grey-capped Woodpecker might also put in an appearance. Crossing the river on a footbridge, we may be treated to views of Taiwan Whistling Thrush, Grey-chinned Minivet, Brown Dipper, White-bellied Erpornis, Plumbeous Water Redstart and Grey-cheeked Fulvetta.

In the late morning we head higher and deeper into the hills to Dasyueshan (which translates literally as 'Big Snow Mountain'), where we stay for two nights in comfortable wooden cabins. This site hosts most of the island's endemic birds and, as we climb higher this afternoon, we will stop for our first exciting chance of the endemic Swinhoe's Pheasant along the road into Dasyueshan. Flocks of endearing Black-throated Bushtits, Taiwan Yuhinas, Rufous-faced Warblers and various tits forage through the woodlands - and by keeping quiet, maybe a group of Taiwan Partridges will appear as well! *Night Dasyueshan Forest Recreation Area*

Day 5**DASYUESHAN FOREST**

Today we explore the renowned Dasyueshan Forest. Although much of Taiwan's lowland

forest has now been lost, the woodlands that clothe the upper slopes of the mountainous interior remain largely intact.

Dasyueshan provides ready access to areas of both primary deciduous and evergreen forest that are home to a wide range of hill country birds. We are sure to see many of Taiwan's endemic forest birds here, from White-whiskered Laughingthrush and Taiwan Barwing to Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Steere's Liocichla and the lovely White-eared Sibia. With luck, we might come across a wintering White's Thrush feeding quietly beside the trail - and in 2018, were fortunate to find a white-headed Taiwan Thrush feasting in some trees near the restaurant!

Early mornings at Dasyueshan are not to be missed! By scouring the grounds around our accommodation we may come across the tiny Taiwan Cupwing. As the day warms, mixed species flocks cause great excitement as birds rapidly flit from tree to tree. These can be quite challenging at first but, with patience, we should encounter many of the constituent species.

Most species are quite common within the flocks and we are likely to see the local, crested (and endemic) Taiwan race of Coal Tit along with Green-backed and Yellow Tits, Fire-breasted and Plain Flowerpeckers and the island's endemic race of Eurasian Jay - looking quite different to the birds we see at home. As excitement builds, the frenzy of activity often attracts other birds to join in and we may well see some familiar faces such as Eurasian Nuthatch and Wren, too. With luck, the excited calls will lure a Collared Owlet with its rhythmic, four-note whistle. This diurnal owlet preys principally on small birds.

Along the way we can hope to find the delightful Vivid Niltava, rattling flocks of Black Bulbul and the distinctive Taiwanese form of Grey-headed Woodpecker. We should also encounter the endemic Formosan Macaque, the island's only primate. With luck, we might catch sight of a Silver-backed Needletail as it rockets overhead; this recently discovered population appears to be resident in Taiwan but ranges over a vast area so encounters outside the breeding season are inevitably a bit hit-and-miss.

As we climb higher and venture deeper into the heart of Taiwan's majestic central mountains, we will search for one of the island's greatest avian prizes: the beautiful Mikado Pheasant, Taiwan's national bird. Endemic to Taiwan, these deep blue pheasants are found amidst the highest evergreen forests, where we should also come across the confiding White-whiskered Laughingthrush and Formosan Striped Squirrel. Nearby, we will be alert for those two stunning *Tarsiger* chats: White-browed Bush Robin and the smart endemic Collared Bush Robin.

The pristine *Trochodendron* and pine forest around our cabins can be a good place to see Ashy Wood Pigeon and the endearing Brown Bullfinch, while a nearby waterfall is home to Little Forktail. In winter, Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes gather into roving flocks and this species becomes perhaps the most difficult of Taiwan's endemics to find, but we will give them our very best efforts.

If conditions are suitable, after our evening meal we have chances to look for Chinese Muntjac in the forests. The charismatic Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel, Chinese Ferret-badger and endemic Taiwan Serow (an elusive goat-like creature) are also possible up here. *Night Dasyueshan Forest Recreation Area*

Day 6
DASYUESHAN & COASTAL WETLANDS
After a last morning in the forests in search of missing species from our 'endemic bucket list', we drop down through the hills today to reach the coast.

