



**China Mammal Tour**  
Since 2014

## **Gouli Valleys in Qinghai, China**

**5-12 Oct 2024**

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Ivan He, Gabriel, Marco, Tang Jun (L-R)



Participants: Gabriel & Marco

Leader/Driver: Tang Jun

Guide: Ivan He

Dates: 5-12 Oct 2024

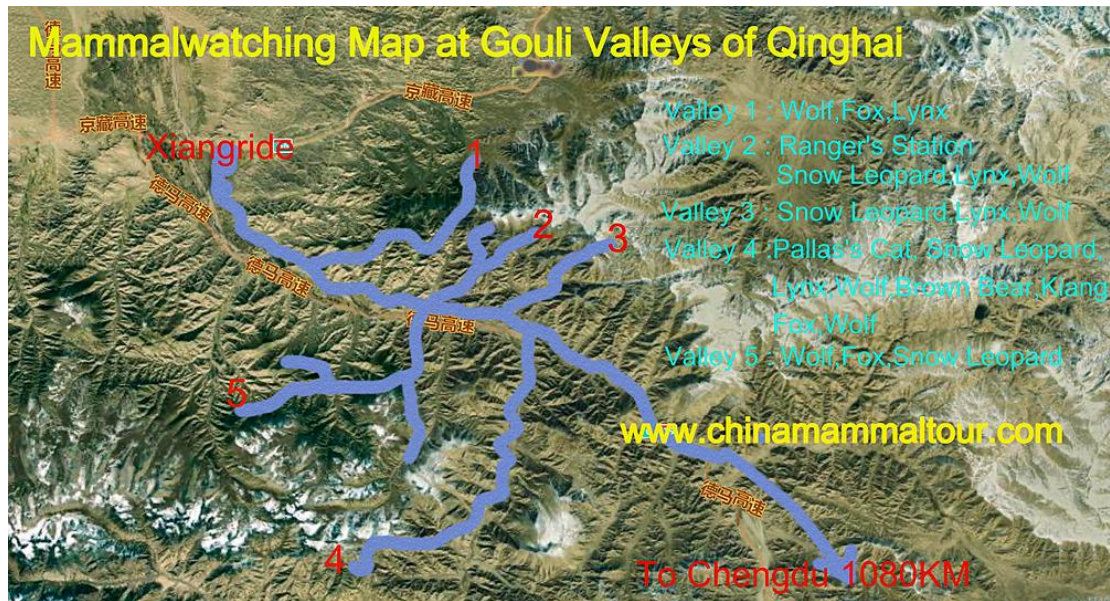
Gears: TOYOTA Landcruiser; Swarovski Telescope; InfiRay Thermal Camera PH35+

Reported by : Tang Jun

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All photos by Tang Jun during the trip

