

ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO TAIWAN
Island Endemics & Migrants

14 - 26 April 2013



Leaders: Nigel Jones and Chiang Kuen-Dar

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A Personal Diary

Sunday 14 April

The group all arrives on time at Heathrow and we are soon on our evening Singapore Airlines flight to Hong Kong. We are all happily surprised at the leg room and seat width!

Monday 15 April

Many films and meals later we arrive into Hong Kong after the 12 hour flight. The airport is clean and spacious and we settle down with coffees and drinks and wait for our connecting flight to Taipei. This Singapore Airlines flight is a relatively short hop and we are soon through customs and meeting with our local guide Chiang Kuen-Dar. The roads are busy, and thronged with hundreds of mopeds and scooters, the main mode of transport in this bustling metropolis. Forty minutes later we are at the Gala Hotel and checked-in. It appears that the Taiwanese eat their dinners quite early, so we have missed the main sitting, even though it is only 9pm. However, we tuck in to noodle soup and various other dishes, and Chiang outlines our plans for tomorrow, before we retire for the night.

Tuesday 16 April

We take breakfast at 7am and are treated to a mix of western and eastern diets, with cooked eggs, bacon, sausages and toast, as well as noodles, rice, and various vegetables. We leave in our spacious bus at 8am and drive the short distance to the Botanic Gardens. Here we are greeted by lots of people exercising, either power walking with swinging hands, or standing in small groups and practicing Tai Chi. Our birding begins with Chinese Bulbuls, Japanese White-eyes, Javan Myna and Spotted Doves. A pair of colourful Black-naped Monarchs is watched flycatching, while our first endemic is a fine Taiwan Barbet, with its striking red and yellow face, and is watched as it picks and eats the ripe fruits. As we round a corner Chiang spots his main quarry, a



Malayan Night-Heron stalking insects on a small lawn. The bird is very tame and used to the walkers, so is not alarmed by our presence as we watch from close range and take many photos. It moves stealthily,

catching beetles with a quick lunge of its neck. Around the lake we find Little Egret, Black-crowned Night-Herons and Grey Treepies, as well as Common Moorhens. As we leave there is a parade along the streets with festive costumes, drums and fireworks.



We now head for the coast and the chance to find some migrants. We are greeted with vast crowds of people leaving coaches to look at the strange rock formation at Yeliu Geo Park. Luckily we pass them all quickly and head to a promontory devoid of sightseers. We find Brown

Shrike, Plain Prinia, Blue Rock Thrush and Pacific Reef Egret. A Taiwan Scimitar Babbler sings and gives brief views. Overhead we spot a pair of Peregrines and a Crested Serpent Eagle. As we walk along the trail a well-marked bunting feeds by the side of the track, a Tristram's, en route to its breeding grounds in China – a good find. We then encounter a large group of photographers intent on stalking a male Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, which we all eventually see. This is a bird normally more associated with subtropical or the tropical moist montane forests of south-east Asia. There is also a pair of Black-naped Monarchs and we watch them nest-building. A phylloscopus with a wing-bar is also spotted but so briefly we could not identify it for certain.

We leave the coastal hot spot and head inland a little for a fine lunch of prawns, duck, fish, dumplings, bamboo shoots and cockles, rounded off with desserts of sweet dumplings and fruit. Outside we find Pacific Swallows, and the rice paddies hold Red-throated Pipits, Little Ringed Plovers, and many Yellow Wagtails.



We walk at the Jinshun Youth Centre, spotting Black-faced Buntings, a flighty Pale Thrush, Bramblings and an Osprey. At the river mouth are Greater Sand Plovers and Brown-throated Martins and a Dusky Thrush. As we make our way back to Taipei we stop at some flooded fields where John spots a fine group of Great Knot in summer plumage - they make for some great photos with their reflections in the still water. A male Pied Harrier hunts over the field and Phil find a Painted Snipe with four babies.



We return to our hotel in Taipei very satisfied with our first day of birding, with some great birds seen. We are back by 5.30pm and have a Chinese banquet at 7pm with many courses. Most of us are already eating with chop sticks. We finish with tea and coffee and call the bird log.

Wednesday 17 April

We take breakfast at 7am and we are packed and away by 8am. We pass through the crowded and bustling streets of Taipei and soon hit the highway, heading south. Phil spots Taiwan Whistling Thrush and there are lots of egrets and a few Sacred Ibis on the numerous water courses. The areas are very built up, with light industry everywhere – this is where the “Made in Taiwan” is manufactured!

We make a stop at Jincheng Lake for waders, where we spot Red-necked Stint, Greater Sand and Pacific Golden Plovers and Dunlin. In the distance is a gull, but too far away to identify – gulls are far from numerous in Taiwan! Andy sees a Great Knot. We walk along a track finding a male Black-naped Monarch, while Phil sees a flock of White-shouldered Starlings flash past. Nearby pools hold lots of Black-winged Stilts with a few Common Redshanks mixed amongst them.

As we approach the hills we stop for lunch by the river. The restaurant serves us a great meal with baby squid, fish, prawns and pork. Afterwards we stand by the river and spot Common Kingfisher, a Crested Goshawk displaying, a Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Collared Finchbills and Grey Treepie. Meanwhile, Andy spots a flying Blue Magpie, while Jane finds Scaly-breasted Munias. On the river Demoiselle dragonflies flit amongst the overhanging vegetation.

An important stop is made in the next town to buy beers, as our accommodation might not have supplies. We watch Striated Swallow collecting mud for their nest, and White Wagtails are feeding along the edge of the puddles.



