

Wild Japan in Winter (with Kyushu extension)

Naturetrek Tour Report

30th January – 10th February 2023



Blakiston's Fish Owl



Red-crowned Cranes



Japanese Macaques "Snow Monkey"



Whooper Swans at Lake Kussharo

Tour report by Duncan McNiven, (extension report by Philip Thompson), images by Daphne Lewsley



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Duncan McNiven (tour leader) with eight Naturetrek clients.

Day 1

Monday 30th January

Travel to Tokyo

Day 2

Tuesday 31st January

Tokyo – Kasai Rinkai Koen

After an overnight flight from Heathrow to Tokyo, eight Naturetrekkers were greeted by Naturetrek tour leader Duncan and our Tokyo guide Yasuko at Haneda Airport and quickly transferred to our comfortable hotel in Shinagawa to complete our early check-in. Most of the group then elected to accompany Duncan on an excursion to check out some of the commoner birds to be found in the environs of this huge metropolis. So, after our first navigation through the intricacies of the Tokyo metro system, we soon emerged into the waterfront urban park that is Kasai Rinkai Koen where an Osprey circling over the metro station was our first bird!

We found a quiet spot to eat our sandwiches whilst familiarising ourselves with the park's common avian residents such as Tree Sparrows, White-cheeked Starlings, Brown-eared Bulbuls, Large-billed Crows and Japanese Tits. Nearby some ornamental ponds held some smart Eastern Spot-billed Ducks along with the more familiar Mallards and Northern Shovelers. Some attractive Oriental Turtle Doves were feeding on the ground under a small copse and we also caught a glimpse of a Pale Thrush before it disappeared into a ditch.

At the sea front, a good selection of waterfowl were present including a huge flotilla of Greater Scaup and Great Crested Grebes which helps explain why this bay is designated as a Ramsar site. Common Sandpipers flitted along the shoreline of a channel where Great Cormorants fished and Eurasian Teal and Eurasian Wigeon dabbled.

We strolled back to the local nature reserve consisting of a small freshwater wetland and information centre, spotting a Blue Rock Thrush on the way. A big flock of Tree Sparrows were frequenting the edge of a reed bed and some Warbling White-eyes flitted around the bushes. Nearby, a pair of Bull-headed Shrikes put in a far too brief appearance for our liking, but a flock of smart Dusky Thrushes lingered longer in the tops of some trees. Familiar Eurasian Coots, Common Moorhens and Grey Herons frequented the pools but an unfamiliar "tack" emanating from the reed fringe turned out to be a pair of subtle Japanese Bush Warblers. Another arm of the wetland held a solitary Common Greenshank whilst out on the bay nearby we were captivated by a tight flock of twenty Black-necked Grebes that seemed to be engaged in some synchronised diving manoeuvres perhaps inspired by the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Soon the Keiyo Line was whisking us back into Tokyo where later in the evening we all met up to enjoy our first meal together ahead of our upcoming adventure in Wild Japan.

Day 3

Wednesday 1st February

Tokyo – Kushiro (Hokkaido) – Tsurumidai – Ito Crane Sanctuary – Lake Kusharo – Kawayu Kanko

After an early start, we caught a flight from Haneda Airport and only an hour and a half after take-off we were descending into the beautiful island of Hokkaido where we met our lovely local guide Sonoko and boarded our bus. As we travelled through the snow-covered forests and meadows towards our first destination, Sonoko just had time to introduce herself and explain a little bit about her island home. Soon we saw a flock of about 200 Red-crowned Cranes in a snowy meadow right by the road. This was Tsurumidai where local farmers have fed the wintering birds for many years and quite literally saved this threatened population from near extinction.

We walked over to the side of the meadow where the cranes seemed unconcerned by the attention they were receiving and went about their business of social interaction which included bouts of balletic display accompanied by loud trumpeting. Is there a more beautiful sight in nature than these big, elegant, noisy white and black cranes patrolling their snowy landscape? It's hard to think of one. Sonoko explained that when the pairs duetted it was possible to distinguish the otherwise identical males and females by the pattern that their breaths made in the freezing air. The exhalation pattern made by the long drawn out trumpet call of the males was indeed quite different from the pattern made by the short answering calls of the female. Some of us were briefly distracted by a Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker and a flock of Long-tailed Tits of the cute local white-headed race in some nearby trees but only a few of us glimpsed a rarer Grey-headed Woodpecker.

After enjoying the spectacle for around 90 minutes, we made the short journey to a country restaurant where we enjoyed a nice home-made lunch. After lunch we had an appointment with another group of Red-crowned Cranes at the Ito Crane Sanctuary only five minutes drive away. This was a different experience because we arrived there just in time to watch the local farmer putting out food for the birds which resulted in a lot more excited trumpeting and a good deal of coming and going as birds flew in or left the site to forage elsewhere.

Around 3pm we left the flock of cranes and headed into the interior of Hokkaido eventually arriving at the huge expanse of Lake Kussharo which as usual was partly frozen. As the evening was now approaching, the temperature had dropped even more but that was of no consequence to the flocks of Whooper Swans which were enjoying the warm water of the hot springs that empty into the lake here. These swans are remarkably tame, and it was a quite extraordinary experience to stand right next to the noisy birds, bugling loudly as they swam around in the clouds of hot steam in this otherwise frozen landscape.

