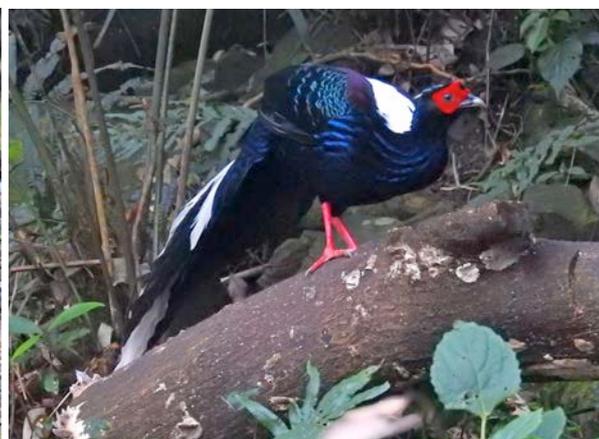


# TAIWAN

The Beautiful Isle

Thu 17th – Wed 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016



**Trip photos** (clockwise, from top left): One of the close Taiwan Bamboo Partridges near the end of the tour • We had good looks at Steere's Liocichla • White-eared Sibia was a real star in the highlands • One of the highlights of the trip, a male Swinhoe's Pheasant... • ...and another, but not quite as striking, a male Mikado Pheasant • a worn White-whiskered Laughingthrush at Dasyueshan © tour leader Colin Bushell, Limosa

Report compiled by tour leader: Colin Bushell

## TAIWAN | The Beautiful Isle

### Tour Leaders: Colin Bushell & Kuan-Chieh Hung ('KC')

Taiwan is now a well established bird tour destination and returned to Limosa Holidays in 2016. I was very fortunate indeed to visit Taiwan on a scouting trip a few weeks before the tour and returned home excited at the prospects of watching many island endemic taxa with the group a few weeks later.

Starting in Taipei we followed a well-established route to the hills of central Taiwan before heading to the vast wetlands of the west coast. Returning to the highlands once again we crossed the divide this time, descending to the east coast prior to driving north, eventually returning to Taipei for the end of the tour.

Some tour highlights .....

- Malayan Night Heron at point blank range in the Taipei Botanical Gardens on our first morning.
- The first male Swinhoe's Pheasant - is there a more stunning bird?
- Mikado Pheasants in the open with Vinaceous Rosefinch hopping around them!
- Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel and Formosan Serow on a spotlighting session.
- "Welcome to Taiwan wetlands" with Chinese Egret, Black-faced Spoonbill, Saunders's Gull, Baikal Teal and Falcated Ducks.
- Singing male Siberian Rubythroat in the 'scope!
- Taiwan Hill Partridge leaving it late to appear on our afternoon at the Alishan hide.
- Mixed Asian thrush flocks - Eyebrowed, Dusky, Pale and Brown-headed all seen.
- Totally unexpected walk-away looks at Taiwan Bamboo Partridge on the last day in the field.

## Trip Diary

### 17 & 18 November

We began our long journey to the Far East at London Heathrow with almost 12 hour's flight to Hong Kong courtesy of British Airways.

With a hassle-free transfer in Hong Kong we connected with the short Cathay Pacific flight to Taipei where KC met us for the hour's journey to the hotel. With the whole group now assembled (coming via Dubai and South Korea as well as UK) we settled in for our first dinner and discussed the following day's birding schedule.

### 19 November

**Taipei - Guguan. Fine at first and a little humid in Taipei. Overcast but dry later.**

Waking to a fine Taipei morning we headed to the restaurant for breakfast. The magnificent view from the dining room was so good many of us returned to our rooms to fetch our cameras before departing, but we were soon on our way for our first taste of Taiwan birding.

The Botanical Gardens are just a stone's throw from the hotel so in no time at all we were immersed in Taiwan Barbets and Taiwan Scimitar Babblers (our first endemics), many Japanese White-eyes, Oriental Turtle Doves, Grey Treepies, Black Bulbuls and the abundant Javan Myna.

The gardens are very popular with local people exercising, taking some early morning fresh air and of course photographers. So roosting Collared Scops Owls were a big attraction here understandably. We were able to watch an adult and two juveniles huddled together above a footbridge as they stared down at the admiring crowds.

But of course the gardens are rightly known for the magnificent Malayan Night Herons and it wasn't long before Joyce spotted a bird on one of the lawns. No 'worm pulling', but some serious staring ensued with seemingly little reward and we left it to its war of wills with the local worm population. The pond held our only Chinese Pond Heron of the tour as we made our way back to the bus for our journey to Guguan and the hill forests.

Our journey to Guguan was uneventful apart from a quick stop at the Shian Dam, a site that has held wintering Scaly-sided Merganser in recent years. We were probably a bit early in the winter for this bird and there was no sign of this rarity but we did see our first Eastern Spot-billed Ducks and Western Osprey of the tour. On arrival at Guguan we headed straight for the forested slopes and work began on bumping up the trip list with Plumbeous Water Redstarts and Brown Dipper on the river, Black-naped Monarch and White-bellied Erpornis in the wooded borders as well as our target bird here - Chestnut-bellied Tit.

## **20 November**

### **Guguan - Dasyueshan (22K - 28K). A fine start becoming overcast with rain.**

With all of the team out for a pre-breakfast amble this morning we decided on some birding local to the hotel. We were greeted with Taiwan Whistling Thrush on the hotel roof (always good to start the day with an endemic!) and continued to enjoy interesting birds like Bronzed Drongo, Grey-chinned Minivet and Plain Flowerpecker until it was time to return for breakfast. The Chestnut-bellied Tit even put in an appearance and a Crested Honey Buzzard drifted overhead before we made it to reception. Not a bad start!

With bags packed and ready to move on we continued birding locally on foot before leaving Guguan. With the sun hitting the hillsides a few raptors began to appear with Crested Serpent Eagle and four or five extra Crested Honey Buzzards in the air.

Ascending in the bus we stopped in search of Taiwan Blue Magpie (I had seen them here on the previous month's scouting trip), but only the noisy Grey Treepies could be found. A singing Taiwan Hwamei, expertly enticed into view by KC's recordings was fine compensation however with a pair singing at the edge of cover. Two Spotted Nutcrackers perched in the mid-morning sunshine before we had to leave for Dasyueshan.

Lunchtime crept up on us but Silver-backed Needletails zooming over the nearby hills watched from the restaurant at 13K meant that there was never a dull moment.

Afternoon in the hill forests of Dasyueshan was busy birding as expected. We started in the 22K area with almost immediate success in the form of a male Swinhoe's Pheasant! Said to be one of the world's most beautiful birds, this male certainly had the admiring glances of several females as he strolled on the bare slopes below the car park.

