

Wild China - Sichuan's Birds & Mammals

Naturetrek Tour Report

15th – 30th November 2025



Black-throated Tit



Golden Snub-nosed Monkey



Blue Eared Pheasant



Eastern Red Panda

Tour report by Chris Griffin



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Tour participants: Chris Griffin and Sid Francis (leaders) and ZZ (local guide) with five Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Saturday 15th November

Departure

Our flight left Heathrow in the evening, heading east overnight to arrive at Chengdu in the late afternoon the next day.

Day 2

Sunday 16th November

Airport pick-up, night at Lingyang Mountain, Dujiangyan

After a long but reasonably comfortable flight, we cleared customs and met Sid Francis, our local guide for the trip, at arrivals. We met the contingent of our group who had been in the country already, and started our transfer across to Dujiangyan. Arriving after dark, we checked in, freshened up, then headed out to a local restaurant where we enjoyed our first taste of Sichuan cuisine, before taking a short night walk outside our hotel to look for owls. Unfortunately, in damp weather, we were unsuccessful and so we headed back to the hotel to retire for the night.

Day 3

Monday 17th November

Lingyang Mountain, Meijiang river, Yaan, Labahe NR

Today was our transfer day to Labahe Nature Reserve, where we would spend the next three nights. We took an early breakfast, then headed straight out to head up Lingyang Mountain for a spot of birding before starting the drive. The weather was a little inclement and damp, but during our walk we still managed to catch up with some good birds: Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Black-chinned Yuhina, Olive-backed Pipits, Blue-fronted Redstarts, Black-headed Sibia, White-browed Laughingthrush and, after a bit of patience, some amazing views of Scaly-breasted Cupwing. We made a start on our journey towards Labahe, stopping at a couple of locations en route along the river, finding both Plumbeous Water Redstarts and White-capped Redstarts, and some very smart 'Hodgson's' White Wagtails (*alboides*) at the first. These were all trumped by four Scaly-sided Mergansers (quite distant) at the second.

An impromptu stop next to some fields resulted in a Grey Bush Chat, flocks of Grey-winged Blackbirds and Light-vented Bulbuls, and a lone Chinese Blackbird. Heading down the impressive new (and extremely car-less) motorway, we stopped on the hard shoulder overlooking a river and looked for Long-billed Plover with no luck, but a nice Hodgson's Redstart, Rosy Pipit and a flock of Oriental Greenfinches were good to see. We stopped for a noodle lunch in a restaurant which backed onto a small brook, where even while we there was plenty to see. More Plumbeous Water Redstarts and White-capped Redstarts, Red-billed Leiothrix, a Pallas's Leaf Warbler, our first Brown Dipper and a Black-crowned Night Heron perched in the tree right next to the balcony helped to grow the list.

Another forty minutes down the road, we made our final main stop of the day at Ya'an, where we viewed the river in the hope of finding Baer's Pochard. They had evidently not arrived yet, but plenty of other winter wildfowl held

our attention, including genuine wild Mandarin Ducks and a very close Black-necked Grebe. A sleeping wader tucked amongst the rocks was quickly identified as a Grey-headed Lapwing. We were also fortunate to enter a small gated nature reserve that is often locked up, which enabled us to encounter Black-faced Buntings, Chinese Pond Heron, and a notable speciality of the reserve, Ashy-throated Parrotbill. As we walked back to the car, an extremely showy Chinese Babax was found feeding on the ground next to a hedge.

We completed our drive to Labahe and, after gaining entry to the park, we checked in and took a short break, before meeting for dinner in the restaurant. Here we were treated to our first mammals of the trip, Sambar, which were coming to flooded pools at the back of the hotel, lit up by floodlights. After eating, we met for our first night drive which, although a little quiet, resulted in our first Masked Palm Civets, Chinese Goral and a Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel in a tree, of which we got reasonable views through the scope.

Day 4

Tuesday 18th November

Labahe NR

After breakfast and much-needed coffee, we drove a short distance down the hill to catch a bus up to the top of the mountain. As we waited for Sid to sort out the tickets, we found a Hair-crested Drongo perched in a tree.

We were soon heading up on the road; the autumnal colours of the trees were gradually replaced by bright white as we made it up into a beautiful, snow-laden landscape. Disembarking at the visitor centre at the top, we dropped off our bags and started walking slowly back down the road, looking for our main quarry for the day: Eastern Red Panda. We bumped into a beautiful pair of Grey-headed Bullfinches before we rounded a corner and clapped eyes on two pandas feeding in the top of one of the trees about a hundred metres ahead of us! Stopping to look through scopes to avoid scaring them off, we spent a few minutes observing them delicately picking off the frozen berries; we edged a little closer, all the while watching carefully for any sign of alarm. But we needn't have worried, as the pandas were totally fixated on their breakfast, and we were able to stand right across the road from them. It was a truly special moment, and we watched them for well over half an hour at close quarters until we decided to leave them to it and carry on with our walk.