As darkness began to fall a flock of Goosander flew over and we made our way a short distance to the hotel at Kawayu Kanko, a traditional Hokkaido Ryokan with its own Onsen (hot spring), where we all later enjoyed a sumptuous Japanese meal together with some of our group having already enjoyed the hotel's hot spring facilities.

Day 4

Thursday 2nd February

Otowa Bridge – Ito Crane Sanctuary – Lake Mashu – Mt. Io

Today was our earliest start of the tour and therefore unsurprisingly the coldest. After stopping at an all-night convenience store for extra coffee and snacks we continued on to our first port of call, the famous site of Otowa Bridge which crosses the beautiful Setsuri River. As we looked down the tree-lined, braided river with its numerous broad gravel shoals, we could see a flock of roosting, Red-crowned Cranes tucked into bankside bushes downstream. Upstream more cranes were visible including two very close to the bridge which provided excellent photographic opportunities, as did a Eurasian Nuthatch of the beautiful pale *clara* race running up and down the trunk of a nearby tree.

We drove the short distance back to the Ito Crane Sanctuary in order to catch the 9am crane feeding spectacle which resulted in much bugling and dancing by excited birds with many cranes arriving during the course of the morning, probably from the Otowa Bridge roost site. Having had our fill of these magnificent birds we said farewell and left the cranes for the last time.

Our next destination was a quiet, wooded river valley quite close by. After being dropped off by the bus we all marched (carefully) down an icy track through the snowy forest until we reached a point where we had a clear view across the stream below us. Across the valley, in the hollow of a lovely gnarled oak tree, sat a Ural Owl blinking in the bright winter sunshine. Everyone filled their boots with photographs and video images of this strikingly pale, large relative of the familiar Tawny Owl which seemed quite unconcerned with all the attention it was getting. As we climbed back aboard our bus, two huge raptors were spotted soaring over the nearby forest which turned out to be a pair of magnificent Steller's Sea Eagles, the first of hopefully many that we would encounter over the next few days.

After our early morning start, most folk were feeling quite peckish by now so we set off for our lunch stop where we enjoyed a delicious 'bento' meal. After a leisurely lunch we set off again heading back inland towards what is usually one of the scenic highlights of the tour. Lake Mashu is a stunning caldera lake, reputedly one of the clearest lakes in the world, surrounded by a spectacular ring of mountains cloaked in forest which normally provide splendid photographic opportunities. 'Normally'... but not on this occasion because as we approached the rim of the caldera it was snowing heavily so our views were quite restricted but nevertheless a group of Sika Deer foraging on dwarf bamboo nearby provided some interest for the photographers.

On the way back to our hotel, we stopped at another uniquely scenic site. Mount Io is a truly weird and wonderful lunar landscape where volcanic vents spew forth steam, boiling water and sulphurous fumes. We spent a little time exploring this extraordinary place before we headed back to Kawayu Kanko where we could enjoy the hot springs after a long day out in the cold followed by yet another sumptuous traditional Japanese meal.

Day 5

Friday 3rd February

Shibetsu – Rausu (Shiretoko Peninsula)

After a leisurely breakfast we set off for our next destination, the fishing port of Rausu up on the Shiretoko Peninsula in the east of the island. Arriving on the east side of the peninsula we stopped at the coastal town of Shibetsu, another fishing port, and had a walk around the harbour which was partly frozen but was still attracting lots of birds. Here we had nice close views of Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Mergansers, Goosanders, Tufted Ducks and our first multicoloured Harlequin Ducks. The harbour was full of Slaty-backed Gulls and by sifting through them we eventually picked out some Glaucous-winged Gulls with their characteristic greyed-out wingtips. Leaving Shibetsu behind we noticed a number of distinctive Black-eared Kites soaring over the local tip, but soon we were heading north up the coast where numerous flocks of Harlequins and Black Scoters dotted the surface of the sea just offshore.

Eventually we reached the little port of Rausu and here we began to get a flavour of the aweome spectacle that makes this little fishing port world famous. The skies, the harbour walls and lots of trees on the surrounding coastline were dotted with hundreds of huge eagles. We boarded our boat for a cruise out to sea and just beyond the harbour walls the crew began tossing fish into the surf. At first only large gulls were attracted to the free food on offer. But gradually increasing numbers of eagles began to soar above the boat and we had our first chance to distinguish the adult and immature plumages of the two species present – the White-tailed Eagle and its even larger cousin, the magnificent Steller's Sea Eagle.

On our return to dry land, we noticed some smart looking Pelagic Cormorants and many more Harlequin Ducks swimming around in the harbour. Scrutinising all the gulls along the harbour walls revealed our first Glaucous Gulls of the trip. Once safely back on dry land we had half an hour to spare before checking in to our hotel so we went for a stroll up the river on a dipper hunt. Before too long we located a pair of Brown Dippers busily feeding underwater in their inimitable style.

