



## **MAMMALS:**

### **Himalayan Marmot** *Marmota himalayana*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

### **Tibetan Dwarf Hamster** *Cricetulus tibetanus*

Several were seen at >4,500masl.

### **Gansu Pika** *Ochotona cansus*

Animals identified as this species 'with a high degree of confidence' were seen on a few occasions.

### **Plateau (= Black-lipped) Pika** *Ochotona curzoniae*

This cornerstone species is widespread & in places abundant– not systematically recorded.

### **Glover's Pika** *Ochotona gloveri*

Several were seen well.

### **Moupin Pika** *Ochotona thibetana*

Animals identified as this species 'with a fair degree of confidence' were seen on two or three occasions.

### **Woolly Hare** *Lepus oiostolus*

Widespread – not systematically recorded.

### **Tolai Hare** *Lepus tolai*

Subsequent visits have confirmed that hares near Xining are indeed this species rather than *Lepus oiostolus*...

### **Pallas' Cat** *Felis manul*

2-3 at >4,500masl. A rarely encountered species... we were very fortunate indeed to get prolonged views of one sitting still in good light, then stalking down towards us.

### **Wolf** *Canis lupus*

Singles were noted on three dates.

### **Tibetan Fox** *Vulpes ferrilata*

14 animal-days. Noted on four dates.

### **Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*

Nine animal-days. Noted on four dates.

### **Brown Bear** *Ursus arctos pruinosus*

An adult with three cubs offered superb views on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Having just gained The Ridge we were settling down to scan & catch our breath when mum bear was spotted, approaching us. There was no need to scatter, however – or get in formation, boiled eggs and other weapons of self defence at the ready – she was only collecting her cubs, and it was a privilege to then watch the little family make off fairly unhurriedly across the boulder-strewn terrain, the female setting the proverbial 'realistic pace' but stopping now and then to let her youngsters catch up.



## **BIRD highlights:**

### **Severtzov's Hazel Grouse** *Tetrastes sewerzowi*

Five bird-days near Nangqian - two pairs intermittently showing well on 6<sup>th</sup> & one briefly [PF] on 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Szechenyi's Monal Partridge** *Tetraophasis szechenyi*

24+ bird-days. Noted on three dates. Extended views of two at close range (<15m) on 8<sup>th</sup> far exceeded our wildest hopes - a well-earned reward for putting in the mileage in pursuit of this attractive species.

### **Tibetan Snowcock** *Tetraogallus tibetanus*

13-15 bird-days. Noted on three dates... nothing like arriving at a high pass on a fine morning to find the pure air resounding with the clucking and curlew-ey calls of this snowline specialist.

### **Tibetan Partridge** *Perdix hodgsoniae*

24 bird-days. Noted on six dates.

\*\*\*'Not being molested by Buddhist faith, the bird is fairly common in most parts of its distributional range' ... Cheng (1987) was writing about the status of another gamebird but his comment applies equally to this one.

### **Blood Pheasant** *Ithaginis cruentus*

c14 bird-days. Noted on four dates – heard-only until 10<sup>th</sup> when half a dozen allowed prolonged 'scope viewing.

### **White Eared Pheasant** *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*

30 bird-days. Noted on four dates - we'd been out of the vehicles at the designated spot for barely 15 seconds before the first calls were heard, and then it was mostly a matter of scanning diligently.

### **Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*

530+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

### **Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

Three bird-days. An incubating bird was seen on two dates; on the 1<sup>st</sup> occasion its presumed partner was present nearby.

### **Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

Two bird-days. Singles at Koko Nor on both visits – seen...

### **Saker** *Falco cherrug*

17 bird-days. Noted on seven dates. For most of us a most welcome opportunity to familiarize ourselves with a species which is declining globally.

### **Lammergeier** *Gypaetus barbatus*

36 bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. A top Dreambird for several group members, this emblematic species was not in the least devalued by several superb encounters...

**Himalayan Griffon** *Gyps himalayensis*

115-120+ bird-days. Noted on 15 dates.

\*\*\*On 13<sup>th</sup> 13 birds 'around a yak carcass close to a felt tent whose owner, a nomad woman, untied large dog which started chasing the vultures. Fortunately the vultures never seemed in serious danger. Later the dog started feeding off the carcass...'

**Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*

195 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates.

**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*

A superb 2<sup>nd</sup> c-y bird overhead on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

14 bird-days. Noted on eight dates. A pair of adults on 10<sup>th</sup> crossed the valley mobbed by an Alpine Chough, then landed acrobatically on ledge; the Alpine Chough kept up the harassment. Later seen collecting material for nest-building: energetically pulled at bushes to break off stems.

**Demoiselle Crane** *Anthropoides virgo*

A flock of ten at a well-timed stop at Koko Nor on 28<sup>th</sup> - the birds did a bit of standing around and a bit of dancing before flying past us at <50m: very much a bonus bird as this time of the year!

**Black-necked Crane** *Grus nigricollis*

41 bird-days. Noted on four dates.

**Ibisbill** *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*

Ten bird-days. Noted on six dates.

