

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

SOUTHEAST CHINA

5 - 23 May 2012

TOUR REPORT

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During the tour one of the tour participants Ken Baker, commented that `China was one giant building site`. His description was very accurate. Massive building projects are taking place throughout the whole country and in every town and village, even in the most remote areas, new homes are springing up, right next to the old ones. Modern free-ways criss cross the entire country and trucks, cars and motorbikes are taking full advantage of them. In the modern, rapidly developing new China, the ancient Confucian philosophy of living in harmony with nature, is being severely challenged. We visited two magnificent wetland areas on the coast, equal to anything I have seen anywhere else in the world and both are being developed; one for petrochemical plants and at the other site a whole new city is being built, right in the middle of a vast expanse of reedbeds. On this unique tour, we visited a total of 7 different provinces as we searched for some of China's most beautiful, but least known, endemic birds. We found a very respectable 236 species of birds, including almost all of the hoped for specialities, but it was the quality of the birds seen, that was the most impressive aspect of the tour. We witnessed the great spectacle of literally thousands of birds on migration, including hundreds of waders in immaculate full breeding plumage. On the final day of the tour we saw no less than three different species of bitterns, in the space of a few hours, this would be very difficult to equal, anywhere in the world. We also sampled everyday life in rural China, enjoyed the hospitality of the Chinese people and for better or for worse, sampled much of China's unique cuisine! Birding highlights of the tour included the endangered Chinese Egret, the endangered White-eared Night-Heron, the rarely observed Great Bittern, the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill, the beautiful Mandarin Duck, the delightful Pied Falconet, a male Cabot's Tragopan displaying to a female, the very uncommon Long-billed Plover, the endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, the endangered Saunder's Gull, the endangered Chinese-crested Tern, the rarely observed Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, the migratory Northern Boobook, the very uncommon Blyth's Kingfisher, the migratory Forest Wagtail, the breeding Chinese endemic Brown-rumped Minivet, the stunning Siberian Thrush, the rarely observed Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher, the stunningly attractive Siberian Rubythroat, the secretive Manchurian Bush-Warbler, the recently described Limestone Leaf-Warbler, the much sought after Pygmy Wren-Babbler, the attractive Streaked Wren-Babbler, the critically endangered Courtois Laughingthrush, the stunningly attractive Red-tailed Laughingthrush, the equally attractive Red-billed Leiothrix and the little-known Reed Parrotbill.

Following a long and tiring flight from Australia we arrived at Shanghai airport early in the evening. We then drove for a few more hours to Rudong, on the coast of Jiangsu province. It was the early hours of the morning before we got to bed.

We spent the early part of the morning the following day birding a large expanse of reedbeds, during the drive there we observed our first mammal of the tour, an Amur Hedgehog, which we saw along the roadside. Our main target bird in the reedbeds was the little-known and range-restricted Reed Parrotbill. It is a splendid bird and in no time at all, we were enjoying great looks at the bird.

There was also a supporting cast of Little and Cattle Egrets, Chinese Pond-Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, the very shy Brown-cheeked Rail, Oriental Pratincole, Grey-headed Lapwing, Common Snipe, Common Tern, flocks of White-winged Black Terns in magnificent full breeding plumage, Feral Pigeon, Spotted and Red-collared Doves, the beautiful Black-capped Kingfisher, Oriental Skylark, Barn Swallow, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Richards Pipit, Light-vented Bulbul, Plain Prinia, Zitting Cisticola, both Black-browed and Oriental Reed-Warblers, Yellow-browed Warbler, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Brown Shrike and Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and that was just our first birding stop!

We then visited the nearby sea wall and birded the tidal mudflats, on an extremely fast moving, incoming tide. Literally thousands of migrating waders were feeding on the mudflats. It was not long before the tide came in very quickly and the waders then flew inland a little, to a large expanse of sandy flats, which was their high tide roost. The vast majority of the waders were in stunning full breeding plumage, in stark contrast to how we normally observe them on their wintering grounds in Australia. We saw huge numbers of waders here, which included the following; Pacific Golden-Plover, Grey Plover, Kentish Plover, including a nest with three eggs in it, both Lesser and Greater Sandpipers, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Terek, Sharp-tailed, Curlew and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Red-necked Stint and Dunlin. However, our best find amongst the waders, and the one we were earnestly looking for, was the severely endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, the bird we found had partly moulted into breeding plumage. We also enjoyed the added bonus of a rare vagrant to this part of the world, a Little Stint, in full breeding plumage. In this area we also saw Eurasian Hobby, the endangered Saunder's Gull, Little and Gull-billed Terns, Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler and Black-faced Bunting.

In the afternoon we birded a couple of small patches of woodland, which at this time of year act as migrant traps, holding large numbers of mainly, migrating passerines, who were busily feeding, in reality refuelling for the long nights flight which lay ahead of them. There was also some wetlands adjoining the woodland so we also added a few wetland birds, the new birds were as follows, Intermediate Egret, Chinese Sparrowhawk, Black-winged Stilt, Common Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, a stunning male Siberian Thrush, Eyebrowed Thrush, Common Blackbird, Grey-streaked, Asian Brown, Korean and Mugimaki Flycatchers, Rufous-tailed Robin, Siberian Stonechat, Manchurian Bush-Warbler, Radde's Warbler, Eastern-crowned Leaf-Warbler, Great Tit, Japanese White-eye, Long-tailed Shrike, Black Drongo, the very beautiful Asian Azure-winged Magpie, Red-billed and White-cheeked Starlings, Yellow-billed Grosbeak and Meadow and Tristram's Buntings. We also enjoyed the surprise find of a migrating owl, the little-known Northern Boobook.

The following morning we birded an area of woodland looking mainly for migrants and here we added Little Grebe, Common Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Common Pheasant, Oriental Turtle-Dove, the very attractive Forest Wagtail and the very smart Daurian Redstart. Our best find was a male Siberian Rubythroat in full breeding plumage, which was absolutely stunning, it showed really well for a Siberian Rubythroat, which on their wintering grounds are notorious skulkers! We spent the latter half of the morning out on the mudflats, literally surrounded by hundreds of waders, of which most were in brilliant breeding plumage. New birds here included Grey Heron, the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Grey-tailed Tattler and Arctic Warbler.

In the afternoon we drove back to Shanghai, where we caught an early evening flight to Fuzhou, the provincial capital of Fujian province. We then drove to nearby Jingfeng, for a two nights stay.

Much of the following day was spent at the nearby Min Jiang Estuary; the major attraction here at

this time of year is the critically endangered Chinese Crested Tern. We walked out to an area of sand dunes which overlooked a large expanse of sandbanks, where large numbers of Gull-billed, Crested, White-winged Black and Whiskered Terns congregate at high tide. At this time of year small numbers of Chinese Crested Terns also roost here. While walking to the sand dune we observed a couple of Great Egrets and a few Eastern Spot-billed Ducks. I then picked out a critically endangered Chinese Egret amongst the many other egrets on the mudflats, this caused a great deal of excitement as we looked through the scopes in order to get a good look at this much sought after species. While admiring the egret through our scopes, another very uncommon bird walked behind the Chinese Egret, it was an Asian Dowitcher in full breeding plumage, this also caused much excitement. On our arrival at the sand dunes we enjoyed the surprise sighting of a Masked Laughingthrush, as this was not typical habitat for this species. On the sandflats in front of us a number of waders and terns began to congregate and we picked out a few Red Knots, a single Marsh Sandpiper and an immature Black-tailed Gull flew by. As we were watching the number of terns increase, two Chinese Crested Terns joined the flock and we were able to enjoy good close looks at them through our scopes. As the tide receded, we were able to walk out to the roosting tern flocks and enjoy even closer looks and a second pair of Chinese Crested Terns also joined the throng and we even watched them copulating! Very satisfied with our days work, we rounded off the afternoon with some birding in nearby farmland which produced the following new birds, White-breasted Waterhen, Eurasian Moorhen, both Pintail and Swinhoe's Snipe, Eurasian Hoopoe, Oriental Magpie Robin, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Black Collared and White-shouldered Starlings, Crested Myna and Scaly-breasted Munia.