After an early check in at our comfortable hotel (and onsen), we had time to relax for a while before heading out again for an important rendezvous that required us to be in place just before dark. Soon we were ensconced at the famous Washi No Yado cafe-cum-hide overlooking a floodlit river. Sometimes we have to wait an hour or two for the stars of this particular show to turn up but on this occasion, we were in luck. Shortly after dusk a huge shape swept down river and landed next to the floodlit pool. Blakiston's Fish Owl! This huge shaggy, haystack of a creature is the world's largest owl and never fails to take the breath away. As its name befits, it was here for a spot of fishing and in no time at all it had dropped into the river, grabbed a couple of fish, and then flew off into the forest. We thought that might have been it but since we had some time before we were due to be picked up by our transport we waited patiently for a little longer. Our patience was duly rewarded when another "BFO" arrived on a fishing trip and this time emerged from the pool with not two but three fish in its talons before flying off again. What an exemplary angler!

Totally satisfied with our good luck we returned to our hotel for another sumptuous traditional Japanese meal washed down with some cold beer (or Sake in some cases) after another very full day.

Day 6

Saturday 4th February

Rausu 'sunrise cruise' – Shiretoko coast – Shibetsu - Rausu

Despite birding until after dark the previous day, we had a 'sunrise cruise' booked to enjoy this morning. Luckily, at this time of year, this far north, sunrise isn't too early! As before, as soon as the crew began throwing fish out, the sky around the boat filled with eagles of both species and the photographers in our group could fill their memory cards with hundreds of images of eagles fishing, chasing and interacting with each other. After enjoying that spectacle, the captain pulled alongside the snow-covered harbour wall where more eagles lined up just a few metres from us at eye level on the top of the boat. Thoroughly awestruck, we made our way back to our hotel for a welcome breakfast before getting back on the bus for a drive down the coast to see what we could find.

A check of the river in downtown Rausu again revealed some Brown Dippers, five this time, as well as eight Whooper Swans, two Northern Pintail and some Harlequins. At the river mouth a flock of Black-headed Gulls were mingling with some Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Mergansers and Harlequins.

We then drove along the coast keeping our eyes peeled on the ocean and not far south of Rausu Duncan spotted a group of suspiciously large pinnipeds lounging in the surf not far offshore. We all piled off the bus and sure enough we were soon watching a wonderful group of nine Steller's Sea Lions with a couple of much smaller Harbour Seals for comparison. The group seemed to be composed of females and young animals just relaxing and socialising but there was no sign of the bull sea lion.

At Shibetsu we discovered that the harbour was now largely frozen, so we spent some time wandering around examining any birds on the unfrozen areas. This resulted in some nice views of yet more Harlequins, Red-breasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, Goosander, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Tufted Duck but a solitary male Black Scoter stole the show with its bright orange cere simply glowing in the low winter sun. Also loafing around the harbour were a variety of gulls of different age groups and by careful examination through the scope we were able to distinguish Slaty-backed, Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gulls.

But now it was time to make our way back to Rausu so we headed back up the coast stopping briefly to examine some big flocks of Black Scoter and more mergansers offshore. We had another evening booked at the owl watching hide but tonight it seemed that our luck was not in as the big owl failed to turn up to show off his angling prowess. Feeling slightly deflated we trooped back to our bus at the allotted time only to stumble across the huge shape of a Blakiston's Fish Owl sitting in a riverside tree right next to the track. Bingo!

Day 7

Sunday 5th February

Rausu – Notsuke Peninsula – Yoroushi

A slightly later start today as we left our hotel in Rausu and drove back down the coast road and out along the Notsuke peninsula, a huge 17 mile long spit that sticks out into the Sea of Okhotsk. It was a beautiful blue-sky day and from the peninsula we had a great view of the magnificent snow-covered mountains of the Shiretoko Peninsula to the north-west where we had just been. Over to the north-east we could clearly see the volcanoes of Kunashir Island, part of the Kuril Island chain held by Russia but disputed by Japan.

Out on the marshes on the south side of the spit the water was frozen and large numbers of ice anglers were camped out trying their luck. Dotted around the marsh were small numbers of Sika Deer including some fine stags with multi-pointed antlers. We stopped the bus periodically to scan the terrain and found a flock of delightfully pink Asian Rosy Finches feeding on the shingle whilst a Short-eared Owl ghosted over the marshes nearby. Looking out to sea we could see numerous flocks of duck of by now familiar species, but careful searching of the Black Scoter flocks revealed the presence of smaller numbers of smart Stejneger's Scoters as well as a scattering of Spectacled Guillemots and a single Red-throated Diver. Overhead, Glaucous Gulls patrolled the beaches whilst a few White-tailed and Steller's Sea Eagles searched for prey on the marshes.

At the Nature Centre near the end of the peninsula we saw some confiding Red Foxes of the beautiful 'Ezo' race as well as another flock of Asian Rosy Finches. To finish off we had a bracing walk out to the lighthouse through the snow before heading back to Shibetsu for lunch in a delightful tempura restaurant.

After lunch we drove to our next hotel, the luxurious Ryokan at Yorouchi set in some forested hills overlooking a beautiful river. After checking in we had time to relax in the comfortable lounge looking out of the huge windows that overlook the river. Some well-stocked feeders were visited by a constant stream of Marsh Tits, some remarkably tuft-headed Coal Tits, the distinctive cinnamon-headed *brandtii* race of Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Nuthatches, Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Japanese Tits whilst on the river Brown Dippers searched for aquatic invertebrates. However, the big prize here was the discovery of a Solitary Snipe bobbing and probing among the rocks of the riverbed which resulted in some quick phone calls to round up those not already present so that everyone could enjoy this rare sighting.