The snow meant that birdlife was thin on the ground, but as we dropped lower, a few species emerged. A little tit flock contained Black-browed Tits and Coal Tits, the latter a different subspecies to those in the UK (*semodius*), which had a short crest, unlike ours. A few Naumann's Thrushes flew over too, but before long it was time to catch a bus back to the top and enjoy a warm noodle lunch and coffee to warm ourselves from the sub-zero temperatures outside.

After warming up a little, we headed back down to the bottom on the bus, and went birding at a couple of spots at lower elevation. This worked a treat, as we found a rather tired-looking Red Turtle Dove at the side of the road, a Golden Eagle and a flock of Speckled Pigeons flew over, and a pair of Hodgson's Redstarts showed well at the first stop. The second stop saw us exploring the bushes behind the Blue Crystal Hotel, a place Sid explained could often be good for finding both migrants downed in bad weather, but also sometimes Golden Snub-nosed Monkey. Unfortunately, the monkeys weren't around, but the birds were. First was a very showy Water Pipit, quickly followed by a pair of waders flying around: a Northern and a Grey-headed Lapwing.

Then ZZ found a scops owl perched out in the open and, after close inspection, it was identified as an Oriental Scops Owl; the views through the scope were simply stunning. An eastern-type stonechat appeared on the hotel fence (after review of photos in the evening it turned out to be have been a Siberian (Amur) Stonechat). Then three finch-like birds appeared on the wall. Two were female-type rosefinches, but the other was a fine male Mongolian Finch, a true Sichuan rarity and most likely a first for the region! We discussed the rosefinches, uncertain of the identification, but it wouldn't be until later in the evening that they would be pinned down as Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinches, another staggering rarity! A few other commoner birds appeared too: Stripe-throated Yuhina, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Sichuan Treecreeper and a couple of Blue-fronted Redstarts moved around in the bushes.

With that, we headed back to the hotel for a break and dinner, ready to go out later for our second night drive. It was cold and crisp, and it proved to be a very successful drive with great views of Forest Musk Deer, more Sambar, Chinese Goral and Masked Palm Civet, but best of all a Mainland Leopard Cat.

Day 5

Wednesday 19th November

Labaha NR

After our success yesterday, we decided to head back to the Blue Crystal Hotel to see if there was any more movement. Almost straight away, we re-found the Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinches and Mongolian Finch. A small thrush in the undergrowth eventually came out to be identified as a Chinese Thrush, and a small bird feeding by a ditch turned out to be a Bluethroat. As we went to relocate the Bluethroat, which had flicked around a corner, we found three buntings feeding on the floor. Two were Little Buntings, but the third was yellow underneath and had a strong facial pattern. After a discussion we decided it had to be a Yellow-breasted Bunting. This is a bird in steep decline in China, and is globally classified as Critically Endangered, so it was an excellent record and a lovely bird to see.

Heading further up the road, we took a long stroll along a boardwalk. It was initially quiet, albeit beautiful in the snow, but we soon started seeing a few things. First, a female Takin and her calf showed very well walking down an exposed ridge, and then there was a party of parrotbills, both Three-toed and Brown, which showed fantastically well on top of some Umbrella Bamboo. We stopped at a viewpoint for a sandwich lunch, then made our way back down the valley towards the road, bumping into Black-faced Laughingthrush, White-crowned Forktail and an entertaining tit flock which held Rufous-vented, Yellow-browed, Grey-crested and Green-backed Tits, plus a couple of Pallas's Leaf Warblers and a very brief Green Shrike-babbler. Near the road, we had lovely close views of a White-throated Dipper, but soon we were back on the road to wait for a bus to take us back down to our vehicles. With some of the group taking a break back at the hotel, a couple of us went back to the bushes at the Blue Crystal, where somehow ZZ found a Long-eared Owl on the other side of the valley. But there was no sign of the rosefinches, Mongolian Finch or bunting, so presumably they had moved on.

After dinner, we went for our last night drive at Labaha, during which we finally caught up with Mainland Serow, and also had excellent views of both Red-and-white and Grey-headed Giant Flying Squirrels, Chinese Goral, Masked Palm Civet, plenty of Sambar; the rear car had views of another Mainland Leopard Cat.

Day 6

Thursday 20th November

Labaha – Chuanzhusi

During a full day's drive from Labaha to Chuanzhusi, we made a few stops along the road when we could; at one on the hard shoulder of the motorway, we caught up with Long-billed Plover on the gravel islands of a river, and saw our first Steppe Eagle circling over a Panda conservation centre. A noodle lunch was taken at a local restaurant, where Black-rumped Magpies and a pair of Daurian Redstarts were seen. We made it to our hotel, and after dinner took an early night.