We first head towards Taichung City, then swing south into Yumlin County for a dramatic change in scenery and bird species. Here, on Taiwan's west coast, areas of once extensive mudflats that were recently destroyed by reclamation have unexpectedly reverted to coastal wetlands again in the wake of land subsidence and the cessation of farming in the area. In a remarkable turnaround, places such as Aogu and the Ba Zhang River estuary have now established themselves as the best places in Taiwan to see many coastal and wetland species!

One target species here will be the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill. Over half the world population of 4000 birds winters in Taiwan, and there should be good numbers present in November.

In such a rich environment, birds of prey such as Western Osprey and Black-winged Kite can be found hunting the fields and wetland areas, with Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns possible in the channels and ditches. Scrubby embankments may reveal the likes of Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Yellow-bellied and Plain Prinias (the latter of the endemic Taiwan race, *flavirostris*), Zitting Cisticola, Eastern Yellow Wagtail and mynas. With a little bit of luck (and patience), we might also encounter some of the scarcer or more skulking winter visitors that reach this part of Taiwan, such as Bull-headed Shrike and Siberian Rubythroat.

Scanning the open water is likely to reward us with a good range of winter wildfowl, including Common Pochard, Northern Shoveler, Garganey and maybe the smart Falcated Duck. We even found a handsome drake Baikal Teal here on our November 2016 tour! *Night Putai*

Day 7
PUTAI WETLANDS SOUTH TO KENTING
Right on our doorstep, we have time to enjoy some further birding in the coastal lowlands this morning, checking the salt pans and estuaries for waders and gulls. As well as more Black-faced Spoonbills and wildfowl, wintering waders can include Kentish and Lesser Sand Plovers, Pacific Golden Plover, Marsh Sandpiper and Long-toed and Red-necked Stints, along with Intermediate Egret and Caspian and Whiskered Terns. There should be some Great Knot about, too. We may well encounter a few lingering passage waders, such as Terek or Sharp-tailed Sandpipers - and both our November 2017 and 2018 groups saw the rare Nordmann's Greenshank!

With luck, we will again come across Far Eastern Curlew, the rare Saunders's Gull or even Chinese Egret on the Ba Zhang mudflats - but even if we are not so fortunate this year as last, there will nonetheless be a good variety of birds to see before we head to our next overnight stop, Kenting, at the southernmost tip of Taiwan.

If time allows, we will pause along the way to visit an area of farmland that can be good for buntings and Oriental Skylarks that 'bizz' overhead. Richard Pipits and introduced Scaly-breasted Munias and Indian Silverbills can also be found - and in 2018, we enjoyed a communal roost of 15 or more Savanna Nightjars before continuing south along the coastal road to arrive at our hotel. *Night Kenting*

Day 8

LONGLUAN LAKE, YINGDA ECO FARM & GUANTIAN

We'll spend some time exploring at Kenting this morning. Our main focus will be the Longluan Lake area and - after ensuring we have seen the endemic Styan's Bulbul well - we will search for birds in the open country, scrub and ponds as well as on the huge lake itself.

The range-restricted Styan's Bulbul is found only in southeastern Taiwan, down to Kenting, and is the main reason for our visit here. Its population is under threat from hybridisation with the closely related Light-vented Bulbul - which is spreading as a result of habitat alteration and releases for religious purposes - and it is quite possible that genetically pure populations of Styan's Bulbul will disappear entirely within 20 years.

This is also a good place for another endemic, the Taiwan Hwamei, that sings loudly from thickets. Eastern Marsh Harriers quarter the fields, flushing Eastern Spot-billed Ducks from the small ponds and we should see Striated Swallows and White-shouldered Starlings perched on the roadside wires. Careful scanning over the open country may reveal the presence of small flocks of Oriental Skylarks and munias, with Brown Shrikes hunting from fence posts.

Leaving Kenting later this morning, we head back north to Tainan, breaking our journey with a stop at Yingda Eco Farm. Here we hope to find the handsome Maroon Oriole - the subspecies (*ardens*) here being a possible future 'split'.