Some group members then chose to relax in one of the hotel's fabulous onsens but we all met up in the lounge before dinner to call our daily bird log. However, no sooner had we started to work our way through the list than we were interrupted by the arrival of an enormous Blakiston's Fish owl which helped itself to some fish in the pool literally a few metres from our noses outside the lounge windows. The huge bird stayed long enough for everyone to get amazing views and take some photographs before it left and we headed into our private banqueting suite where a lavish traditional banquet had been laid out for us.

Day 8

Monday 6th February

Yorouchi – Kushiro – Tokyo

Today was largely a transfer day back to Tokyo so we were able to enjoy a relaxed morning having a leisurely breakfast overlooking the river. After breakfast, some opted to stay and watch the feeders whilst the rest of us stretched our legs with a walk through the snowy forested landscape outside the hotel where we saw some Dusky Thrushes, Eurasian Bullfinches of the grey-bellied *griseiventris* race, as well as some confiding Hawfinches. After waving goodbye to our friendly hosts at the hotel we headed back to Kushiro Airport, briefly pausing en route to savour a last look at the statuesque Red-crowned Cranes at Tsurumidai. We all said our fond farewells to Sonoko and then flew back to Haneda Airport in Tokyo. Before too long we had checked in to our centrally located hotel in Tokyo and were enjoying a meal out on the town.

Day 9

Tuesday 7th February

Imperial Palace Gardens, Tokyo – Shinkansen - Nagano

Our Shinkansen ‘bullet train’ booking which would take us up into the mountains of Honshu was not due to leave until mid-afternoon so we spent the morning exploring the gardens and surroundings of the Imperial Palace, close to Tokyo Station. It was a lovely, warm sunny day, quite a contrast from the arctic climate on Hokkaido. The palace moats were full of an array of attractive duck including Eurasian Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Eastern Spot-billed Duck and Gadwall with the males sporting their fine vermiculated plumage. But of special interest here were some beautiful Falcated Ducks with their glossy bronze/green mane and sickle-shaped tertial feathers which give rise to its common name. A pair of Common Kingfishers flashing past was a bit of a surprise to find in central Tokyo but less surprising were a pair of introduced Mute Swans and a pair of Eurasian Sparrowhawks soaring overhead. The gardens around the exterior of the palace were being carefully attended by a small army of gardeners but who knows what they made of the molehills pushed up through the immaculate lawns by a colony of Small Japanese Moles!

We entered the palace’s Eastern Gardens and found that some plum trees in this classic Japanese garden were already in flower captivating many photographers but also attracting feeding Warbling White-eyes, Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers and Long-tailed Tits. Flocks of Dusky Thrushes, Oriental Turtle Doves and noisy Brown-eared Bulbuls moved through the trees and a couple of Masked Buntings scratched around on a lawn. We were also pleased to add the strikingly coloured Varied Tit as well as Daurian Redstart and Olive-backed Pipit to our ever-growing bird list.

After lunch we walked the short distance from our hotel to Tokyo Central train station where we boarded our bullet train with military precision and in no time at all we arrived at the former Winter Olympics town of Nagano which would be our base for the next two nights.

Day 10

Wednesday 8th February

Nagano – Snow Monkey Park – Zenkoji Temple - Tatsumi Park

Today was going to be a special day for many of our group as we planned to visit Jigokudani (literally ‘Hell’s Valley’) to see the fabled ‘snow monkeys’ or Japanese Macaques to give them their proper name. ‘Hell’s Valley’ gets its name from the vents of steam that emanate from fissures in the rocks along the valley floor, but it best known for its resident troupe of around 170 macaques that habitually use the pools of hot volcanic water for bathing and socialising in. After donning our ice grips near the trail head, we made the gentle walk up through the snow encrusted trees and soon emerged into the natural amphitheatre where the monkeys were indeed in residence.

The forest was largely silent on the way up, but we did hear a few birds such as Eurasian Jays, Coal Tits and a Goldcrest but only two of us managed to see a furtive Japanese Accentor that was foraging under some riverside scrub. After enjoying our encounter with the engaging primates, we strolled back down to the trailhead and had lunch at the delightful Enza Cafe nearby (the best fish and chips in Japan in the opinion of our leader).

After lunch we boarded our bus and drove back into Nagano, noticing some Eastern Buzzards on the way, in order to visit the site of the Zenkoji Temple which was founded in the 7th Century. Some of us went off to examine the venerated temple with our local guide Hitomi whilst the rest of the group scoured the temple gardens for more avian fare and were rewarded with a brief glimpse of some Grey-capped Greenfinches. Finally, on our way back to the hotel in Nagano we stopped at the tiny Tatsumi 'pocket' park where there was a nice selection of wildfowl on the pond including our first Common Pochards of the tour, a Great Egret and two Great Cormorants in quite stunning breeding plumage.

Day 11

Thursday 9th February

Nagano – Karuizawa – Tokyo

We left Nagano at 8am the next morning in our bus and headed east through the mountains to the upmarket ski resort and summer retreat of Karuizawa whose famous previous residents include John and Yoko Lennon. Picking up our picnic lunch at the local Seven Eleven we had a quick look around the woodlands and gardens at the back of the store and were delighted to get scope views of a Japanese Green Woodpecker and some Eurasian Siskins and Grey-capped Greenfinches. Then as we were heading back to the bus Kathy caught sight of some small passerines in a hedgerow which on further investigation proved to be a lovely pair of Meadow Buntings. We headed up the valley to the Shiotsubo Hotel which is normally our morning coffee stop but whilst they could not accommodate us on this occasion, we were free to wander around the grounds where we saw Eurasian Wren, Long-tailed Tits, Willow Tits, Varied Tits, and some Eurasian Jays and Eurasian Nuthatches of distinctly different subspecies to those we had seen on Hokkaido.