Day 7

Friday 21st November

Xueshanliang Mountains, Gami Monastery

We headed out in the morning to head up the mountain pass over the Xueshanliang Mountains, looking for the high-altitude specialities of the area. We stopped on the roadside to scan through a nice bird flock, and were treated to fantastic views of both White-browed and Crested Tit-warblers, the latter of which is a Chinese endemic. As we continued gaining height, we checked the Sea-buckthorn and found several Gldenstdt's Redstarts, the largest redstarts in the world, a few Horned Larks feeding on the cropped grass poking through the snow, and a small flock of Alpine Accentors by the side of the road. Our main target for the morning was further up the pass, almost at the 4000m mark, where we parked by the side of the road and played a tape to see if we got a response from Tibetan Snowcock. After a few minutes, Chris spotted one perched on top of a ridge, which stayed long enough for everyone to see it through the scope before it took flight and dropped slightly lower down, accompanied by a second bird.

We tried the tape again to see if we could get another response, and incredibly both birds appeared and walked straight down the mountain towards us. Staying stock still, we watched as they came closer and closer to us, eventually stopping to feed only a matter of a few metres away. We had incredible views of a very attractive bird! We headed up and over the pass, looking at the breathtaking scenery of snow-clad mountains stretching off into the distance, before dropping down to the other side looking for Grandala. Unfortunately, none were around, but at the town lower down we had a refreshment stop, then made our way back up and over the pass again to head back to the hotel for lunch.

Meeting up again in the afternoon, we took the short drive up to a holy mountain, topped by a monastery. We stopped in the fields and scrub before we made our way up the steep track, and found Pine Buntings and a pair of White-browed Tit-warblers, which showed spectacularly. Heading up to the monastery, we stopped to take a walk by the prayer wheels, finding both Giant and Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrushes, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch and Himalayan Vultures drifting overhead. We wandered back down the track before nearly walking into three beautiful Blue Eared Pheasants feeding by the track. They gave fantastic views, sometimes coming too close for our lenses!

With dark approaching, we made for the cars, catching up with Spectacled Parrotbill, Rufous-breasted and Robin Accentors and Kessler's Thrush before heading down the track. A White-winged Grosbeak showed excellently, marking a good end to our time here.

Day 8

Saturday 22nd November

Drive onto the Tibetan Plateau and Ruorgai

After a very early morning self-made breakfast in Sid's room, we packed the vehicles and set off early in an attempt to get over the mountain pass before the lorries. Luckily, we managed to get over with minimal disruption; we later found out we had missed a jack-knifed lorry blocking the road for several hours by a matter of just ten minutes or so. As we made our way towards Ruorgai, we were finding birds perched in the bushes and telegraph poles: Gldenstdt's Redstarts, Daurian Jackdaws, Azure-winged and Black-rumped Magpies. But the best sighting was a pack of Tibetan Grey Wolves walking close by the road through the falling snow: epic!

We checked into our hotel, then gave the weather a bit of time to clear, having an early cheese toastie lunch in Sid's room before heading back out to try a few grassland sites in the afternoon. A small river creek in the town before we got to the plains was productive, with Ferruginous Duck, Green Sandpiper and a superb Solitary Snipe showing well, and a quick stop by the river produced Goosander and Pallas's Gulls. Arriving on the plains, we encountered another Tibetan Wolf and our first Tibetan Foxes, including one which successfully hunted a Plateau Pika and sat there for a moment or two with its prize clasped in its mouth.

At a couple of farmsteads we found some large flocks of birds, with Oriental Skylark, Horned Lark, Twite and Eurasian Tree Sparrow all mixed together in impressive numbers; a couple of Saker Falcons showed well on pylons, but the stars of the afternoon were two Giant Grey Shrikes, a fairly recent split from Chinese Grey Shrike, one of which caught a struggling vole and proceeded to skewer it on a fence nearby, so close we were even able to identify the vole as a Pre David's Red-backed Vole! We headed back to the hotel for a break, had an excellent dinner at a restaurant in town, and went out again along the same road as in the afternoon for a night drive, on which we located a couple of Tibetan Foxes, a single Red Fox, and a Woolly Hare. Best of all was a Chinese Mountain Cat which sat still long enough to spotlight and see through the telescope.