We worked the road as far as 29K (before the rain started), experiencing our first proper Taiwan bird flocks of the tour. Some endemics were easily seen such as the Taiwan Yuhina and we watched busy parties making their way through the subcanopy. The gorgeous Black-throated Bushtits and Rufous-faced Warblers often accompanied them. Every so often the "Yellow Tit" cry would come with the team frantically searching for this superb endemic, so often apart from the other flock members on the top or outer limbs of the trees. Other endemics just refused to play ball though and Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler remained in the dense cover, despite being heard.

After a good day in the field we headed back to 13K and Dasyueshan Manor with the weather closing in. That evening we enjoyed one of the best dinners of the tour in a local restaurant, celebrating Joyce's birthday in style with a cake!

### **21 November**

**Dasyueshan (13K early, 23K - 43K for lunch, 50K late afternoon). Cloudy all day with rain from mid morning becoming heavy later.**

Our first full day in Dasyueshan started rather inauspiciously. Thick fog shrouded the lower Persimmon-covered slopes and visibility was poor to say the least! Slowly but surely the roadside trees began to appear through the murk with Rufous-capped Babblers, Taiwan Scimitar Babblers and Grey-cheeked Fulvettas close enough to identify. A Yellow-browed Warbler called nearby as we returned to the lodge for breakfast. By now we could see Oriental Turtle Doves on the wires as visibility improved and a Crested Goshawk that flew low over the slopes, flushing birds as it went.

After breakfast we packed our bags ready to move on into Dasyueshan. Unlike back home, the Taiwanese weather forecasts had a habit of being very accurate and sure enough we were birding in the rain just after mid morning. However the birds kept coming, albeit in somewhat difficult conditions.

Birding between 23K and higher elevation forest at 43K we encountered some new species before lunch. Eyebrowed Thrushes flitted between trees, giving fleeting glimpses and never stopping to feed on the available (but perhaps unripe) fruits. White-eared Sibias, Steere's Liocichlas and Taiwan Yuhinas were easily seen at 23K. 'Wait and see' tactics here yielded Vivid Niltava (a probable future split as Taiwan Niltava) in the taller trees near the car park, joined momentarily by a Mugimaki Flycatcher (a scarce migrant here). Higher we finally found a roving party of Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes that lingered long enough for everyone to get reasonable views. Unfortunately the Black-necked Scimitar Babbler still wasn't co-operating.

Post lunch was another rather damp affair but persistence paid off once more. The fancy male Collared Bush Robin provided a nice splash of colours on a dull, dank afternoon even if the Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler appeared for only a lucky few. The higher elevations of Dasyueshan are of course the home of another endemic pheasant and we were delighted to see both male and female Mikado Pheasants in the open alongside a female Vinaceous Rosefinch. The information centre clearing was very kind to us with Flamecrests in the pines surrounding the feeding station and an opportunity to watch a DVD featuring Mikado Pheasants in the centre for those fed up with the rain!

### **22 November**

**Dasyueshan (43K pre-breakfast, 50K area - 43K down to 38K in afternoon). Rain all day (very heavy at times) and becoming chilly.**

Staying at the Dasyueshan Recreational Area meant we were in prime location to see upper-elevation forest birds before breakfast. The Taiwan Wren-babbler singing near our lodge was a great start to the day. KC had this little bird approaching so close it was impossible to use binoculars at times, even if it was a bit tricky following a fast moving tiny bird in the dark forest understorey. White-backed Woodpecker and Spotted Nutcracker were also on show before we headed down to breakfast with hopes of improving weather for the day ahead.

Out on the road again a quick stop at a ravine got us in the mood for endemic birds once again. This, a favoured spot for White-browed Robin, was an absolute gift with the target bird appearing instantly. Posing for photographs on the roadside rocks, it was even alongside a cracking male Collared Bush Robin at one time.

We started serious bird finding once again 'high' up (above 2500m) near the information centre. Eyebrowed Thrushes were foraging around the borders of the car park, feeding below trees in the dark undergrowth but emerging to the edges every so often. The trail here was somewhat hard work with the rain, the 'leaf drip' tricking us as we examined every movement in the canopy for our desired birds species. Frustratingly we heard Grey-headed Bullfinch but failed to see it. Initially Taiwan Fulvetta appeared only briefly too but spirits were lifted later with eight Taiwan Barwings in bamboo thickets near the road.

Continuing birding from the road we periodically met bird flocks, mainly consisting of Rufous-faced Warblers and Grey-cheeked Fulvettas, but sometimes Yellow Tit, Black-throated Bushtits and even a Dusky Fulvetta would be picked out with them. Heavy rain may have thwarted our attempts at some of the birds today but at last (this was my fourth attempt including the October scouting trip) the Little Forktail appeared at the waterfall.

With the rain easing we decided to take a short excursion after dinner in search of mammals. We were fortunate with our views of Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel in trees near the accommodation and brief but good views of Formosan Serow after a short journey in the bus.

### **23 November**

#### **Dasyueshan - Dong Shih (lunch), afternoon Aogu Wetland Forest Park. Rain at Dasyueshan becoming lighter near the coast.**

Pre-breakfast birding was cancelled this morning due to the heavy rain. Indeed it had been raining for most of the night so it was surprising the Taiwan Wren-babbler was singing away in the depths of the dark, damp forest!

The sky brightened a little soon after breakfast and with the bus loaded we left Dasyueshan for hopefully drier times. Dropping into the lower hill forests it was clear we'd still be using waterproofs and umbrellas for the morning at least. A nice male Swinhoe's Pheasant was the sole bird seen in the morning for an hour or so until we bumped into our first large flock of Rufous-faced Warblers and Grey-cheeked Fulvettas.

Lower still near 10K our fortunes began to change (though not the weather). A lone Chestnut-bellied Tit with Black-throated Bushtits and a single Yellow Tit was a bit of a surprise and it's always good to see the gorgeous male Grey-chinned Minivets. No sign of the hoped-for Collared Finchbill here unfortunately and we pressed on towards Dong Shih where we enjoyed one of the best lunches of the tour and an opportunity to dry off for a while.

In the afternoon we headed west towards the coast and a very different birding experience indeed. On arrival in Aogu the rain had almost stopped (but not quite). The sometimes rather oppressive forest conditions now gave way to open pools, shrimp ponds, mudflats and lagoons for the next two day. Telescopes at the ready!

Black-faced Spoonbills, one of Asia's rarest birds were found almost immediately with at least 60 loafing in the far lagoon. Suddenly our trip list was boosted; Asian Spot-billed Ducks joined Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal, Northern Pintail and Garganey with Tufted Ducks diving around the dabblers. A Cinnamon Bittern was a real treat, first in flight and then watched through the 'scopes in a quiet corner of the lagoon. Kentish Plovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Marsh Sandpipers and Common Greenshank fed in the muddy margins as Whiskered Terns flew by overhead and the huge Caspian Terns called above them.