The following morning we birded an area of nearby farmland, which produced four new birds for us, a solitary Osprey, a very attractive Little Ringed Plover, a couple of Pied Kingfishers and a few Yellow-bellied Prinias. We then drove through a patchwork of intensely cultivated farmland to Fuzhou Forest Park, where we had lunch. Following lunch we did some birding in the park and new birds for us included White Wagtail, the very beautiful Scarlet Minivet, Collared Finchbill, the handsome Chestnut Bulbul and the noisy and conspicuous Common Tailorbird. In the latter half of the afternoon we drove to the town of Wuyishan, in Jiangxi province, on the way some members of the group saw a Wild Boar in farmland as we were driving along. On arrival at Wuyishan we found nesting House Swifts, close to our hotel, where we spent the night.

Following breakfast at our hotel we set off to go birding in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve; on the way we picked up three new species of birds along the roadside, we found Red-rumped Swallows nesting above some shops in a small village, enjoyed watching a pair of Plumbeous Water Redstarts alongside a small stream and we found the handsome Crested Bunting, perched on overhead telegraph wires. We then spent the next two days birding in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve situated high in the Wuyi Mountains, the largest surviving subtropical forest system in the whole of southeastern China. On the lower slopes of the reserve beech, laurel and magnolia trees predominated, while on the higher slopes various species of conifers were plentiful. The reserve was a whole series of spectacularly steep sided mountains, which abounded with brilliant red azaleas and soft pink rhododendrons. The star attraction of the reserve is undoubtedly the splendid Cabot's Tragopan and this endangered species of pheasant was the bird we were most hoping to see. Fortunately, the weather was very much in our favour, it was overcast, with low cloud and poor visibility, exactly the weather that Cabot's Tragopan favours, on bright sunny days, they remain well hidden inside the dense forest. We drove slowly up the road leading to the summit and then drove slowly back down it again. We enjoyed a total of eight Cabot's Tragopans, all seen along the edge of the road, we saw adult males and females and very young chicks. At one time we watched a male displaying to a female, he approached the female with his lappet, a sack of brightly coloured skin on the throat, fully extended. Normally, the lappet is completely retracted and remains

practically invisible. As he approached the female the lappet was suddenly expanded down over the breast, forming a bright orange, bib-like flap that he exposed in front of the female. At the same time he extended himself in an upright position, with his wings lowered and half spread. At the climax of the display, the male erected two small, fleshy orange horns, which are normally shrunk and concealed beneath the crown feathers. This is one of the most spectacular mating displays in the avian world and we were very fortunate to witness it. Had a vehicle not approached from behind, forcing us to move, I am sure that copulation would have taken place. During our first day of birding in the reserve other new birds included Striated Heron, the very attractive Black Baza, Black Eagle, unbelievably close and prolonged looks at the normally very timid Chinese Bamboo Partridge, Grey-chinned Minivet, Brown Dipper, Chestnut-bellied and Blue Rock-Thrushes, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Hartert's Leaf-Warbler, Bianchi's and Chestnut-crowned Warblers, Indochinese Yuhina, the stunningly attractive Red-billed Leiothrix and the beautiful Blyth's Shrike-Babbler. We also enjoyed the first of many sightings of Pallas's Squirrel.

On our second day in the reserve, we experienced some rain and a great deal of low cloud. On the lower slopes of the reserve new birds included Pacific Swift, Grey-headed Woodpecker and we observed a large nesting colony of Asian Martins on a steep rock-face. We also enjoyed good looks at Himalayan Black Bulbul, the shy and inconspicuous Small Niltava, the beautiful Spotted Forktail, Rufous-faced and Alstrom's Warblers, the uncommon Grey-hooded Fulvetta, a rather confiding Black-chinned Yuhina, a small flock of Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes, the seldom observed Brown Bullfinch, and no less than three attractive and rather active species of tits, Coal, Yellow-bellied and Black-throated. During a brief respite in the weather we made a dash to the summit of the reserve, where we added a few high altitude species which included displaying Rosy Pipits, nesting Brown Bush-Warblers and Buff-throated Warblers and Doris was shown a White-browed Shortwing by one of the local guides.

We also spent the following morning birding in the reserve but unfortunately it rained for much of the time and bird activity was very low. However, we did manage to find a few new species, these were Mountain Bulbul, White-spectacled Warbler, the elusive Pygmy Wren-Babbler and the very attractive Yellow-cheeked Tit. In the afternoon we drove northwards winding our way through deep valleys and large areas of rice paddies before arriving at Yanshan, where we spent the night.

We awoke the following morning to find fine rain falling, but after a short period of time it cleared to a fine, if somewhat overcast day. A short drive took us to the Wuyuan Nature Reserve, which in reality was an area of farmland surrounding a few small villages. This is the only place on the entire planet where the severely endangered Courtois Laughingthrush occurs, the birds nest in loose colonies in some of the taller trees actually inside the village. We soon located a flock of Courtois Laughingthrushes, it is an incredibly beautiful bird and we enjoyed watching them in the village, we even watched some of the birds helping to build a nest. Walking through the village was also of interest, as it contained some very old buildings. While we were looking at a particularly old building which was constructed out of intricately carved wooden panels, an elderly gentleman from the village came up to us and started talking to us, so we asked our guide to translate for us. The elderly gentleman told us that we were admiring the oldest house in the village and that there had been two older houses, but unfortunately, they had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. A little birding in the farmland that surrounded the village produced a surprisingly good number of new birds for us which included the rarely observed Brown Crake, the very uncommon Long-billed Plover, Dollarbird, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike, the Chinese endemic breeding Brown-rumped Minivet, Striated Prinia, the skulking Dusky Warbler, Chinese Hwamei, Eurasian Jay, White-rumped Munia and Grey-capped Greenfinch.

The following morning we awoke to find heavy rain falling, undaunted, we did some birding in farmland close to Wuyuan. New birds here included Mandarin Duck in flight, close and prolonged, if somewhat soggy looks at the stunning Pied Falconet, a very bedraggled Asian Barred Owl, Brown-breasted Bulbul, Ashy Drongo and the attractive Russet Sparrow. By this time we were soaked to the skin and happy to have lunch and enjoy an afternoon drive in our warm bus to Nanchang, where we took a short evening flight to Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong province, where we spent the night.

Following breakfast as we were driving to Nanling National Forest Park, we found a couple of new birds along the roadside, Greater Coucal and Large-billed Crow. The Nanling National Forest Park is situated in the Nanling Mountains and protects an extensive area of conifer plantations and some broadleaf woodland. Unfortunately, the rain had followed us and birding activity was very low, however, in one or two of the dry periods we managed to find the uncommon and very unobtrusive Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher, the gorgeous Slaty-backed Forktail and small flocks of Grey Treepies.