Continuing north, we make a couple of afternoon stops at wetlands for more shorebirds and wildfowl - with a chance of Falcated Duck and Baikal Teal at Qieding. Pheasant-tailed

Jacanas are numerous in the rice paddies of Guantian district and we'll also hope to see a few Greater Painted-snipe here - although they can be very elusive indeed! *Night Chiayi*

Days 9 - 10

CHIAYI TO ALISHAN

Leaving Chiayi after breakfast, we make our way back up into the mountains. Our destination today is the Alishan National Scenic Area in central Taiwan, which will be our base for the next two nights.

Driving into the mountains we will make a stop both to stretch our legs and try for the difficult Taiwan Bush Warbler. In the thick vegetation from which they sometimes call, we will be hoping for at least a glimpse - we were lucky on our November 2018 tour, when three were seen, albeit briefly. Collared Finchbill, Rusty Laughingthrush, Taiwan Scimitar Babbler, Steere's Leiochichla and Asian House Martin are also possible as we watch and wait for the bush warbler to appear.

About our lodge at Alishan, we have a chance of Taiwan Bamboo Partridge, Brown-flanked Bush Warbler and some cracking Daurian Redstarts.

Rising early next morning, we drive up high to Tataka, at around 2700m in the Yushan National Park. This is an excellent area for birds and endemics we should find include the cracking Collared Bush Robin in the undergrowth, Taiwan Fulvetta and the aptly named Flamecrest in the evergreen forest. The furtive Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler can sometimes show well in roadside grasses.

The higher altitude roads and forest trails offer further opportunities to search for the secretive Mikado Pheasant - always a more elusive bird than Swinhoe's. At these elevations, other species to watch out for include White-backed Woodpecker, White-whiskered Laughingthrush, White-browed Shortwing, Golden Parrotbill, the crested local form of Coal Tit, White-browed Bush Robin and Grey-headed Bullfinch.

As we enter the forest of hemlock and dwarf bamboo at the highest points, we will meet the distinctive endemic Taiwan race of Southern

Nutcracker, with its silver-spotted cheeks. If it is clear up here (hopefully, we will be up above the clouds), the views here are breathtaking. In the distance, we may be able to see Taiwan's highest peak, Yushan, which stands just short of 4000m (13,000ft).

One evening, if it is fine, we can try our luck with Mountain and Collared Scops Owls as well as Northern Boobook. *Two nights Alishan*

Day 11

ALISHAN TO QINGJING

Before leaving Alishan today we have a last opportunity to find some of our "missing" birds from lower elevations here. Crested Serpent Eagle (another of Taiwan's endemic subspecies), Black Eagle and Mountain Hawk-eagles could be soaring overhead, along with smaller species of raptor including Crested Honey Buzzard and Crested Goshawk. Various buntings, flycatchers and pipits are possible during our walks amid secondary forest that also holds White-bellied Green Pigeon, White-tailed Robin, Emerald Dove, Dusky Fulvetta and the endemic Rusty Laughingthrush. This area also offers perhaps our best chance for the oft-elusive Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler.

We descend, then ascend again up to the 'alpine' resort of Qingjing, where locals come to get cold – away from the heat of the coast! The 'unique' town lies at an elevation of 1720m (5650ft), and is renowned for its sheep population as well as being an ideal base to try again for highland bird species the following morning. *Night Qingjing*

Day 12

QINGJING & THE HIGH PASSES (HEHUANSHAN & WULING) TO KEELUNG (NORTH COAST)

Before leaving Qingjing today, we should have time to check the hotel grounds for migrants. In the past we have been very fortunate here, seeing flocks of Eyebrowed Thrushes and careful scrutiny has produced Pale and Brown-headed Thrushes in with them. We have also enjoyed Black-necklaced Scimitar Babblers here, along with Taiwan Bamboo Partridge, Manchurian Bush Warbler, Taiwan Hwamei, Siberian Rubythroat, Brown-flanked Bush Warblers and Black-faced Bunting.

