

Wild Japan in Winter (with Kyushu extension)

Naturetrek Tour Report

28th January – 12th February 2025



Red-crowned Cranes by Lindsay King



Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker by Gemma Kelleher



Stella's Sea Eagle by Lindsay King



Snow Monkeys by Gemma Kelleher

Tour report by Duncan McNiven, Images by Gemma Kelleher, Lyndsay King and Duncan McNiven



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 (leader) with nine Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Tuesday 28th January

Travel to Tokyo

Day 2

Wednesday 29th January

Tokyo – Kasai Rinkai Koen

After an overnight flight on BA007 from Heathrow to Tokyo, eight Naturetrekkers and our tour guide Duncan were greeted by the smiling face of our Tokyo guide Yasuko at Haneda Airport and quickly transferred to our comfortable hotel in Shinagawa to complete our early check-in and meet the final member of our group. After a couple of hours rest, eight 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.

It was a sunny afternoon but quite breezy near the sea, so we needed light jackets to keep warm. The park is often busy with families enjoying picnics but today it was quite quiet so we were hopeful that we could find plenty of the park's common avian residents. We made a great start with a big flock of Asian Azure-winged Magpies as well as ubiquitous and noisy Brown-eared Bulbuls, White-cheeked Starlings and Tree Sparrows, all near the train station. Large-billed Crows and Japanese Tits proved to be also widespread, and some nearby ornamental ponds held some smart Eastern Spot-billed Ducks and a Little Egret. Whilst enjoying our sandwiches on some park benches, we spotted some attractive Oriental Turtle Doves feeding on the ground as well as some Grey-capped Greenfinches and a beautiful male Daurian Redstart.

At the sea front a good selection of waterfowl were present including a huge flotilla of Greater Scaup and Great Crested Grebes for which this bay is designated as a Ramsar site. Out on the bay some Vega Gulls were patrolling around, and an Osprey was sitting on a distant post. Closer to the shoreline, Eurasian Teal and Eurasian Wigeon dabbled, a Common Sandpiper flitted among the rocks, and a Little Grebe was diving in a channel. On another island, some Grey Herons were roosting whilst an Eastern Buzzard and a Black-eared Kite circled around, and Jonathan spotted a couple of Black-faced Spoonbills flying in.

We then strolled over to the small freshwater wetland nature reserve back in the park, having a brief view of three Brown-headed Thrushes that promptly disappeared into some bushes and some Warbling White-eyes that were equally uncooperative. At the reed-fringed wetland we added a few ducks to our tally including Common Pochard, Northern Shoveler and Tufted Duck, and as we headed slowly back towards the railway station a Peregrine flew over. 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

Thursday 30th January

Tokyo – Kushiro (Hokkaido) – Tsurumidai – Ito Crane Sanctuary – Lake Kussharo – 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 our driver Mr Endo, and boarded our bus. We travelled the short distance through the snow-covered forests and meadows towards our first destination where a flock of about 150 majestic Red-crowned Cranes were in a 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. When trumpeting pairs duet, it is 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 is quite different from the pattern made by the short answering calls of the female. A bonus for us was to find a solitary, White-naped Crane in with the flock. This is a species we normally see in considerable numbers much further south on the extension tour in Kyushu.

After enjoying the crane spectacle for a while, we made the short journey to a delightful family restaurant out in the countryside where the owners are always delighted to welcome Naturetrek each year. We enjoyed the delicious home-cooked lunch whilst keeping an eye on the bird feeders outside which attracted a steady stream of Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Long-tailed Tits, Japanese Tits and Marsh Tits.

After lunch we had an appointment with another group of Red-crowned Cranes at the Ito Crane Sanctuary only few 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. A berry-bearing tree in the car park was also attracting some Dusky Thrushes and Brown-eared Bulbuls.

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 is normally frozen, but this year was completely unfrozen. A flock of Whooper Swans which were enjoying the warm water at one 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. Further out on the lake some Common Pochards and Goosanders were busy diving for food.

As darkness fell, we moved to our nearby hotel at Kawayu, a traditional onsen where we enjoyed a sumptuous buffet meal with some of our group having already enjoyed the hotel's hot spring facilities.