The following morning we returned to the Nanling National Forest Park where a thick mist covered the lower parts of the park, making birding very difficult. Following a little persistence we enjoyed good scope views of Blue-throated Bee-eater and a quick look at a pair of Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes. The Nanling National Forest Park continues across the border into Hunan province, where it became the Mangshan Nature Reserve. Fortunately for us, the weather was much better here and consequently the birds were more active. We enjoyed a great deal of success by playing the call of the Collared Owllet, which attracted large numbers of passerines to us. New birds for the tour came thick and fast and included Verditer Flycatcher, Mountain Tailorbird, the uncommon Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, the stunning Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Grey-cheeked Fulvetta, Rufous-capped Babbler, the stunningly attractive Red-tailed Laughingthrush which has to be one of the most beautiful of all the laughingthrushes and the very colourful Gould's Sunbird.

Much of the day was taken up by the long drive to Jiulianshan Nature Reserve. The reserve is situated on the mountainous spine between southern Jiangxi and northern Guangdong provinces, and protects a large area of forest and more importantly, crystal clear, unpolluted rivers and streams. On our arrival at the reserve headquarters, where our accommodation was situated, a little birding produced the very uncommon Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and the attractive Red-whiskered Bulbul. The two most sought after species of birds in the reserve are the endangered White-eared Night-Heron and the very uncommon Blyth's Kingfisher. Subsequently, we took up our positions by the side of one of the rivers, where we enjoyed good close looks at a Maritime Striped Squirrel. By late afternoon we had enjoyed a couple of nice looks at Blyth's Kingfisher as it flew past us. We stood motionless until it was quite dark and then a pair of ghostly shapes flew past us, just above the river, it was a pair of White-eared Night-Herons.

The following morning we continued birding in the reserve where we added Little Forktail, Hill Prinia and best of all, Ken and Floss found a juvenile Brown Wood-Owl sitting on a large branch overhanging the river. The bird was not going anywhere, so we were able to admire it at leisure through our scopes. Unfortunately, in the afternoon we experienced torrential rainfall, so much so, that we became concerned that landslides may block our exit out of the reserve the following day and cause us to miss our flight to Nanning. We made the decision to drive out of the reserve late in the afternoon and find accommodation in one of the small nearby towns. As we were preparing to leave we received word that indeed a small landslide, was blocking the road, but fortunately it was only one tree. The park ranger left before us and started to cut up the tree. On our arrival at the

landslide the ranger ably assisted by John, soon cleared the blockage and we continued on our way. We found a very nice small hotel, where we settled in for the night.

The following day was very much a travel day and we did not add any new species of birds to our ever growing trip list. Following an early breakfast we drove to Guangzhou, where we took the flight to Nanning, in Guangxi province. From here we drove to the town of Longzhou, where we stayed for the next two nights.

We spent the whole of the day birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve, which is situated very close to the border with Vietnam. We were now very much in the tropics, the houses looked like Vietnamese houses, much of the advertising was in Vietnamese and the conical shaped hats also looked very Vietnamese. The reserve consists of stunningly attractive limestone karst forest, large limestone pinnacles, cloaked in perpetually damp rainforest. The insect life was prolific; consisting of large numbers of colourful tropical butterflies, numerous species of beetles, preying mantis, centipedes and large numbers of snails and crabs. Our main target species here was the recently described Nonngang Babbler, but try as we may, we failed to find one, although we did hear it calling from the dense forest. We did manage to find a good number of other new birds for the tour which included Black Kite, White-throated Kingfisher, Black-crested and Sooty-headed Bulbuls, the recently described Limestone Leaf-Warbler, Hainan Blue Flycatcher, Black-naped Monarch, the uncommon Streaked Wren-Babbler and Olive-backed Sunbird.

The following morning we returned to Nonggang Nature Reserve, where we continued our unsuccessful search for the Nonngang Babbler, but fortunately, once again, we did manage to find a few new birds to add to our trip list. These included Plaintive Cuckoo, Rufescent Prinia, Grey-throated Babbler and Pin-striped Tit-Babbler. In the afternoon we drove back to Nanning Airport, where we added Ashy Woodswallow. We then flew to Shanghai, and drove to the Binhai Marshes, where we spent the night at a very nice hotel.

We spent much of the following day birding in the Binhai Marshes, a huge expanse of reedbeds, which had been artificially and accidentally created, as the result of building a sea wall. The area is undoubtedly of international importance. Even so the Chinese government is currently building a brand new city right in the middle of the reedbed. As a concession to conservationists a small dedicated wetland reserve has been created in a small area of the reedbed. The birding was simply spectacular, perhaps the best birds in the reserve are the bitterns. We saw over 100 Yellow Bitterns, up to 20 Great Bitterns, which until recently were only rare winter visitors to this area, now they are resident breeders in this area. We also observed one Cinnamon Bittern at very close quarters. Other new species of birds observed in the marsh included Great Crested Grebe, Purple Heron, Eurasian Coot and Common Cuckoo, which were flying above the reedbeds calling profusely. We also saw two adult female Amur Falcons, which were migrating northwards over the reserve. In the late afternoon we drove to Shanghai airport, where we boarded our flight bound for Australia.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Small numbers of this resident species were present in the wetlands at Rudong and again in the Binhai Marshes.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* A few birds were present in the Binhai Marshes. The Great Crested Grebe should be only a winter visitor to this area, but it is now a summer breeding species in the Binhai Marshes.

ARDEIDAE

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* A locally common resident which we saw well in a few of the wetland areas we visited.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A locally common summer visitor to this part of China, we found good numbers present in the Binhai Marshes.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* This species is an uncommon summer visitor to southeast China, we saw small numbers at the Min Jiang Estuary and in the Binhai Marshes.

Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* A fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, we observed small numbers in a number of the wetlands we visited.

Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* This species is a very rare summer breeding bird to small islands off the coast of southeast China. We were very fortunate to enjoy prolonged scope views of a single bird while birding at the Min Jiang Estuary. This species is classified as endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The population is estimated to be 1,000 pairs and declining. By the end of the 19th century it had become almost extinct due to the plume trade. Today the greatest threat is habitat loss through reclamation of tidal flats and estuarine habitats for industry, aquaculture and agriculture.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A common summer visitor to southeast China, which we saw very well on most days of the tour.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* A fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, we observed a good number of flocks of this species, many of which, were in full breeding plumage.

Chinese Pond-Heron *Ardeola bacchus* A common summer visitor to southeast China, where it is a bird of rice paddies, we saw it very well on many occasions.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, which we saw on two separate occasions along the edge of a large river, close to Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A locally common summer visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on many occasions.

White-eared Night-Heron *Gorsachius magnificus* This resident species is unfortunately an endangered species, we observed a pair of birds in flight, after dark, in the Julianshan Nature Reserve. This species is classified as critically endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The population is estimated to be less than 1,000 individuals and declining rapidly. The main threat to this species is forest clearance and fragmentation, as a result of demands for timber and agricultural land in an extremely densely populated region of China.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* This species is a common summer visitor to southeast China, it proved to be very common in the Binhai Marshes.

