

Japan's Summer Wildlife

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st June – 5th July 2026



Blue and White Flycatcher



Chestnut-eared Bunting



Japanese Serow



Asiatic Black Bear

Tour report by Barrie Cooper



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Summary

This was an excellent inaugural tour with great wildlife, spectacular scenery and delicious food. We saw some elusive mammals, including Japanese Serow, Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel and Sea Otter. One special highlight was an Asian Black Bear feeding for over an hour on the slopes of a volcano, while we watched from a safe vantage point. Boat trips enabled us to get good views of Orcas, a Dall's Porpoise, Pacific White-sided Dolphins and some birds with restricted breeding ranges, such as Red-faced Cormorant and Spectacled Guillemot. One boat trip even gave us close views of a Fin Whale, the second-largest animal on the planet, and a rare visitor to Hokkaido. Iconic Red-crowned Cranes and White-tailed Eagles were seen on multiple days. Other bird highlights included several species of warblers with restricted breeding ranges, such as Middendorf's Grasshopper Warbler, plus Siberian Rubythroat, and an Oriental Pratincole that put in a hyperactive ten-minute fly around before heading off towards the sea. We also experienced the sight and sound of the extraordinary display of Latham's Snipe, a bird which spends its winter in Australia. It wasn't just the wildlife that made this tour special. We stayed in some fine hotels and enjoyed some excellent meals, which received regular positive comments from group members. Plus, of course, there's Japan itself: it is a safe, clean and fascinating country, which it is always a pleasure to visit.

Day 1

Sunday 21st June

The overnight BA flight from Heathrow to Tokyo departed on time, leaving England in a heatwave.

Day 2

Monday 22nd June

The flight touched down at Haneda Airport one hour ahead of schedule, giving us plenty of time to go through immigration and switch terminals. Everyone eventually met up at Terminal 2 in preparation for an internal flight to Memanbetsu, on the island of Hokkaido. The flight was delayed by twenty-five minutes, but we eventually arrived in cool, cloudy weather.

Our luggage didn't take long to appear, and we soon met Yuki, our local guide. It was then less than thirty minutes to our first destination: Lake Tofutsu. Our first Black(-eared) Kites were the first of many seen during the trip. The road brought us to our first views of the Sea of Okhotsk, where we followed the coast road until we reached the visitor centre of Lake Tofutsu, an internationally important wetland. Slaty-backed Gulls and Grey Herons were immediately obvious, and a male Amur Stonechat was spotted posing in various places. A Common Cuckoo was calling, but it was the sight of three Red-crowned Cranes at the edge of the reeds on the far side of the lake which got us particularly excited. The cranes remained visible throughout the time we were there, but we soon had to move on and return to the coastal road.

Our next destination was a car park where there were a couple of boardwalks and an information centre with toilets and a retail area. Almost as soon as we started one of the boardwalks, a male Bull-headed Shrike was spotted at the top of a bush in the marsh. After we had watched it for a few minutes, it was joined by a female, both of them posing next to each other. A male Reed Bunting was close by, but it was a splendid male Chestnut-eared Bunting that set the pulses racing. The bird posed nicely for a few minutes, while nearby a female was spotted carrying food. The other boardwalk gave us close views of plants such as colourful Japanese Rose, Arctic Iris, Day

Lily and Daurian Lily. We were about to board the bus when a Latham's Snipe was spotted doing its impressive display, performing undulating and vocal acrobatics before darting down to the top of a bush, allowing views through the scope.

We continued our journey to Utoro, seeing a total of four White-tailed Eagles either flying or perched in prominent locations. Asian House Martin and Russet Sparrow were two of the additional species seen during the journey. After checking into our rooms, some of the group took the short walk past Godzilla Rock to Cape Utoro, where we enjoyed more wonderful experiences. From certain angles, the rock formation does look similar to Godzilla! At least three hundred Pacific Swifts were darting around the cliffs, sometimes in such large and tight numbers that they resembled clouds of mosquitoes: it was quite a sight. A colourful male Eastern Blue Rock Thrush then put in a good performance, with another seen briefly further down the road. Spectacled Guillemots and Japanese Cormorants were flying over the sea. A rather mangy-looking Red Fox came ambling through the tunnel and passed just five metres away from us, before continuing on its way. It was a good end to our first full day in Japan. The day was completed with an excellent dinner at the hotel, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. The robots collecting dirty crockery and cutlery were added to the collection of photos taken today!

Day 3

Tuesday 23rd June

The morning was cool and cloudy, becoming sunny and warmer in the afternoon, probably with a maximum temperature of around 14°. Liam (from Melbourne) was our local guide today, and he met us at the hotel after an excellent breakfast. It was a short walk to the office of the company that operated this morning's scheduled boat trip. However, the boat trip was cancelled due to the sea conditions, which was disappointing. So we rearranged the day and did the scheduled afternoon walk in the morning. This involved a short drive up to the Shiretoko National Park Nature Centre, where we took the two-kilometre walk to the Furepe waterfall. We were soon hearing Japanese Bush Warblers, but not seeing them in the thick Dwarf Bamboo. An Oriental Cuckoo was giving its loud call, but we were in the forest and it remained out of sight. However, further along the trail we arrived at an open area where we could see the Oriental Cuckoo perched on a dead branch at the top of a tree. From the same spot, and at the top of another tree, a White-bellied Green Pigeon and a Brown-headed Thrush were within a metre of each other. A female Sika Deer with her fawn were also here, and they posed very nicely for the photographers, making it a very productive part of the walk.