Day 4

Friday 31st January

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

Armed with a packed breakfast and a thermos full of coffee, we had an early start for the drive to the famous site of Otowa Bridge which crosses the beautiful Setsuri River just over an hour from our hotel. Conditions at this classic photography site are always variable and this year we weren't blessed with the hoped for 'cranes in the mist' scenario as conditions were quite mild and slightly overcast. Nevertheless, as we looked down the tree-lined, braided river with its numerous broad gravel shoals, we could see small numbers of Red-crowned Cranes foraging in the river and indeed one pair wandered right up to the bridge with their youngster, offering terrific photo opportunities. There are always other birds to see here apart from the cranes and sure enough Duncan found a confiding male White-backed Woodpecker chiselling away at a riverside alder providing photographers with some more excellent shots.

Afterward we drove the short distance back to the Ito Crane Sanctuary, calling in at the Tsurui Shrine for a short walk through the park where Marsh Tits were calling in the trees. At Ito we watched 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. 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 solitary Ural Owl. 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.

We called in at a local park where a Brown Dipper was on the river and then made our way to a local hotel where we were booked in for lunch. Just over the road however, we noticed some activity in a fruiting tree, so we went to investigate and discovered some Brown-eared Bulbuls and Dusky Thrushes feasting on the berries, briefly joined by two Hawfinches, whilst two Steller's Sea Eagles soared overhead.

After a leisurely 'bento' lunch we set off again heading back inland towards what is often 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 usually provides splendid photographic opportunities. 'Usually', but not on this occasion, as it was already snowing heavily so the lake was mostly obscured today.

On the journey 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 amid a snowy landscape. We spent a little time exploring this extraordinary place before we headed back to our hotel for another sumptuous banquet with time to relax in the hot springs for those that so wished.

Day 5

Saturday 1st 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 where some Harlequin Ducks, Tufted Ducks, Great Crested Grebes and Pelagic Cormorants were busy diving amongst the fishing vessels. As in most fishing harbours around the world, gulls were present, waiting for an opportunity for a snack with the majority being the large Slaty-backed Gulls as well as a few Glaucous Gulls, a single Glaucous-winged Gull and a couple of 'Kamchatka' Common Gulls. Leaving Shibetsu behind we noticed a few Black-eared Kites soaring over the local tip, but soon we were heading north up the coast where numerous flocks of Black Scoters dotted the surface of the sea just offshore.

Eventually we reached the little port of Rausu and where we boarded our boat for a mini cruise. Initially, we cruised a short way south of the harbour where we viewed a herd of Steller's Sea lions distantly near the shore but soon returned towards the harbour where two Red-necked Grebes, Red-breasted Mergansers, Goldeneyes and Harlequin Ducks were diving just outside the harbour entrance, and a number of large eagles were circling overhead. They were both White-tailed and Steller's Sea Eagles, and the crew threw some fish on to the water to entice them to swoop down. However, tomorrow was going to be our 'big eagle day' so once safely back on dry land, with some time to spare before checking in to our hotel, some of the group went for coffee in a nice warm café whilst the rest opted to stroll up the river. There were plenty of birds on the river including Goosanders, Harlequins and Whooper Swans and before too long we located four Brown Dippers busily feeding underwater in their inimitable style.

After checking in to our hotel, we headed out and were soon ensconced at the famous Washi No Yado cafe-cum-hide overlooking a floodlit river. Our goal here was to try to see the world's largest owl, the Blakiston's Fish Owl, that habitually comes to hunt salmon in a floodlit pool in the river. However, tonight our luck was out, so after giving it our best shot for a couple of hours we retreated to our hotel for dinner, slightly disappointed but quite relaxed in the knowledge that we had two more chances at trying to see this special bird.

Day 6

Sunday 2nd February

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

Despite birding until after dark the previous day, we had a 'sunrise cruise' booked to enjoy this morning. The captain steered the boat to an area just north of the harbour and the crew then began to throw frozen fish onto the sea surface. At first this only attracted large numbers of Slaty-backed Gulls but the gull feeding frenzy soon attracted the attention of larger predators. Before long, the sky around the boat filled with both White-tailed and Steller's Sea Eagles swooping down, chasing and interacting with each other allowing the photographers in our group to fill their memory cards with wonderful images. As the light improved, we noticed that the forested hills along the shoreline were dotted with even more eagles. On our way back into the harbour the captain parked up by the outer harbour wall which was at the exact same height as the upper deck of our boat. The crew lobbed

some fish on to the wall and very soon we were treated to the astonishing spectacle of over a hundred eagles of both species sitting almost within touching distance of us as they devoured their prey.

After enjoying that spectacle, we made our way back to our hotel for a welcome breakfast before heading out again to see what else we could find. We were keeping a particular look out for the sea lions we had seen distantly from yesterday's cruise and sure enough we found a herd of six Steller's Sea Lions lounging around in the surf just a little way offshore and they were close enough to get some nice photos. We continued south along the coast and out along the Notsuke peninsula, a huge 17-mile-long spit that sticks out into the Sea of Okhotsk. 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 Islands chain held by Russia but disputed by Japan.