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* Another common summer visitor to southeast China, somewhat surprisingly, we only observed one individual throughout the whole tour. However, we did observe it extremely well both in flight and on the ground. This sighting took place in the Binhai Marshes, on the last day of the tour.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Once again the Binhai Marshes have thrown a spanner in the works. In the past the Great Bittern has been a winter visitor to southeast China. However, since the creation in recent years of the huge expanse of reedbeds at Binhai, which were

created unintentionally, as a result of building a sea wall. The Great Bittern finds the area very much to its liking and is now resident all year round, breeds in the reedbeds and no longer bothers to migrate northwards to its former breeding grounds. We observed large numbers of birds flying over the reedbeds at Binhai and we also heard them booming, which is their way of marking their breeding territories.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* In the areas we visited the Black-faced Spoonbill is a rare winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding species. We saw an immature bird which was migrating northwards, along the foreshore at Rudong. Then on the last day of the tour at Binhai Marshes, we found a group of four individuals, who were also on migration northwards. This species is classified as endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The population is estimated to be 700 individuals and declining. The main threat to this species is habitat loss through reclamation of tidal flats and estuarine habitats. The recent economic development in China has converted many coastal wetlands into aquaculture ponds and industrial estates.

ANATIDAE

Eastern Spot-billed Duck *Anas zonorhyncha* A fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, we enjoyed several good scope views of this species during the tour.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* This very beautiful species of duck is a winter visitor to southern areas of southeast China and a passage migrant in the northern half of southeast Asia. During heavy rain we saw up to three individuals in flight, in farmland close to Wuyuan. This species is classified as near-threatened, in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* In southeast China this species is mainly a passage migrant, we saw a single bird in flight, flying over a large lake in farmland close to Jinfeng.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes* We saw this uncommon resident fairly well on a few occasions throughout the tour.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* A common resident of southeast China, somewhat surprisingly, we only saw a single bird, while birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Chinese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter soloensis* The Chinese Sparrowhawk is a fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, which we saw very well on a few occasions.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* We were very fortunate to see this bird which only occurs in a very small area of southeast China, where it is a rare resident. We enjoyed really close looks at a couple of birds, during our time in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve and in farmland close to Wuyuan.

FALCONIDAE

Pied Falconet *Microhierax melanoleucos* This very uncommon resident of southeast China, is the size of a sparrow, on a very wet day we enjoyed prolonged close looks at a couple of these birds in farmland close to Wuyuan. This species is classified as near-threatened in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* A fairly common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on two separate occasions; the first occurred at Rudong and the second sighting took place in farmland close to Nonggang Nature Reserve.

- Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis* We were very fortunate to observe two separate immatures of this species migrating northwards over Binhai Marshes. It is a rare passage migrant throughout southeastern China. This bird has one of the most bizarre migration routes of any bird in the world. It breeds in northeast China and southeast Russia and winters in southern Africa!
- Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* This species is a fairly common summer visitor to southeast China. We saw a solitary individual, on the first day of the tour at Rudong.
- Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* The Peregrine is an uncommon resident of southeast China, we saw it well at Rudong and again at the Min Jiang Estuary.

PHASLANIDAE

- Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** *Bambusicola thoracicus* This species is a fairly common resident of southeast China, however, it is a shy inhabitant of dense forest. We were extremely fortunate to enjoy good prolonged looks at a pair of birds along the roadside in Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.
- Cabot's Tragopan** *Tragopan caboti* The Cabot's Tragopan is a rare resident of evergreen subtropical hill forest and is restricted in range to southeast China. We were very fortunate to enjoy multiple sightings of both males and females, as well as young chicks, in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve. This species was voted 'Bird of the Tour' by tour participants. It is classified as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The population is estimated to be less than 10,000 individuals and declining. The main threat to the Cabot's Tragopan is habitat loss and modification. Most nature forest in southeast China has been cleared or modified as a result of the demands for agricultural land and timber. The progressive replacement of natural evergreen broadleaf forest with conifer plantations is now a major problem for this species. Illegal hunting for food still occurs in some places, especially outside protected areas. Dr. Samuel Cabot (1815-1885), a physician and ornithologist, was the Curator of the Department of Ornithology at Boston's Society of Natural History. In the 1840's he made an important expedition to the Yucatan Peninsula, where he discovered several new species. His collection of 3,000 mounted birds is now at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard. John Gould named the tragopan in his honour.
- Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus* This species is an uncommon resident throughout southeast China, where we saw it very well on a number of occasions.

RALLIDAE

- Brown-cheeked Rail** *Rallus indicus* A fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China. We saw one bird in flight, on the first day of the tour at Rudong.
- Brown Crake** *Amaurornis akool* A locally common, but shy summer visitor to southeast China. We very much enjoyed good close looks at this species in farmland close to Wuyuan.
- White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* A common summer visitor to southeast China, we saw it well in farmland close to the Min Jiang Estuary and again in farmland close to Wuyuan.
- Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* A common resident of southeast China, we saw it well in farmland close to Min Jiang Estuary and we also saw it well in the Binhai Marshes.
- Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* Yet again, this species is supposed to be a winter visitor to southeast China and once again, we found it to be a breeding species in the Binhai Marshes.

HAEMATOPODIDAE

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* An uncommon winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on a few occasions, along the coast at Rudong.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* This species is an uncommon passage migrant in southeast China, we enjoyed a few good sightings, along the coast at Rudong.

GLAREOLIDAE

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* A locally common summer visitor to southeast China. We saw birds in flight at Rudong and again, flying over the Binhai Marshes.

CHARADRIIDAE

Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* In southeast China the Grey-headed Lapwing is a passage migrant and summer visitor, which we saw well on a number of occasions.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* A common passage migrant throughout southeast China which we saw well at Rudong and in farmland close to Min Jiang Estuary.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* This species is predominantly a winter visitor to southeast China, we observed good numbers in full breeding plumage, along the coast at Rudong.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* This species is a common passage migrant through southeast China. We observed large numbers of birds in full breeding plumage, along the coast at Rudong and on the mudflats in the Min Jiang Estuary.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii* This species is a fairly common passage migrant through southeast China. We observed good numbers of birds in full breeding plumage, along the coast at Rudong and on the mudflats in the Min Jiang Estuary.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* A common resident of coastal areas of southeast China, which we saw well on numerous occasions. At Rudong we found a nest with three eggs in it.

Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus* Great spotting by Ken Cowell enabled us to enjoy close and prolonged scope views of this rare winter visitor to southeast China. We observed it on a shingle bed in a large river, not far from Wuyuan. This species is classified as near-threatened in 'Threatened Birds of the World' and has an estimated world population of 10,000 individuals.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* This species is predominantly a winter visitor to coastal areas of southeast China. We saw a bird very well in farmland close to Jinfeng and a second bird in the Binhai Marshes.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* This species is a common winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on a few occasions throughout the tour.

Pintail Snipe *Gallinago stenura* The Pintail Snipe is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China, we saw three or four birds in farmland close to Min Jiang Estuary, near Jinfeng.

Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago megala* The Swinhoe's Snipe is also a common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China and once again we saw three or four birds in farmland

close to Min Jiang Estuary, near Jinfeng. Robert Swinhoe (1836-1877) was born in Calcutta, India, and was sent to England to be educated. He worked in China as a diplomat and during this time he explored a vast area which had not been open previously to any other collector. As a result he discovered new species at the rate of about one per month throughout the more than 19 years he was there. He discovered more than 200 new species of birds.

- Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus* The Asian Dowitcher is a rare passage migrant through southeast China. We were very fortunate to find a bird on the mudflats of the Min Jiang Estuary, as we were watching a Chinese Egret. The bird was in full breeding plumage and we enjoyed a prolonged look at it. This species is classified as near-threatened in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* The Bar-tailed Godwit is a common winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw very well on a number of occasions.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* This species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China and we saw it well on several occasions.
- Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis* This very large species of wader is an uncommon but regular passage migrant through southeast China. We saw small numbers very well during our time at Rudong. This species is classified as near-threatened in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.
- Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* This species is a common winter visitor to southeast China, we saw this species well during our time at Rudong.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* This species is also a common winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on a number of occasions.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* This species is a fairly common passage migrant in southeast China. A single bird was observed on the mudflats in the Min Jiang Estuary.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* This species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China, we enjoyed several good sightings throughout the tour.
- Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* The Terek Sandpiper is a common passage migrant in southeast China, we saw it very well on a number of occasions.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* This species is a common winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.
- Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes* The Grey-tailed Tattler is a fairly common passage migrant to southeast China, we saw it very well on a number of occasions.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* This species is also a fairly common passage migrant to southeast China, we also saw it very well on a number of occasions.
- Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* The Red Knot is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China. We saw up to a dozen birds in full breeding plumage, on the mudflats of the Min Jiang Estuary.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* This species is a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China. We saw birds in breeding plumage at Rudong and again at the Min Jiang Estuary.
- Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* This species is a very common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China, we saw it well on many occasions. One of the most striking memories I have of the tour, was to be out on the mudflats at Rudong and being surrounded by literally hundreds of Red-necked Stints, all in full breeding plumage.
- Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* The Little Stint is a very rare passage migrant in southeast China. It was first recorded in Hong Kong in 1986 and since then it has been recorded annually in low

numbers each spring. We were very fortunate to observe a bird in partial breeding plumage on the sandflats at Rudong.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* This species is a fairly common passage migrant in southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* The Dunlin is a common winter visitor in southeast China, it was a delight to see large numbers in full breeding plumage.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* The Curlew Sandpiper is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China, we saw small numbers very well on several occasions. Unlike most of the other waders most birds were in non-breeding or partial breeding plumage.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* The Spoon-billed Sandpiper is a very uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China. We enjoyed scope views of a solitary bird out on the mudflats at Rudong. The bird was in partial breeding plumage. This species is classified as critically endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World', with a current population of fewer than 2,500, and probably fewer than 1,000 mature individuals. The main threats to its survival are habitat loss on its breeding grounds and loss of tidal mudflats throughout its migratory and wintering range. The important staging area at Saemangeum, South Korea, has already been partially reclaimed, and the remaining wetlands are under serious threat of reclamation in the near future. A 2010 study suggests that hunting in Burma by traditional bird trappers is a major cause of the birds decline.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* This is a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China, we enjoyed a few good sightings during our time at Rudong.

LARIDAE

Saunders's Gull *Saundersilarus saundersi* A fairly common winter visitor to southeast China, we saw good numbers of birds at Rudong and all were in full breeding plumage. This species is classified as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. It is estimated that the population is less than 7,000 individuals and declining. The main threat to this species is the reclamation of tidal mudflats and saltmarshes in China, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Lesser threats include pollution and disturbance by human activity, particularly through the collection of lugworms on tidalflats in China and sadly, by bird photographers in South Korea. Howard Saunders (1835-1907) was a British ornithologist who worked at the British Museum. He was known as the 19th century's foremost expert on gulls and terns, and wrote books entitled *Sternae* and *An Illustrated Manual of British Birds* in 1889. His contemporary Swinhoe, named the gull when Saunders was completing a study of that family. Saunders clearly applied strict standards to sight records, at a time when field identification was in its relative infancy and optical aids were much inferior to modern equipment. He rejected his own sighting of a Masked Shrike near Gibraltar in May 1863, writing 'as I am frequently sceptical of other people's identifications ... I do not want anyone to accept mine until the bird can be produced as proof.'

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* A common winter visitor to the coast of southeast China, somewhat surprisingly, we only saw one bird, a sub-adult, which flew past our group as we were birding in the Min Jiang Estuary.

STERNIDAE

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* This species is a common passage migrant in southeast China and we saw good numbers along the coast at Rudong.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* This species is a common summer visitor to southeast China, we observed small numbers at Rudong and at the Min Jiang Estuary.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* This species is an uncommon resident and winter visitor to coastal areas of southeast China. Once again we observed small numbers at Rudong and at the Min Jiang Estuary.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to coastal areas of southeast China. On several occasions throughout the tour we saw flocks of this species, in spectacular full breeding plumage.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* This species is a common summer visitor to coastal areas of southeast China, we encountered several flocks of birds in breeding plumage throughout the tour.

Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* A fairly common resident along the coast of southeast China, we saw a flock of 20 or so birds at a high tide roost in the Min Jiang Estuary.

Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* This very rare species breeds in very small numbers on small islands off the coast of southeast China. We saw four individuals at close quarters, for a prolonged period of time in the Min Jiang Estuary. This species is classified as critically endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. It was previously thought to be extinct, until four pairs were rediscovered in 2,000 nesting in a Crested Tern colony on an islet in the Matsu Islands, just off the coast of Fujian province, China. The main threat to this species is egg collection for food. The lack of protection at the birds breeding colony has been blamed on the islands' disputed status, administered by Taiwan, but claimed by mainland China. Recently, the islet where the birds breed has been declared a wildlife sanctuary. It is possible that other small colonies may yet be found off the Chinese and Taiwanese coasts. The total population is estimated to be less than 50 birds, making it one of the rarest birds in the world.

COLUMBIDAE

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* Common and widespread resident throughout most towns and villages of southeast China.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* A common resident, which we saw well on many occasions.

Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* This species is also a common resident, which we saw well on a number of occasions.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* This species is also a very common resident, which we saw well on many occasions.

CUCULIDAE

Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* This very beautiful species of cuckoo is a rare summer breeding visitor to southeast China. Some of us saw a bird in flight, in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* A common summer breeding bird throughout southeast China. Large numbers of birds were present and calling loudly at the Binhai Marshes, southeast of Shanghai.

Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* Common summer breeding species in southeast China. I saw one very well in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* A common resident along the edge of the forest, we saw it once near Guangzhou and once again, close to the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

STRIGIDAE

Asian Barred Owlet *Glaucidium cuculoides* A fairly common resident, we saw a very bedraggled

bird, while birding in heavy rain in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Brown Wood-Owl *Strix leptogrammica* A rare, secretive and seldom-seen resident of dense forest. It was very fortunate that Ken and Floss found a juvenile sitting on a branch, over a large river in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve, which enabled us to have a good long look at it.

Northern Boobook *Ninox japonica* A recent split from the Brown Hawk-Owl, previously one race of Brown Hawk-Owl was resident in the far south of China and the race *ussuriensis* was a migrant and summer breeding bird along the entire east coast of China. Recent research concluded that race *ussuriensis* should be considered a full species. We saw a bird very well in full daylight when we disturbed it from its daytime roost, at a known migrant trap at Rudong.

APODIDAE

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* A common resident and summer visitor, which we saw well in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve and in the Nanling National Forest Park.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* A common resident, which we saw very well on a few occasions.

ALCEDINIDAE

Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules* A very uncommon resident of shady streams and small rivers in evergreen forest. We saw this bird very well in flight, during our time in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve. This species is classified as near-threatened in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. Edward Blyth (1810-1873) was an English zoologist and author. He was Curator of the museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1842-1864. He wrote *The Natural History of Cranes* in 1881.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* A common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* A fairly common resident of southeast China, we saw it very well on one occasion, close to the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* An uncommon summer breeder to southeast China, we enjoyed a few good sightings of this large species of kingfisher, during our time at Rudong.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A fairly common resident of southeast China, we saw a bird very well in farmland close to Jinfeng.