From Qingjing we climb ever higher until we reach the high passes at Hehuanshan and Wuling Shan - the latter a breathtaking 3275m (10,740ft) above sea level. Hopefully we will enjoy good weather up here, but please be aware it can be very cold and windy at times, and shrouded in low cloud. If conditions are good however, we could enjoy some first-rate birding this morning. Key specialities to watch for include the richly coloured endemic Taiwan form of Alpine Accentor (which can often be found in the car park), the simply gorgeous Taiwan Rosefinch (formally lumped with Vinaceous Rosefinch), Collared Bush Robin and White-whiskered Laughingthrush – as well as Eurasian Wren...

In the afternoon we descend, then travel north via the west coast highway, completing our long drive through Taipei to reach Keelung, on the island's north coast. *Night Keelung*

Day 13

RETURN TO TAIPEI, FLY LONDON

Keelung lies conveniently within an hour or so's drive of Taipei Airport. Since our flight home doesn't depart until this evening, we should be able to enjoy the best part of today in the field as we take the opportunity to check for migrants and winter visitors arriving on Taiwan's north coast.

One of the best sites for migrants is the Jinshan Youth Centre grounds. By searching the park and scrubby borders here, we could well find a surprising number of interesting East Asian birds. Our last two visits have produced Dusky, Naumann's and Eyebrowed Thrushes, Siberian Rubythroat, Daurian Redstart and Black-faced and Yellow-throated Buntings.

Not far away, the impressive Yeliu Geo Park may also be worth a visit - especially if there has been a recent arrival of migrants. Our November 2018 trip was blessed with some very exciting finds, including Ryukyu and Japanese Robins, Japanese and Brown-backed Thrushes, Red-flanked Bluntails, Siberian Rubythroats, Asian Stubtails and two different subspecies of Japanese Bush Warbler!

As we return full circle towards Taipei, a visit to the low elevation forests of Yangming Shan ('Grass Mountain') National Park offer one last

look at Taiwan's resident birds. On our 2016 and 2017 tours we enjoyed superb close views of Taiwan Bamboo Partridge here - a fitting finale to this exciting tour!

Our birding over, we continue to nearby Taipei Airport for farewells to 'KC' and late afternoon check-in for flights home. Evening departure to Hong Kong, with onward overnight connection back to London.

Day 14

ARRIVE LONDON

Early morning arrival in London on Day 14, where our birding tour to Taiwan tour concludes.

Trip Information

Group Size Max 10 participants & 2 leaders (both leaders will travel regardless of group size)

What to Expect Overall this is not a strenuous tour. But please be aware that it's one that does involve a fair amount of travelling (necessary in order to find Taiwan's endemic birds), and on which we spend more than one night at only two hotels - those at Dasyueshan (2 nts) and Alishan (2 nts).

You should be prepared for early starts, which are the norm for birding tours in tropical regions where the daylight hours are relatively short, and where bird activity is generally at its peak early and late but often dies away during the middle of the day. In late November, sunrise in Taiwan is around 6.30am and sunset at 5.30pm. It will be important to be in the field at dawn so that we can hear the birds calling as the day starts up - in some instances, this may be our only chance to discover if certain species are present or not, so we will naturally want to make the most of this.

Away from the coast, much of our birding in Taiwan will be in forest, from tropical lowland to temperate high montane. We'll spend most of the time walking on level ground, birding from paved or unpaved roads or tracks, and on some forest trails with occasional steep sections, but these are quite short. As we may sometimes be on our feet for several hours at a stretch

watching for birds, some participants may find it helpful to carry a lightweight collapsible stool.

Birds 170-210 species

Mammals 5-10 species

Accommodation 11 nights accommodation in Taiwan. Our hotels are well placed for easy exploration of the areas we shall be birding in, with those away from the major cities being of the highest standard available. Those in Taipei, Putai, Chiayi, Kenting and Keelung are modern and comfortable tourist hotels. At Dasyueshan, in Taiwan's mountainous interior, we stay at a rustic lodge; the Firefly Lodge at Alishan is a small family-run hotel; at Qingjing, we stay at a local hotel - all the best available. All rooms have private facilities.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with lunch or dinner in Taiwan on Day 2 (according to flight schedule) and concluding with lunch on Day 13. Larger hotels generally provide an international buffet for breakfast, lunch and dinner, while smaller establishments tend to serve a delicious and nourishing Chinese meal from a set menu.