The sea off the peninsula was alive with birds and over the course of half an hour we saw Black Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Harlequin Ducks, Greater Scaups, Goldeneyes, Red-breasted Mergansers and Goosanders, Pelagic Cormorants, Red-throated Divers and Spectacled Guillemots. Gulls were well represented with many Glaucous, Glaucous-winged and Slaty-backed as well as a few Common Gulls. We took a short, invigorating walk out to the lighthouse where singletons of Stejneger's Scoter and Red-necked Grebe drifted past close inshore. As we returned along the spit, we scanned the marshes where many Japanese Sika Deer were grazing. On a couple of occasions, we stopped so that photos could be taken of the deer as well as some very confiding 'Ezo' Red Foxes.

Now it was time to retrace our steps back to Rausu where, after an early dinner, we had another evening booked at the owl watching hide. Unfortunately, our luck was out again this evening – but no need to panic – we had one more night to try at a different venue.

Day 7

Monday 3rd February

Rausu – Shibetsu – Notsuke - Yoroushi

After breakfast at our hotel, we had a final look at the harbour and the river that runs through Rausu. One Brown Dipper was foraging in the river and at the harbour some Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gulls roosting on the trawlers enabled us to contrast and compare these two similar species.

Finally, it was time to say goodbye to Rausu as we heading back south again to Shibetsu where, after a quick look round the harbour there, we headed out on to Notsuke where a similar mix of birds to yesterday were out on the sea. But we were really looking for a little bird we had missed yesterday and, sure enough, after a short while we came across a charming flock of about ten Asian Rosy Finches busily feeding close to the road. Satisfied with having clawed this 'missing' species back, we headed into Shibetsu where we had lunch in a delightful restaurant before heading inland again to our next hotel, the luxurious Ryokan at Yoroushi, set in some forested hills overlooking a beautiful, tumbling river. As we drove inland the rather cold, overcast weather began to deteriorate even further with increasing flurries of snow but nevertheless we made our destination in good time.

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, Japanese Tits, Brown-eared

Bulbuls, Eurasian Nuthatches of the very pale *clara* subspecies, Great Spotted Woodpeckers and the diminutive Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, whilst on the banks of the river Dusky Thrushes searched for earthworms.

This superb hotel really is a great place to chill out and some group members chose to experience one of the hotel's fabulous onsens or relax in their comfortable rooms overlooking the river. Later, in our private banqueting suite the hotel laid on a lavish traditional banquet for us to enjoy. The main event of the evening was to be enjoyed outside though. The river at Yoroushi also hosts a pair of the giant Blakiston's Fish Owls which can be seen fishing in a pool right outside the hotel windows. Luckily for us, the birds didn't disappoint this evening, and we were treated to some point-blank views of this impressive beast. Phew!

Day 8

Tuesday 4th February

Yoroushi – Kushiro

Today was due to be largely a transfer day back to Tokyo, but overnight the snow had continued to fall and in fact some parts of Hokkaido were experiencing historically bad snow storms. Indeed, whilst we were enjoying a relaxed morning having a leisurely breakfast overlooking the river, news came through that all flights from Kushiro Airport had been cancelled for that day, so alternative plans had to be made. Luckily for us, we had the superb help of our local guide Sonoko to help us, and with maximum efficiency she booked us into a hotel in Kushiro for the night as well re-arranging our flight for tomorrow. All we needed now was for the weather to behave!

After breakfast, we had time to watch the feeders before our mid-morning departure. We saw much the same birds as yesterday, plus some shy Hawfinches that seemed rather nervous of the many Eurasian Jays, of distinctive cinnamon-headed race *brandtii*, that were visiting the feeders. Out on the river a Japanese Wagtail and a couple of Brown Dippers were busy foraging.

Soon it was time to bid a fond farewell to our charming hosts as we made our way across the island. Thankfully, the snowstorm had now passed, and we made good progress to our destination whilst keeping our eyes open for any interesting wildlife in the snow-covered landscape we were driving through, which included a pond containing a flock of a dozen Falcated Ducks. After checking in at our comfortable city centre hotel we had some downtime to explore Kushiro before we all re-convened and walked through the snowy streets to a local restaurant for dinner.