We then had the pleasure of watching the impressive display of two Latham's Snipes. The birds flew overhead, emitting their strange calls, until one of them eventually dived down to pose on a rock on a small hillock. Remarkably, it remained there for at least thirty minutes, emitting its distinctive sounds and encouraging the photographers to use a significant portion of their memory cards in an attempt to get a good photo of this charismatic wader.

Olive-backed Pipits had been singing from the tops of trees, and a couple showed particularly well. A few Meadow Buntings were seen, singing on top of various tall plants. When we reached the Furepe Falls, we were treated to the sight of a couple of Eastern Blue Rock Thrushes posing on the cliffs. On our way back, we finally had good views of a very obliging Japanese Bush Warbler singing in the open, which then commenced displaying. This was a very satisfying sighting of a species that can sometimes be elusive.

Lunch was taken at the Nature Centre, where an Eastern Buzzard gave a brief fly past. After lunch, we drove down to Utoro harbour, where we were finally able to board a vessel for our boat trip. As the boat travelled along the Shiretoko peninsula, we managed to see birds such as Spectacled Guillemot, Japanese Cormorant, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Slaty-backed and Black-tailed Gulls. A couple of Short-tailed Shearwaters flew past the boat but, unfortunately, we didn't see any Brown Bears, which was the main target. On the way back, we had the excitement of an adult White-tailed Eagle being mobbed by a pair of Peregrines, providing an interesting size comparison. Following our return to the hotel, some of the group went for a walk along the road that hugged the nearby coast. A Meadow Bunting repeatedly sang from a roadside wire and provided everyone with excellent views, displaying with its peach-coloured breast. Two Oriental Greenfinches also briefly appeared along the same wire.

The highlight of the walk was a White-tailed Eagle being mobbed by crows and then by gulls, before landing on a cliff in among a breeding colony of Slaty-backed Gulls. After a couple of minutes on the cliff, it took off and flew over our hotel, before landing in a tree overlooking the road, just thirty metres ahead of us. This magnificent bird posed for several minutes as it looked out over its domain. The photographers were very happy: when it flew off, it was our cue to make our way back to the hotel. Another excellent dinner was enjoyed by everyone with a variety of dishes to suit all tastes.

Day 4

Wednesday 24th June

The sun was shining and the sea appeared calm when we looked out of our hotel windows, and some of the group also saw an Eastern Blue Rock Thrush from theirs. Fortunately, the sunshine remained all day, and temperatures climbed to approximately 18°. It was a perfect day for a boat trip, and that's what we did after breakfast. Pacific Swifts soared over us as we left the harbour for a cruise along the Shiretoko Peninsular. We were soon seeing plenty of Spectacled Guillemots, their red feet particularly noticeable when they flew. We had close views of some waterfalls, where water from nearby mountains emerged from fissures in the cliffs, allowing the water to cascade down into the sea below. We saw some good examples of cliff erosion by pack ice, with large cavities carved out of the rock. A few Sika Deer were seen feeding near beaches, but we again found no bears.

After an hour of cruising, we came across a pod of Pacific White-sided Dolphins, which had a Dall's Porpoise accompanying them. The dolphins performed in their usual active way, but after a few minutes they were gone. On the way back, we went close to a Sooty Shearwater, which just swam away from the boat rather than flying, probably due to the lack of wind. After we left the boat and started walking back to the hotel, a Black Kite and a couple of Tree Sparrows were seen.

It was a quick turnaround, and lunch was eaten in the vehicle while we drove to the Shiretoko Goko Lakes. The warmer, sunny weather had brought out our first butterflies, and a Japanese Labyrinth conveniently posed on the side of the gift shop, enabling us to confirm its identification. After an introductory film about Brown Bears and safety protocol, we set off with local guide Ayumi on a three-hour walk to the five lakes. We hadn't walked far before seeing an example of bear activity. A Brown Bear had trampled an area of Asian Skunk Cabbage as it searched for the bulbs and rhizomes of this nutritious plant. Unfortunately, we didn't see a bear, although a group which came through two hours later did see one in that area. A few hundred metres after that site, we saw more evidence of bears, in the form of claw marks on a couple of trees.

A Japanese Thrush was singing in the forest on the other side of the first lake, which had a female Mallard and ducklings. A remarkable Ghost Plant was seen here, with just one specimen on the forest floor. This is a parasitic plant which gets its nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi connected to tree roots. The second lake had two male and one female Mandarin Ducks, with the “bonus” of an Asian Giant Hornet taking an interest in the tour leader. Further on, we came across at least three singing Brown-headed Thrushes, with one giving brief fly-over views. A couple of singing Masked Buntings were good to see, but they were surpassed by a Ural Owl perched in a tree just twenty metres from the trail. Decent views were had before it flew off. While we were on the final section of boardwalk, an Oriental Greenfinch and a Meadow Bunting carrying food to its nest were seen, while Japanese Bush Warblers sang in the Dwarf Bamboo.

On the way back to the hotel, we made a slight diversion to drive alongside a river, and it was quite productive. A Brown Dipper was a new bird for the trip, perching on rocks in the river. Along the road, several Oriental Turtle Doves were feeding and showing very well, and a Grey Wagtail was seen on the river as we made our return journey. At the end of another good day, we enjoyed another excellent meal.



Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler



Narcissus Flycatcher



Red-crowned Crane



Sea Otters

Day 5

Thursday 25th June

It was warm, sunny and breezy all day, reaching approximately 22°C. We had an earlier start this morning, as we were going out on a walk through the forest near the Shiretoko Nature Centre. An Oriental Cuckoo was calling when we arrived at the centre. Soon after we entered the forest, we heard a singing Narcissus Flycatcher, and

eventually most of the group got a good but brief view. We heard a few during the walk, but most birds in the forest were tricky to see. An interesting, but lonely, orchid was found on the forest floor, and garnered a lot of interest. It was later identified as *Calanthe tricarinata*. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard, and eventually we saw two of the local subspecies. A few Eastern Crowned Warblers were singing high up in the leafy trees, but only a brief view was gained of one individual. A Hawfinch feeding on caterpillars at the top of an Oak tree enabled the photographers to get some images. As we reached the end of the path at the cliff edge, overlooking the Sea of Okhotsk, several Pacific Swifts were flying at eye level. An Olive-backed Pipit flew over an open area, and a Latham's Snipe was displaying. As we returned to the road, a very obliging Japanese Bush Warbler posed nicely, singing away. Two Masked Buntings also showed well in a tree next to the road, looking very smart.

We were due to have a boat trip from Rausu during the afternoon; however, it was cancelled due to the state of the sea. This resulted in a quick change of plan, so it was agreed that we would drive over to Rausu and do some seawatching, in the hope of finding a whale or two. It's always good when a plan works, and after just a few minutes at a vantage point on a hill above Rausu, five Orcas were spotted. Further observation resulted in at least ten being seen, and there were probably more. We watched them race across the sea, sometimes in formations of five, all swimming and porpoising together. It was great to see, and we watched the Orcas for approximately thirty minutes in the warm sunshine.

Meanwhile, close to our watchpoint, a pair of Amur Stonechats were carrying food to their nest. A flock of fifty-three Short-tailed Shearwaters was spotted flying low and heading north over the sea. We decided to leave the viewpoint and drive as far as we could along the eastern side of the Shiretoko peninsular, passing two male Sika Deer as we went. Before we got out of our vehicle, an immature White-tailed Eagle flew past and was mobbed by a couple of Large-billed Crows. A walk down the coastal track wasn't productive in terms of our intended target, although a passage of Rhinoceros Auklets was notable. Having returned to the vehicle, we drove along the coastal road back to Rausu and spotted at least five Orcas active offshore. The drive back to Utoro was uneventful, apart from an attractive Red Fox walking up the road and past the vehicle. After an earlier dinner, we went out for a night drive. A few Red Foxes and plenty of Sika Deer were the only mammals seen, while Venus, Jupiter and the red giant star Antares were seen in a sky illuminated by a bright moon.

Day 6

Friday 26th June

The weather was bright and breezy in Utoro, but foggy when we arrived in Rausu. Despite the conditions, the sea was calm enough for us to go on a boat trip, which replaced the one cancelled the day before. A White-tailed Eagle was on the harbour wall as we sailed into the sea fog. Despite visibility being less than one hundred metres in places, we were soon seeing Rhinoceros Auklets, Spectacled Guillemots and Short-tailed Shearwaters. The majority of the Short-tailed Shearwater population breed off Tasmania, and then migrate in a clockwise circuit of the Pacific: this is a good time to find them in Japan. They were a regular sight throughout the boat trip. It was rather surprising to see two Pacific Swifts flying over the boat, at least two miles off the coast. After cruising through the fog for around one hour, we finally found our main target: Orcas. Fortunately, the visibility was much better now, and we had prolonged, excellent views of at least six Orcas swimming relatively close to the boat. There was a lot of excitement among the passengers, as is always the case with this entertaining species. With a satisfied boat-load of people, we made our way back to Rausu, where a pair of White-tailed Eagles were now on the harbour wall, the size difference between the sexes being very noticeable.

Back in Rausu, we grabbed some lunch from a convenience store, and heard Oriental Cuckoo and Japanese Bush Warbler. Tree Sparrow, White Wagtail, Black-tailed and Slaty-backed Gulls where some of the birds around the town. Our scheduled boat trip went ahead, even though it was still foggy. After around thirty minutes of travel, we finally got much clearer conditions, and could even see Kunashiri Island, which was formerly Japanese but is now claimed and occupied by Russia. The clearer conditions were much appreciated when we found a Fin Whale. Tracking the second-largest animal on the planet enabled us to get decent views of this magnificent animal. Until recently, there was only a two percent chance of seeing this species on these trips, but one or two Fin Whales had been seen occasionally during the last month, and we got lucky. This area also had a few Blue Fulmars flying close to the boat, and a couple of Red-necked Phalaropes were spotted, looking tiny among much bigger company. After another satisfying boat trip, we returned to Rausu before boarding our bus to continue to Shibetsu, where we would be staying for a couple of nights.

After dropping our luggage off at the hotel, we quickly drove the short distance to the Notsuke Peninsula, where it was misty when we arrived, but foggy when we left. A good display of Siberian Irises carpeted an area near the road, and we were soon seeing birds such as Oriental Greenfinch. Even more exciting were several beautiful Long-tailed Rosefinches, which occasionally posed long enough for a photograph. By contrast in size, a few White-tailed Eagles were also around. A couple of singing Black-browed Reed Warblers at the top of reeds and rosebushes were our first of the trip. In among the reeds in one section, a Great Egret was feeding, with Mallards in close attendance. Common Cuckoo, Reed Bunting and Amur Stonechat were other birds seen along this productive section. Unfortunately, time and the weather forced us to return down the peninsula and make the short journey back to the hotel. A traditional Japanese dinner was enjoyed at the hotel, after a very good day, despite the weather.