We now start to ascend on the winding track towards our destination at Dasyueshan. The mountains here are designated as a Forest Recreation Area and are largely untouched mature forest, although some logging has obviously happened in the past. The lower area, around the 1,000m mark holds mixed temperate forest, while the upper sections of the forest are boreal conifers with hemlock and cypress (around 3,000m). We make a stop at the kilometre 26 mark, as this is where photographers bait the roadside verge; we watch as Long-nosed and Taiwan Striped Squirrels

take the corn. However, the star of the show does not take long to emerge as a magnificent male Swinhoe's Pheasant feeds. Its plumage is fantastic with the main colour a deep blue, with a red face mask, a white cap to the head, pale feather fringes to feathering on the back, red shoulders and a long blue, black and white tail - surely one of the world's most beautiful pheasants.

Nearby we also find diminutive Black-throated Tits, larger Green-backed Tits, Steere's Liocichlas, a female White-tailed Robin and, best of all, a Taiwan Partridge feeding just down the slope on the edge of the car park - wonderful views of this sometimes difficult species.

We arrive at the main park buildings and collect the keys but, while the weather is still good, we drive up to km 47 and find calling Flamecrests and more squirrels coming to bait - this time the food is set for Mikado Pheasant but there is no sign of him. We return to the accommodation and unpack for our three-night stay.

Later the rain begins to fall as we have another fine dinner with seafood, cockles, pork and beef.

Thursday 18 April

Some of us are out at 5.30am and watching White-whiskered Laughingthrushes and Steere's Liocichlas taking moths off windows where they have been attracted to the lights overnight. Taiwan Yuhinas are relatively common, but very smart, reminding us of Crested Tits with their tufted heads. Taiwan Sibias are



also common and vocal. John finds a Taiwan Whistling Thrush, still an elusive species for most of the group. We drive to km 47 and hope the Mikado Pheasant might put in an appearance at the baiting site. Vinaceous Rosefinches show well and the Flamecrests appear on cue, with a Spotted Nutcracker posing well on top of tree, while Large-billed Crows fly over the valley. There is still no sign of the Mikado but a fine male Johnstone's Robin does hop along the roadside. As we drive down for breakfast we stop to watch a White-backed Woodpecker

feeding on some of the mature trees in this extensive mountain forest.

At 9am we head again uphill and make for the end of the road at km 49. We are besieged by a noisy gang of hungry White-whiskered Laughingthrushes and there are even a few Spotted Nutcrackers waiting for hand outs (which are not allowed by the park authorities!).

There are large stands of bamboo here and we can hear Taiwan Shortwing singing. Chiang tries the tape and the bird moves a little,



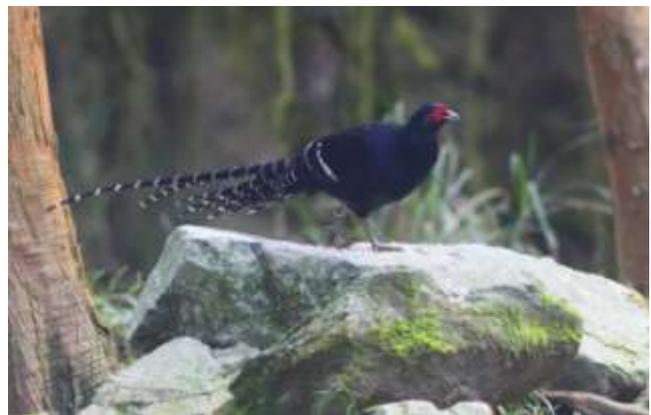
with some getting brief views of this skulker. We have better luck with Taiwan Bush Warbler which does appear plus Yellow-bellied Prinia. We walk a track to Heaven Lake and find more Vinaceous Rosefinches and get good views of two Yellow-bellied Bush Warblers. We are also treated to sightings of two Taiwan Fulvettas.



We have lunch in the restaurant at km 49 and afterwards walk around the car park and inspect the bushes, hoping for better views of the shortwing – with no joy! However, a Taiwan Bush Warbler is very cooperative and shows well to the whole group. A higher track allows us views of more diminutive Black-throated Tits and also Taiwan Barwing.

At around 2.30pm we make our way down to the pheasant feeding area, where an officious photographer has us sitting as he requires! Not sure if it is to allow the pheasant an easy exit when it has fed, or to make

sure we are not the background to his photos! As we sit we have Steere's Liocichlas feeding around us and White-whiskered Laughingthrushes, while Perny's Squirrels come to the food provided. At 3pm, right on cue, the male Mikado Pheasant appears – an impressive beast, with dark blue ground colouration and a very long black and white tail. It feeds briefly before shooting over the road and up the hill behind us. An excellent bird, but perhaps not as colourful as the Swinhoe's.



We drive down and stop in search of White-browed Robin but there is no sign, but Taiwan Macaques are seen and heard close by. A large waterfall by the roadside is an impressive sight and we stay and watch in the hope of spotting a forktail. Denis soon spots one and we all get great views of this piebald Little Forktail as it bobs and tail wags by the side of the cascades – a new bird for lots of the group.

We return to the lodge and many of us walk the many tracks and paths around the building. I find Ashy Wood Pigeons, while Andy has Taiwan Whistling Thrush, Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush and even a Muntjac.

Friday 19 April

We wake to showers at dawn and some of us venture out to search for birds. Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes are in the garden and we also have good views of an Ashy Wood Pigeon on a dead tree.

After breakfast we make a brief stop at the tourist centre where we have good views of Taiwan Barwing. Near the police station a Collared Owlet is calling and is being mobbed by Taiwan Yuhinas and Taiwan Sibias, but there is no sign of the well-hidden owlet. A female White-tailed Robin does show on the track though.