Day 9

Wednesday 5th February

Kushiro – Tokyo – Nagano

Normally, we would expect to be waking up in a central Tokyo hotel before taking a gentle stroll around the Imperial Palace gardens ahead of catching our Shinkansen 'bullet train' to take us up into the mountains of central Honshu. The snowstorm on Hokkaido had put paid to that itinerary however and we found ourselves instead having breakfast at the top of our high-rise hotel in downtown Kushiro. At least the weather was now nice and sunny and to our astonishment three White-tailed Eagles cruised past our restaurant at eye level.

We were booked on the afternoon flight back to Tokyo and so, after saying our thankful farewells to Sonoko in the departure lounge, we flew back to Haneda airport where we were met by Yasuko. She took us to Tokyo station

and then re-booked us on to a later train than usual as our re-arranged flight arrived too late to make our original booking. Soon we were boarding our 'Shinkansen' 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. We were finally back on schedule!

Day 10

Thursday 6th February

Nagano – Snow Monkey Park – Tatsumi Park - Zenkoji Temple

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. We met our local guide, Haruna, after breakfast and drove the short distance to Jigokudani. 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 we enjoyed watching the macaques bathing, grooming each other and generally engaging in monkey business. In addition to the primates, we also found some interesting birds feeding along the banks of the river below the pools including three Asian Rosy Finches, six Meadow Buntings and three Japanese Accentors.

After enjoying our encounter with the bathing primates, we strolled back down to the trailhead encountering a few bird flocks on the way whose members included Goldcrest, Coal Tit, Japanese Tit, Willow Tit, Varied Tit, Long-tailed Tit and Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker. We enjoyed lunch at the delightful Enza Cafe near the trail head where they serve the best fish and chips in Japan in the opinion of our leader (although a great selection of delicious Japanese cuisine was also on offer) and then headed back into Nagano.

In Nagano, we stopped at the tiny Tatsumi 'pocket' park where there was a nice selection of wildfowl on the pond including Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard, Eastern Spot-billed Duck and Eurasian Teal, whilst a Great Egret and a Grey Heron stalked the banks. A beautiful male Bull-headed Shrike was hunting amongst the marshy fringes of the pool, and a small reed bed concealed a very shouty Japanese Bush Warbler.

The day was now drawing to a close, so we finished off our time in Nagano with a visit to the site of the Zenkoji Temple which was originally founded in the 7th Century. Whilst some of us went off to examine the venerated temple with Haruna, the rest of the group took a leisurely stroll around the temple gardens in the twilight.

Day 11

Friday 7th 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. After picking up our picnic lunch at the local 7- Eleven we had a quick look around the woodlands and gardens at the back of the store and were delighted to get great scope views of a male Japanese Green Woodpecker, some Varied Tits, two Rustic Buntings, two Meadow Buntings and two Grey-capped Greenfinches.

We walked further up the valley paralleling the river and came across a smart flock of Japanese Grosbeaks that posed briefly for nice scope views before flying off. A walk up the Kose Rindo trail through the forest was quite quiet apart from sightings of Great Spotted Woodpeckers, some more Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers, Eurasian Nuthatches, Brown-eared Bulbuls and a Daurian Redstart. However, with the snow continuing to fall we decided it was time to make our way out of the mountains and back to Tokyo. But first we had to say goodbye to Christian who was staying on for a few days to explore Karuizawa and to look (successfully as it turned out) for that curious mammal, the Japanese Serow. For the rest of us, we were royally entertained on the three-and half-hour drive down to Tokyo by the funny and talented Haruna who serenaded us with some popular tunes on her clarinet!

Apart from Christian, everyone else was continuing with Duncan to visit the island of Kyushu on the post-tour extension. So, after a convivial evening in our Tokyo hotel, we all retired for some sleep before commencing the next part of exploration of wonderful Japan.

Kyushu tour extension

Extension Day 1

Saturday 8th February

Tokyo – Kumamoto (Kyushu) – Yatsushiro - Izumi

So it was that the eight remaining group members caught our mid-morning flight to Kumamoto where we were met by our local interpreter guide, Hitomi, and our new driver Mr Shimomura. Boarding our new bus, we drove the short distance to the Yatsushiro estuary. On the river itself there were flotillas of now familiar duck species whilst overhead several Ospreys were busy fishing. The sea wall and river embankment here is often home to both Common Sandpiper and Blue Rock Thrush and sure enough both species were in residence. The trees lining the river here always hold a roost of Black-crowned Night Herons and this time was no exception, a mixture of both adults and juveniles. A small rocky island in the mouth of the river was a refuge for roosting Grey Herons as usual but this year also had Little Egret, Great Egret and one of our target birds for the day, the Black-faced Spoonbill. It was a treat to connect with this globally threatened species with a world population of only 4,000 individuals, which is at least an improvement on the estimate of only 288 birds thought to exist in 1988.