Further down the valley we took a walk through the forest along the Kose Rindo trail paralleling the river. Normally we need to don our ice grips for this walk but in fact the trail was bone dry and ice free – a sign of the times. The mainly deciduous forest was very quiet. We assiduously checked every clump of mistletoe growing on the trees but the hoped for Japanese Waxwings did not materialise – some years they just don't arrive from their breeding grounds in China. However, a thin call emanating from some understory bushes was more interesting and with a bit of manoeuvring everyone was able to get point blank views of the Japanese Accentor, a close relative of our familiar Dunnock, that was responsible.

As we were nearing the time for our departure from Karuizawa we walked back towards the bus. On the way 'eagle eyes' Kathy spotted a Long-tailed Rosefinch on the far bank of the river only for it to immediately disappear again. Arriving back at the bus we found we still had a few minutes to spare. Some opted to tuck into their lunch sarnies whilst the rest of us used the time up trying to squeeze a few more birds out of the forest which resulted in sightings of a flock of Japanese Grosbeaks, a pair of Japanese Green Woodpeckers and finally a tiny male Japanese Sparrowhawk soaring over the canopy.

Finally, we boarded our bus for the journey back to Tokyo and were entertained by our lively local guide Haruna who recounted her time as a punk band guitarist in Hackney and lead the group in a slightly surreal chorus of "Knees up Mother Brown" as we headed back out of the mountains!

For some of us this was to be our last night in Japan before heading back to London on the morning British Airways flight. So we bade fond farewells to the five lucky souls who were to spend an extra day exploring Tokyo before meeting up with another Naturetrek group to visit the island of Kyushu on the post-tour extension.

Day 12

Friday 10th February

Tokyo – London

So it was that another enjoyable tour to savour the magnificent wildlife, scenery, cuisine and culture of 'Wild Japan in Winter' came to a close. Lasting memories of this tour will undoubtedly include cranes dancing in the snow, eagles swooping down over the sea, magnificent owls in their forest homes and adorable monkeys bathing in their hot springs; but it will also be remembered as much as anything for the great company and good humour of our group.

Kyushu Extension

Day 1

Friday 10th/Saturday 11th February

Our early morning flight left Heathrow for our 'overnight' journey into Tokyo's Haneda Airport, arriving in the early morning of the next day. We then collected our luggage to transfer to the Domestic Terminal to await our next flight to the island of Kyushu. At the departure gate the new arrivals met up with the members of the earlier Naturetrek tour staying on for a post tour extension. With introductions complete we were able to relax while we awaited our punctual plane taking us to Kumamoto.

Arriving safely, we were met by our charming local interpreter/guide who led us out to our waiting bus where we were soon loaded and heading south. A short stop was taken to stock up on some lunch provisions before reaching Yatsushiro River and estuary mouth where our birding began! Among a familiar mix of dabbling duck on the river were numerous Eastern Spot-billed Ducks to remind us we were in foreign climes. Likewise, the plentiful Oriental Turtle Doves in the trees of the slope at our backs were new and exciting for most. The roost of Black-crowned Night Herons were in their usual spot with several Black-eared Kites and Large-billed Crows drifting overhead. A very unexpected Ryuku Minivet flew over uttering its distinctive call in a rather untypical habitat and location! With our attentions then focused on the estuary waters and mudflats we were keenly seeking our two target species of Black-faced Spoonbill and Saunders's Gull of which we were successful in finding both. Initially both species were seen quite distantly but as our time passed and we slowly walked along the concrete seawall we obtained increasingly closer views of both of these range-limited and scarce species. Fishing the shallow waters were several Western Ospreys that were proving successful in catching a number of large fish. Despite the expanse of open mud, waders were notably absent apart from a distant small flock of Pacific Golden Plovers and a few Common Sandpipers scattered along our route. Inland we added Dusky Thrush, White-cheeked Starling, Buff-bellied Pipit and Bull-headed Shrike to our tally, with a distant Brown Booby out in the bay only seen by the group leader. With time drawing on after a very long and tiring previous 24hrs, our thoughts turned to our hotel in Izumi and checking in. Our remaining journey still took some time before our arrival leaving some time before we headed out to the town and a local restaurant where the group could have their first experience of the wonderful Japanese cuisine.

Day 2

Sunday 12th February

An early start was required for our appointment at the Arasaki Crane Centre where we were granted permission to visit their rooftop terrace to witness the 7am feeding of the assembled mass of cranes. This did not disappoint as we watched the dense throng of cranes jostling for grain that as spread evenly around the protected rice paddies. To our amazement we were able to witness even more birds arriving, flying low over our heads, bugling as they passed to add to the rising numbers of birds. The majority of birds were Hooded cranes with a smaller number of statuesque White-naped Cranes numbering in the thousands. Among them we were incredibly fortunate this year in finding the single visiting adult Siberian Crane, that oddly seemed put off by the growing numbers of cranes and the free food and promptly took off, to head off to more peaceful areas. Of interest, also present was the hybrid offspring of a Common/Hooded Crane parentage picked out from the throng. Joining the cranes were numerous Eastern Rooks among which a considerable number of Large-billed Crows were present. Of note we were delighted to find a couple of adult piebald Daurian Jackdaws. Whilst enjoying the spectacle a stunning Goshawk swept by giving the smaller birds a shock. With our allotted time coming to a close we boarded the bus to begin our explorations of the wider area.