\*\*\*Somehow, Ibisbills seen in Tibet feeding on a flowered-over meadow or 'frozen' against a rushing, icy stream - yaks snorting in the background - are more *real* than the sad one or two which cling on along the last stretch of acceptable water close to Beijing in competition with sickly-looking domestic ducks!

**Tibetan Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes tibetana*

Four birds near Er La pass. The first two flew past us even before we'd reached the main target area, calling repeatedly and showing the diagnostic nearly all-black underwing 'under the sun' before dropping to become nearly impossibly to get on against a snow-flecked hillside... thus a couple of hours of agony for our top lister, but soon enough we were all watching another bird. WOW!

**Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

c20 W of Koko Nor. A pair on the ground allowed prolonged 'scope views as others flew back and forth overhead, all in superb light... WOW!

**Snow Pigeon** *Columba leuconota*

40 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Seeing these strikingly patterned birds effortlessly sail along the towering rock faces is a visual treat, the simple beauty of 'em enhancing the grandeur of the setting.

**Eurasian Eagle-Owl** *Bubo bubo*

Three bird-days. Singles noted on three dates –one seen well by all on 1<sup>st</sup> ('in flight; then perched on a ridge in full view, with two Red-billed Chough in attendance')...

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

26 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

**Northern Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

Two (one seen singing later joined another we hadn't noticed) near Gonghe on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius*

11 bird-days. Noted on four dates at Nangqian forest reserve: 'scope views on a couple of occasions and frequently heard calling.

**Tibetan Grey Shrike** *Lanius (s.) giganteus*

One put on a good show W of Koko Nor on 29th. A low-density species, wide-ranging and often inconspicuous even when present (and thus easily missed), we were fortunate to see this individual so well.

**Crested Tit-Warbler** *Leptopoecile elegans*

Eight bird-days. Noted on four dates. To say that this species does not draw attention to itself is hardly an exaggeration... our patience was, however, amply rewarded: I've leafed through the dictionary and two Birdquest brochures in search of a superlative which fully does this jewel justice, in vain...

**Long-billed Calandra (= Tibetan) Lark** *Melanocorypha maxima*

35 bird-days. Noted on seven dates.

**Kozlov's Babax** *Babax koslowi*

Seven bird-days. Noted on four dates. Occupying a restricted range this was one of our main targets. Often a rather tricky one to dig out but this time the species could hardly have surrendered itself more easily: everyone got memorable views as two birds fed in the open, one squabbling briefly with a Giant Laughingthrush.

**Giant Laughingthrush** *Garrulax maximus*

c62 bird-days. Noted on five dates. This superb-looking species has an impressive range of calls, some subdued, some anything but, yet others direct or derived mimicry – duetting birds are often a striking component in the dawn chorus, and throughout the day groups traveling through the pristine forest will mark their progress with sessions of loud calling.

\*\*\*We were surprised to see one do a long flycatching sally, not returning to its starting point.

**Kessler's Thrush** *Turdus kessleri*

145 bird-days. Noted on 12 dates – this supremely attractive species proved common near Yushu.

**Himalayan Rubythroat** *Luscinia pectoralis*

29-30 bird-days. Noted on three dates. Although very much an expected species we initially struggled to get satisfactory views of a satisfactory individual (our first bird was a singing male in a rarely seen ruby-throat-patch-less plumage!) but with the trip barely begun it was too soon to panic, and sure enough we managed no less than 26-27 singing males in a morning later on, several of which sat out to the delight of camera-wielding team members.

**Przevalski's Redstart** *Phoenicurus alaschanicus*

Five males & three females W of Koko Nor. We'd barely caught our breath before the 1<sup>st</sup> superb male appeared, and throughout a fine morning we were treated to close-up encounters with this sought-after, very pretty species.

**Grandala** *Grandala coelicolor*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates. A nest-building pair at 3,950m close to the N edge of the species' known range very early in the trip. The species never came close to losing its place on the hypothetical Bird of the Trip shortlist: 'Grandala Blue' may not be in your dictionary but it should be - no named shade captures the glowing colour of the male of this sought-after species.

**Tibetan (=Himalayan) Snowfinch** *Montifringilla adamsi*

36 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

\*\*\*Rather plain on the ground but spectacular in flight, this species is blessed with no less than four English names...

**White-rumped Snowfinch** *Onychostruthus taczanowskii*

37 bird-days. Noted on four dates – a side attraction at colonies of Black-lipped Pika.

**Przevalski's Rosefinch** *Urocynchramus pylzowi*

Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

\*\*\*The alternative English names suggested for this species are hereby vetoed...

**Roborovski's Rosefinch** *Kozlowia roborowskii*

20 bird-days. Noted on four dates... the first – as is often the case – were the most satisfying: three males & five females 'scoped as they were feeding together at close range.

**Crimson-browed Finch** *Pinicola subhimachala*

Six bird-days. This retiring species was seen extremely well & heard singing on two dates at Nangqian forest reserve.

**Kozlov's Bunting** *Emberiza koslowi*

Four birds – two pairs S of Yushu... Unsurpassable views were had – and we'd earned 'em! TINGALING!