Out on the mudflats of the estuary careful scanning revealed the presence of some Grey Plovers, Common Greenshanks, Dunlins and Kentish Plovers. The other star bird patrolling the estuarine mud was the tern-like Saunders's Gull which were occasionally dropping down to pick up crustaceans to eat. This is also a globally threatened species which currently number about 14,000 individuals but unlike the spoonbill its population is unfortunately still declining with mudflat reclamation throughout its east Asian range being an ongoing threat. As the tide receded, we counted fifty of these diminutive, rare gulls coming to roost on the mud although unusually one bird was feeding inland on a flooded paddy field.

Inland of the sea wall we scoured the fields, bushes and power lines resulting in sightings of Bull-headed Shrikes, Dusky Thrushes, a Pale Thrush, Grey-capped Greenfinches, Eurasian Skylarks, Daurian Redstarts, Oriental Turtle Doves and some Tree Sparrows but curiously only one Russet Sparrow. A fly-past by a Peregrine caused some brief excitement, but soon we had to leave this productive area to continue our southward journey to our destination for the next three nights, the city of Izumi in southwest Kyushu. After checking in to our hotel we

sampled the delights of a local traditional Japanese restaurant before retiring to prepare for our early start in the morning.

Extension Day 2

Sunday 9th February

Izumi - Arasaki

Izumi sits alongside the Komenotsu River which, as it enters the sea, is surrounded by a series of low-lying marshy polders. These serve as rice paddies in the summer but in winter are a major wintering ground for cranes and other wetland birds. The Arasaki Crane Sanctuary on the polders was our destination this morning. We wanted to be in place at dawn to watch one of the world's great wildlife spectacles from the roof of the crane centre. So we had an early breakfast and then after only twenty minutes' travel on the coach we were climbing up to our vantage point. Luckily for us it was a sunny day, and as dawn broke, the air reverberated with the trumpeting of thousands of cranes as they streamed past us at eye level, arriving from their flooded roosting sites out on the polders, and settled in the fields below us where crane centre staff were putting food out for them. At this time of year their normal feed of grain is supplemented by large blocks of frozen fish to help the birds prepare for their upcoming northward migration to the breeding grounds in northern China and southern Russia. Around 13,000 cranes winter here at Arasaki with by far the most numerous being the Hooded Cranes (c.10,000 birds) and the taller, elegant White-naped Crane (c.3000) with one or two individuals of other species often present. This year the Hooded Cranes numbers at 12,036 were above average, whereas the 948 White-naped Cranes counted were somewhat less than usual. Whatever the exact figures were, it was difficult to know whether to take photos, take videos or just stand and drink the whole amazing noisy spectacle in.

We also couldn't ignore that fact that the free handout was attracting masses of other birds in the form of wildfowl and corvids and in particular the power lines adjacent to the centre were dripping with Rooks of the eastern subspecies *pastinator* like a scene from Hitchcock's "The Birds". Carefully scrutiny of these massed ranks revealed three strikingly pied Daurian Jackdaws hiding amongst them.

Beyond the feeding cranes, large flocks of wildfowl were leaving their roosting pool and dispersing to feed on the polders. They included big flocks of familiar species such as Common Shelduck, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard, Eurasian Teal and Eastern Spot-billed duck as well as numerous Northern Lapwings, but Jonathan was the only one to spot the vagrant Swan Goose leaving the roost with the other wildfowl.

Having had our allotted hour's worth of observations from the centre roof we returned to our bus and went off to explore the East Polder area where more flocks of Hooded and White-naped Cranes were feeding in the fields. Careful searching through these flocks usually reveals a small number of other crane species and so it proved, as we managed to pick out three Common Cranes and three Sandhill Cranes, probably from the small population that breeds in far eastern Arctic Russia. The fields the cranes were feeding in were also being picked over by Common Snipe, Eurasian Skylarks, Buff-bellied Pipits and at least one beautifully marked Red-throated Pipit.

We continued eastwards, checking an isolated pool that held a solitary Greylag Goose, quite a rare bird in Japan, although others had been seen in eastern Kyushu this winter. A quick look at a small estuary nearby revealed a nice flock of Falcated Ducks among the commoner ducks as well as a couple of Dunlin and, just as we were leaving, a Green Sandpiper flew alongside the bus flashing its white rump at us and a Pale Thrush flew across the road.