Day 9

Sunday 23rd November

Ruorgai Zhasage Gorge

Today we started our hunt for Pallas's Cat in earnest, trying a few different grassland sites. In the morning, we headed up Zhasage Gorge for dawn and, as the sun rose, we started finding birds everywhere. Both Rufous-necked and White-rumped Snowfinches were common, Ground Tits bounded in between them, and all the while Plateau Pikas darted in and out of their burrows, busily finding fresh shoots to eat. Exploring up and down the valley, we found plenty of Tibetan Gazelles and a few Tibetan Foxes, but the cats continued to be elusive. During the day, raptors appeared here and there: Saker Falcons, Upland Buzzards, Steppe Eagles, Himalayan and Bearded Vultures, and a fine White-tailed Eagle all floated overhead, some on their way somewhere, some no doubt searching the ground for an errant pika too far from its burrow.

After a few hours searching the valley, we headed off to a local caf for late morning breakfast noodles for some and sandwiches for others, before trying a couple of other sites in the afternoon. The bird life was spectacular, with flocks of Twite and Oriental Skylark, Red-billed Choughs and more snowfinches everywhere. As we drove around, we encountered a few ringtail Hen Harriers and a large flock of over two hundred Hill Pigeons, but still

the Pallas's Cat refused to be found. For the last couple of hours of daylight, we headed back up the Zhasage Gorge, heading right to the end, where we found a large herd of Blue Sheep on the opposite side of the valley. They seemed a little skittish, and the reason became apparent soon after: a pair of wolves was prowling along a ridge nearby, keeping tabs on the sheep. We watched them for a while before heading back down the valley back, still on the hunt for cats.

Only a minute round the corner, Chris found a shape at the top of a nearby hill. After a quick check through the scope, we realised it was a Chinese Mountain Cat sat with its back to us. We watched it for a while until it stretched and wandered across the ridge, pausing to hunt briefly before slipping up into the rocks. We continued up and down the valley as night fell, still looking for Pallas's Cat with the torch and thermal, we only found more Tibetan Foxes and Tibetan Gazelles. Soon it was time to head back to the hotel for the night.

Day 10

Monday 24th November

Ruoegai Zhasage Gorge

Our second day attempting for Pallas's Cat was spent in the same valley as the previous day, starting at dawn. We encountered more Tibetan Foxes and Tibetan Gazelles, but again we had no luck finding any cats. We were kept entertained by the hundreds of snowfinches and fabulous views of Ground Tits, as well as a steady flow of raptors overhead: Steppe Eagles, Saker Falcon and Himalayan Vulture all cruised though during the morning.

We took breakfast in the same restaurant before heading back to the hotel for a break and to warm up. We set out again a little later, stopping briefly at the small river creek to see if the Solitary Snipe was still in the same place, but it had moved on. The Ferruginous Duck and Green Sandpiper were still present, although it looked like the duck might have been regretting its life choices in being there! Soon were back at the Zhasage Gorge, but despite our intense efforts (we found more foxes and gazelles), we were still thwarted by the ever-elusive cats. At dusk, we headed back to town, where we went out to a fabulous restaurant for dinner, then headed back to our hotel.

Day 11

Tuesday 25th November

Baxi forest/Zhasage Gorge

The next morning the group split: some opted to carry on the hunt for Pallas's Cat, while others heading out to Baxi Forest for some birding. The forest crew had an excellent morning, with plenty of birds around after the sun had warmed things up a little (it had started at -14°C), ending up with brief views of a pair of Chinese Grouse, and a flock of over thirty Blood Pheasants crossing the path in front of the group. In a scrubby area, birds suddenly exploded to life: Godlewski's Buntings, a pair of White-browed Tit-warblers, Pink-rumped and Chinese White-browed Rosefinches, and a lovely tit flock holding a Sichuan Tit and Przewalski's Nuthatch showed well for several minutes, before we decided to head back to the hotel for brunch, then take a break ready for our final afternoon/evening drive up the valley.

The valley crew were unfortunately unsuccessful with the Pallas's Cats, but they did have an excellent morning nonetheless, finding themselves another Tibetan Wolf prowling over the ridges.

We went back to the valley in the late afternoon/evening for our final attempt at Pallas's Cat: like the others, it was unsuccessful, but the beauty of the area and the foxes, wolves, pikas and staggering numbers of birds would stay in the memory for a long time.

Day 12

Wednesday 26th November

Drive to Tangjiahe – morning stop off at Baihe

We set off again pre-dawn after a Sid's room breakfast spread, heading through another mountain pass to make our way to Tangjiahe. On the way up, we briefly saw a Grey-headed Woodpecker and a pair of Siberian Roe Deer, and we stopped at the top of the pass to marvel at the mountain scenery. After a few hours, we reached Baihe National Nature Reserve, our main stop for the day. As we waited for Sid to sort out tickets, we enjoyed a small flock of Collared Finchbills in the car park. A Golden Eagle and a flock of thirty or so Grandals floated above, the Grandals almost looking like woodswallows as they gracefully twisted and turned in their flock.