Lunches will either be picnics or taken at a convenient restaurant or store along the way, according to local availability and whichever arrangement best suits our daily plan. There are plenty of opportunities to buy 'trail food' in local convenience stores. These establishments usually have seating areas to eat meals there, too - which we have found to be surprisingly good!

Please note! Many restaurants in Taiwan offer set menus only and are unable to accommodate special requests for participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs.

Few of the restaurants we visit routinely provide knives and forks with meals. Instead chopsticks (often disposable wooden ones) are used. If you are not used to eating with chopsticks, you may prefer to bring your own lightweight cutlery (knife, fork, spoon) with you from home.

Walking The walking effort is mostly easy on this tour, along established paths and trails. The going can be more moderate at times in the

mountains, with occasionally longer walks here and at the coast. At Alishan, we shall be birding at altitudes of up to 2500m (8200ft). Inevitably when walking in the mountains, there will be some steep sections along roads and tracks, and one or two places involving descending well-made steps. These sections are usually quite short and, wherever possible, we aim to drive uphill and then bird as we walk back down.

Comfortable lightweight, waterproof walking shoes or boots with stout corrugated soles for grip are recommended for this trip. Some participants might find walking poles helpful.

Altitude: Wuling Pass is the highest point we reach on our Taiwan tour, at 3275m (10,740ft) above sea level. We do minimal walking here and shall be there only for a few hours at most (Day 12).

Weather With daytime temperatures in the coastal lowlands ranging between 18-26C (64-80F), November is one of the best times of the year to visit Taiwan. Conditions then are mostly sunny and pleasant, although early mornings will be cold in the higher hills. Although rainfall is relatively low here in November (Oct-Jan being the driest months of the year in Taiwan), note that we are likely to encounter some wet weather during our stay, especially in the lush mountains. Some rainfall is almost certain in and around Taipei and the north coast, where it can also be humid.

The weather in Taiwan's central mountains will be considerably cooler, with temperatures decreasing as we climb higher. It will be cold (0-3C/32-37F) and is often damp at the highest elevations, with a high likelihood of mist and occasionally heavy rain. At night, temperatures in the mountains may drop below freezing, and even the days will likely feel cool above 2000m (6500ft).

Flights Return flights from London Heathrow to Taipei (change of planes in Hong Kong), with Cathay Pacific. Flights from Manchester also available (subject to schedule, please ask).

Ground Transport By minibus or small coach with local driver.

Insects Generally, mosquitoes should not be a problem in November, but they can occasionally be a local nuisance (e.g. at Jingshan, and around the hide at Alishan). There is no malaria risk in Taiwan.

Tour Cost ^{*1}

2019 (14 days): £4395 (inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £3895
Deposit: £600
Single Supp: £445

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking Taiwanese bird guide
- Return flights London Heathrow-Taipei
- 11 nights accommodation in Taiwan
- All main meals (with drinking water provided)
- Minibus transport
- All excursions, entry fees, tour based tips (driver, lodges and local guides) and taxes
- Map and Limosa checklist of birds.

Cost excludes

Insurance, airport snacks/meals, drinks & other items of a personal nature

^{*1} **2019 prices shown. Costs for November 2020 tour TBC (available summer or autumn 2019)**

About Your Guides

Colin Bushell A birder since his teens, Colin lives in Lancashire, where he works as both a professional bird tour guide and freelance ornithologist for ecology consultancies. His first forays into overseas birding were to Majorca, Austria, Greece and Morocco - before the draw of the tropics became irresistible. After exploring Africa and the Far East, Colin immersed himself in South America and its vast avifauna, becoming a frequent visitor there (particularly to Peru and Brazil) and amassing a wealth of experience leading bird tours to the 'Bird Continent' over the last twenty years. With a keen interest in migration, he has also led tours

to Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Colin lives with his wife and two chocolate Labradors near the Ribble Estuary, where he spends most of his spare time birding the marshes. Our November 2019 tour to Taiwan will be Colin's third visit there for Limosa.