We headed further east to explore the mouth of the Komenotsu River. This area is a good spot to find Black-tailed Gulls and sure enough, a walk along the embankment to a stony midstream shoal, revealed a constant stream of these attractive gulls in various plumages coming from the sea to bathe in the fresh water. A couple of dozing ducks among the small group of Eurasian Wigeon and Eurasian Teal looked quite interesting, so we waited until they woke up and were delighted to find they were a smart pair of Baikal Teal, a species that is far from guaranteed here in Kyushu in winter.

Happy with that encounter we headed back to the West Polder to the Euchi River where some waders on the mud near the dam attracted our attention. One was a Common Sandpiper but the other, we were pleased to find, was a smart Long-billed Plover, a bird we normally see elsewhere in the stonier stretches of rivers in Kyushu. A walk along the field margins and reedbeds bordering the river yielded Black-faced Spoonbills and smart Bull-headed Shrikes, Daurian Redstarts, Common Reed Buntings and Meadow Buntings and for Jonathan a lucky Chestnut-eared Bunting. The star bird of these reedbeds took a little finding but eventually we had some great views of a small party of Chinese Penduline Tits acrobatically clinging to the red stems searching for food. Ospreys were patrolling up and down the river as usual and one bird was carrying a long, thin prey item which on close examination of photographs proved to be a Garfish. As we walked back to the bus, a flock of finches in a small spinney were found to contain mostly Grey-capped Greenfinches but also some attractive Bramblings.

Finally, after a busy and rewarding day in the field, it was time to head for our hotel before meeting up for another fine meal at the imaginatively named Gorilla Kitchen restaurant. After the meal, Hitomi gave us a short lesson in Origami that resulted in most of us creating some miniature Shogun hats to take home, except for Andy who mysteriously ended up with a banana!

Extension Day 3

Monday 10th February

Izumi – Arasaki – Kogawa dam

We had another early start today as we wanted to be down on the East Polder as dawn was breaking to watch the cranes overhead as they came out of their roost in the flooded polder and headed over to the Arasaki Crane Centre for the morning's feeding. It was a wonderful spectacle and once the cranes began to settle in their feeding areas we looked around for some other birds. Buff-bellied Pipits and Eurasian Skylarks were foraging in the fields, a Zitting Cisticola bounced around briefly and a Common Kestrel, some Black-eared Kites and Common Buzzards were hunting overhead. Also of interest here was an attractive mustelid that played hide and seek in a roadside culvert which photos later revealed to be a Siberian Weasel.

After taking all this in we retraced our steps from yesterday calling in at the Crane Centre to have a last look at the feeding cranes where a flock of Common Starlings were augmenting the White-cheeked Starlings and some Warbling White-eyes in the car park bushes provided some good photo opportunities. Before we left the polders for the last time, we took a quick look at a different area of the Euchi River reedbeds where we had walked the previous day but apart from a couple of elusive Japanese Bush Warblers there was nothing new to add to our list, so we headed up into the hills to look at some different habitats.

Our drive up into the hills took us along the Komenotsu River valley which flows through central Izumi. We stopped in Izumi for a look at a normally productive area of this boulder strewn river and found a nice group of

Falcated Ducks along with Eastern Spot-billed Ducks but most of our interest was taken up by a titanic struggle ongoing between a Great Cormorant and an enormous Eel. Other birds of interest along this stretch of river were Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Bull-headed shrike, Masked Bunting and Olive-backed Pipit.

Further up the river valley we stopped at a couple of road bridges to scan the river up and down stream in the hope of finding Crested Kingfishers but only their smaller cousin, the Common Kingfishers, appeared. Along the river, three species of wagtail were foraging – White, Grey and Japanese - along with Brown Dipper, Daurian Redstart, Red-flanked Bluetail and Blue Rock Thrush. A flock of smart Japanese Grosbeaks in a riverside tree was greatly appreciated but soon it was time to move on up to the forested hills above the river to look at the reservoir created by the Kogawa Dam.

As ever at this time of the year, forest birding was a bit quiet but over the course of our exploration we found more Daurian Redstarts, Long-tailed Tits, Japanese Tits, Varied Tits, Pale Thrushes, Masked Buntings, Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers and a roost of four White-bellied Green Pigeons. Out on the water, we noted Mallard, Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Tufted Duck and Common Pochard, whereas ten gaudy Mandarin Ducks were a little harder to track down in a quiet arm of the reservoir. But what really took our breath away was a huge flock of perhaps four hundred or more Baikal Teal that had suddenly materialized at this site in typically irruptive fashion for this species.