Day 7

Saturday 27th June

It was a cool, rainy start to the day. We were due to take a boat trip to look for seals, but unfortunately it was cancelled due to poor visibility. We therefore drove up the Notsuke peninsula, and enjoyed an excellent morning. We were soon seeing regulars such as White-tailed Eagle, Sika Deer and Red Fox. Three Red-crowned Cranes in a field just a couple of kilometres from our hotel in Shibetsu were good to see. As we began our drive up the peninsular, we encountered our first Latham's Snipe of the day: we were to see several during the morning. We seemed to be finding Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers everywhere in the vegetation between the road and marsh, with two birds displaying to each other at one stage. The Middendorff's outnumbered the Black-browed Reed Warblers, which also showed well. A few Masked Buntings and Oriental Greenfinches added some contrast to the many Amur Stonechats. Four Chestnut-cheeked Starlings flew off before everyone got a good view, but some Eurasian Skylarks were much more obliging.

Displaying Latham's Snipes were a big highlight: they gave us a continuous air show, their aerial acrobatics combined with amazing vocal sounds and the low resonance from their tail feathers. The Japanese call them "thunder birds", and it's easy to understand why. We walked past a small lake that had Greater Scaup, Tufted Duck, Little Grebe and Mallard. On our return, we were delighted to find a male Black Scoter and a male Garganey. We then had amazing luck when we saw an Oriental Pratincole flying in off the sea and doing several circuits over the lake. Oriental Pratincole is a rare bird on Hokkaido, and doesn't breed here, so we had incredibly good fortune to be in the right place at the right time to see this remarkable bird. Elsewhere, two members of the group saw a Burnt-spot Hummingbird Hawk-moth (*Macroglossum pyrrhosiata*). Unfortunately, it was now time to leave the excellent Notsuke peninsula, and to head inland for lunch.

A pleasant lunch was taken at a restaurant near a railway station. We then drove to the Nature Centre at Kawayu Forest, in the Akan-Mashu National Park. After having a look at the displays, we went for a walk through the Sakhalin Spruce forest. Unfortunately, the forest was quiet, apart from the occasional call and the distinctive flight call of a Black Woodpecker. The trail transitioned from Spruce forest to mixed, including Japanese Oak, before shifting again into Silver Birch, and then Dwarf Japanese Stone Pine. Labrador Tea appeared to be everywhere in the more open habitat, while Hakusan Rhododendron, Bunchberry and Reindeer Lichen were in the forest. Eventually, the trail brought us to the foot of Mount Io, where we walked up to the sulphur fumaroles and bubbling springs of geothermally-heated water. Light rain had been falling for half an hour, and it was now time to return to the hotel in Shibetsu. The journey back was brightened up by some close views of Red-crowned Cranes, and a Spot-billed Duck standing in the road.

Day 8

Sunday 28th June

An Oriental Turtle Dove and a pair of copulating Oriental Greenfinches were on a cable opposite the hotel as we waited to board our bus. Soon after we set off, we saw a White-tailed Eagle on the coastal defence sea wall, in the same location as yesterday. Two Brown-eared Bulbuls, a Bull-headed Shrike and approximately thirty Greater Scaups were seen as we drove along the coastal road. Our destination this morning was Ochiishi, for another boat trip. Fortunately, the sky was almost cloudless, and visibility was excellent throughout the two-hour trip. A White-tailed Eagle flew over the harbour as we exited it and chugged into the Pacific Ocean. We headed to some small islands, which host various birds during the breeding season. At least three White-tailed Eagles were patrolling the islands, no doubt bringing a touch of tension to the occupants below. Spectacled Guillemots and Japanese Cormorants were commuting between their feeding grounds and their nests, and at least a dozen Harbour Seals were loafing on the rocks at the base of the cliffs. The tops of two smaller islands were covered with at least two hundred Japanese Cormorant nests.

However, the prize bird on these cliffs is Red-faced Cormorant, which is at the southern edge of its breeding range here. We managed to see six of them, which were conveniently nesting lower down the cliffs, away from the throng above them. We managed to get decent views of this rare bird, despite the movement of the boat. Having seen one of our targets, we moved a short distance to another part of the islands, and found our next: eight Sea Otters were showing well near to one of the islands. They were four mothers, each with a young one. We had been watching them for at least twenty minutes when another six appeared, making fourteen in total, which was a good number for here. Sea Otters had been hunted to local extinction in Japan by the early twentieth century, but after hunting was banned, in the late 1990s some moved south from the Kuril Islands to start a new breeding colony in eastern Hokkaido. The population of Sea Otters in Japan is slowly increasing, which is most encouraging. On the way back to the harbour, a few Rhinoceros Auklets were seen, either on the sea or flying past at speed. After a successful boat trip, we boarded the bus and headed to a convenience store to pick up some lunch.

The afternoon was spent at Lake Furen, which is an important wetland site in this part of eastern Hokkaido. Our first walk was along a boardwalk at Shunkunitai Wild Bird Sanctuary, where a Red-crowned Crane was immediately spotted. The first part of the boardwalk followed the edge of the intertidal wetland, before crossing the water and eventually reaching a forest area with Sakhalin Spruce and Fir. Unfortunately, the trail did not go far into the forest, so we didn't see as much as we would have liked, apart from a very obliging Japanese Bush Warbler. Five Sika Deer swimming across the lake provided an interesting sideshow.