As the light began to fade KC suggested that we check one larger lagoon of the Aogu Wetland Forest Park and it was here we discovered a drake Baikal Teal in the company of a couple of Northern Pintail. A good find indeed with just a few records annually in Taiwan.

**24 November****Putai wetlands, Ba Zhang river mouth, Dong Shih bridge, Firefly Lodge (Alishan). Fine all day. Breezy but sunny on the coast, clouding over in afternoon.**

Early breakfast in the hotel (chips for some!) and a fine morning greeted us for more wetland birding, this time at Putai. With plenty of lagoons to choose from we are fortunate to have KC's local knowledge here and we are soon watching Black-faced and Eurasian Spoonbills together as Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns fed in the nearby reedy ditch. High-pitched alarm calls revealed the presence of a Siberian Rubythroat and in no time KC has this smart male perched up for all to see ..... and singing! What a bird! Two handsome drake Falcated Ducks can be seen on one of the larger lagoons and the Greater Flamingo was logged as "of unknown origin".

Wetland birds are of course the main focus here today, but the telescopes were also put to good use with a handsome Long-tailed Shrike before testing the optics further with waders. Red-necked and Long-toed Stints were found by sifting through the huge flocks of Kentish Plovers, Dunlins and Curlew Sandpipers. More familiar shorebirds in the form of Pied Avocets, Ruffs and Spotted Redshanks can be seen with Northern Shovelers present in good numbers dabbling around the waders.

Leaving the lagoons behind we searched the river mouth and Chinese Egret was found on the distant mudflat. A small, short-legged gull looked interesting but was just too far off in the heat haze. Not to worry as we found a closer Saunders's Gull near the Dong Shih Bridge soon after plus a bonus Broad-billed Sandpiper.

It was time to leave the west coast wetlands all too soon but more quality birding awaited us in the hills once again, this time at Alishan. No time to hang around once we arrived at the Firefly Lodge as we were whisked away in the small 4x4 vehicle to the trailhead leading to the bird blind. With everybody safely ensconced in the hide the wait began. And we waited...

Patience was tested only slightly before the delightful male Swinhoe's Pheasants appeared, with some hens following and passing only a few metres from the hide. White-tailed Robin, female Snowy-browed Flycatcher and finally our target bird here, the exquisite Taiwan Hill Partridges all appeared. We sat quietly, apart from the constant shutters clicking away, as the partridges fed just a few metres upslope from the hide in the dark forest. Suddenly all the birds scurried away, probably due to a passing Crested Goshawk (this often happens here) and we all agreed it was a good time to vacate the bird blind.

Dinner tonight was 'offsite' in the local village so we took the opportunity to do some owling on the way back to Firefly. Despite hearing a couple of Mountain Scops Owls we were unable to see one; the birds remaining in the dense forest cover across the valley.

**25 November****Alishan & Yu Shan National Park. Fine start becoming cloudy with low cloud late afternoon.**

With very little daylight before breakfast time we only had a short birding walk this morning. There's always something to see in Alishan though - a smart *leucopsis* White Wagtail in the garden, Arctic Warbler just down the lane and then a nice flock of Grey-cheeked Fulvettas with a couple of Dusky Fulvettas for good measure. Back to the lodge for a fresco breakfast only to be disturbed by calling Taiwan Bamboo Partridge on the garden slope. No sign of them unfortunately and they had obviously scurried away by the time we reached the trail.

We travelled by bus into the higher reaches of Alishan seeing a soaring Black Eagle on the way and into the Yu Shan National Park where birding was a little quiet in all honesty. However we kept at it and while looking for Golden Parrotbill (without any luck whatsoever)

we saw some good birds including Taiwan Fulvetta and great views of Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler for all. The latter was most welcome as some of the group had the misfortune to be standing in just the wrong place when the last appeared at Dasyueshan. Hearing Grey-headed Bullfinch once again just added to the growing frustration, as we failed to see it but Collared Bush Robins, Flamecrest and Spotted Nutcrackers kept us occupied while White-whiskered Laughingthrushes just could not be avoided!

By late afternoon those incredible views of the forested hills were all but gone as the clouds rolled in and rain started. We headed down through the cloud for an early dinner with plans of owling near the lodge, where I had some success during the previous month's scouting trip. Unfortunately the owls were quiet on this night though, possibly due to the heavy cloud?

## **26 November**

### **Alishan - Hueisun stopping in Chang Pu en route. Overcast morning with sunny spells and rain by lunchtime.**

A pre-dawn start saw us birding the roads above the Firefly Lodge for babblers and laughingthrushes on this day. Taiwan Barbets were up early, calling from the forest below the road and a single Black-naped Monarch showed briefly in the half light. White-eared Sibias, Taiwan Yuhinas, fulvettas, white-eyes and Rufous-faced Warblers were busy on the scrub and secondary forest covered hillsides but our target birds were seemingly absent. Then suddenly there was a burst of Black-necked Scimitar Babbler song above the road. Once again no show until a pair almost magically appeared behind us. Those quick enough to predict the bird's movements managed brief binocular views as two of these seemingly shy birds moved through the undergrowth. Others had to make do with naked eye glimpses unfortunately as the scimitar babblers disappeared rapidly and stopped calling. Suddenly Hazel spotted a bird perched, partially obscured on the slope above us. As she suspected, this turned out to be one of this morning's target birds in the form of a Collared Finchbill. Joyce who had persevered with the flock as it moved through, picked out a White-bellied Erpornis too providing us with our best looks at this species for the tour.

Returning to the lodge for breakfast (with Crested Honey Buzzard overhead as we ate), we gathered our belongings and loaded the bus once again. Today was a travel day and a brief stop for provisions at a convenience store in Chang Pu proved surprisingly good for birds as well as coffee! Keen birders are never without their 'bin's' (even in a car park!) and this unscheduled birding stop showed how we could find birds literally anywhere. Obtaining second views of calling Plain Prinias led to sightings of new birds for the tour in the shape of Yellow-bellied Prinia, Zitting Cisticola and Golden-headed Cisticola. Incredibly there was also a perched Collared Finchbill in the corner of the field too, White-rumped and Scaly-breasted Munias in the grass and Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker gave us the best views of the tour.