But our excitement this afternoon was not confined to the avian interest in these hills as Dean managed to photograph yet another Siberian Weasel jumping across some stones in the river, whilst later a Japanese Badger scurried out of some roadside vegetation into a culvert and promptly disappeared!

Satisfied with our haul we made our way back to Izumi for our final night on Kyushu together where we also had to bid farewell to our friends James and Nicky who were leaving us to go off exploring Kyushu on their own.

Extension Day 4

Tuesday 11th February

Izumi – Satsuma - Lake Miike – Kagoshima - Tokyo

Our last day on Kyushu was spent taking a winding circuitous route leading ultimately to Kagoshima Airport for our internal flight back to Tokyo. We checked out some road bridges over the Komenotsu River and did another quick circuit of Kogawa dam to see if we could pick up any birds missed yesterday, but we found nothing new apart from a Eurasian Wren and an elusive Yellow-throated Bunting. So we pressed on to our final destination, stopping at Satsuma to stretch our legs along the river and at a supermarket and bakery where we picked up some nice pastries for lunch as well as noting the Asian House Martins hawking over the car park.

Our final birding destination of the day, and indeed the whole tour, was Lake Miike, a crater lake formed by a volcanic eruption over four and a half thousand years ago. The lake is surrounded by mixed deciduous and coniferous forests and after a brief stop to take some scenic shots of the lake from the rim of the caldera, we walked down through the forest to the lake shore.

The forest held a typical assembly of woodland birds and by careful listening and scanning we teased out some of the more interesting inhabitants such as Red-flanked Bluetail, Bull-headed Shrike, Pale Thrush, Daurian Redstart, Yellow-throated Bunting, Red-billed Leiothrix and the usual small flock of tail-pumping Olive-backed Pipits strolling around the lake camp site. Out on the lake itself were good numbers of duck including Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-bills, Northern Shoveler and Eurasian Teal.

Finally, our time was up, and we climbed aboard our bus for the short journey to Kagoshima airport where we said our goodbyes to Hitomi and our driver, Mr Shimomura, and caught our evening flight back to Tokyo.

Extension Day 5

Wednesday 12th February

Tokyo - London

It was another early morning start to catch the flight back from Haneda to Heathrow except for Jonathan who was staying on for a few days. What a great trip! So many highlights to treasure - cranes dancing in the snow, eagles swooping down over the sea, a giant fish-eating owl at point blank range, snow monkeys bathing in their own hot springs, fascinating Japanese culture and food, a wonderfully friendly group that enjoyed each other's company, and so much else besides. That's Wild Japan in Winter!

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek email list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers.

naturetrek.co.uk/e-newsletter-signup

Scan to
sign up!



Social Media

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



[instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays](https://www.instagram.com/naturetrek_wildlife_holidays)



[facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays](https://www.facebook.com/naturetrekwildlifeholidays)



naturetrek.bsky.social



x.com/naturetrektours (formerly Twitter)



Blakiston's Fish Owl by Lindsay King



Meadow Bunting by Gemma Kelleher



Falcated Ducks by Gemma Kelleher



Ural Owl by Gemma Kelleher

Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

I = Introduced, E = Endemic, N = Near endemic		January - February 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mute Swan - I	<i>Cygnus olor</i>								1		
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		100		6	6					
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	6								✓	
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓								✓	
Falcated Duck	<i>Mareca falcata</i>							12			
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	✓								✓	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	15	✓					✓	
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>									✓	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓								✓	
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	✓	✓								
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	1			20	✓	✓			✓	
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	200			✓	✓	✓	✓			
Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓			
Stejneger's Scoter	<i>Melanitta stejnegeri</i>					✓					
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>					✓	✓				
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>					✓	✓				
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	2	20		10	✓	✓				
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>		2	3	1	✓	✓				
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				20	✓	✓	✓			
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓								✓	
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	20								1	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>									1	
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓								✓	✓
White-naped Crane	<i>Antigone vipio</i>		1								
Red-crowned Crane	<i>Grus japonensis</i>		300	150			1				
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓		1		✓					