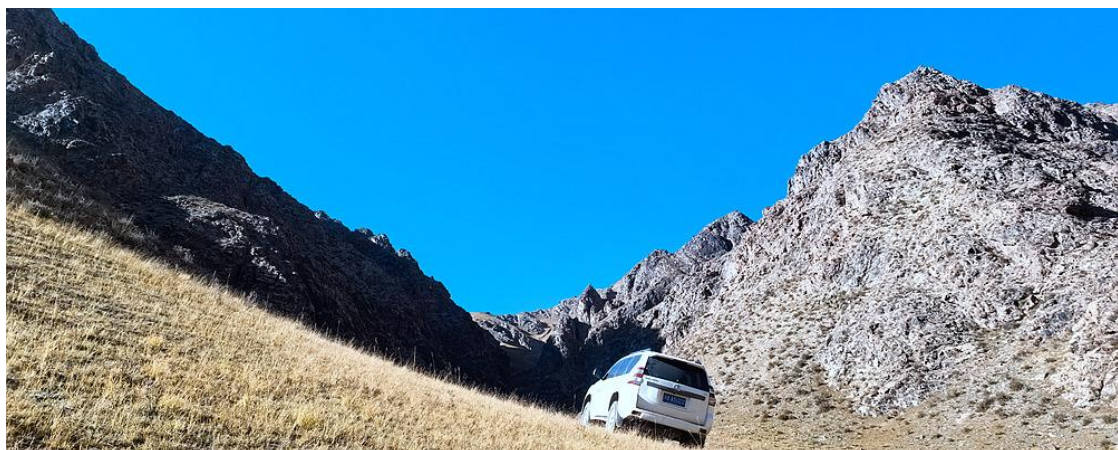


First of all here some information of Gouli Valleys:

The areas include 4-5 valleys and all have good habitat with possibilities of Snow Leopard, Lynx, Pallas's Cat, Brown Bear, Kiang, Blue Sheep, Grey Wolf, Tibetan Fox, Red Fox, Tibetan Gazelle, Woolly Hare, Red Deer etc. Was thought an excellent site for cats and also birds such as Przewalski Partridge, Himalayan & Tibetan Snowcock, Golden Eagle, Bearded Vulture etc.

There is a Ranger's Station located at the end of Valley 2 which is about 7km from the main road. There are simple accommodations and meals available there but foreigners are not allowed to stay inside the valley for overnight since the summer of 2024. The nearest hotel which can take foreigners is good and 1.5 hours away by car located at the town named Xiang Ri De.

Thus the way for foreigners to do the mammal watchings at Gouli Valley area should use Xiang Ri De as the base and visit the valleys during the daytime following the guidance of the ranger (Mr Rou Bao) of the small Gouli Nature Reserve.





Back the tour plan, the tour date was from 5-12 Oct 2024. Starts/ends place was Xining City of Qinghai Province. Gabriel & Marco original planned only visit Gouli Valley for 6 full days and focus on the three kinds of cats plus other high plateau mammals which looks a reasonable plan.

5 Oct Meet at Xining and drive 6 hours to Xiang Ri De where as the base  
6-11 Oct Visit Gouli Valleys  
12 Oct Drive back to Xining where they departure

But actually we did very well on the cats at Gouli and to give the most flexibilities for this kind of small private tour as usual. We decided to drive into Sichuan for the forth cat (Chinese Mountain Cat) and also a quick visit to the site of Sichuan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey as got the forth cat at Ruoergai very smoothly.



Here is the brief report of the trip by Tang Jun

5 Oct As Ivan He (one of guides of CBT & CMT) living at Xining and have time to join us for a rather deep visit of Gouli Valleys, so after talked to Gabriel & Marco who are happy and agreed more eyes for better chance. Then we four drove to Xiang Ri De town and check in the only hotel named Jin Xiang can take foreigners.

6 Oct We started from hotel at 6 am by took packed breakfast and met with Mr Rou Bao/Ranger at the entrance of Valley 2 at 7:30 am. We spent most of the day at Valley 4 and had really very good chance of the Pallas's Cat from 8-9 am. The rest of the morning we explored the inner area of Valley 4 but not that many good things except couple of birds. We back to Valley 2 to have a sit down lunch at Ranger's Station made by his wife and afternoon drove into Valley 5 opposite of Valley 2. Back to Xiang Ri De town for a late dinner and rest. We had a very good fish Hot Pot.









7 Oct We started from hotel at 6 am by took packed breakfast and met with Mr Rou Bao/Ranger at the entrance of Valley 2. We are now focus on Snowleopard and Lynx. We searched the most common area for Lynx in the early morning where outside of Valley 2 but nothing got. Then we drive into Valley 3 where we scan by Thermal Camera and check each possible "white spots", about 2.5km away from the entrance of the Valley 3, we got one Lynx which is about 200m away and still lying on the ground. It stood up and climbed uphill and disappeared 10 minutes later.



We continue explore the same valley till the end where quite open with many



Blue Sheep and all of us are trying best to get a Snow Leopard but of course can not that easy and good luck. But we got three Wolves. Back to Xiang Ri De town for a late dinner and rest.