Chiang tries his tape for the diminutive Taiwan Wren-Babbler and we do get a response, but there are no sightings of this secretive bird. We also hear Rufous-faced Warblers and Red-capped Babblers. Luckily, the birds of prey are more obvious and we have views of Oriental Honey-buzzards, Indian Black Eagles and Crested Serpent Eagles. An enormous raptor perched in a tree is a Mountain Hawk Eagle but it drops into the forest canopy before most of the group can see it.

Perched right out in the open and singing a sweet warbling song is a Vivid Niltava, a potential split as Taiwan Niltava. White-backed Woodpeckers call and chase through the trees and Richard is lucky with sightings of Rufous-faced Warbler. We are looking at this lower altitude for Yellow Tit, but no luck – yet.



We stop at a bridge where the road crosses a gorge and watch hundreds of Asian House Martins collecting nesting material from the cliff edges. They nest under the bridge, but why did we not see them when we passed this way the other day? We drop down even further to take lunch at a restaurant near to the village. As we are a little early we birdwatch on the farmland finding White-rumped Munias, Spotted Doves, Chinese Bulbuls and nesting Barn Swallows. We have yet another excellent meal before we start heading back up the road in our quest for Yellow Tit.

We pass another male Swinhoe's Pheasant and then stop at a spot that Chiang thinks looks likely for the tit. We play the song for a few minutes with no success, and then suddenly the bird is right in front of us – a great looking species, with a fantastic yellow tuft! We watch it for a few minutes before it disappears.

We walk along the road and have a few minutes of good bird activity, with many Taiwan Yuhinas, good views of Rufous-faced Warblers, both male and female Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers, and some lovely Grey-chinned Minivets. We listen to the calls of Fairy Pittas – they have literally just arrived in Taiwan to breed, fresh from their wintering areas in Malaysia. This is not a breeding area though, and they will soon move to the lowlands to take up their territories.

We stop once more outside the police station and listen to the calls of the Taiwan Wren-babbler. It is tantalizingly close and we trace the calls back and forth in front of us. The police are beckoning us for a group photo – they are obviously bored! Just as we are about to break away Chiang spots the bird and we have it at point blank range right in front of the whole group. We don't need binoculars as we are only a few feet from it. It is a tiny, tailless bird, with a brown back and an underside with black chevrons. We are overjoyed with the views and readily agree to our police mug-shot! We return to the lodge very happy with our haul of endemic species today.

Saturday 20 April

Once again we wake to the sound of falling rain. It's a matter of birding with umbrellas this morning and we still manage to find a noisy group of Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes. Today we have a new bus and driver and at 8am we drive up the road once more and listen to the Taiwan Shortwings singing – once again they remain well hidden in the bamboo and tangles. A pair of Vinaceous Rosefinches show well in the open. We try once more for White-browed Robin, but there is no sign or sound of them.

We return to finish packing and some of us spot Vivid Niltava in the garden. We leave at 10am and have a brief stop in the visitor centre for buying presents and a chance to look at the exhibit on the forest of Dasyesushan. Some of us take a brief walk and find Taiwan Barwings and finally the Taiwan Shortwing.

At the bottom of the valley Chiang uses his tape and we are soon watching a Taiwan Hwamei. This species can have problems with hybridization with Chinese Hwamei, which have escaped from captivity where they are kept because they are fine songsters. The bird we are watching appears to have all the features of a pure Taiwan Hwamei, with a small pale buff eye ring and no eye stripe. Here there are also Grey-cheeked Fulvettas and we also hear Rufous-crowned Babblers. We take our lunch in a small restaurant in Douliou.

The rain continues as we make our way. Chiang stops us at a road bridge where he used to do a butterfly migration project – so many butterflies were being killed by cars (tens of thousands a day) that they erected barriers on the edge of the road so the butterflies had to migrate above car height. On the river below the bridge we watch Crested Mynas with Javan Mynas for comparison. The Crested are a species that is becoming quite scarce in Taiwan. There are also lots of Plain Prinias, Grey Wagtails and fleeting views of Vinous-throated Parrotbills.

We arrive at Huben Ecovillage, an area of lowland forest and cultivation, managed by the local farmers for the benefit of the wildlife. We meet Mr Chiang, an ex-hunter who is now the top birder here and he walks us around a small part of the reserve. We find Taiwan Barbet, Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers, Grey-cheeked Fulvettas, a Grey-streaked Flycatcher and a female Maroon Oriole at a newly constructed nest.

We leave, as we have to get to town to check-in to our hotel but a detour due to road works sees us at the end of a cul-de-sac! The driver shows off his reversing skills and we are impressed! Our hotel is a high rise and many of us are on the 12th floor, overlooking the train station. Tonight there is dancing with drums as we leave for a meal at the steak house. In the dark we can see Barn Swallows still hawking along the streets using the artificial lighting.

After we return we listen to the calling of the Savanna Nightjars and a few of the group manage to watch one perched on a building opposite as it calls. In the dark sky we can still hear the screams of the Little Swifts.

Sunday 21 April

This morning is quiet in the city as it is a Sunday and we return to Huben Ecovillage. It is raining lightly but we walk the paths through the cultivation and have good views of the Taiwan Scimitar Babbler. A Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler is calling nearby but is more of a skulker. There is a ringing programme run at Huben and the ringers have the nets open – a Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler is caught and shown to the group. A real close-up in the hand! A Taiwan Barbet is also caught and as Phil is one of the UK's top ringers we ask if he could process it.

The cultivation and the rank vegetation by the river provides us with some more good sightings as we add Vinous-throated Parrotbills, Dusky and Grey-cheeked Fulvettas, Rufous-capped Babbler, both Yellow-



bellied and Plain Prinias and Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush. Overhead we watch Pacific Swifts and an Emerald Dove makes a swift flight past the group into the dense forest. A male Maroon Oriole gives excellent views as it perches up in a tree. All too soon we have to say goodbye to Mr Chiang and we present him with a small present, a birding cap.