Our first stop was on the harbour wall opposite Warabi-jima Island. Plentiful duck were present of a familiar type to home but our main interest was the fringing reedbeds alongside the river. We found a selection of commoner local birds of which Pale Thrush, Daurian Redstart and Meadow Bunting were new finds. We were particularly entertained by the beautiful Warbling White-eyes actively feeding in the reed heads and surrounding bushes. Our main target species was the Chinese Penduline Tits usually found in this area. Alerted to their fine melancholy contact call we were again fortunate in a small party of birds crossing the river to settle among the reeds in front of us. After a little patience we all obtained some excellent views of these attractive birds feeding on the seedheads. We then took a walk along the raised seawall enclosing some of the reclaimed land of paddies and ditches. We were on the search for buntings of interest, finding only Meadow and Reed joined by numerous Russet Sparrows, Grey-capped Greenfinches and Bramblings in the fields and a couple of Eastern Blue Rock Thrushes on the wall making the walk worthwhile nonetheless.

After this successful walk we returned to the crane centre for a coffee in time for the fish feeding of the cranes. Large frozen blocks of fish are provided for the birds to peck from with kites, egrets and crows attempting to get a snatched scrap among the massed bodies of cranes. Refreshed we then set out once more, buying our lunch provisions on the way to an area of the Noda River south of the centre where the Siberian Crane was rumoured to spend its time. We enjoyed our lunch on the riverbank with no sign of the crane but enjoying the very mild weather and local birds as we waited.

Our next stop was the Highashi Protected Area where we enjoyed more crane action with numerous Eurasian Skylarks and Buff-bellied Pipits feeding in the wet pastures. A further short move was taken for a walk around the Fukunoe Port area. Having seen a couple of female Blue Rock Thrushes earlier we were delighted to find a resplendent male on the nearby house rooftops with his chestnut-coloured belly. Birding otherwise was rather quiet, so a final move was taken when we headed back to central Izumi and a walk along the Komenetsu River. Our plan played off perfectly with all our target birds found, beginning with a couple of wintering Barn Swallows flying over the general area. Along the fast-flowing river we found several Japanese Wagtails among numerous White Wagtails perching on the abundant rocks. As we reached a small weir a little careful scanning soon found our main quarry of Long-billed Plover sitting stationary on a concrete breakwater with the final bonus of a few

sleeping Falcated Duck in the calm waters above the weir, it was just a shame that our viewing was a little obscured by the falling rain! It was then back to the hotel for another evening meal out.

Day 3

Monday 13th February

In a repeat of yesterday, an early start found us waiting alongside the eastern polder Protected Area in time for the sunrise and crane feeding resulting in a wonderful mass of low flying cranes passing overhead heading to the main Arasaki Centre from their safe overnight roost. Cloud cover prevented us from experiencing the sun breaking over the nearby range of hills but the spectacle something to remember. During a careful scan of the remaining birds a brief head popped up from the undulating ground just long enough to be ID'd as a 'goose'. After a patient wait the bird, joined by another, eventually walked out more into the open to be revealed as a Taiga Bean Goose in company with a Greater White-fronted Goose. We then received a tip-off that the Siberian Crane was showing once more at the Arasaki Centre, so we hightailed it over there for a second viewing of this very rare and endangered bird, that as yesterday did not spend long in the company of its many thousands of Hooded and White-naped relatives! We then retraced our steps for a second prolonged viewing of the eastern polder area in search of the small party of Sandhill Cranes known to frequent the area. We tried from a different spot using a new very 'Japanese' style bird hide with unfathomable viewing windows at very odd heights. It overlooked a small lake that contained a rich mix of dabbling duck including several smart Falcated Ducks. Scouring through the cranes on show we came up empty regarding the Sandhills and eventually made the decision to move on and try other areas. As we drove off, we then nearly missed the group of Sandhill Cranes that had been unobtrusively feeding behind us all the time!

Our next stop was a walk alongside the Komenetsu River towards the mouth feeding into the Yatsushiro Sea. Our objective here was to find some Black-tailed Gulls that are reliably seen along this stretch. They did not disappoint, and we were soon watching a couple of adults, joined by the distinctively sooty-looking juveniles, a couple of which settled on the water for a good 'scope view. As we neared the river mouth a scan out to sea picked up a couple of feeding Brown Boobies near an offshore island. Flushed with success we headed back to the bus picking up a couple of smart Olive-backed Pipits in the nearby shrubs and grassy banks. We then bought our lunch provisions and headed inland to visit Kogowa Dam. Rain was falling on our arrival that was forecast to stop around midday, so we ate our lunch in the vehicle to wait it out. It slowly began to ease so we undertook a number of short walked sections around the lake, with the bus catching us up periodically. The birds this year were rather different from previous trips with an incredible 1000+ Mandarins joined by 200+ Baikal Teal out on the open water. Unfortunately, they had skilfully picked a bay of the lake that it was not possible to get a close view of them from the road. We had to console ourselves with distant scope views only. Smaller forest birds were rather notable by their absence this year, possibly due to the damp wet start to our explorations. In another contrast to previous years the normally ever-elusive (and generally unseen) White-bellied Green Pigeons seemed to be popping up all over with a couple of flocks of 20+ individuals seen! Our notable woodland birds spotted included a Red-flanked Bluetail (Orange-flanked Bush-robin?) and a few Red-billed Leiothrix.