Brian Small Brian was a teacher for 12 years and lives in Suffolk with his wife and their teenage son. In 2013, he switched to full time employment with Limosa, guiding tours and working Operations and Media Manager in the Limosa office. Brian has travelled around the globe and is the inspiration behind a growing number of *Limosa* tours, including those to China, Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland, Italy, Georgia and Armenia. He regularly leads our guided *BirdWalks* in Norfolk and Suffolk, too. Well known as a bird artist his current projects include work on a major new guide to birds in southern Brazil. In his spare time at home, he concentrates on working his local patch on the Suffolk coast, searching especially for migrants and gulls. Brimming with infectious enthusiasm, Brian has been guiding tours for Limosa since 2002 and has excellent experience tour leading and birding across both the Western and Eastern Palearctic, as well as much of Asia (including India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, China, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula and Borneo). Our November 2020 tour to Taiwan will be Brian's second visit there for Limosa.

Local guide Our resident local expert for this tour is 'KC', an experienced English-speaking **Taiwanese bird guide** who led our November 2016, 2017 and 2018 tours to Taiwan.

Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our ATOL licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip. ^{*1}

^{*1} **Conditions:** *This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extra costs such as additional flights or accommodation, private extensions and cancellations.* • *Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.* • **Please note discount must be requested at time of booking!**

How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our **Booking Conditions** and **General Information** (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

All our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Last-minute Bookings: We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

Payments

Deposit: The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **electronic bank transfer** (please ask for our bank details), **UK debit card** and **cheque** (made payable to *Limosa Holidays* and drawn on a UK bank in GBPounds Sterling).

For payment of **booking deposits** only we also accept Visa and MasterCard credit cards.

Balance: Full payment of the **tour balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept balance payments and any additional payments (e.g. interim flight deposits, flight

upgrades, extra hotels etc) by **electronic bank transfer (BACS), UK debit card** or **cheque**.

Payment by overseas customers must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by electronic transfer direct to our bank (*please ask for our bank details*).

We do **not** accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Credit cards - please note:

(i) We do **NOT accept** credit cards or overseas debit cards for balance payments (including any additional or interim payments) from customers living within the UK or European Economic Area (the EEA is the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

(ii) For customers living in North America, Australia and all other areas outside of the UK and the European Economic Area we are able to accept payment by Visa and MasterCard credit cards or overseas debit card but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges.

Late Booking Payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all late bookings (i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure).

Other Things You Need To Know

Passports & Visas

Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Taiwan.

• Visa NOT required

British nationals may spend up to 90 days in Taiwan without a visa.

[Specific rules exist for naturalised British Citizens born in the People's Republic of China and holders of British National (Overseas) passports wishing to enter under the visa waiver

scheme. Check with the Taipei Representative Office in London.]

Holders of non-UK passports should contact the nearest Taiwanese embassy or consulate to check whether or not they require a visa. If a visa is required, you will need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.

Health & Vaccinations

Visit your health professional at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country specific information and advice is published by the **National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC)**, visit: travelhealthpro.org.uk/country-information/ and by **NHS (Scotland)**, visit: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>

Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available at NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>

Compulsory vaccinations: None.

Recommended vaccinations: tetanus and hepatitis A. Consult your doctor for current advice and up-to-date information regarding hepatitis B, Japanese B encephalitis, polio and TB, which may be recommended in some circumstances. There is no malaria risk in Taiwan.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. **Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.**

For full and up-to-date health information we urge everyone to consult The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk prior to booking any overseas holiday. NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government's Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team. You can search for individual country requirements, which are updated regularly.

Your Safety & Travel Advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the risk it may pose to your safety and security. The best advice on current risks is provided by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination we strongly recommend that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel. See www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).

'**Travel Aware**' - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is **essential** before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, **it is a condition of booking** that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Be aware that some destinations may require you to produce proof of comprehensive travel insurance (e.g. valid insurance certificate) at immigration on arrival in the country, so you should carry your documentation with you.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses.

Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire, particularly in Third World countries, may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important Things to Note about Insurance

- Travel Insurance does **not** normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.
- Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. **We recommend all travellers** check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way. Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

*Thank you for your interest in our tours.
We do hope that you will be able to join us
- and we look forward to hearing from you
again!*

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