MEROPIDAE

Blue-throated Bee-eater *Merops viridis* An uncommon summer breeding visitor to southeast China, we were fortunate to enjoy good scope views of a couple of birds in the Nanling National Forest Park.

CORACIIDAE

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Another uncommon summer breeding visitor to southeast China, which we saw very well on a few occasions.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* A common resident in this part of China, we saw it in farmland close to Rudong and again in farmland, close to the Min Jiang Estuary.

PICIDAE

Grey-headed Woodpecker *Dendropicos spodocephalus* An uncommon resident of southeast China, which we saw on one occasion, in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* A common resident which we saw very well on one occasion, in farmland close to Wuyuan.

ALALUDIDAE

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* A very common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta* A fairly common summer visitor to southeast China. We saw it well at Rudong, on the first day of the tour and again, at Binhai Marshes, on the last day of the tour.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* A very common summer visitor, which we saw on almost every day of the tour.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Another very common summer visitor, which we saw well on many occasions.

Asian Martin *Delichon dasypus* A common resident of southeast China, we found a large colony of birds nesting on steep cliffs in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

MOTACILLIDAE

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* This species is a common winter visitor and passage migrant in southeast China. We saw Eastern Yellow Wagtail at Rudong and in farmland close to Min Jiang Estuary.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* This species is an uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant to southeast China. We saw one bird very well, during our time at Rudong.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* This species is a common resident of southeast China, which we saw on almost a daily basis.

Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* The beautiful Forest Wagtail is an uncommon winter visitor to the southern half of southeast China and an uncommon breeding summer visitor to the northern half of southeast China. We saw an individual very well indeed at Rudong, this was followed by a second sighting in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* The Richard's Pipit is a common winter visitor, resident and summer visitor throughout southeast China. We only observed it around Rudong, where it was common. Rudong is part of the birds summer range. Monsieur Richard of Luneville was a French naturalist and collector. The pipit was named after him and was described by Vieillot.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus* The Rosy Pipit is a fairly common altitudinal migrant in isolated areas of southeast China. We saw it very well at the top of the highest mountain in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve. Here we watched it performing its display flight and it was obvious that several pairs were nesting in the alpine meadow.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos* This species is an uncommon summer breeding species in southeast China. We saw it well on two occasions, firstly, in farmland close to Wuyuan and secondly, while having lunch in a small village not far from Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Brown-rumped Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis* This species is a locally common summer breeding bird and breeds only in southeast China. We observed it very well in farmland

close to Wuyuan.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* This species is a locally common resident of southeast China, we saw it well in the Fuzhou Forest Park and again in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* This species is a common resident throughout much of southeast China and we saw it well on several occasions.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Collared Finchbill *Spizixos semitorques* A common resident of southeast China, which we saw very well on many occasions.

Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* This species is a common but shy inhabitant of lowland hill forest, in southern southeast China. Floss saw this bird very well in the Nanggong Nature Reserve.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* A very common resident of southern southeast China, which we saw well on many occasions.

Brown-breasted Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthorrhous* This species is a fairly common resident, which somewhat surprisingly we only observed on one occasion, in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Light-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus sinensis* This species is the common resident bulbul of southeast China, we saw it on almost a daily basis.

Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster* A fairly common resident of southeast China, we saw it well in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mccllellandii* A common resident of montane forest throughout southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

Chestnut Bulbul *Hemixos castanonotus* A common resident of southern southeast China, we saw this attractive species very well on a few occasions.

Himalayan Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus* This common species is resident in the far south of southeast China and a summer visitor to the northern two thirds of southeast China. We saw it well on several occasions, including the white-headed form.

CINCLIDAE

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* This species is a common resident of fast flowing streams in southeast China. We saw it very well on a few occasions.

TURDIDAE

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris* A fairly common resident throughout southeast China, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* A fairly common resident throughout southeast China, we saw it very well on one occasion in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* A common summer breeding species is southeast China, which we saw well on many occasions.

Siberian Thrush *Zoothera sibirica* This beautiful species is a very uncommon passage migrant through southeast China. We were very fortunate to observe an adult male in a small patch of woodland at Rudong.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* A common resident in southeast China, which we saw well on numerous occasions.

Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* A fairly common passage migrant throughout southeast China, even so, we very much enjoyed watching an adult male in a small patch of woodland at Rudong, at one time it was in the same tree as the Siberian Thrush.

White-browed Shortwing *Brachypteryx montana* This species is a common resident of high altitude forest throughout southeast China. Doris saw one very well towards the top of the

highest mountain in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

CISTICOLIDAE

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* A common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Striated Prinia *Prinia crinigera* This species is also a common resident throughout southeast China, we saw it well on one occasion, in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Hill Prinia *Prinia atrogularis* This species is a common resident in the far south of southeast China. We observed a single bird very well as it sang in the rain, in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve.

Rufescent Prinia *Prinia rufescens* A common resident of the extreme southerly section of southeast China. I saw one very well in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Yellow-bellied Prinia *Prinia flaviventris* A common resident in the southern half of southeast China, we saw it particularly well in farmland close to Jinfeng.

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* A common resident throughout southeast China, which we saw very well on numerous occasions.

SYLVIIDAE

Manchurian Bush-Warbler *Cettia canturians* The Manchurian Bush-Warbler is a fairly common winter visitor to southeast China. We were fortunate to enjoy good looks at a bird at Rudong, as it is a rather shy and unobtrusive species.

Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler *Cettia fortipes* This species is a fairly common resident, but skulks in thick scrub and is seldom seen. We saw a couple of individuals very well at the top of the highest mountain in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Brown Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris* The Brown Bush-Warbler is a fairly common resident in southeast China, it also skulks in dense scrub, however, we did see an individual very well at the top of the highest mountain in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Black-browed Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* This common species is a winter visitor in the far south of southeast China, a passage migrant through central southeast China and a summer visitor in the northern third of southeast China. We saw a few individuals very well in dense reedbeds at Rudong.

Oriental Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* This common species is a passage migrant in the far south of southeast China and a summer visitor elsewhere. We frequently encountered it throughout the tour, wherever there were reedbeds.

Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cucullatus* A fairly common resident of montane forest in the far south of southeast China. We observed a few birds very well in the higher altitudes of the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* A common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* A common, though skulking, winter visitor throughout southeast China. We saw a single bird very well in dense scrub in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus subaffinis* An uncommon summer visitor to montane forest and scrub, over much of southeast China. We saw a couple of birds very well at the top of the highest mountain in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* This species is a fairly common passage migrant

throughout southeast China, we glimpsed a bird on one occasion, in woodland at Rudong. Gustav Ferdinand Richard Radde (1831-1903) was originally trained as an apothecary. The Prussian naturalist and explorer founded the Caucasian Museum in Tiflis, Georgia, in 1867.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* This species is a common passage migrant throughout southeast China, we enjoyed many sightings of this species during our time at Rudong.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* This species is a fairly common passage migrant throughout southeast China. We saw a single bird fairly well in dense scrub at Rudong.

Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus tenellipes* This species is an uncommon passage migrant throughout southeast China. We saw a few individuals very well, during our time at Rudong.

Eastern Crowned Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus* A common passage migrant throughout southeast China, we observed a good number of birds in woodland at Rudong.