After completing the walk, we drove a short distance to a visitor centre overlooking Lake Furen, and took a walk along the forest trail. Two Sakhalin Grasshopper Warblers were singing quite noisily, but they remained hidden, which is typical for this notoriously skulking species. Two of the group had brief views of a Siberian Chipmunk before it disappeared in the forest. Eastern Crowned Warbler and White-bellied Green Pigeon were here, and a Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen with a juicy green caterpillar. After we completed the walk, it was then a one-hour drive to our hotel in Hamanaka. After a short break, we had an excellent tempura and sushi meal in a local restaurant.

Day 9

Monday 29th June

After a drizzly start, the weather improved to give us a fine, but cool day. Cape Kiritappu was our first destination, and fortunately it wasn't draped in fog, so we had good views of a variety of wildlife. Sea Otters were our main target, and we saw a total of seven. We had a mother suckling its kit, and another mother constantly harassed by its vocal young one swimming alongside. Wherever we went along that stretch of the Cape, we could hear that noisy young Sea Otters constantly calling: it was quite entertaining. Middendorf's Grasshopper Warblers showed well, as did a few Pelagic Cormorants. Latham's Snipe displayed, but the real avian prize was a Siberian Rubythroat singing on a wire, before moving to a nearby fence. This magnificent bird showed its ruby-red throat to immaculate perfection, and was a joy to see. On the way to the Biwase boardwalk, we saw two Red-crowned Cranes near a river, and we later saw two more from the boardwalk. Other birds included displaying Eurasian Skylark and Latham's Snipe, plus Reed Bunting and Black(-eared) Kite.

It was a short drive to the impressive visitor centre, where we commenced another boardwalk stroll. Black-browed Reed Warblers and Japanese Bush Warblers showed well, as did the local mosquitoes! We then had the privilege of seeing both Eurasian and Oriental Cuckoos calling from the tops of trees: they made quite a double act. As we approached the end of the boardwalk, we had the surprise of a Hawfinch giving brief, but good views, in a dead tree. An Asian Brown Flycatcher later appeared in the same tree. A Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler gave its loud song hidden in dense foliage, less than ten metres away from us. Some of the group then had the good fortune to have a brief glimpse of this large warbler as it flew over the path, before disappearing into more thick foliage. A male Masked Bunting was more obliging, and gave good views before we returned to the visitor centre.

It was another short drive to a restaurant overlooking Kiritappu, where we had an excellent lunch. The drive towards Kushiro Marshes was enlivened by more Red-necked Cranes, a Bull-headed Shrike, Chestnut-cheeked Starlings and Brown-eared Bulbuls. We enjoyed a pleasant few minutes at Otowa Bridge. There weren't any Red-crowned Cranes on the river, but there were still birds to see. A pair of Grey Wagtails was seen, both birds carrying food, and we added female Long-tailed Rosefinch, Spot-billed Duck and Oriental Turtle Dove too.

A short distance further on, we stopped for a few minutes to photograph an adult Red-crowned Crane relatively close to the road. After another short drive, we were at Onnenai Visitor Centre at the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park. Along the boardwalk here we couldn't help noticing the large number of toxic caterpillars of the Spongy Moth, munching through Alder leaves and almost everything else. Eurasian Cuckoos showed well: perhaps they were one of the few birds to eat those caterpillars. Singing Masked and Reed Buntings showed well along the boardwalk, although Eastern Crowned and Sakhalin Leaf Warblers were rather less obliging. A small patch of a sundew species was interesting, as were a few singing Black-browed Reed Warblers. A thirty-minute journey to our hotel in Kushiro was followed by an excellent meal at a local restaurant.

Day 10

Tuesday 30th June

A thirty-minute journey from our hotel to Kushiro Airport began our day. The flight to Tokyo arrived at the scheduled time, and we then took a couple of trains from Haneda to Tokyo. After picking up some lunch provisions, we took the *shinkansen* to Sakudaira, where we were to stay for four nights. Azure-winged Magpies were active in trees near the station as we made the short walk to our hotel. After a break, our coach took us to the Picchio Visitor Centre, in Karuizawa's Wild Bird Park. Barn Swallows and White-cheeked Starlings were seen during the drive. Once at the centre, we met up with our local guide Odin, who gave an interesting presentation about the Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel. Prior to the talk, some members of the group saw a Tiger Keelback snake.

As sunset approached, we took a short walk to an area where three Flying Squirrel nestboxes were attached to trees. Each nestbox had a camera inside, which made it easy to find an occupied one. Once Odin had connected his computer to the cable from the camera, we were able to view the hidden world inside the nestbox. To our delight, there were two squirrels inside one of the boxes. Once the light faded the squirrels became more active, and began grooming in preparation for their night-time foray. Eventually, the first squirrel poked its face out of the hole to survey the outside situation. After a minute or so, it dropped down inside the box to do some more grooming. After a few more visits to the nestbox hole, the first Flying Squirrel left the nestbox and immediately climbed the tree. After less than a minute, it glided over the clearing to another tree, before gliding to another. The other squirrel soon left the nestbox, climbed up the tree, and glided to the same tree as the first one. They were soon gone into the dark forest, and that was the end of our entertainment. We had been able to view the climbing and gliding using a red beam from a torch: the red light does not impact the squirrels. Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel had been a major target species for the trip, and it had been excellent to see two animals very well.

Day 11

Wednesday 1st July

Today was a calm, cloudy day, with a temperature of approximately 20°C, which made for perfect conditions for a walk around the forest of the Karuizawa Wild Bird Sanctuary. Prior to boarding the bus at the hotel, we saw a selection of birds, including Azure-winged Magpie, House Swift, Oriental Turtle Dove and Oriental Greenfinch. A couple of Tiger Keelback snakes showed well at the visitor centre, and Spot-billed Duck, Grey Wagtail and Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker were also around.