Soon, with tickets in hand, we boarded a bus and made our way up to the start of a boardwalk which climbed up the hill to a very special site. A slow and steady climb later, and we were treated to close and intimate views of Golden Snub-nosed Monkeys, in a troop of nearly eighty individuals. Some climbed and fed, some sat huddled together on the floor, and some youngsters played excitedly under the watchful eye of an adult female. It was an exceptional experience, and most certainly one of the highlights of the trip. We stayed with them for a good half an hour, taking photographs and enjoying watching their interactions, before we took our leave and slowly made our way back down the steps. Along the way we came across a small feeding flock of Rufous-faced Warblers and a Speckled Piculet, but soon we were back on the bus on the way to the car park, where Sid and ZZ waited for us to continue on our way to Tangjiahe.

After lunch we arrived in Qingyizhen, and took a little walk up the river while Sid and ZZ went to fill up the cars. It ended up being quite a birdy walk, including an unfortunate Northern Goshawk hitting a window while chasing a bird. It perched on a wall recuperating, and we feared the worst as we could see blood dripping from its beak, but thankfully we later saw it flying off strongly. On the river itself, we had Plumbeous Water Redstarts and White-capped Redstarts, Brown Dippers, Water Pipits and a lone Siberian Pipit. A Crested Kingfisher flew past, calling loudly. In the trees and bushes next to the river, Brown-breasted and Light-vented Bulbuls perched, Hodgson's and Daurian Redstarts flicked here and there, a Black Drongo appeared and showed well on top of a tree, and a migrant flock of Bramblings moved from tree to tree. At a split in the river, a pair of Long-billed Plovers flew in and landed on the gravel, giving nice but distant views.

With time moving on, we got back to the cars, made our way into Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve, and checked into our stunning lodge, before heading to the restaurant for dinner. A little while after eating, we were back out in the cars, driving down the road using spotlights and thermals on a night drive. Plenty of Takins and Reeve's Muntjac were around, as well as a few Wild Pigs (Boar), but the star of the show was a Mainland Leopard Cat which crossed the road slowly, right in front of us.

Day 13

Thursday 27th November

Tangjiahe NNR

We started off before dawn, heading out to look for more mammals in the torchlight and thermals, finding plenty more Takins and Reeve's Muntjacs, but little else. So we went back to the hotel for breakfast. As we arrived, we saw tourists taking pictures of the regular troop of Rhesus Macaques, so we watched them do their thing.

After breakfast we wandered up the river a bit, looking to walk the boardwalk on the opposite side, but after watching a group of school children wander that way, we chose to walk up the road instead. It certainly wasn't a bad shout, as we caught up with a brief Little Forktail, several Red-billed Leiothrixes, a Crested Goshawk perched in a tree, a Mountain Hawk-Eagle flying overhead, and several Southern Nutcrackers perched up. We got in the vehicles to try further down the valley, and made a brief stop where a feeding flock was in the trees next to the road. Here we had wonderful views of Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Sooty Tits, Rufous-faced Warblers and a couple of Eurasian Nuthatches, and a surprise Chinese Bamboo Partridge appeared at the side of the road briefly.

At a small boardwalk we found several Himalayan Bluetails and a couple of Collared Finchbills, while Brown Dippers, Plumbeous Water Redstarts and White-capped Redstarts flicked up and down the river. We headed off to the park entrance, where one of the wardens showed us a roosting Tawny Fish Owl; the views through the scope were fabulous, with the full bird on view. Making our way into town for a restaurant lunch, we spent a few minutes on the river afterwards, finding Yellow-bellied Tit and a Common Kingfisher perched under the bridge, but soon we headed back to the hotel, supposedly for an afternoon break ahead of a night drive. However, most clients headed out for their own personal spot of birding.

After dinner, we headed out for the night drive, which was excellent. Plenty of the usual suspects were about, but another Mainland Leopard Cat also showed very well in the scope, and a Malayan Porcupine appeared close by, before bustling off into the undergrowth.

Day 14

Friday 28th November

Tangjiahe, Qing Ping Lu

Early morning saw us head out in the vehicles before breakfast again, looking for mammals. We were rewarded with a Northern Hog Badger crossing the road, but other than that there was nothing new for the trip. We headed back to the hotel for breakfast, finding a few birds using the pools outside our lodge, including a singing first-winter bluetail which, after a little bit of detective work, would transpire to be a Qilian Bluetail. With the sad news that the steps that we were planning to walk up this morning to look for Temminck's Tragopan were closed for maintenance, we decided to take a morning stroll up the road in the valley instead.