Our destination today was Cingjing but we took a detour to Hueisun in the afternoon in search of Taiwan Blue Magpie. The weather worsened as we travelled into the gorge and by the time we stopped for lunch rain had set in, clouds shrouding the tops of the hills surrounding the valley. We walked the recreation centre area in search of the magpies without any clear sign that these birds were present. A flock of 30 or more Silver-backed Needletails sped over the area but the only other birds on show in the by-now dismal conditions were Grey Treepies and a few Grey-chinned Minivets. We returned to the bus, a little disheartened with clothes and optics soaked.

A few minutes later KC suggested a quick stop near a park for a last chance magpie attempt. Emerging from the bus it appeared the rain had abated a little but peering over the ledge into the park there was no indication that magpies were around. By chance I glimpsed some movement on a distant hillside; just passing treepies, but what are those larger birds perched in the pines? A mad dash back to the bus a few metres away for the sodden 'scopes and we

were scanning the hillside intently. Every now and then a Taiwan Blue Magpie would perch but only for a moment and even with 'scopes you had to be quick! After a while it was evident the flock had moved on but at least we had seen them. I think we know the meaning of "eleventh hour" now. Unfortunately we all missed a Maroon Oriole picked up by KC briefly too.

## **27 November**

### **Cingjing Farm, Blue Gate Trail, Hehuanshan Pass then east to Tian Xiang via Taroko Gorge. Rain all day, very windy and cold at Hehuanshan**

In truth the weather didn't look too promising on this day and the team met outside the Cingjing Farm hotel in waterproofs, carrying umbrellas or even weighing up whether to venture out or not! Fortune favours the brave (or wet) though and the heavy rain turned to just light drizzle quite quickly. In fact the slopes outside the hotel were quite lively with early morning bird activity including Oriental Turtle Doves, Taiwan Scimitar Babblers, Steere's Liocichlas and White-eared Sibias. Most of these were 'lifers' for the group just a few days previously.

The Redwing-like "seeep" calls of Eyebrowed Thrushes could be heard as we walked the paths, birds flying over and heading to tall trees just out of view. Fortunately some had found a fruiting tree lower down on our slope and were allowing fine 'scope views, despite the rather dark early morning conditions. I never tire of watching these superb birds; so rare in the UK and 'scoping them here led to the discovery of a fine male Brown-headed Thrush (endemic to East Asia). We later discovered at least two females and continued scrutiny produced Pale Thrush as well. Our luck, so unlikely at the outset of our walk, continued with stunning views of duetting Black-necked Scimitar Babblers and best views to date of Black-faced Bunting before we returned for breakfast.

Boarding the bus and heading towards the high pass at Hehuanshan it was obvious the rest of the day at this elevation was to be a struggle. Unfortunately it was a travel day so we had no alternative but to press on, stopping for a short walk on the Blue Gate Trail seeing our only White-bellied Green Pigeon of the tour and two Flame-breasted Flowerpeckers that were really just calling 'shapes' in a misty canopy.

Hehuanshan was very busy with tourists. The strong, rather cold wind with drizzle made the overcrowded car park a quite unpleasant place to be so we found a quieter stretch of road to park and set about the business of birding. We walked a stretch of road in terrible conditions until Christine called "I've got one" and there, hopping around on the bare rocks was a nice Alpine Accentor. Not just any old accentor either, but of the endemic *fennelli* subspecies!

We returned to the bus, somewhat relieved to say the least. Unfortunately the horrid conditions made the journey down to the east coast a rather unpleasant affair. Poor visibility hampered viewing conditions as we descended towards the famous Taroko Gorge and birding stops were few and far between (or unsuccessful) due to the heavy rain.

A stop at Tian Xiang introduced us to 'Styan's Gate' with flocks of bulbuls including individuals showing characteristics of both Light-vented and the endemic Styan's. A Mountain Hawk Eagle was a bonus given the poor raptor watching conditions though.

We continued towards Hualien, stopping nearby overnight and hoping for better conditions the following morning.

## **28 November**

### **Liwu River, Lan Yang river (north and south banks), Xin Nan. Overcast all day, very windy at Liwu but mainly dry.**

Well, it wasn't raining ..... But it was windy as we headed out to the Liwu river mouth seeing our first Styan's Bulbuls. Never mind because in the shelter of the trees we found some more

Brown-headed Thrushes and best of all another Pale Thrush for the few who missed the previous day's bird. A quick look towards the coast soon showed how difficult birding would be away from the shelter belts although we did find a female Blue Rock Thrush. Back among the avenues of trees and weedy margins we chanced upon a super little flock of Vinaceous-breasted Parrotbills. These enchanting birds amused us for sometime, acrobatically hanging from the grass tops or feeding on the path a few metres away from the group.

Moving north to Lan Yang and checking both sides of the river mouth for migrants we added White-breasted Waterhen and a pair of Mandarin Ducks to our list. The latter somehow looking so much better here than in Windsor Great Park! Also on view here was a smart Eastern Yellow Wagtail of the *taivana* subspecies that breeds in southeast Siberia, wintering as far south as the Philippines.

Our final stop of the afternoon was Xin Nan, a very promising area indeed. A quick look at the river showed the number of birds present in this area with hordes of distant ducks and waders on the muddy islands and river bends. Most of these birds were out of range for the mainly 'scope-less group though so after a quick but thorough scan we moved to the pans with birds at a more comfortable range. This tactic was very successful with two Great Knot picked up quickly by KC, conveniently feeding with a single Red Knot. KC was on great form finding Temminck's Stint although this bird didn't loiter for all to see unfortunately.

It felt as if we could've seen more here as with the other wetland sites on this tour, but time beat us and we moved on to Jingshan, the last overnight stay of the Taiwan tour.

## 29 November

### **Jingshan, Ching Shui Wetlands, Ying Huin Shan National Park. Overcast start with drizzle, clearing later with sunny spells.**

Another dull but dry start to the day and we found ourselves walking the streets of Jingshan for a pre-breakfast birding session. What at first seemed like a most unlikely birding venue came good as we turned a corner to an area of paddies. Wood Sandpiper and Green Sandpiper (our one and only of the trip) mingled with Little Ringed Plovers on one pool. The introduced Common Myna was numerous here and on one wire we could see Red-billed and White-shouldered Starlings together.

Packed and ready for the last time of the tour we took a short drive to a local park in search of migrants, surely one of our hobby's most enjoyable pastimes? With most winter visitors already established on the islands, bird movements were unlikely but what had arrived to spend the winter here this winter? Daurian Redstarts, Brown Shrike and Eyebrowed Thrush fed in the park grounds but surprisingly we failed to find Olive-backed Pipit which the habitat looked ideal for. A Dusky Thrush was undoubtedly the best find of the morning though.