The walk along the road along the river produced a variety of birds including Eurasian Nuthatch, Meadow Bunting, Willow and Cinereous Tits, and Ashy Minivets flying over and calling. A singing Blue-and-white Flycatcher posed quite conveniently for everyone to get good views. A Far Eastern Skink provided a contrast, before a couple of Japanese Grosbeaks flew over a few times. Narcissus Flycatchers had been quite vocal but elusive, until we finally found one that repeatedly perched in visible positions, allowing us fully to appreciate its beauty. On the walk back to the centre, Chinese Hwamei and Japanese Bush Warbler were singing, and a young stick insect was found on a plant next to the path.

A short drive took us to a convenience store to pick up some lunch, and we had a look into the edge of the forest behind it. A Lesser Cuckoo was vocal but out of sight, but otherwise it was quiet, apart from the ubiquitous Brown-eared Bulbuls.

After lunch, another short drive took us to a private area of forest. Oriental Cuckoo was heard as soon as we entered the forest, and a few Sika Deer grazed on the lush vegetation. Two female Copper Pheasants flew off ahead of us, but sadly no male was seen. White-bellied Pigeons gave their 'Clangers' calls, and a couple of Eurasian Wrens were our first of the trip. A Japanese Thrush sang loudly but remained hidden, but a male Narcissus Flycatcher did show well. One of the highlights in this forest was the sight of a singing Yellow Bunting, and we soon saw a few more individuals of this declining species. As we walked back to the vehicle, a singing Blue-and-white Flycatcher showed well on an exposed branch, and a group of Warbling White-eyes passed by.

Our next destination was Nagakura Shrine and its park. One of the first birds we saw was a male Daurian Redstart, taking food to its nest in a ventilation cover on the side of the building. We had some very good views of this attractive bird, and an equally smart Meadow Bunting. Asian House Martins and Barn Swallows flew over the river alongside the park. A fine evening meal was enjoyed in the hotel restaurant.

Day 12

Thursday 2nd July

The accurate weather forecast was for rain last night and this morning, so the plan for today was changed. We set off to explore the agricultural fields in the Hocchi area. On arrival, we immediately found a new bird for the trip: an Oriental Reed Warbler was giving its loud song from the top of a bush. This species looks and sounds similar to Europe's Great Reed Warbler, and they were a constant soundtrack while we toured the area. A couple of Bull-headed Shrikes showed well, before we soon found our second new bird. Green Pheasant is Japan's national bird, and three males and a female were seen during our visit. Several male Chestnut-eared Buntings were singing in prominent positions and looking very smart in their breeding plumage. Black-browed Reed Warblers were making the most of the *Phragmites* reeds growing in abandoned fields, as were a few Masked Buntings. Eurasian Skylarks took advantage of the open areas, while a Common Kingfisher came whizzing past. Azure-winged Magpies, Oriental Greenfinches and a couple of Chestnut-cheeked Starlings were seen on roadside powerlines.

A drive towards Saku took us through another agricultural area, where we had very good views of an Eastern Buzzard on the top of roadside post. The rain had stopped by now, and the sky was brightening up. Lunch was picked up at a convenience store, and eaten at Sakura Reservoir. There was a breeding colony of Great Cormorants and nearby we found a heronry, with breeding Grey Herons, Great Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons. Great Crested Grebes were nesting, and a few Coots were swimming around. The river had Asian House Martins flying over and Oriental Reed Warblers singing in the reeds. A walk around a part of the reservoir gave us our first Japanese Wagtail, and a Meadow Bunting carrying food. Cinereous and Long-tailed Tits were moving through an area of trees and bushes as we made our way back to the vehicle. A tiny Japanese Tree Frog was a bonus sighting near the path.

We drove back to Karuizawa to walk along a trail to a waterfall, which had been boosted by all the rain. It was relatively quiet in terms of birds, but we did find a smart Montane Brown Frog. Our final destination was a private track in the forest near the Wild Bird Park. A group of Meadow Buntings was feeding beneath some trees, and a Japanese Thrush was singing from a hidden vantage point. A male Narcissus Flycatcher carrying food was good to see, and a calling Asian Stubtail flew across the path.

An early dinner was required, in advance of the planned night drive. Prior to boarding the bus, we enjoyed the spectacle of a few hundred birds coming in to roost in trees near our hotel. The majority were White-cheeked

Starlings and Tree Sparrows, with a few Oriental Greenfinches. The night drive was up a mountain above Karuizawa, and began at the ski centre. We drove up the mountain road passing ski lifts, snow blowers and other contraptions. It was a dank, miserable evening, with rain falling most of the time; however, we did see quite a few Sika Deer, including several young fawns.

Day 13

Friday 3rd July

Half of the group hiked up a slope on the flanks of the Mount Asama volcano, while the remainder relaxed in and near the hotel. The weather was cloudy, but looking promising when we set off. The first half of the hike was through forest, with Willow Tit being the commonest bird, and a couple of Narcissus Flycatchers singing and showing. A vocal male Blue-and-white Flycatcher looked resplendent in the morning light. A Bull-headed Shrike was at the top of a distant tree, while a Eurasian Cuckoo could be heard in the distance. A male Siberian Blue Robin gave us the run around, singing from various places but remaining hidden, with no sign of movement. Masked and Meadow Buntings sang from the tops of trees, as did Olive-backed Pipits as we reached more open areas of the mountain.