I = Introduced, E = Endemic, N = Near endemic		January - February 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>				2	1					
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	✓			1	✓	✓				
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1									
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Glaucous-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Vega Gull	<i>Larus vegae</i>	3									
Slaty-backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Spectacled Guillemot	<i>Cepphus carbo</i>					✓	✓				
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>					✓	✓				
Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Urile pelagicus</i>				✓	✓	✓				
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1,000+								2	1
Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	2									
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	50								1	1
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>									1	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓		1							
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1									
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>								1	1	
Black-eared Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	1		1	2	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Steller's Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i>		4	2	✓	✓	✓				
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>		2	1	✓	✓	✓		3		
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>	1		2		✓	✓	1		1	1
Blakiston's Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa blakistoni</i>						1				
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>			1							
Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus kizuki</i>						✓	✓		✓	✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		2		1		✓	✓			2
White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i>			1							
Japanese Green Woodpecker - E	<i>Picus awokera</i>										1
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1									
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1									

I = Introduced, E = Endemic, N = Near endemic		January - February 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>									3	
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>							✓			1
Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyanus</i>	20									
Carion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		2								
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>									1	
Varied Tit	<i>Sittiparus varius</i>									1	✓
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>		1	2			✓	✓			
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>									2	
Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Japanese Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>									1	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		6							✓	
Warbling White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>	30									
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>									1	
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>										
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>						✓	✓			✓
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>	✓								✓	✓
Brown-headed Thrush	<i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	3									
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus eunomus</i>			20		2	2	1			
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	1									1
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>			1	4		1	2			
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Japanese Accentor - N	<i>Prunella rubida</i>									3	
Black-backed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba lugens</i>	✓								✓	✓
Japanese Wagtail - N	<i>Motacilla grandis</i>	1		2				2			
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>							2			
Japanese Grosbeak	<i>Eophona personata</i>										4
Asian Rosy Finch	<i>Leucosticte arctoa</i>						10			3	
Grey-capped Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>	2									2

I = Introduced, E = Endemic, N = Near endemic		January - February 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>									6	2
Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>										2

Mammals

		January – February 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Japanese Macaque - E	<i>Macaca fuscata</i>									100+	
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>							1			
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>		3	3	3	✓	✓	✓		6	
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		5			✓	✓				
Steller's Sea Lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>				6	1	6				
American Mink - I	<i>Mustela vison</i>						1				

Kyushu Extension

Birds

I = Introduced, N = Near endemic		February 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>		1		
Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>		1		
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>			10	
Baikal Teal	<i>Sibirionetta formosa</i>		2	400+	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	✓	✓		
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓	✓		
Falcated Duck	<i>Mareca falcata</i>		15	6	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

I = Introduced, N = Near endemic		February 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>			20	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		1	1	
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓		
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-bellied Green Pigeon	<i>Treron sieboldii</i>			4	2
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandhill Crane	<i>Antigone canadensis</i>		3		
White-naped Crane	<i>Antigone vipio</i>		✓		
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>		3		
Hooded Crane	<i>Grus monacha</i>		✓		
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>		✓	✓	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>		✓	✓	
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓			
Long-billed Plover	<i>Charadrius placidus</i>		1		
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	✓			
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	✓	✓		
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		✓		
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		1	1	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	10		1	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	2			
Saunders's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus saundersi</i>	50			
Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>		20		
Vega Gull	<i>Larus vegae</i>	✓	✓		
Slaty-backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>		✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>		1		
Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	✓	✓	1	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	✓		1	

I = Introduced, N = Near endemic		February 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓	1	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Black-eared Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>	1		1	1
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	1	6	2
Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus kizuki</i>			2	H
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			1	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1			
Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>	✓	2	6	1
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			2	H
Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus dauuricus</i>		3		
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>		✓	✓	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				1
Varied Tit	<i>Sittiparus varius</i>	1		4	4
Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>			✓	✓
Chinese Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz consobrinus</i>		6		
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asian House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>				3
Japanese Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>			2	1
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1		1	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			✓	✓
Warbling White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-billed Leiothrix - I	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>				✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>			h	1
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>				✓
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>		✓	✓	

I = Introduced, N = Near endemic		February 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>			10	
Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus eunomus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>			2	✓
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	1		1	
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>			2	1
Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer cinnamomeus</i>	✓			
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black-backed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba lugens</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japanese Wagtail - N	<i>Motacilla grandis</i>			✓	✓
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>			1	4
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>		1		
Buff-bellied Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>		✓	✓	
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>		✓		
Japanese Grosbeak	<i>Eophona personata</i>			14	1
Grey-capped Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Masked Bunting	<i>Emberiza personata</i>			✓	✓
Chestnut-eared Bunting	<i>Emberiza fucata</i>		1	1	
Yellow-throated Bunting	<i>Emberiza elegans</i>				2
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓	✓	✓	

Mammals

		February 2025			
Common name	Scientific name	8	9	10	11
Siberian Weasel	<i>Mustela sibirica</i>		1	1	
Japanese Badger	<i>Meles anakuma</i>			1	