We are moving to Tainan today, on the coast, but we stop at the Guntain Wetlands a site where they are trying to protect the Pheasant-tailed Jacana. Here



there are a series of lakes, covered with white water lilies and a string of hides – popular with Taiwanese photographers, all armed with large lenses. The male Pheasant-tailed Jacanas all have their long tails at the moment and make for some good photos as they strut over the lilies, or fly between ponds. They are a handsome bird. We also find Garganey and Mallard, as well as Indian Pond Herons, Little Grebe and many colourful dragonflies.



We decide to walk down one of the tracks outside of the wetland and we hit some raptor migration with hundreds of Chinese Sparrowhawks thermalling. Phil spots a White-bellied Sea Eagle amongst them as well as a distant Black-shouldered Kite. There are also Oriental Skylarks singing, Oriental Pratincoles fly catching and even a Common Pheasant calling from the cover. We take lunch in a nearby restaurant and find a male Painted Snipe on the rice paddy outside.

As we arrive into Tainan we stop at the harbour wall and walk down to where there are many people fishing. We hit some great migration, with hundreds of egrets coming in from the south-west, from where they have presumably wintered in the landmasses around the South China Sea, and heading directly past us to their breeding grounds further north, perhaps in Japan or Korea. There are Eastern Cattle Egrets in their lovely



rusty orange breeding dress, many Littles and a few Intermediates and Great Egrets as well. There are also Yellow Wagtails migrating in small flocks and distant groups of waders. On the beach we can see Lesser Sand Plovers and in the harbour are a few Greater Crested and Little Terns. We also find a Blue Rock Thrush perched on the harbour wall and a Long-tailed Shrike in the dunes.

We check-in to our smart hotel and have another great dinner.

Monday 22 April

From the hotel at dawn the migration is still happening with groups of egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons still passing across the city skyline. At 6am the Tai Chi groups are already in action amongst the mature trees of the university campus. Tree Sparrows, Japanese White-eyes and Chinese Bulbuls all chirrup and twitter from the Indian Almonds and Camphor Trees.

Our quest today is to visit the large complex of wetlands close to Tainan around Cigu. Here we hope to find some Black-faced Spoonbills as well as many other waterbirds and waders. The pools are mainly used to farm fish, but there are some old salt pans which are part of a small reserve. It does not take us long to see our first Black-faced Spoonbill as one flies over the group. We then find more feeding with Great and Little Egrets. As we scan the birds Phil spots an interesting egret and yes, he has found a Swinhoe's Egret. We all

note its long head plumes, short and stout yellow bill, and dark legs. Andy and Jane now find a Cinnamon Bittern as it moves slowly along a dyke. There are also Red-necked Stints and many Black-winged Stilts here. Sue and Jenny make a visit to the very ornate Citsao Temple.



On the more saline area we find smart summer-plumaged Pacific Golden Plovers, as well as more Red-necked Stints, Lesser Sand Plovers, Marsh Sandpiper and Common Greenshanks. We move to an area with a large hide which overlooks a tidal mudflat – here we have Far Eastern Curlew, many Terek Sandpipers and Grey-tailed Tattlers.

After lunch we decide to drive north and see if we can spot some wader flocks. The driver is not too keen to stop his vehicle on what is a dual carriageway, but we disembark to sort through a large wader flock. Here there are many more Pacific Golden Plovers, Lesser Sand Plovers, some Kentish Plovers and Red Knot. Phil manages to find a few Broad-billed Sandpipers. In the distance are large flocks of Black-faced Spoonbills and a few

Eurasian Wigeon. The spoonbill centre shows the world population to be 2,725 this winter, with 1,624 having wintered in Taiwan. We estimate we have seen around 84 today, as most have now departed for their breeding grounds in north-eastern China and Korea.

We return one last time to the hide overlooking the mudflats as we think the tide should be further out, with more exposed mud. We find Ruddy Turnstones and some Whimbrels, but two distant summer plumaged waders initially have us foxed as to their identity – are they Eastern Black-tailed Godwits or a race of Bar-tailed Godwits. When they eventually stand next to some Whimbrel and we see their true size we realise what the problem is – they are actually two Asiatic Dowitchers! What a great way to end a day's birding.



Tonight we walk to the restaurant and have another slap-up Chinese banquet!

Tuesday 23 April

A pre-breakfast walk in the campus grounds produces a few migrant Asian Glossy Starlings, plus a pair of Malayan Night-Herons at their bulky stick nest.

Once we are all packed we leave the city, stopping briefly at Cigu to scan the fields for migrant Little Curlews, but we only find Brown Shrikes. Chiang thinks a stop at the Aogu Wetland centre would be a good idea and we drive along the roads scanning the many pools. We find many ducks still present, including Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-billed, Northern Shoveler and Garganey plus many Little Grebes. There are also Black-faced Spoonbills, Black-crowned Night-Herons, a Great Cormorant, and many Common Kingfishers. In the bushes fringing the dyke are still some lingering Black-faced Buntings.

As we drive north-eastwards we pass many waders, and thousands of egrets, on the extensive fish ponds and some large flocks of Caspian Terns on mud flats. We have lunch at Ming Chien before we head into the foothills leading towards our destination at Huisun.

We drive alongside river valleys, where the fast coloured waters tumble over boulders and scree. We stop at a bridge and look down to find Brown Dipper and Plumbeous Redstart. John is also pleased as there are many butterflies here, including some pretty swallowtails.