A quick stop at Ching Shui enabled us to see our first Black Kites of the tour as well as another opportunity to see Long-tailed Shrike and Black-winged Kites. What a shame the long-staying Siberian Crane had decided it should leave this site last Spring! A few coastal stops in search of Pacific Reef Heron as well as scanning from the coasting bus were unfortunately unsuccessful. We moved back inland and into the hills soon afterwards in the direction of Taipei and through Ying Huin National Park.

Nobody could've predicted the following events as we walked up a steep road (too narrow for the bus) for a little while. As the terrain flattened near a small lake KC entered a trail. I had not had enough time to retract the tripod legs before some Taiwan Bamboo Partridges came scurrying along the forest floor, seemingly oblivious to our presence! Over the next quarter of an hour or so we watched four of these normally shy (so I'm told) birds, feeding only a metre or two from their admiring observers. Incredible.

By comparison the rest of the day was rather uneventful. We enjoyed a nice final lunch of the tour but failed to find any more Taiwan Blue Magpies before heading to the airport where we checked in for flights to Hong Kong and then homebound.

### 30 November

We all arrived early morning in a chilly London and after baggage collection headed our separate ways. The end of another Limosa tour and despite some challenging conditions we were incredibly successful in seeing the majority of the endemic taxa as well as some more widespread birds of East Asia including wintering birds from Siberia.

I cannot close this report without mentioning the superb skills of our excellent guide KC whose knowledge of wildlife, particularly birds and birding in Taiwan helped us through those wet days in the hills. He also managed to answer every question about Taiwanese culture and all of my daft logistical queries regarding the tour.

Finally my gratitude goes out to members of the team who helped find birds, appreciated them and even enjoyed seeing them over again! A special mention to Paul and Joyce: without their knowledge we would have a much shorter butterfly list!

### ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED (n=181)

#### **Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata***

A pair located on ponds on the south side of Lan Yang 28th.

#### **Falcated Duck *Anas falcata***

This near-threatened species was seen at Putai on 24th when two drakes were found.

#### **Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope***

Recorded on four dates with largest numbers at the Aogu Forest Wetland Park 23rd.

#### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Four at the Shigang Dam on 19th were the only ones recorded.

#### **Eastern Spot-billed Duck *Anas zonorhyncha***

Regularly seen in most wetland habitats and recorded on five dates.

#### **Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

Seen at Aogu and Putai wetlands (23rd & 24th) and Xin Nan on 28th.

#### **Northern Pintail *Anas acuta***

Seen at the same localities as the above species but less numerous.

#### **Garganey *Anas querquedula***

Small numbers at Aogu on 23rd and a single at Putai the following day.

#### **Baikal Teal *Anas formosa***

A drake at Aogu on 23rd was a good find as it's a rare bird in Taiwan.

#### **Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca***

Seen on three dates. Nowhere numerous but most were seen at Aogu wetlands on 23rd.

#### **Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula***

Once again recorded at the major wetland sites visited with largest numbers at Aogu on 23rd.

#### **Taiwan Partridge *Arborophila crudigularis* E**

Recorded on five dates (mostly by voice). One was seen very briefly at 23K in Dasyueshan on 23rd but the following day four were seen very well from the hide near Firefly Home Stay, Alishan.

#### **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola sonorivox* E**

Heard at Guguan, Alishan and Cingjing before finally seeing them at Yangmishan National Park on our final day in the field. We were able to watch four birds at extremely close range on a narrow trail only a few metres in from the main path and definitely one of the surprise highlights of the tour! Birds on Taiwan *B. sonorivox* have recently been elevated as a separate species from Chinese Bamboo Partridge *B. thoracicus*.

#### **Swinhoe's Pheasant *Lophura swinhoii* E**

The male is surely one of the world's most stunning birds and we enjoyed great views at Dasyueshan and Alishan. Up to eight birds were seen at the latter site with females approaching within just a few metres of the hide there.

**Mikado Pheasant *Symaticus mikado* E**

A pair watched at leisure near the information centre at 50K in Dasyueshan on 21st.

**Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

A male flushed on 28th near the mouth of the Liwu River.

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis poggei***

Seen on three dates with most recorded at Aogu and Putai wetlands.

**Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***

Several at the Putai wetlands on 24th.

**African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus***

This introduced species was seen at many wetland sites and most numerous at Aogu and Putai on 23rd and 24th.

**Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia***

Two with the following species at Putai on 24th.

**Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor***

This endangered species was observed over a two day period on the wetlands near Aogu (at least 60 birds) and Putai. The Tainan wetlands of the west coast of Taiwan are one of three major wintering sites for Black-faced Spoonbills and habitat destruction through industrial development is the main threat to this species.

**Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis***

A few seen at Aogu and Lan Yang.

**Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus***

One at Aogu on 23rd and another couple the following day at Putei.

**Malayan Night Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus***

Our first was predictably at the Taipei Botanical Gardens on 19th; a favourite site with most tours starting here and getting their first taste of the enigmatic bird. Another strolled into the road in front of the bus on 26th in Alishan. It was seen by only a few from the group as it made a hasty escape into the forest.

**Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax***

Seen at most wetland sites visited during the tour with records from five dates.

**Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus***

One at the Taipei Botanical Gardens on our first day in the field was our only record.

**Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus***

Widespread if not particularly numerous at any one site. Recorded on six dates.

**Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea***

Small numbers from five dates. seen at all wetlands plus a few from the bus between sites.

**Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea***

One at Lan Yang on 28th was the sole record for the tour.

**Great Egret *Ardea alba modesta***

Widespread with many seen in roadside paddies and also at wetland sites. Recorded on six dates.

**Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia***

Seen on four dates though the difficulty of identifying this species from a moving vehicle (compared with other egrets) probably means it was under recorded!

**Little Egret *Egretta garzetta***

Common and widespread in all damp areas. Seen on eight dates.

**Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes***

One distant bird at Ba Zhang river mouth on 24th. This species is characterised as "vulnerable" in BirdLife International's threat level with the small population declining due to reclamation of tidal mudflats and offshore islands for development.

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Seen on four dates, mainly on large rivers.

**Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

Small numbers (up to three birds) seen at Shigang Dam (19th), Aogu wetlands (24th), Lan Yang (28th) and Ching Shui (29th).

**Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus***

A few in the wetlands around Aogu, Putai and Ching Shui.

**Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus***

We saw this species on two dates including four birds together at Guguan on 20th. Our last flew over Firefly Lodge in Alishan as we took breakfast on 26th.

**Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela hoyi***

Seen on three dates including four on 19th as we travelled to Guguan. Endemic subspecies.

**Mountain Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis***

One in Taroko Gorge in dreadful weather on 27th was the only one seen.

**Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis***

A soaring bird over Alishan on 25th gave prolonged views.

**Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus formosae***

Singles in Taipei Botanical Gardens (19th), Guguan (20th), Dasyueshan (21st), Alishan (25th) and (26th). Endemic subspecies.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus***

One in Dasyueshan on 22nd.

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans formosanus***

Several were seen at Ching Shui wetlands on 29th. Near endemic subspecies.

**White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus***

One seen briefly at Lan Yang on 28th.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus***

Recorded on six dates.

**Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra***

Seen at Aogu, Putai, Lan Yang and Ching Shui, though nowhere numerous.

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus***

Quite common in the Aogu and Putai areas over the two day period we spent there.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

A flock of at least 40 at Putai on 24th.

**Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva***

Large numbers around Aogu and Putai and a few near Lan Yang.

**Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola***

Ones and twos at Putai and Xin Nan.

**Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius***

Up to a dozen at Xin Nan on 28th and at least one pair the following day at Jingshan.

**Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinu nihonensis***

Small numbers at Aogu were eclipsed by large gathering the following day at Putai. A small flock frequented the river mouth at Lan Yang on 28th.

**Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago***

Three at Xin Nan on 28th.

**Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus***

One at Putai on 24th.

**Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata***

At least ten at the Ba Zhang river mouth on 24th.

**Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus***

At least ten at Putai on 24th.

**Common Redshank *Tringa totanus***

Singles at Aogu on 23rd and Putai the following day.

**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis***

Numerous in the Aogu, Putai and Xin Nan wetlands.

**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia***

Seen at the same sites as the above species but in smaller numbers.

**Green Sandpiper *Tringa chloropus***

One at Jingshan on our final morning in the field.

**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola***

Seen at Xin Nan and Jingshan.

**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos***

Seen on five dates in ones and twos.

**Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris***

Two at Xin Nan on 28th were well watched, mostly feeding alongside the following species.

**Red Knot *Calidris canutus***

A single Xin Nan on 28th.

**Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis***

Common at Putai on 24th and smaller numbers at Xin Nan on 28th.

**Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii***

Just the one seen at Xin Nan. Unfortunately it disappeared before everyone could get onto it.

**Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta***

Fairly numerous at Putai and a few at Xin Nan.

**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea***

A few scattered among the stints and Dunlins at Putai on 24th.

**Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

We saw these at the prime wetland sites at Aogu, Putai and Xin Nan.

**Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus***

One, maybe two birds on the mudflats near the Dong Shih bridge on 24th.

**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax***

Half a dozen or so at Putai on 24th.

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Fairly numerous at Aogu and Putai.

**Saunders's Gull *Chroicocephalus saundersi***

After a very distant putative Saunder's Gull at Ba Zhang we found one nearby on mudflats from Dong Shih Bridge on 24th. Another good find as this species is listed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International.

**Vega Gull *Larus vegae***

Two birds (both adults) identified at Putai on 24th.

**Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia***

A few at Aogu and Putai on 23rd and 24th.

**Little Tern *Sternula albifrons***

Some small flocks at Putai on 24th.

**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida***

The most numerous tern in the Aogu and Putai wetlands with some large flocks seen.

**Feral Rock Dove *Colomba livia***

Seen on eight dates.

**Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis***

Recorded on five dates in Taipei, Dasyueshan, Alishan, Cingjing and Jingshan.

**Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica***

Seen on five dates. Some large roadside flocks noted on wires.

**Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis***

Small numbers seen on five dates.

**White-bellied Green Pigeon *Treron sieboldii sororius***

One seen along the Blue Gate Trail above Cingjing on 26th. Endemic subspecies.

**Mountain Scops Owl *Otus spilocephalus hambroeki***

Heard near Firefly Lodge, Alishan on 24th. Endemic subspecies.

**Collared Scops Owl *Otus lettia glabripes***

An adult and two juveniles at a daytime roost in the Taipei Botanical Gardens on 19th. Endemic subspecies.

**Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis***

Five over 13K on 20th and a fast moving party of about 30 birds over Hueisun on 26th.

**House Swift *Apus nipalensis kuntzi***

Seen on six dates. Endemic subspecies.

**Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis***

Seen on three dates with repeated views at Putai.

**Taiwan Barbet *Psilopogon nuchalis* E**

At least eight on our first morning birding in the Botanical Gardens in Taipei. We also had good views above Firefly Lodge in Alishan on 25th. Endemic to Taiwan, now in *Psilopogon* and formerly placed within Black-browed Barbet *P. oorti*.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus canicapillus***

Recorded on five dates but proved elusive. One was eventually seen well and 'scoped on 26th at Hueisun.

**White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos insularis***

One in Dasyueshan on 22nd. Endemic subspecies.

**Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus***

One at Lan Yang on 28th.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

Seen in Taipei on 19th, Aogu on 23rd, Alishan on 25th and Liwu on 28th.

**Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris***

Frequently encountered in Guguan, Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus***

Seen on four dates and in open areas.

**Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach***

This handsome bird was seen on three dates at Putai, Liwu and Ching Shui.

**White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis zantholeuca***

This species remained elusive throughout the tour. Two were seen briefly at Guguan on 19th where it was also heard the following day. One appeared (briefly again) in Alishan on the road above Firefly Lodge.

**Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus harterti***

Regularly seen on roadside wires in the lowlands. Recorded on six dates. Endemic subspecies.

**Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus braunianus***

Seen well in the hills at Guguan, Dasyueshan and Alishan. Endemic subspecies.

**Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea oberholseri***

Singles at Guguan on 19th, Dasyueshan on 21st and Alishan on 25th. Endemic subspecies.

**Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius taiwanus***

Examples of the distinctive, endemic *taiwanus* subspecies were seen in Guguan and Dasyueshan.

**Taiwan Blue Magpie *Urocissa caerulea* E**

A flock at Hueisun on 26th moved rapidly through trees on a distant hillside. Thankfully at least three lingered long enough for 'scope views.

**Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae formosae***

Seen on seven dates and often in large numbers. Endemic nominate subspecies.

**Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica***

Seen on six dates.

**Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes owstoni***

We saw our first two at Guguan on 20th and then a single was seen in Dasyueshan on 22nd. Our last birds were in Yu Shan National Park on 25th. Endemic subspecies recently treated as part of Southern Nutcracker *N. hemispila* by HBW/BirdLife checklist (but not yet by IOC).

**Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos***

Seen on just three dates but some large flocks above Guguan and Dasyueshan.

**Coal Tit *Periparus ater ptilosus***

The distinctive crested endemic subspecies *ptilosus* was seen on two dates in Dasyueshan.

**Chestnut-bellied Tit *Sittiparus castaneiventris* E**

Guguan was a good site for this species but we were a little surprised to find one just above Dongshih on 23rd. This endemic species has fairly recently been split from Varied Tit *S. varius*.

**Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus insperatus***

Regularly encountered around Guguan, Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Yellow Tit *Macholophus holsti* E**

We saw this stunning Taiwan endemic at Dasyueshan and in Alishan. Recorded on four dates with four birds seen on 22nd.

**Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques cinereicapillus***

This one gave us a few problems and was not seen until 26th when a bird was found perched as we searched for Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler in Alishan. Typically once seen, we found another soon after - in a car park near a convenience store in Chang Pu! Endemic subspecies.

**Light-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis formosae***

Common and widespread. Endemic subspecies.

**Styan's Bulbul *Pycnonotus taiwanus* E**

We first encountered 'Styan's types' as we descended towards the east coast through the Tarako Gorge on 27th. Many variants were seen alongside Light-vented Bulbuls with hybrids exhibiting characteristics of both species. More convincing examples of this endemic were seen the following day along the coast north of Hualien.

**Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus nigerrimus***

Widespread with sightings on seven dates. Endemic subspecies.

**Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis***

Seen on six dates; usually near water in lowland sites.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Seen on just three dates and did not appear on the list until we reached the west coast at Aogu.

**Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica namiyei***

Widespread and seen on nine dates. Near endemic subspecies.

**Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus***

Seen on six dates. Mostly in mountainous regions like Dasyueshan, Alishan and Cingjing.

**Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata***

Seen on three dates at Guguan, near Aogu and at Chang Pu.

**Taiwan Wren-babbler *Pnoepyga formosana* E**

Seen in Dasyueshan on 22nd when despite atrocious weather, a bird responded very well to playback. Repeated views in admittedly rather dark conditions allowed us to observe the frantic wing flicking of this endemic as it flitted from perch to perch. The same individual could be heard singing before dawn the following day (outside our lodge). At least two were heard in Yushan National Park in the afternoon of 25th but could not be enticed into views. Formerly placed in Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler *P. albiventer*.

**Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis***

Seen at Guguan, Dasyueshan and Alishan. Some large flocks were seen in Dasyueshan with up to 30 birds mixing with Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*, their bright, creamy-white rumps illuminating the often dank forest as they passed by.

**Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler *Horornis acanthozoides concolor***

A calling bird responded briefly to playback in Dasyueshan on 21st. Unfortunately it was not seen by everyone due to restricted viewing angles but two that showed extremely well in Yu Shan National Park on 25th made up for that! Mark Brazil's guide (Birds of East Asia) mentions the endemic subspecies *concolor* is "split by some as Taiwan Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler".

**Black-throated Bushtit *Aegithalos concinnus***

This attractive little forest dweller was seen on six dates in Guguan, Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus***

One heard below 13K in lower Dasyueshan on 21st was our only record.

**Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis***

Heard at Guguan and Dasyueshan before finally seeing one near Firefly Lodge on 25th.

**Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis***

Two or three in a damp tall grassy area bordering a car park in Chang Pu on 26th.

**Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis volitans***

One seen alongside the above species exhibited its subtly longer tail and plainer head pattern. Endemic subspecies.

**Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris***

At least one in the same area as the cisticolas. Also heard in open areas on our last two days in the field.

**Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata flavirostris***

Our first was at Putai on 24th (although a certain Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* was grabbing the headlines at the time I seem to remember!). At least three were seen at Chang Pu with others recorded by voice only on 28th and 29th. Endemic subspecies.

**Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis* E**

Heard at Dasyueshan on 21st and 22nd but we were unable to tempt one into view. We were foiled once again at Alishan on 25th before this tricky endemic finally gave itself up the following day in the secondary forest above Firefly Lodge. However the views were brief so it was a pleasant surprise when two performed beautifully on the slopes at Cingjing on 27th when a pair were observed duetting in full view. Formally placed within Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler *P. erythrocnemis*.

**Taiwan Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus musicus* E**

Quite easily seen (compared to the above species, at least!) with observations from Taipei Botanical Gardens, Guguan, Dasyueshan, Alishan and Cingjing. An species endemic to Taiwan formally placed within Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *P. ruficollis*.

**Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyridopsis ruficeps praecognita***

Seen on three dates at 13K (Dasyueshan) and in Alishan. Endemic subspecies.

**Dusky Fulvetta *Alcippe brunnea brunnea***

Sightings from just two dates with birds seen at Dasyueshan (22nd) and Yu Shan (25th). Endemic subspecies.

**Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia* E**

One of the more widespread endemics and numerous forest flock components with sightings on six dates. Particularly numerous in Dasyueshan and easily seen in Alishan and above Cingjing.

**Taiwan Hwamei *Garrulax taewanus* E**

Finding and identifying this endemic is somewhat complicated by the presence of feral populations of Chinese Hwamei *G. canorus*. After hearing a hwamei at Guguan on 19th (but unable to firmly identify it) we were able to confirm Taiwan Hwamei the following day at a slightly higher elevation thanks to some marvellous views of a singing bird. We also heard what was probably 'good' Taiwan Hwamei at Cingjing on 27th (confirmed site record from Limosa reconnaissance trip, October 2016).

**Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax ruficeps* E**

Another tough cookie! We finally connected with them at Dasyueshan on 23rd when a group of several birds flew through the forest upslope of the road. A Taiwan endemic formally placed within White-throated Laughingthrush *G. albogularis*.

**White-whiskered Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron morrisonianum* E**

This species was as easy and confiding as the last was difficult and elusive! Only seen on three dates (Dasyueshan and Yu Shan) but often at close range and posing for photographs as they sang from roadside stumps.

**Steere's Liocichla *Liocichla steerii* E**

Another easy endemic to see in the montane forests of Dasyueshan, Alishan, Yu Shan and near Cingjing. Seen on eight dates.

**Taiwan Barwing *Actinodura morrisoniana* E**

A noisy group of eight in the upper Dasyueshan watched as they made their way through the forest edge below the road on 22nd.

**White-eared Sibia *Heterophasia auricularis* E**

Another endemic species that's very easy to see on this tour. Seen on seven dates in Dasyueshan, Alishan and Yu Shan with some nice feeding flocks seen.

**Taiwan Fulvetta *Fulvetta formosana* E**

Seen on 22nd at Dasyueshan and cracking views of roadside birds foraging in bamboo and scrub in Yu Shan National Park on 25th.

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Sinosuthora webbiana bulomacha***

A beautiful flock of about 30 birds kept us entertained as they fed by the side of a track at the Liwu river mouth on 28th. Endemic subspecies.

**Taiwan Yuhina *Yuhina brunneiceps* E**

Common in the montane forests with some nice flocks seen at Dasyueshan and Alishan. This endemic was seen on six dates.

**Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus***

Widespread and seen in good numbers at some sites. Seen on seven dates.