At first it was fairly quiet, as it was still cold in the shadows of the valleys, but a few birds appeared here and there: Southern Nutcrackers, Eurasian Jays and Red-billed Blue Magpies in a loose flock, then a large flock of White-throated Laughingthrushes migrating through the trees. Further along, a Speckled Piculet gave great views as it dangled under branches looking for a morning meal, and a few Yellow-browed Tits flicked around the trees. As we broke into the sunshine, the colours of the autumn leaves turned the river golden, and we marvelled at the

beauty of the place. But it was very quiet, bird-wise, so we made our way back down the valley towards the hotel. There, the full troop of Rhesus Macaques was making their way down from the trees to graze on the lawn. It was lovely watching the youngsters playing and dangling from branches, and while we watched, a lovely party of Black-throated Tits and Sooty Tits appeared above them. It was a lovely finish to the morning.

We took a midday break, having our final cheese toastie banquet in the communal area of our lodge, before planning to meet up later to drive to a good birding spot outside the park. Unfortunately, a combination of lorries and roadworks delayed our arrival, leaving us arriving later than intended, but it actually worked in our favour in the end as we bumped into a few new birds that had dropped in to roost. The first was a big surprise: a Japanese Quail which flushed from the side of the path. Then we saw a small party of White-collared Yuhinas, and best of all a noisy flock of Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes. A Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler showed very briefly, flying from one patch of cover to another, but it was mostly heard rather than seen. We also added a new mammal to the trip, with a Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel found poking its head out of its burrow! With the light rapidly dropping, we made our way back to the vehicles, refinding the Greater Necklaced Laughingthrushes at the top of the valley, and then headed back to the hotel for dinner. After dinner, we took our final night drive of the trip, getting brief views of another Northern Hog Badger and another Mainland Leopard Cat.

Day 15

Saturday 29th November

Tangjiahe – transfer to Chengdu

We took a last pre-breakfast drive looking for mammals. but it wasn't until we made it back to the hotel where we struck lucky. On the slope next to the hotel a smallish deer was found in the thermal. and on closer inspection we found it was a Tufted Deer, a final mammal tick on our final full day: excellent. After breakfast, we packed up the cars and started our long journey back towards Chengdu. We stopped for lunch in an odd ghost town, a huge development where nobody appeared to live, apart from in the 'old town' area. The meal was superbly traditional and very tasty. The rest of the journey was uneventful, apart from a few Crested Mynas on the road signs on the outskirts of Chengdu, and as the sun set we arrived at our overnight hotel, said our goodbyes to both ZZ and Sid, and had an early night ready for our various departures the next day.

Day 16

Sunday 30th November

Flights home

All of the group caught their various flights safely, navigating connections in Beijing and Hong Kong before making it safely back to their respective countries late in the day.



White-browed Tit-warbler

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	✓													
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓						
Scaly-sided Merganser	<i>Mergus squamatus</i>	✓													
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>						✓								
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	✓					✓		✓						
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓													
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	✓													
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>						✓								
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓													
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓													
Blood Pheasant	<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>									✓					
Chinese Grouse - E	<i>Tetrastes sewerzowi</i>									✓					
Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	✓				✓				✓					
Blue Eared Pheasant - E	<i>Crossoptilon auritum</i>					✓									
Chinese Bamboo Partridge - E	<i>Bambusicola thoracicus</i>											✓			
Tibetan Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>					✓									
Japanese Quail	<i>Coturnix japonica</i>												✓		
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓			✓										
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓													
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	✓													
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	✓			✓									✓	
Red Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>		✓												
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>						✓								
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>						✓		✓	✓					
Speckled Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba hodgsonii</i>		✓												
Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>							✓							
Feral Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓													
Long-billed Plover	<i>Thinornis placidus</i>				✓						✓				
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓												
Grey-headed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus cinereus</i>	✓	✓												
Solitary Snipe	<i>Gallinago solitaria</i>						✓								
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	✓			✓										
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓			✓										
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	✓					✓		✓						
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓													
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓													
Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus</i>						✓		✓						
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓													
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓			✓						✓	✓			
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓													
Chinese Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>						✓								
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>			✓											
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>							✓	✓	✓					
Oriental Scops Owl	<i>Otus sunia</i>	✓	✓												
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>			✓											
Eurasian Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>									✓					
Tawny Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa flavipes</i>											✓			
Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>					✓		✓	✓						
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	✓													
Himalayan Vulture	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Mountain Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus nipalensis</i>											✓			
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓				
Crested Goshawk	<i>Lophospiza trivirgata</i>											✓	✓		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					✓									
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>										✓				