We soon arrive at our accommodation at Huisun and are amazed at the size of the baths each of us have - pool parties are planned for the evenings! Outside on the lawn are tame Taiwan Blue Magpies and many Himalayan Black Bulbuls. We stroll down the road passing Malayan Night-Herons and hearing Chinese Bamboo Partridge calling – these are another potential split species, as they look very different from the partridges on the mainland.

After dinner we walk along the road and hear Mountain Scops Owl calling in the distance. Denis stays up later and adds Brown Hawk Owl and Chinese Tawny Owl to the “heard-list”.

Wednesday 24 April



A few of us are up at 5.30am to look for the Chinese Bamboo Partridge. There is a Varied Tit singing from the top of a tall fir tree near where the coach is parked. We walk down to where we heard the partridges yesterday, passing feeding Malayan Night-Herons. However, we fail to find the partridges and trudge back up the steps to be greeted by Chiang who tells us that we have just missed two right outside our rooms. He even went round the rooms waking those who slept in and who have now seen the birds! There is no justice sometimes. Sue even manages a good photo of the bird.

At 6am we walk downhill and find a perched Crested Goshawk, many singing Himalayan Black Bulbuls, Grey Treepies, some smart male Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers and Grey-cheeked Fulvetta. At the bottom of the hill, near the car park, we find Plain Flowerpecker and Yellow-bellied Erpornis. Chinese Bamboo Partridges taunt us with their calls, but they still remain invisible for some of us! There is snow fall as the white petals of the Tung Oil Tree (*Vernicia fordii*) carpet the roads. These introduced white-petalled trees are a real feature of the hill sides.

After breakfast Dennis and I have a last try for the partridges, finding a fine male Swinhoe's Pheasant and two Malayan Night-Herons. Others try for better photos of the showy Taiwan Blue Magpies. We pack our bags and load them onto the coach, stopping briefly at the lower car park again but no sign of any more Varied Tits. The coffee shop is next for a welcome fix for those who couldn't get any at breakfast time; the shop is part of a university project. Coffee was introduced to the island by the Japanese over 100 years ago and the climate on the mountains around the 750 m mark produces ideal conditions for its growth. We stop again at the



bridge and have both male and female Plumbeous Redstarts, but no dippers.

We stop for lunch at Wufeng and then make the journey back to Taipei, stopping for some good ice creams at a service station. En route, Andy sees our first Striated Heron. We are soon back at our hotel and checked into our rooms. We walk to a nearby restaurant and have a great banquet – we vote to revisit tomorrow evening as it has been so good.

Thursday 25 April

We wake to what must be a cold front, and the first heavy rain of the wet season. We leave the hotel at 7.30am and miss some of the heavy traffic, heading into the mountains south of Taipei. A rushing river gives us views of Plumbeous Redstart but just brief ones of Taiwan Whistling Thrush and a Blue Rock Thrush. Further on we use a restaurant by the river to shelter and have warming drinks of tea and coffee. Watching from under the awning is a much better idea and we can look down on the river and stay dry. Below us we can watch the comings and goings of a Taiwan Whistling Thrush as it repeatedly enters a small cave below a boulder, where it must be nesting - the opalescent blues of the wing show up really. There are also Brown Dippers and more Plumbeous Redstarts here, and Andy spots Striated Heron and our first Silver-backed Needletails.



The rain has almost stopped so we walk along the narrow roads and up the hill. We spot land crabs in the banks and find many Chinese Bulbuls. Suddenly three pigeons fly overhead – we can't really get any colours on them due to the poor light, but they look interesting. A group of us strike off uphill and soon we are watching three White-bellied Green Pigeons as they preen and court in a tree. Soon the rest of the group catches up and we have extended views of the threesome through the telescope.

We take lunch at a nearby restaurant and then visit some of the spectacular waterfalls and bridges in the area. Unfortunately it is still raining, so we opt for an early return to the hotel for showers and packing. However, we have one last visit and that is to the shop of the Taiwan Wild Bird Society where some of us buy books and reminders of our visit.

Tonight we return to the same restaurant and have our farewell meal. Thanks and toasts are made to Chiang for being such a great guide and we are pleased to hear that he will be happy guiding our next group in 2014.

Friday 26 April

We leave the hotel after breakfast and transfer to Taipei Airport. The first leg of the flight home takes us to Hong Kong where we pick up the London flight. We arrive at Heathrow on time and collect our luggage. We say our farewells by the carousels, before setting off on our journeys' home.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Chiang Kuen-Dar for being such a great local guide and looking after us so well on this tour. His choice of eating places for every lunch and dinner were all excellent. Many thanks also to our drivers who drove so safely throughout the tour. Thanks also to you the group for being so punctual and happy throughout - you were a joy to guide. I hope that you enjoyed your Taiwan birding and have many happy memories of this interesting island - and all those fantastic Chinese banquets! I hope to see you on another Ornitholidays soon. Many thanks to John Dodd for the butterfly list, and to John Dodd and Sue Healey for the photos in this report.

Votes for bird of the trip – the top five:

1. Yellow Tit
2. Little Forktail
3. Taiwan Wren Babbler
4. White-whiskered Laughingthrush
5. Taiwan Yuhina

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August 2013



Striped Blue Crow

Itinerary and Weather

Shade temperatures are given.