8 Oct We started from hotel at 6 am by took packed breakfast and on the way to met with Mr Rou Bao/Ranger at the entrance of Valley 2. And just before our arrival at Valley 2 and we saw a Lynx across the road. We stopped and found another two. We then call the ranger to share the information and he came with another two vehicles. So after talked to the ranger and be agreed us to explore the valley 4 by ourselves.





We drove into Valley 4 again almost till the end and then return without anything except the free-ranged Przewalski Partridge.



We back to Valley 2 for lunch at Ranger's Station and after that we decide to explore Valley 3 when the other Chinese photographers are going to take a rest at the station. We passed the site where we saw Lynx yesterday and carry on further where has a beautiful small valley and I joked that if we climbed upper and inner, we may saw a Snow Leopard. We did and relax climbing for about 30 minutes, I habitual scan around by telescope + binoculars on the way up and I scanned a small head of a Snow Leopard but very very distant. But wanyway, this is our first view of the Snow Leopard at Gou Li Valley this time.







We staid there and wached the Snow Leopard by telescope for about 40 minutes and finally saw the Snow Leopard stood up,turned and waked behind the rock. We wait another 30 minutes and did not see it came out agin. Back to Xiang Ri De town for a late dinner and rest. We were so happy as we saw a Snow Leopard finally.

Himalayan Snowcock



We understand that not easy to see a Snow Leopard in wild and we now got Pallas's Cat, Lynx and also the Snow Leopard though it was quite distant. Gabriel & Marco were very very happy. We are thinking to add some flexibility into the tour. So we decide to try again next morning inside the same valley then we travel south into Sichuan for Chinese Mountain Cat at Ruoergai.





9 Oct As thinking the snow leopard probably will wounder around the area for a while. We decided to start 30 minutes earlier and drive into Valley 3 directly for a quick check. Then what a big surprise, a Snow Leopard right beside the dirt road 4km after inside Valley 3 and runned cross the fence, climbed slowly uphill, stayed at the summit at least 30 minutes long in SNOW.

Cross the road



Slowly uphill







Snow Leopard in SNOW



We celebrated by beer at the site and backed to Valley 2 where said goodbye to the ranger and drove towards to Ruergai in Sichuan. Ivan He backed to Xining.





On the way to Sichuan we off the road to had a quick visit of the Przewalski Gazelle.



10 Oct Arrived at Ruergai in later afternoon and then start the hard job to look for the Chinese Mountain Cat till very late. Nothing happend and really tough night drive even by Thermal Camera. We backed to hotel to sleep mid-night.



11 Oct I insisted back to the area where the habitat of the cat and still can well use the Thermal Camera in the morning. We succeed and scanned a weak



"white spot" at hillside be confirmed by telescope was a Chinese Mountain Cat hunting and we luckily can across the fence and climbed up for a very closer view of the cat.



Then we got the forth cat and can carry on to the site of Sichuan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey. Till the arrival at the lovely home stay hotel, we had big drunk dinner to celebrate the succeeded tour on 4 cats in 5 days and all 4 kind of cats be viewed within 15 metres.

12 Oct We enjoied with a herd of 30 Golden Monkeys at the site for 3 hours and drive 5 hours to Mianyang railway station where Gabriel & Marco travel to Xi'an as original planned. We did find a chance to had another very good Fish Hot Pot on the way to the railway station.







Be proud to say:

**a very succeed and pleasant mammal watching tour.**

**4 cats in 5 days and all 4 kinds of cat be viewed within 15 metres.**

Mammals we saw:

Snow Leopard, Lynx, Pallas's Cat, Chinese Mountain Cat, Kiang, Tibetan & Przewalski's Gazelle, Grey Wolf, Tibetan & Red Fox, Red Deer, Chinese Goral, Blue Sheep, Himalyan Marmot, Plateau Pika, Woolly Hare

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