We headed back to town where the group were offered the choice of a direct return to the hotel or being dropped off at the river and walking back the short distance to the hotel. Those that opted to continue birding were rewarded with large numbers of Asian House Martins feeding on midges over the river after our rainy morning and the resident Peregrine perched on its high radio mast lookout. Continuing on back to the weir the water levels had risen considerably from yesterday, completely covering most of the rocky perches found there. The Long-

billed Plover was soon found once more, again standing motionless on a different perch from before (do they ever move and do anything?), this time in much better conditions to admire.

Day 4

Tuesday 14th February

Our last day on Kyushu was spent taking a winding circuitous route leading ultimately to Kagoshima Airport for our internal flight back to Tokyo. Once all loaded, we set off for our first stop in the town of Satsuma where we stopped for a walk along the river at an area with many large rocky outcrops and torrents. A familiar mix of birds were found here including Japanese Wagtail, Japanese Bush Warbler and another stationary Long-billed Plover that took a little finding. After a pleasant spell of birding, we continued on, reaching Kannondaki-koen Glass Works and pleasure gardens for a coffee and toilet stop. The group wandered at will exploring the surrounding riverside, ornamental gardens and rather overgrown and sorry-looking nature trail leading up into the forest with its array of labelled forest trees. The bird highlight was the discovery of a pair of skulking Grey Buntings near the car park that most of the group obtained some view of. The working glass works were fascinating with their shop displaying the very high quality (and high priced!) products.

Back on the road we headed on into Kirishima where we stopped at a convenience store for lunch provisions. Walking back to the bus the group picked up a very obliging Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker feeding close by in the cherry trees. Onwards to Lake Miike, where the bus parked at the top of the slope down into the caldera lake basin. We walked down, scanning for birds as we went, succeeding in hearing first and eventually pinning down the endemic Japanese Green Woodpecker feeding above us. We ate our lunch by the lakeside that held large numbers of Eurasian Wigeon and smaller numbers of Eastern Spot-billed Duck. Elsewhere we struggled to find many birds, but one main target was the obliging small flock of Yellow-throated Buntings in their customary spot. A further Red-flanked Bluetail was found that proved typically skulking and elusive. Otherwise, it was only a selection of tits that we managed to connect with before time ran out and we made our way back to the bus and the final leg of our journey to the airport. Our flight duly left, a little behind schedule, taking us into Haneda Airport in Tokyo. From here the two respective groups split up, being taken to their different respective hotels, the earlier group in preparation for their homeward journey tomorrow, and the recent arrivals for a rest day before continuing their tour on to Hokkaido.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Social Media

We're social! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and be the first to hear about the launch of new tours, offers and exciting sightings and photos from our recently returned holidays.



www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays



www.twitter.com/naturetrektours



www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays

Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced H=Heard		January - February 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mute Swan - I	<i>Cygnus olor</i>								2		
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		100+	7	2	8		2			
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	50+							2	3	
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	2							10	12	
Falcated Duck	<i>Mareca falcata</i>								20		
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	50+			12				1	50	
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	100+	2						4	10	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	20	20	2	6	6					
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		1			2				20	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	50							6	20	
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>									6	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>				20	✓			20		
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	500+			20	✓	✓				
Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>				100+	✓	✓				
Stejneger's (Siberian) Scoter	<i>Melanitta stejnegeri</i>						50				
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>				50	✓	✓				
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>				10	10	30				
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>		1	5	10	10	10				
Goosander (Common Merganser)	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	1	40	3	20	20	20				
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				10	100+	50+				
Feral Pigeon - I	<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	6							6		6
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2									
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	20							✓	20	
Red-crowned Crane	<i>Grus japonensis</i>		300	300+				100			
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1							6		

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced H=Heard		January - February 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	300									
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	20									
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	1									
Solitary Snipe	<i>Gallinago solitaria</i>						1				
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	4									
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	1									
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				30	20					
Mew Gull (Kamchatka Gull)	<i>Larus canus kamtschatschensis</i>					2					
Glaucous-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>				6	5					
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>				4	10	30				
Slaty-backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Spectacled Guillemot	<i>Cepphus carbo</i>						50				
Red-throated Diver (Loon)	<i>Gavia stellata</i>						1				
Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	20					1		5	2	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	12				1			1	2	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>									3	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1								2	1
Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2									
Japanese Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter gularis</i>										1
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus nisosimilis</i>								2		
Black(-eared) Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	1			20+	20	20		1	6	6
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>				100+	100+	4	1			
Steller's Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i>			2	100+	100+	2				
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>									2	1
Blakiston's Fish Owl	<i>Bubo blakistoni</i>				2	1	1				
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>			1							
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>						1				
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>								2		