- 15 April Arrive Taipei 1930.
Cloudy, 20°C
- 16 April Taipei. Botanical Gardens. Yeliu Geo Park, Jinshan Youth Centre & Paddyfields.
Fine 25°C
- 17 April Taipei to Dasyueshan Forest Recreation Area, via Jincheng Lake.
Fine, rain later 20° - 8°C
- 18 April Dasyueshan.
Fine 13°C
- 19 April Dasyueshan.
Rain at first, then clearing 19°C
- 20 April Dasyueshan to Douliou, via Linnei Township and Huben Ecovillage.
Initially wet, drier later 13° - 23°C
- 21 April Douliou to Tainan, via Huben, Guantian and Anping Harbour
Fine 14°C
- 22 April Tainan. Cigu Wetlands & Zengwen River Estuary.
Fine 13° - 28°C
- 23 April Tainan to Huisun, via Aogu Wetlands and Ming Chien
Fine 15° - 32°C
- 24 April Huisun, to Taipei, via Wufeng
Fine, rain later 15° - 33°C
- 25 April Taipei. Wulai.
Rain 13° - 23°C
- 26 April Taipei, depart 1120
Dry 19°C



Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded

1 2h means seen on
1 day and heard on
2 other days

Location Abundance Scale (max. seen on 1 day)

T = Taipei, Yeliu Geo Park, Jinshan, Wulai 1 = 1 – 4 individuals
D = Dasyueshan 2 = 5 - 9
E = Huben Ecovillage 3 = 10 - 99
Z = Zengwen River, Cigu, Aogu Wetland 4 = 100 - 999
H = Huisun
> = on journey to ...

Order, nomenclature & taxonomy follow *Birds of East Asia* by Mark Brazil. Endemic subspecies have trinomial added.
Endemic species are in bold. * Likely to be split soon. (I) Introduced.

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Taiwan Partridge	1	D	1	<i>Arborophila crudigularis</i>
Chinese Bamboo Partridge *	1 2h	E	H 1	<i>Bambusicola thoracicus sonorivox</i>
Swinhoe's Pheasant	3	D	H 1	<i>Lophura swinhoii</i>
Mikado Pheasant	1	D	1	<i>Syrmaticus mikado</i>
Ring-necked Pheasant	- 1h		>Z 1	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Eurasian Wigeon	2		Z 3	<i>Anas penelope</i>
Mallard	1	T	>Z 1	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	3	T	Z 2	<i>Anas poecilorhynchos</i>
Northern Shoveler	1		Z 3	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Garganey	3	T	Z 2	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Little Grebe	5	T >D E	Z 4	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Sacred Ibis (I)	7	T >D E	Z 3	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Black-faced Spoonbill	3		Z 3	<i>Platalea minor</i>
Yellow Bittern	2		Z 1	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>
Cinnamon Bittern	2		Z 1	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>
Striated Heron	2	T	1	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Malayan Night-Heron	5	T >E	Z H 1	<i>Gorsachius melanolophus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	8	T E	Z H 4	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Chinese Pond Heron	3		Z >H 2	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>
Eastern Cattle Egret	7	T >D E	Z H 4	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
Grey Heron	7	T >D E	Z H 4	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	1	T	1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Great Egret	8	T E	Z H 4	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Intermediate Egret	6	T >D E	Z H 3	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Little Egret	8	T >D E	Z H 3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Pacific Reef Egret	1	T	1	<i>Egretta sacra</i>
Swinhoe's Egret	1		Z 1	<i>Egretta eulophotes</i>
Great Cormorant	2	>E	Z 1	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	T	1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Osprey	1	T	1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Oriental Honey-buzzard	1	D	2	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>
Black-eared Kite	3	T >D	>Z 2	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	3	T	Z 1	<i>Milvus caeruleus</i>
White-bellied Sea Eagle	1		>Z 1	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>
Crested Serpent Eagle	6	T D	1	<i>Spilornis cheela hoyi</i>
Pied Harrier	1	T	1	<i>Circus macrourus</i>
Crested Goshawk	2	D	H 1	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus formosae</i>
Chinese Sparrowhawk	2		Z 4	<i>Accipiter soloensis</i>
Indian Black Eagle	1	D	1	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>
Mountain Hawk Eagle	1	D	1	<i>Nisaetus nipalensis</i>
Common Moorhen	5	T >D E	Z 2	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Common Coot	1		Z 1	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Black-winged Stilt	5	T >D	Z >H 3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	2		Z 3	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Pacific Golden Plover	3	>D	Z 4	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>
Grey Plover	2		Z 1	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Little Ringed Plover	3	T	Z 1	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>