Hartert's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus goodsoni* This species is a recent split from Blyth's Leaf-Warbler, it is a fairly common summer visitor to southeast China, we observed it on many occasions throughout the tour. Ernst Johann Otto Hartert (1859-1933) was a German ornithologist and oologist. He travelled extensively, often on behalf of his employer Walter Rothschild (later Lord Rothschild). He was the ornithological curator of Rothchild's private museum at Tring, which later became an annexe to the British Museum of Natural History, housing all of the bird skins.

Limestone Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus calciatilis* This species was first observed in 1994 and was mistaken for the very similar Sulphur-breasted Warbler. The plumage is almost identical, the bird is slightly smaller and has more rounded wings and the bill is proportionally larger. The Limestone Leaf-Warbler is known to occur in northern Vietnam, Laos and has very recently been found in the far south of southeast China. The scientific name *calciatilis*, means "dwelling on limestone", which along with its common name is a reference to the habitat where it occurs, broadleaved evergreen forest, growing around limestone karst mountains. I saw this species on each of the two days we spent birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve, just north of the Vietnamese border.

Alstrom's Warbler *Seicercus soror* This species is a locally common summer breeding visitor to southeast China. We observed the bird very briefly in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve. Per Alstrom is a Swedish ornithologist who specialises in the field of passerine taxonomy, he has recently split the Golden-spectacled Warbler into six separate species, one of which is Alstrom's Warbler.

Bianchi's Warbler *Seicercus valentini* This species is one of the recent splits from Golden Spectacled Warbler. It also is a locally common summer breeding visitor to southeast China. We saw it very well in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve and in the Mangshan Nature Reserve. Valentin L. Bianchi (1857-1920) was a Russian zoologist and ornithologist who was an associate of Berezovski. Together they discovered and described the Black-throated Robin in 1891. He was the Curator of the Ornithological Department of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. Writing with GG Jacobson, he published *Orthoptera and Pseudoneuroptera of the Russian Empire and adjacent countries* in 1905 in St. Petersburg. His son VV Bianki is a well-known writer on nature and ornithology in present day Russia.

White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis* This species is an uncommon altitudinal migrant in southeast China. We enjoyed good looks at a few individuals in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps* This species is an uncommon winter visitor in the southern half of southeast China and a summer breeding visitor to the northern half of southeast China. We saw it very well on several occasions throughout the tour.

Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis* This species is a fairly common resident of southeast China. We saw it very well on one occasion in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias brunneatus* This species is an uncommon summer breeding visitor throughout southeast China. We were very fortunate to observe up to four birds in the Nanling National Forest Park and the Mangshan Nature Reserve. The species is classified as vulnerable in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. It has an estimated population of between 2,500-10,000 individuals and is declining. The main threats to this species is the continuing destruction of broadleaved evergreen forest, on both its breeding grounds in China and its wintering grounds in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta* This species is an uncommon passage migrant throughout southeast China, we saw it very well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* This species is a common winter visitor to the far south of southeast China and a passage migrant elsewhere in southeast China. Once again, we saw it very well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

Korean Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia* This attractive species is a fairly common passage migrant throughout southeast China, we saw a few individuals very well in woodland at Rudong.

Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* This is also an attractive species, it is an uncommon winter visitor to the southern half of southeast China and an uncommon passage migrant in the northern half. We saw a few birds very well in woodland at Rudong.

Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* This species is an uncommon winter visitor to southeast China, we saw a couple of birds very well in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to southeast China, we observed it very well in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve and again in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Hainan Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis hainanus* This species is a locally common summer visitor to southern areas of southeast China. We saw a few birds very well during our time birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans* This species is an uncommon winter visitor in the far south of southeast China and an uncommon passage migrant throughout the rest of the region. We saw a couple of birds which were on passage, in the Rudong area.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope* This species is a fairly common winter visitor to the far south of southeast China and a fairly common passage migrant throughout the rest of the region. We enjoyed very good looks at a stunning male, in full breeding plumage, in woodland at Rudong.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* A common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, which we saw well on many occasions.

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureoreus* This species is a fairly common winter visitor throughout southeast China. We enjoyed good looks at a stunning male, in full breeding plumage, in woodland at Rudong.

Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa* This attractive species is a common resident of fast flowing rivers and streams throughout southeast China. We saw both males and females very well on many occasions.

- Little Forktail** *Enicurus scouleri* A fairly common resident of mountain streams, I saw one very well in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve.
- Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* This species is a common resident of mountain streams throughout the whole of southeast China. We saw it very well on a couple of occasions in the Nanling National Forest Park.
- Spotted Forktail** *Enicurus maculatus* This species is a fairly common resident of mountain streams in the southern half of southeast China. We saw it well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.
- Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus* This attractive species is a fairly common winter visitor in the southern half of southeast China and a fairly common breeding summer visitor to the northern half of southeast China. We saw it well in farmland at Rudong and again in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

MONARCHIDAE

- Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* This species is a common resident in the far south of southeast China. It proved to be plentiful in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

TIMALIIDAE

- Masked Laughingthrush** *Garrulax perspicillatus* This species is a common resident of southeast China, which we saw well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.
- Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax monileger* A common inhabitant of montane forest throughout the southern half of southeast China. We saw a couple of birds fairly well in the Nanling National Forest Park.
- Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush** *Garrulax pectoralis* This species is a fairly common resident throughout southeast China. We observed a large flock fly across the road in front of us, in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.
- Courtois Laughingthrush** *Garrulax courtoisi* This very attractive species is a rare resident and is endemic to one tiny area of southeast China. It was rediscovered in 2000 by Chinese ornithologists. This was the first time this beautiful bird had been seen, since Courtois originally discovered them in 1910. We very much enjoyed our time watching a flock of these birds in a small village, not far from Wuyuan. This species is classified as critically endangered in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. All known nesting sites are close to human habitation, where they nest in tall trees. It has an estimated population of between 150-160 individuals, making it one of the rarest and most sought after birds in the world. It is rather puzzling that this bird only occurs around human habitation, there are very good forests in the surrounding area, but it is absent from all of them. The only known threat to this species is the predation of eggs by squirrels. The Reverend Frederic Courtois (1860-1928) was a French missionary to China from 1901 until his death. He was an amateur naturalist and in 1903 he was appointed Director of the Natural History Museum in Sikawei, near Shanghai. He wrote *Les Oiseaux du Musee de Zi-Ka-Wei* in 1912.
- Chinese Hwamei** *Garrulax canorus* A common resident throughout southeast China, we saw it well in farmland close to Wuyuan and in the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve.
- Red-tailed Laughingthrush** *Garrulax milnei* An uncommon resident of southeast China, we saw it very well indeed on the higher slopes of the Mangshan Nature Reserve. It has to be without doubt one of the most beautiful of all the laughingthrushes. It is classified as near-threatened, in 'Threatened Birds of the World'.
- Streaked Wren-Babbler** *Napothera brevicaudata* This species is a very local and uncommon resident, in the far south of southeast China. John and myself had good looks at different birds, during our time birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Pygmy Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla* This species is a locally common resident throughout the whole of southeast China. It is a notorious skulker and we played hide and seek with an individual for a considerable period of time, during our time in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyris ruficeps* A common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris nigriceps* This species is a common resident of the far south of southeast China. I observed a pair very well in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Macronous gularis* This species is also a common resident in the far south of southeast China. We saw it very well on several occasions, while birding in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* This stunningly attractive species is a fairly common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on several occasions.