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>				✓			✓	✓	✓					
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>			✓				✓	✓	✓					
Upland Buzzard	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Himalayan Buzzard	<i>Buteo refectus</i>		✓		✓	✓				✓					
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>		✓		✓										
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>											✓			
Crested Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>										✓				
Speckled Piculet	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>										✓		✓		
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>										✓				
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus canicapillus</i>											✓	✓		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>											✓			
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>												✓	✓	
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Green Shrike-babbler	<i>Pteruthius xanthochlorus</i>			✓											
Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicurus hottentottus</i>		✓	✓											
Black Drongo	<i>Dicurus macrocercus</i>										✓				
Giant Grey Shrike - E	<i>Lanius giganteus</i>						✓	✓							
Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	✓			✓										
Alpine Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>					✓									
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Red-billed Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythroryncha</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyanus</i>						✓								
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>												✓		
Oriental Magpie	<i>Pica serica</i>										✓		✓	✓	
Black-rumped Magpie - N	<i>Pica bottanensis</i>					✓	✓								
Southern Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga hemispila</i>											✓	✓		
Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus dauuricus</i>						✓	✓							
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>						✓	✓							
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>					✓					✓	✓			
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Yellow-browed Tit	<i>Sylviparus modestus</i>			✓								✓	✓		
Ground Tit	<i>Pseudopodoces humilis</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>			✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>									✓	✓	✓			
Yellow-bellied Tit - E	<i>Periparus venustulus</i>											✓		✓	
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		✓	✓		✓									
Rufous-vented Tit	<i>Periparus rubidiventris</i>			✓		✓				✓					
Grey-crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes dichrous</i>			✓		✓				✓					
Sichuan Tit - E	<i>Poecile weigoldicus</i>					✓				✓					
Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>						✓	✓	✓						
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	✓													
Scaly-breasted Cupwing	<i>Pnoepyga albiventer</i>	✓													
Pale Martin	<i>Riparia diluta</i>	✓													
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>	✓													
Crested Tit-warbler - E	<i>Leptopoecile elegans</i>					✓									
White-browed Tit-warbler	<i>Leptopoecile sophiae</i>					✓				✓					
Black-throated Bushtit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>											✓	✓		
Black-browed Bushtit	<i>Aegithalos iouschistos</i>		✓												
Sooty Bushtit - E	<i>Aegithalos fuliginosus</i>											✓			
Rufous-faced Warbler	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>										✓	✓			
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis acanthizoides</i>											H			
Pallas's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	✓		✓											
Buff-throated Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus subaffinis</i>	✓													
Collared Finchbill	<i>Spizixos semitorques</i>										✓	✓		✓	
Brown-breasted Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus xanthorrhous</i>	✓									✓	✓			
Light-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis</i>	✓									✓	✓			
Chinese Fulvetta - E	<i>Fulvetta striaticollis</i>					✓									
Brown Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis unicolor</i>			✓											
Three-toed Parrotbill - E	<i>Paradoxornis paradoxus</i>			✓											
Spectacled Parrotbill - E	<i>Suthora conspicillata</i>					✓									

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Ashy-throated Parrotbill - N	<i>Suthora alphonsiana</i>	✓													
White-collared Yuhina	<i>Parayuhina diademata</i>												✓	✓	
Black-chinned Yuhina	<i>Yuhina nigrimenta</i>	✓													
Stripe-throated Yuhina	<i>Yuhina gularis</i>		✓	✓											
Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler	<i>Erythrogonys gravivox</i>												✓		
Black-faced Laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron affine</i>			✓											
Elliot's Laughingthrush - E	<i>Trochalopteron elliotii</i>		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓		
Black-headed Sibia	<i>Heterophasia desgodinsi</i>	✓													
Red-billed Leiothrix	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	✓										✓	✓	✓	
Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush - E	<i>Ianthocincla sukatschewi</i>					✓									
Giant Laughingthrush - E	<i>Ianthocincla maxima</i>					✓									
White-browed Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus sannio</i>	✓												✓	
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus pectoralis</i>												✓		
Plain Laughingthrush - E	<i>Pterorhinus davidi</i>				✓	✓					✓				
Chinese Babax - N	<i>Pterorhinus lanceolatus</i>	✓													
White-throated Laughingthrush	<i>Pterorhinus albogularis</i>												✓		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		✓	✓		✓									
Przevalski's Nuthatch - E	<i>Sitta przewalskii</i>					✓				✓					
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>											✓			
Chestnut-vented Nuthatch	<i>Sitta nagaensis</i>		✓												
Bar-tailed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia himalayana</i>											✓			
Sichuan Treecreeper - E	<i>Certhia tianquanensis</i>		✓	✓											
Red-billed Starling	<i>Spodiopsar sericeus</i>	✓													
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>						✓							✓	
Crested Myna	<i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>													✓	
Crested Myna	<i>Acridotheres cristatellus</i>													✓	
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			✓											
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	
Grandala	<i>Grandala coelicolor</i>										✓				
Chinese Thrush	<i>Turdus mupinensis</i>			✓											
Chinese Blackbird	<i>Turdus mandarinus</i>	✓													