Kentish Plover	5		T		Z		3	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	
Lesser Sand Plover	3				Z		3	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	
Greater Sand Plover	3		T		Z		1	<i>Charadrius leschenaultia</i>	
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	2				Z		3	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	
Greater Painted-snipe	2		T		>Z		3	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	
Common Snipe	2		T		Z		1	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	
Asian Dowitcher	1				Z		1	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	
Whimbrel	2				Z		3	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	
Far Eastern Curlew	1				Z		1	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	
Common Redshank	3			>D	Z		1	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	
Marsh Sandpiper	4		T	>D	Z		3	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	
Common Greenshank	4			>D	>E	Z	3	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Green Sandpiper	1		T				1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	
Wood Sandpiper	4		T	>D	Z		3	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	
Grey-tailed Tattler	1				Z		1	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	
Terek Sandpiper	3				Z		3	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	
Common Sandpiper	7		T	>D	E	Z	H	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	1				Z		2	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	
Great Knot	3		T		Z		1	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	
Red Knot	1				Z		1	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	
Sanderling	1			>D			1	<i>Calidris alba</i>	
Red-necked Stint	3			>D	Z		4	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4		T	>D	Z		3	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	2				Z		3	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
Dunlin	2				Z		3	<i>Calidris alpine</i>	
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1				Z		2	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	
Oriental Pratincole	2				Z		3	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	
Caspian Tern	3				Z		3	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	
Greater Crested Tern	1				Z		1	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	
Common Tern	1				Z		2	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	
Little Tern	3				Z		3	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	
Gull-billed Tern	1				Z		1	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	
Whiskered Tern	2				Z		4	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	
Rock Pigeon (I)	8		T	>D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Ashy Wood Pigeon	3			D			2	<i>Columba pulchricollis</i>	
Oriental Turtle Dove	4		T	>D	E		3	<i>Streptopelia orientalis orii</i>	
Red Turtle Dove	8		T	>D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>
Spotted Dove	9		T	>D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Emerald Dove	1				E		1	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	
White-bellied Green Pigeon	1		T				1	<i>Treron sieboldii sororius</i>	
Oriental Cuckoo	-	4h		D			1	<i>Cuculus optatus</i>	
Mountain Scops Owl	-	2h					H	1	<i>Otus spilocephalus hambroeki</i>
Chinese Tawny Owl	-	1h					H	1	<i>Strix nivicola</i>
Collared Owlet	-	1h		D			1	<i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>	
Brown Hawk Owl	-	1h					H	1	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
Savanna Nightjar	1	1h			E		1	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>	
Silver-backed Needletail	1						H	3	<i>Hirundapus cochinchinensis</i>
Pacific Swift	2		T		E		1	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	
House Swift	8		T	>D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Apus nipalensis</i>
Common Kingfisher	7		T		E	Z	H	3	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Taiwan Barbet	4	3h	T	D	E	Z	H	1	<i>Megalaima nuchalis</i>
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	4	1h		D	E		1	<i>Yungipicus canicapillus</i>	
White-backed Woodpecker	2			D			1	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos insularis</i>	
Fairy Pitta	-	2h		D			1	<i>Pitta nympha</i>	
Grey-chinned Minivet	5			D	E		H	2	<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>
Brown Shrike	7		T	>D		Z	H	1	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
Long-tailed Shrike	3					Z	H	3	<i>Lanius schach</i>
Maroon Oriole	2				E		1	<i>Oriolus traillii ardens</i>	
Black Drongo	7		T		E	Z	H	2	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus harterti</i>
Bronzed Drongo	5			D	E	Z	H	2	<i>Dicrurus aeneus braunianus</i>
Black-naped Monarch	5	1h	T		E	Z	H	1	<i>Hypothymis azurea oberholseri</i>
Eurasian Jay	1			D			1	<i>Garrulus glandarius taivanus</i>	
Taiwan Blue Magpie	6		T		E		H	3	<i>Urocissa caerulea</i>

Grey Treepie	8		T	>D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Dendrocitta formosae formosae</i>
Common Magpie (I)	7		T	>D	E	Z	H	1	<i>Pica pica</i>
Spotted Nutcracker	1			D				1	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes owstoni</i>
Large-billed Crow	6			D		Z	H	1	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Green-backed Tit	4			D				1	<i>Parus monticolus inseperatus</i>
Yellow Tit	1			D				1	<i>Parus holsti</i>
Coal Tit	1	1h		D				1	<i>Periparus ater ptilosus</i>
Varied Tit	1						H	1	<i>Parus varius castaneiventris</i>
Grey-throated Martin	6		T					1	<i>Riparia chinensis (paludicola)</i>
Barn Swallow	9		T	D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Pacific Swallow	8		T	>D	E	Z	H	2	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>
Striated Swallow	6			>D	E	Z	H	2	<i>Cecropis striolata</i>
Asian House Martin	2			D				4	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>
Black-throated Tit	4			D				3	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
Oriental Skylark	1						>Z	1	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
Golden-headed Cisticola	1		T					1	<i>Cisticola exilis volitans</i>
Yellow-bellied Prinia	5			D	E	Z		1	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>
Plain Prinia	6		T	>D	E	Z		3	<i>Prinia inornata flavirostris</i>
Collared Finchbill	3			D	E			1	<i>Spizixos semitorques cinereicapillus</i>
Chinese Bulbul	9		T	D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis formosae</i>
Himalayan Black Bulbul	7		T	D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus nigerrimus</i>
Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler *	1	2h		D				1	<i>Cettia acanthizoides concolor</i>
Taiwan Bush Warbler	1	2h		D				1	<i>Bradypterus alishanensis</i>
Rufous-faced Warbler	1	2h		D				1	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>
Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler	1	2h		D	E		H	1	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis</i>
Taiwan Scimitar Babbler	3		T		E		H	1	<i>Pomatorhinus musicus</i>
Taiwan Wren-Babbler	1			D				1	<i>Pnoepyga formosana</i>
Rufous-capped Babbler	1	1h			E			1	<i>Stachyris ruficeps praecognita</i>
Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush	4			D	E			3	<i>Garrulax ruficeps</i>
Taiwan Hwamei	1				>E			1	<i>Garrulax taewanus</i>
White-whiskered Laughingthrush	4			D				3	<i>Garrulax morrisonianus</i>
Steere's Liocichla	4			D				2	<i>Liocichla steerii</i>
Taiwan Barwing	3			D				1	<i>Actinodura morrisoniana</i>
Taiwan Fulvetta	1			D				1	<i>Alcippe formosana</i>
Dusky Fulvetta	2	2h	T	D	E		H	1	<i>Alcippe b. brunnea</i>
Grey-cheeked Fulvetta	3	1h	T	D	E		H	1	<i>Alcippe m. morrisonia</i>
Taiwan Siberia	4			D				3	<i>Heterophasia auricularis</i>
Taiwan Yuhina	4			D				3	<i>Yuhina brunneiceps</i>
White-bellied Erpornis	1						H	1	<i>Erpornis zantholeuca</i>
Vinous-throated Parrotbill	2				E			1	<i>Paradoxornis webbianus bulomachus</i>
Japanese White-eye	9		T	D	E	Z	H	3	<i>Zosterops japonica simplex</i>
Flamecrest	2			D				2	<i>Regulus goodfellowi</i>
Winter Wren	-	2h		D				1	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes taivanus</i>
Eurasian Nuthatch	2			D				1	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Asian Glossy Starling	2		T			Z		3	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>
Crested Myna	1				>E			1	<i>Acridotheres cristellatus</i>
Javan Myna (I)	8							3	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>
Common Myna (I)	8							1	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
White-shouldered Starling	1			>D				3	<i>Sturnus sinensis</i>
Taiwan Whistling Thrush	4		T	D				1	<i>Myophonus insularis</i>
Pale Thrush	1		T					1	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>
Dusky Thrush	1		T					1	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>
Taiwan Shortwing	2			D				1	<i>Brachypteryx goodfellowi</i>
Johnstone's Robin	2			D				3	<i>Luscinia johnstoniae</i>
Oriental Magpie-Robin (I)	3		T			Z		1	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
Plumbeous Redstart	3						H	2	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa affinis</i>
White-tailed Robin	2	1h		D				1	<i>Myiomela leucura montium</i>
Little Forktail	1			D				1	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i>
Siberian Stonechat	1		T					1	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>
Blue Rock Thrush	3		T			Z		1	<i>Monticola solitarius philippensis</i>
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	1		T					1	<i>Ficedula strophciata</i>
Vivid Niltava	2			D				1	<i>Niltava vivida vivida</i>
Brown Dipper	2		T				H	1	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>