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced H=Heard		January - February 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus kizuki</i>		1		2		1	2	2	H	10
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		3				1	1	H		2
Japanese Green Woodpecker - E	<i>Picus awokera</i>										3
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>		1								
Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>	2									
Eurasian (Brandt's) Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius brandtii</i>						1	13			
Eurasian (Japanese) Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius japonicus</i>									H	6
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	1			1		
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		1					2		H	6
Varied Tit	<i>Sittiparus varius varius</i>								2	1	4
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		2	1	1		2	2			
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>										2
Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>	✓	✓	✓	1		2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i>	✓	2	2	1		2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japanese Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>	5									
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		6						20		8
Warbling White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>	20							6		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>									1	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>									1	1
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>			1			1	2			2
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>	20							2	✓	
Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	1									
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus eunomus</i>	20	1		1		2	4	✓	✓	✓
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>								2		
(Eastern) Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius philippensis</i>	1									
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>				3	5	5	4		1	1
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	50	1			30			✓	✓	
Japanese Accentor - N	<i>Prunella rubida</i>									1	1

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced H=Heard		January - February 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
White (Black-backed) Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba lugens</i>	✓							6	1	1
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>								1		
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>							2		1	2
Japanese Grosbeak	<i>Eophona personata</i>										15
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula griseiventris</i>			1				15			
Asian Rosy Finch	<i>Leucosticte arctoa</i>						60				
Long-tailed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus sibiricus</i>										1
Grey-capped Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>	1								5	10
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>				2					6	10
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>										4
Black-faced (Masked) Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	1							2		

Extension

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		February 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	11	12	13	14
Taiga Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>			1	
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>			1	
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>			1000	
Baikal Teal	<i>Sibirionetta formosa</i>			200	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		✓	✓	
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓	✓		
Falcated Duck	<i>Mareca falcata</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>		✓	✓	✓

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		February 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	11	12	13	14
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feral Pigeon - I	<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-bellied Green Pigeon	<i>Treron sieboldii</i>			50	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		✓	✓	
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandhill Crane	<i>Antigone canadensis</i>			3	
White-naped Crane	<i>Antigone vipio</i>		✓	✓	
Siberian Crane	<i>Leucogeranus leucogeranus</i>		1	1	
Common/Hooded Crane hybrid	<i>Grus grus/monacha</i>		1	1	
Hooded Crane	<i>Grus monacha</i>		✓	✓	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		✓	✓	✓
Slavonian (Horned) Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>		1		
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓	✓	
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	✓			
Long-billed Plover	<i>Charadrius placidus</i>		1	1	1
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>				
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>			✓	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓		✓
Saunders's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus saundersi</i>	6			
Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>			4	
Vega Gull	<i>Larus vegae vegae</i>	✓		✓	
Siberian/Taimyr Gull	<i>Larus fuscus taimyrensis</i>		1	1	
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>			4	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>			1	
Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	✓	✓	✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		February 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	11	12	13	14
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓	✓		
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓	✓		
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus nisosimilis</i>			✓	
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		1		
Black(-eared) Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>		✓		
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓	✓	✓
Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus kizuki</i>			✓	✓
Japanese Green Woodpecker - E	<i>Picus awokera</i>				1
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓	✓	
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>		1		
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			1	
Ryukyu Minivet - E	<i>Pericrocotus tegimae</i>	✓			
Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Japanese Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius hiugaensis</i>			✓	
Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus dauuricus</i>		✓	✓	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus pastinator</i>		✓	✓	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓		✓
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				✓
Varied Tit	<i>Sittiparus varius varius</i>		✓	✓	✓
Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>			✓	✓
Chinese Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz consobrinus</i>		✓		
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		February 2023			
Common name	Scientific name	11	12	13	14
Asian House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>			✓	
Japanese Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>				✓
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			✓	
Red-billed Leiothrix - I	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>			✓	✓
Warbling White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>		✓		✓
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>		✓	✓	✓
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus eunomus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>			✓	✓
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>		✓	✓	✓
(Eastern) Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius philippensis</i>		✓	✓	
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>			✓	✓
Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer cinnamomeus rutilans</i>		✓		
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓	✓
White (Black-backed) Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba lugens</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japanese Wagtail - E	<i>Motacilla grandis</i>		✓	✓	✓
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>			✓	✓
Buff-bellied Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>		1		
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		✓		
Grey-capped Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>		✓	✓	✓
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>		✓		✓
Yellow-throated (Elegant) Bunting	<i>Emberiza elegans</i>				✓
Masked Bunting	<i>Emberiza personata</i>			✓	
Grey Bunting	<i>Emberiza variabilis</i>				2
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	✓	✓	

Others

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced S=Sign		Date: 31 January - 09 February 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mammals											
Japanese Macaque - E	<i>Macaca fuscata</i>									x	
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		1		1	2	5	3			
Steller's Sea Lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>					9	9				
Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>				3	2					
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x			
Japanese Squirrel	<i>Sciurus lis</i>										1
Small Japanese Mole	<i>Mogera imaizumii</i>								S		
Reptiles & Amphibians											
Red-eared Terrapin	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>										
Japanese Toad	<i>Bufo japonicus</i>										
Butterflies											
Japanese Oakblue	<i>Arhopala japonica</i>										
Asian (Indian Red) Admiral	<i>Vanessa indica</i>										



Steller's Sea Eagle by Daphne Lewsley