We eventually arrived at the viewpoint, where we were looking for a particular mammal. According to a couple of phone apps, we had walked 3.5 km and had climbed 393m. It hadn't been a simple hike, as the small pieces of pumice stone thrown out from a previous eruption of Mount Asama made the path slippery in places. However, everyone made it to our destination, and we soon had our reward. After fifteen minutes, some group members had started their lunches, but were interrupted when an Asian Black Bear was spotted on the edge of the forest below us. The forest was more open where the bear was exploring for food, but it occasionally disappeared behind trees before reaching another clearing. At one stage, a male Sika Deer was less than twenty metres away from it, and it kept a wary eye on the bear. Fortunately, the bear was progressing away from the thick forest, and eventually reached an area of scattered trees. We were then able to see it clearly, digging up plants and grazing on vegetation. We were in a very privileged, lofty position, with the bear approximately one kilometre away and totally unaware that it was being watched. We enjoyed a Peregrine flying over our heads to add to the experience. After completing our lunches, the Asian Black Bear continued to dine on the slopes of the volcano. Even the cloud lifted so we could see the peak of Mount Asama. After enjoying this wonderful experience for around sixty minutes, it was time for us to return down the way we came, leaving the bear carry on feeding in this beautiful setting.

In the forest, a male and female Siberian Blue Robin. Everyone managed to get views of the female, but only one or two managed brief views of the male singing, about a metre above the ground. Just a little further down, a Lesser Cuckoo was calling close to us, but the forest was just too thick to see it. We continued through the forest and our luck was in again. Just thirty metres from the path, a Japanese Serow stood motionless, watching us. As the group gathered to get views of this endemic mammal, the Serow turned around and slowly walked away into thicker forest. We had had incredibly good fortune: these animals are not common.

Flushed with the success of a very productive hike, we eventually reached the vehicle and returned to Karuizawa. Odin did a detour to an area where Japanese Macaques are regularly seen. Sure enough, we came across a group of mainly mothers and infants, grooming each other on the roof of an abandoned building. Two endemic mammals within thirty minutes of each other was pretty good going! It had been an excellent morning and afternoon of wildlife viewing.

We returned to the visitor centre in the Wild Bird Park where we transferred to our bus. Everyone said their goodbyes and thanks to Odin, after three days of excellent wildlife watching. That evening, before dinner, some of the group went to the front of the hotel to watch the starlings and sparrows coming into roost in the nearby trees. Interestingly, the behaviour was different tonight: the starlings didn't do a pre-roost gathering on nearby wires, but instead flew straight to the trees. Perhaps the male Peregrine doing the occasional fly past was the reason. Or maybe it was the female Peregrine perched at the top of a nearby building looking menacingly over this part of the city. It was certainly a real bonus to see a pair of these magnificent raptors in front of our hotel.

Day 14

Saturday 4th July

After checking out of our hotel, we walked the short distance to the train station to catch the *shinkansen* to Tokyo. We arrived at our airport hotel by early afternoon, and most of the group decided either to go shopping or to relax at the airport. Some navigated the Tokyo train system for a brief visit to Kasai Rinkai Park. Azure-winged Magpies and White-cheeked Starlings were common, Oriental Reed Warblers were vocal and visible, while Asian House Martins and Barn Swallows flew over. Three new species for the trip were seen: a pair of Little Ringed Plovers, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Little Egret.

Day 15

Sunday 5th July

Half of the group stayed on in Tokyo to continue their holiday, while the other half flew back to Heathrow, where our flight arrived back a few minutes ahead of schedule. It was the end of an excellent trip to Japan, during which we had seen some of its wonderful summer wildlife.

My thanks go to the group members for their enthusiasm, patience and cooperation. Thank you also to the local team (Yuki, Liam, Ayumi and Odin) for their help and experience on Hokkaido and Honshu. Your efforts were greatly appreciated by everyone.

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		June - July 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>			✓										
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>						1							
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>						✓							
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>						✓	✓						
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	✓												
Garganey	<i>Spatulaa querquedula</i>						1							
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>						1		✓		✓	✓		✓
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓							
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓												
Copper Pheasant - E	<i>Syrnaticus soemmerringii</i>										2			
Green Pheasant - E	<i>Phasianus versicolor</i>											4		
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>						✓							
Great-crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>											✓		
Lesser Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus poliocephalus</i>										H		H	
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	✓			H	✓	H	?	✓			H	H	
Oriental Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus optatus</i>		✓		H	H	H	?	✓		H			
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>			✓	H		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
White-bellied Green Pigeon	<i>Treron sieboldii</i>		✓					✓			✓	✓		
Red-crowned Crane	<i>Grus japonensis</i>	3					✓	✓	✓					
Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>						✓					✓		
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>													✓
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>													2
Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	2	✓		✓	H	✓	✓	✓					
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>					✓								
Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>						1							
Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓						

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		June - July 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	
Spectacled Guillemot	<i>Cepphus carbo</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓							
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓												
Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓	
Slaty-backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>					✓									
Short-tailed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna tenuirostris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓									
Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>			✓											
Red-faced Cormorant	<i>Urile urile</i>							6							
Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Urile pelagicus</i>			✓				✓	✓						
Japanese Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capillatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓										✓		✓	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>					1						✓		✓	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>													✓	
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>											✓			
Ural Owl	<i>Strix uralensis</i>			1											
White-throated Needletail	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>														
Fork-tailed Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
House Swift	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>										✓				
Japanese Sparrowhawk	<i>Tachyspiza gularis</i>														
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>														
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓		1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>		1									1			
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		2										3		
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>											1			
Japanese Green Woodpecker - E	<i>Picus awokera</i>										H				
Black Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus martius</i>						H								
Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus kizuki</i>										✓		H		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				✓			✓							
Ashy Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus divaricatus</i>										H				
Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>	3	✓				✓	✓	✓						