Plain Flowerpecker	1					H	1	<i>Dicaeum concolor uchidai</i>
Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	2		D			H	1	<i>Dicaeum ignipectum formosum</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	8	T	D	E	Z	H	1	<i>Passer montanus</i>
White-rumped Munia	4		D	E	Z		1	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
Scaly-breasted Munia	3		D	E	Z		3	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>
Eastern Yellow Wagtail	5	T	>D		Z		3	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>
Grey Wagtail	7	T		E	Z	H	1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
White Wagtail	7	T	>D	E	Z	H	1	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Red-throated Pipit	1	lh	T				1	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
Brambling	1		T				1	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
Vinaceous Rosefinch	2		D				1	<i>Carpodacus vinaceus formosanus</i>
Black-faced Bunting	2		T		Z		3	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>
Tristram's Bunting	1		T				1	<i>Emberiza tristrami</i>

Notes:

The taxonomy of some of Taiwan's birds will change as DNA work progresses. We mention there are 24 endemics, but there are almost 60 endemic subspecies and it is likely that many of these will be elevated to full Taiwanese endemic status.



MAMMALS

Taiwan Macaque	5	T	D	E		3	<i>Macaca cyclopis</i>
Red-bellied Tree Squirrel	7	T	D		Z H	1	<i>Callosciurus erythraeus</i>
Taiwan Striped Squirrel	3		D			2	<i>Tamiops maritimus</i>
Perny's (Long-nosed) Squirrel	2		D			3	<i>Dremomys pernyi</i>
Muntjac	1		D			1	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>

BUTTERFLIES

Papilionidae

Common Bluebottle	<i>Graphium sarpedon</i>	24 th Huisun
Lesser Mime	<i>Chilasa epycides</i>	24 th Huisun
Southern Chinese Peacock	<i>Papilio dialis</i>	23 rd Huisun
Paris Peacock	<i>Papilio paris</i>	24 th Huisun
Taiwan Swallowtail	<i>Papilio thaiwanus</i>	23 rd Huisun

Pieridae

Common Grass Yellow	<i>Euremia hecabe</i>	21 st Huben, 23 rd Aogu wetland
Lesser Gull	<i>Capora nandini</i>	23 rd Huisun
Giant Orange Tip	<i>Hebomoia glaucippa</i>	23 rd & 24 th Huisun
Yellow Orange Tip	<i>Ixias pyrene</i>	23 rd & 24 th Huisun
Indian Cabbage White	<i>Pieris candida</i>	Common in lowlands
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Common in lowlands
Spotted Sawtooth	<i>Prioneris thestylis</i>	24 th Huisun

Lycaenidae

Metallic Ceruleaan	<i>Jamides alecto</i>	24 th Huisun
Pea (Long-tailed) Blue	<i>Lampides boeticus</i>	23 rd Aogu wetland
Blue Tit	<i>Hypolycaena kina</i>	25 th Wulai

Nymphalidae

Plain Tiger	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	16 th Botanical gardens Teipei
Ceylon Blue Glassy Tiger	<i>Ideopsis similis</i>	25 th Wulai
Glassy Tiger	<i>Parantica aglea</i>	16 th Yeliu
Striped Blue Crow	<i>Euploea mulciber</i>	20 th Huben, 23 rd & 24 th Huisun
Blue-banded King Crow	<i>Euploea eunice</i>	23 rd Huisun
Common Sailor	<i>Neptis hylas</i>	24 th Huisun
Great Eggfly	<i>Hypolimnas bolina</i>	17 th Jaincheng Lake
Chocolate Pansy	<i>Junonia iphita</i>	24 th Huisun
Lemon Pansy	<i>Junonia lemonias</i>	24 th Huisun
Indian Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa indica</i>	24 th Huisun
Common Leopard	<i>Phalanta phalantha</i>	24 th Huisun
Chinese Bushbrown	<i>Mycalesis gatame</i>	24 th Huisun
Taiwan Wavy-eye (The Ringlet)	<i>Ypthima multistiata</i>	23 rd & 24 th Huisun
Dark Evening Brown	<i>Melanitis phedima</i>	24 th Huisun

Hesperiidae

Shiny-spotted Bob	<i>Isoteinon lamprospilus</i>	25 th Wulai
Banded Awl	<i>Hasora chromus</i>	24 th Huisun

This list represents those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.

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Front cover: Swinhoe's Pheasant

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