Red-billed Leiothrix

Blyth's Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius aeralatus* This species is a recent split from the White-browed Shrike-Babbler, it is an uncommon resident of montane forest throughout southeast China, where we saw it well on a few occasions. Edward Blyth (1810-1873) was an English zoologist and author. He was Curator of the museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from 1842-1864. He wrote *The Natural History of Cranes* in 1881.

Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis* This very attractive species is an uncommon resident of the far south of southeast China. We saw a few birds very well indeed, on the upper slopes of the Mangshan Nature Reserve, in the Nanling Mountains.

Grey-hooded Fulvetta *Fulvetta cinereiceps* This species is a recent split from the Streak-throated Fulvetta. It is a common resident throughout the southern half of southeast China. We saw a few birds very well during our time in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, it was the commonest bird in the mixed species flocks in the forests and we saw it well on many occasions.

Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis* A fairly common resident of the whole of southeast China, John saw a bird well in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Indochinese Yuhina *Yuhina torqueola* A recent split from Striated Yuhina, it is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, we observed small flocks in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve and also in the Mangshan Nature Reserve.

Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta* This species is a common resident of montane forest throughout the whole of southeast China. We saw a couple of individuals very well, during our time in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

PARADOXORNITHIDAE

Vinous-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis webbianus* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, which we saw well on numerous occasions.

Reed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis heudei* This beautiful species is a locally common resident in a small area of southeast China. We enjoyed several good sightings of this species in reedbeds at Rudong and again, in reedbeds in the Binhai Marshes.

AEGITHALIDAE

Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on several occasions.

PARIDAE

Coal Tit *Pariparus ater* A common resident of conifer forests in southeast China, we saw one or two birds very well in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Yellow-bellied Tit *Pardaliparus venustulus* This species is a locally common resident throughout much of southeast China. We saw a single bird very well during our time in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Great Tit *Parus major* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China and we observed it on almost every day of the tour.

Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus sibilans* This species is an uncommon resident throughout southern southeast China, we saw it very well on several occasions.

NECTARINIIDAE

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis* This species is an uncommon resident in the far south of southeast China. We saw it well in farmland on a couple of occasions, not far from the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae* A common resident of the mountains in the southwest corner of southeast China. We saw a male very well, in the Mangshan Nature Reserve, in the Nangling Mountains. This beautiful species of sunbird was named by John Gould (1804-1881) in honour of his artist wife Elizabeth, (1804-1841).

ZOSATEROPIDAE

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* This species is a common resident in the southern third of southeast China and a summer breeding visitor to the northern two thirds of southeast China. We saw it very well on several occasions.

LANIIDAE

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* In southeast China this common species is a winter visitor in the far south, a resident in the centre and a summer breeding visitor in the north. We saw it very well on several occasions.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* The Long-tailed Shrike is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China and we saw it well on many occasions.

DICRURIDAE

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* This species is a common summer visitor throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* The Ashy Drongo is also a common summer visitor throughout the whole of southeast China, we enjoyed a couple of good sightings in farmland close to Wuyuan.

ARTAMIDAE

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* This species is a locally common resident in the south of southeast China. We watched a couple of individuals flying around Nanning Airport.

CORVIDAE

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* This species is a fairly common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, we enjoyed good looks at a couple of birds in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Asian Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus* This species is a common resident in the north of southeast China, we enjoyed several good sightings during our time in Rudong.

Red-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* This very attractive species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China and we saw it on most days of the tour.

Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

Common Magpie *Pica pica* This species is also a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on several occasions.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* This species is also a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, somewhat surprisingly, we only saw it near Guangzhou and again in the Nonggang Nature Reserve.

STURNIDAE

Black-collared Starling *Gracupica nigricollis* A common resident of farmland throughout southern southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

White-shouldered Starling *Sturnia sinensis* This fairly common species is a summer breeding visitor to the southern half of southeast China, where we saw it very well on a few occasions.

Red-billed Starling *Sturnus sericeus* A common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, where we saw it well on many occasions.

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus* This species is a common winter visitor to southeast China, which we saw well on a few occasions.

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, we saw it well on many occasions.

PASSERIDAE

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans* This very attractive species of sparrow is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China. Somewhat surprisingly, we only recorded it on one occasion, when we watched a small flock in farmland, close to Wuyuan.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Another attractive species of sparrow, it is an abundant resident throughout the whole of China and we saw it on almost a daily basis.

ESTRILDIDAE

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* This species is a locally common resident throughout the whole of southeast China. We observed a few flocks in farmland close to Wuyuan.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* This species is also a locally common resident throughout the whole of southeast China. We observed a couple of large flocks in farmland close to the Min Jiang Estuary.

FRINGILLIDAE

Oriental Greenfinch *Chloris sinica* The Oriental Greenfinch is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China. We saw it well in farmland close to Wuyuan and again in the

Nanling National Forest Park.

Brown Bullfinch *Pyrrhula nipalensis* This attractive species is a locally common resident in subalpine forest in the southern half of southeast China. We were very fortunate to observe a pair of birds extremely well while birding in the Wuyishan Biosphere Reserve.

Yellow-billed Grosbeak *Eophona migratoria* The Yellow-billed Grosbeak is a locally common winter visitor, passage migrant and breeding summer visitor in southeast China. We saw it very well on several occasions.

EMBERIZIDAE

Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* This species is a common resident throughout the whole of southeast China, which we saw well on several occasions.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides* This species is an uncommon resident throughout the northern two thirds of southeast China. We saw it very well at Rudong and again in farmland, close to Jinfeng.

Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* This species is an uncommon winter visitor in the southern half of southeast China and a breeding summer visitor in the northern half. We observed it on a couple of occasions at Rudong. The Reverend Henry Baker Tristram FRS (1822-1906) was canon of Durham cathedral and a traveller, archaeologist, naturalist and antiquarian, who assembled a large collection of museum skins. Despite being a churchman he was an early supporter of Darwin. He wrote a number of accounts of his explorations including *A Journal of Travels in Palestine* and *The Great Sahara Wanderings South of the Atlas Mountains*, in 1860. In the latter he describes how he penetrated far into the desert and made an ornithological collection in the course of gathering materials for his work. He actually went there because of ill health.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* The Black-faced Bunting is a common winter visitor to southeast China. We saw several birds very well at Rudong.

MAMMALS

Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraeus* The common forest squirrel of southeast China, it inhabits tropical and subtropical forests, mainly at low elevations. It is primarily active at dawn and dusk. We saw it well on several occasions throughout the tour.

Maritime Striped Squirrel *Tamiops maritimus* This is a very small species or squirrel with distinct stripes on the upper parts. In China it only occurs in the southeast where it inhabits evergreen broadleaved forests. This species has developed the highly specialised habit of robbing nectar from ginger plants. We enjoyed good looks at this species at the Jiulianshan Nature Reserve.

Amur Hedgehog *Erinaceous amurensis* Like other members of the family it is nocturnal and feeds on ground-dwelling invertebrates, especially fly larvae. It hibernates in winter, entering torpor in October and emerging in Spring. We were very fortunate to observe one of these mammals crossing the road, not far from Rudong.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Wild boars are mainly crepuscular and nocturnal. Omnivorous, they will feed on just about anything, plants, mushrooms, seeds, fruit, acorns, worms, snails, insects and even carrion. Ken Cowell and myself observed a solitary male in farmland during the drive from Jinfeng to Wuyishan.