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		June - July 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	
Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyanus</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>		✓	✓			H				✓	✓			
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>				✓		H	H					✓		
Varied Tit	<i>Sittiparus varius</i>														
Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>										✓		✓		
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>						✓	✓	✓			✓			
Black-browed Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus bistrigiceps</i>					✓	✓		✓			✓			
Oriental Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>											✓		✓	
Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Helopsaltes amnicola</i>							H	✓						
Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Helopsaltes ochotensis</i>						✓		✓						
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Asian House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>										✓	✓			
Asian Stubtail	<i>Urosphena squameiceps</i>										H	1			
Japanese Bush Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		H	H	H		
Eastern Crowned Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus coronatus</i>				✓			H	✓		✓				
Sakhalin Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealoides</i>								H						
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i>							2	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	✓	
Warbling White-eye	<i>Zosterops japonicus</i>										✓				
Chinese Hwamei - I	<i>Garrulax canorus</i>										H				
Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>										✓				
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>							H			✓				
Chestnut-cheeked Starling	<i>Agropsar philippensis</i>						✓		✓			2			
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Spodiopsar cineraceus</i>	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>			✓											
Japanese Thrush	<i>Turdus cardis</i>			H	H						H	H	✓		
Brown-headed Thrush	<i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>		✓	✓	H										
Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>								1		✓				
Blue-and-white Flycatcher	<i>Cyanoptila cyanomelana</i>										✓		✓		

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic, I=Introduced		June - July 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	
Siberian Rubythroat	<i>Calliope calliope</i>								1						
Siberian Blue Robin	<i>Larvivora cyane</i>												✓		
Narcissus Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula narcissina</i>				✓		H				✓	✓	✓		
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>										1				
Eastern Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola philippensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓										
Amur Stonechat	<i>Saxicola stejnegeri</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer cinnamomeus</i>	✓													
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			1					2		✓	✓			
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Japanese Wagtail - N	<i>Motacilla grandis</i>											1			
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>		✓		✓								✓		
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>				1				1						
Japanese Grosbeak	<i>Eophona personata</i>										2	H			
Long-tailed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus sibiricus</i>					✓			✓						
Oriental Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>		2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	✓				✓	✓		✓						
Yellow Bunting	<i>Emberiza sulphurata</i>										✓				
Masked Bunting	<i>Emberiza personata</i>			✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓		
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>		✓	✓							✓	✓	✓		
Chestnut-eared Bunting	<i>Emberiza fucata</i>	✓										✓			

Mammals

E=Endemic		June - July 2026													
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	1	1		✓	✓	✓	✓							
Asian Black Bear	<i>Ursus thibetanus</i>												1		
Sea Otter	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>							14	7						
Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>							✓							
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		

E=Endemic		June - July 2026												
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
Japanese Serow - E	<i>Capricornis crispus</i>												1	
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>					1								
Pacific White-sided Dolphin	<i>Aethalodelphis obliquidens</i>			✓										
Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>				10+	8								
Dall's Porpoise	<i>Phocoenoides dalli</i>			1										
Japanese Macaque - E	<i>Macaca fuscata</i>												✓	
Siberian Chipmunk	<i>Eutamias sibiricus</i>							1						
Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel - E	<i>Petaurista leucogenys</i>									2				

Amphibians & reptiles

Common name	Scientific name
Montane Brown Frog	<i>Rana ornativentris</i>
Japanese Tree Frog	<i>Hyla japonica</i>
Far Eastern Skink	<i>Plestiodon finitimus</i>
Tiger Keelback	<i>Rhabdophis tigrinus</i>

Butterflies

Common name	Scientific name
Yellow-spotted Dart	<i>Potanthus flavus</i>
Asian Swallowtail	<i>Papilion xuthus</i>
Old World Swallowtail	<i>Papilion machaon</i>
a clouded yellow	<i>Coleas</i> sp.
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>
Short-tailed Blue	<i>Cupido argiades</i>
Pale Grass Blue	<i>Pseudozizeeria maha</i>
Japanese Labyrinth	<i>Neope niphonica</i>
Dryad	<i>Minois dryas</i>
Common Sailer	<i>Neptis hylas</i>
Dot-dash Sailer	<i>Neptis pryderi</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Blue Admiral	<i>Kaniska canace</i>
Map Butterfly	<i>Araschiria levana</i>

Moths

Common name	Scientific name
Burnt-spot Hummingbird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum pyrrhosicta</i>

Damselflies & dragonflies

Common name	Scientific name
a clubtail	<i>Trigomphus melampus</i>
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>
Japanese Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum japonicum</i>
White-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum albistylum</i>

Other insects

Common name	Scientific name
Asian Giant Hornet	<i>Vespa mandarinia</i>

Selected plants

Common name	Scientific name
Sakhalin Spruce	<i>Picea glehnii</i>
an orchid	<i>Calanthe tricarinata</i>
Siberian Iris	<i>Iris sibirica</i>
Ezo Day Lily	<i>Hemerocallis middendorffii</i>
Japanese Wild Grape	<i>Vitis coignetiae</i>
Japanese Rowan	<i>Sorbus commixta</i>
Japanese Alder	<i>Alnus japonica</i>
Bunchberry	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Convulsion Root (Ghost Plant)	<i>Monotropastrum humile</i>
Labrador Tea	<i>Rhododendron tomentosum</i>
Hakusan Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron brachycarpum</i>