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
White-backed Thrush	<i>Turdus kessleri</i>					✓									
Chestnut Thrush	<i>Turdus rubrocanus</i>			✓											
Naumann's Thrush	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>		✓												
Grey-winged Blackbird	<i>Turdus boulboul</i>	✓													
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>			✓											
Little Forktail	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>											✓			
White-crowned Forktail	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>			✓								✓			
Qilian Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger albocoeruleus</i>													✓	
Himalayan Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>			✓								✓	✓		
Blue-fronted Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓			
White-throated Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i>					✓				✓	✓				
White-capped Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus leucocephalus</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
Plumbeous Water Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus fuliginosus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>										✓	✓		✓	
Hodgson's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓			
Güldenstädt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogastrus</i>					✓	✓	✓							
Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rufiventris</i>	✓													
Grey Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola ferreus</i>	✓													
Siberian (Amur) Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>		✓	✓											
Alpine Accentor	<i>Prunella collaris</i>					✓									
Robin Accentor	<i>Prunella rubeculoides</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Rufous-breasted Accentor	<i>Prunella strophciata</i>			✓		✓				✓		✓			
White-rumped Snowfinch	<i>Onychostruthus taczanowskii</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Rufous-necked Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda ruficollis</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓					
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓									✓				
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	✓	✓												
Rosy Pipit	<i>Anthus roseatus</i>	✓													
Siberian Pipit	<i>Anthus japonicus</i>										✓				
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	✓	✓				✓				✓				

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Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		✓	✓							✓		✓		
White-winged Grosbeak	<i>Mycerobas carnipes</i>					✓									
Pink-rumped Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus waltoni</i>					✓				✓					
Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>		✓	✓											
Chinese White-browed Rosefinch - E	<i>Carpodacus dubius</i>					✓				✓	✓				
Grey-headed Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula erythaca</i>		✓										✓		
Mongolian Finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>		✓	✓											
Plain Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>		✓	✓											
Brandt's Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte brandti</i>					✓									
Oriental Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>	✓			✓										
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>							✓	✓						
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>					✓									
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>					✓									
Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>			✓											
Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>		✓	✓							✓	✓			
Godlewski's Bunting	<i>Emberiza godlewskii</i>									✓					
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>					✓									

Mammals

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		November 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>											✓	✓		
Tibetan Macaque	<i>Macaca thibetana</i>	✓	✓	✓											
Golden Snub-nosed Monkey - E	<i>Rhinopithecus roxellana</i>										✓				
Woolly Hare	<i>Lepus oiostolus</i>						✓				✓				
Plateau Pika	<i>Ochotona curzoniae</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Malayan Porcupine	<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>											✓			
Pallas's Squirrel	<i>Callosciurus erythraeus</i>	✓													
Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel	<i>Dremomys pernyi</i>												✓		
Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista alborufus</i>	✓		✓											

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Common name	Scientific name	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
Grey-headed Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista caniceps</i>			✓											
Pere David's Rock Squirrel - E	<i>Sciurotamias davidianus</i>										✓	✓	✓		
Pere David's Red-backed Vole	<i>Eothenomys melanogaster</i>						✓								
Confucian White-bellied Rat	<i>Niviventer confucianus</i>		✓												
Eastern Red Panda - E	<i>Ailurus styani</i>		✓												
Northern Hog Badger	<i>Arctonyx albogularis</i>												✓		
Grey Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>						✓	✓		✓					
Tibetan Fox	<i>Vulpes ferrilata</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓					
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>						✓		✓						
Chinese Mountain Cat - E	<i>Felis bieti</i>						✓	✓							
Mainland Leopard Cat	<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>		✓	✓							✓	✓	✓		
Masked Palm Civet	<i>Paguma larvata</i>	✓	✓	✓								✓			
Tibetan Gazelle	<i>Procapra picticaudata</i>							✓	✓	✓					
Chinese Takin	<i>Budorcas tibetana</i>			✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	
Blue Sheep	<i>Pseudois nayaur</i>					✓		✓							
Maned Serow	<i>Capricornis sumatraensis</i>			✓											
Chinese Goral	<i>Naemorhedus griseus</i>	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	
Forest Musk-deer	<i>Moschus berezovskii</i>		✓	✓											
Eastern Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus pygargus</i>					✓					✓				
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>									✓					
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓											
Tufted Deer	<i>Elaphodus cephalophus</i>													✓	
Reeves's Muntjac - N	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Wild Pig (Boar)	<i>Sus scrofa</i>										✓	✓	✓	✓	