**Flamecrest *Regulus goodfellowi* E**

We had great views of this Taiwan endemic in the upper reaches of Dasyueshan. Also heard at Yu Shan.

**Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea formosana***

Seen on two dates in Dasyueshan (two seen 21st) and once in Alishan. Endemic subspecies.

**Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus formosanus***

Scarce but probably overlooked with sightings on just two dates. Endemic subspecies.

**Javan Myna *Acridotheres javanicus* I**

An introduced species to Taiwan and well established.

**Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* I**

Another introduced species that we saw regularly during the last two days of the tour between Hualien and Taipei.

**Red-billed Starling *Spodiopsar sericeus***

Three near the hotel in Jingshan on 29th were the only ones seen.

**Daurian Starling *Agropsar sturninus***

One lucky member of the group saw one on wires by the Dong Shih Bridge on 24th.

**White-shouldered Starling *Sturnia sinensis***

One with the Red-billed Starlings in Jingshan.

**Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus***

First seen in Dasyueshan. Devilishly difficult to observe in the trees so a few feeding on the ground in the borders of the car park were a welcome site indeed. Towards the end of the tour we encountered this species and other thrushes more frequently. Most numerous at Cingjing and watching this most sought-after vagrant to UK shores, led to the discovery of other species feeding nearby.

**Pale Thrush *Turdus pallidus***

Singles with the above species at Cingjing and Jingshan. Two were seen at Liwu on 28th.

**Brown-headed Thrush *Turdus chrysolaus***

Up to six at Cingjing and Liwu and three at Jingshan. An East Asian endemic wintering in Japan, Taiwan, SE China and Philippines.

**Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus***

One at Jingshan on 29th provided us with a nice opportunity to study this rare vagrant to the UK.

**Vivid Niltava *Niltava vivida vivida***

Good views of two in Dasyueshan on 21st. The subspecies *vivida* is endemic to Taiwan and may be a separate species (Taiwan Niltava).

**Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope***

A stunning male singing at Putai on the morning of 24th. Also heard at Liwu and Jingshan (alarm calls only).

**White-tailed Robin *Myiomela leucura montium***

Heard at Dasyueshan before being seen well in Alishan on 24th. Endemic subspecies.

**White-browed Bush Robin *Tarsiger indicus formosanus***

Another smart endemic seen well in Dasyueshan on 22nd. Endemic subspecies.

**Collared Bush Robin *Tarsiger johnstoniae* E**

This handsome endemic was seen in Dasyueshan and Alishan.

**Little Forktail *Enicurus scouleri***

A traditional site at a Dasyueshan waterfall finally produced the goods and we were able to watch this ornate bird clambering up the wet rock face and dancing across pools.

**Taiwan Whistling Thrush *Myophonus insularis* E**

This noisy endemic is quite easy to see around Guguan and Alishan.

**Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki***

This scarce migrant was seen in Dasyueshan on 21st and in Alishan on 25th.

**Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra innexa***

A female by the hide near Firefly Lodge was our only sighting but we did hear it in Alishan a couple of days later. Endemic subspecies.

**Oriental Magpie-robin *Copsychus saularis* I**

This established exotic in Taiwan was seen in the Taipei Botanical Gardens on 19th.

**Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus***

This migrant was frequently encountered throughout the tour in small numbers, including a few handsome males.

**Plumbeous Water Redstart *Phoenicurus fuliginosus***

Seen on six dates and frequently near water.

**Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius***

One (a female) by the Liwu river mouth on 28th was our only record.

**Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii***

One at Guguan on 19th and a pair at Alishan on 25th were our only records.

**Plain Flowerpecker *Dicaeum minullum uchidai***

Singles in Dasyueshan on 20th and a couple in Alishan on 25th were the only ones seen. Endemic subspecies.

**Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum igneipectus formosum***

Two along the Blue Gate Trail above Cingjing on 27th could only be identified by vocalisations in the mist and rain there. Endemic subspecies.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus***

Seen on eight dates.

**White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata***

A few at 13K (Dasyueshan Manor) and at Chang Pu.

**Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata***

Two at Putai on 24th and also seen at Chang Pu on 26th.

**Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris fennelli***

One of the distinctive form *fennelli* seen at Hehuanshan on 27th. Endemic subspecies.

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis***

The distinctive *taivana* (from Siberia, Sakhalin and Hokkaido) that winters from Taiwan, SE China and Philippines, was seen at Putai and Xin Nan.

**Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***

This familiar bird to all UK birders was seen on ten dates.

**White Wagtail *Motacilla alba***

The handsome *leucopsis* was seen at Firefly Lodge (Alishan) and Liwu.

**Grey-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca owstoni***

Heard at Dasyueshan on 25th. What a shame we didn't see it as *owstoni* occurring on Taiwan may be specifically distinct. Endemic subspecies.

**Taiwan Rosefinch *Carpodacus formosanus* E**

A female in Dasyueshan at 50K was our only sighting. Recently split from Vinaceous Rosefinch *C. vinaceus* so now an endemic species. Only occurs in the upper montane areas of Taiwan.

**Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala***

Singles on the last three dates of the tour at Cingjing, Liwu and Jingshan.

**ESCAPES or BIRDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN.**

**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*** Two at Putai on 24th and one at Lan Yang on 28th.

**MAMMALS**

**Formosan Serow *Capricornis swinhoei***

**Formosan Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi micrurus***

**Formosan Striped Squirrel *Tamiops maritimus***

**Owston's Long-nosed Tree Squirrel *Dremomys pernyi owstoni***

**Red-bellied Tree Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraenus***

**Red & White Giant Flying Squirrel *Petaurista alborufus***

**Formosan Macaque *Macaca cyclopis***

**Lesser Asiatic Yellow Bat *Scotophilus kuhii***

**Mouse-eared Bat sp. *Miotis* sp.**

**BUTTERFLIES**

**Common Rose *Pachliopta aristolochiae***

**Common Tiger *Danaus chrysippus***

**Blue Tiger *Tirumala limniace***

**Common Mormon *Papilio polytes***

**Silver Forget-me-not *Catochrysops panormus***

**Glassy Tiger *Parantica aglea***

**Double-branded Crow *Euploea sylvester***

**Painted Jezebel *Delias hyparete***

**Common Bluebottle *Graphium sarpedon***

**Chinese Peacock *Papilio bianor***

**Common Sailer *Neptis hylas***

**Chestnut Tiger *Parantica sita***

**Lilacine Bushbrown *Mycalesis francisca***

**Chocolate Pansy *Junonia iphita***

**Formosan Swift *Borbo cinnara***

**ODONATA**

**Red Percher *Neurothemis ramburii***

**Asian Amberwing *Brachythemis contaminata***