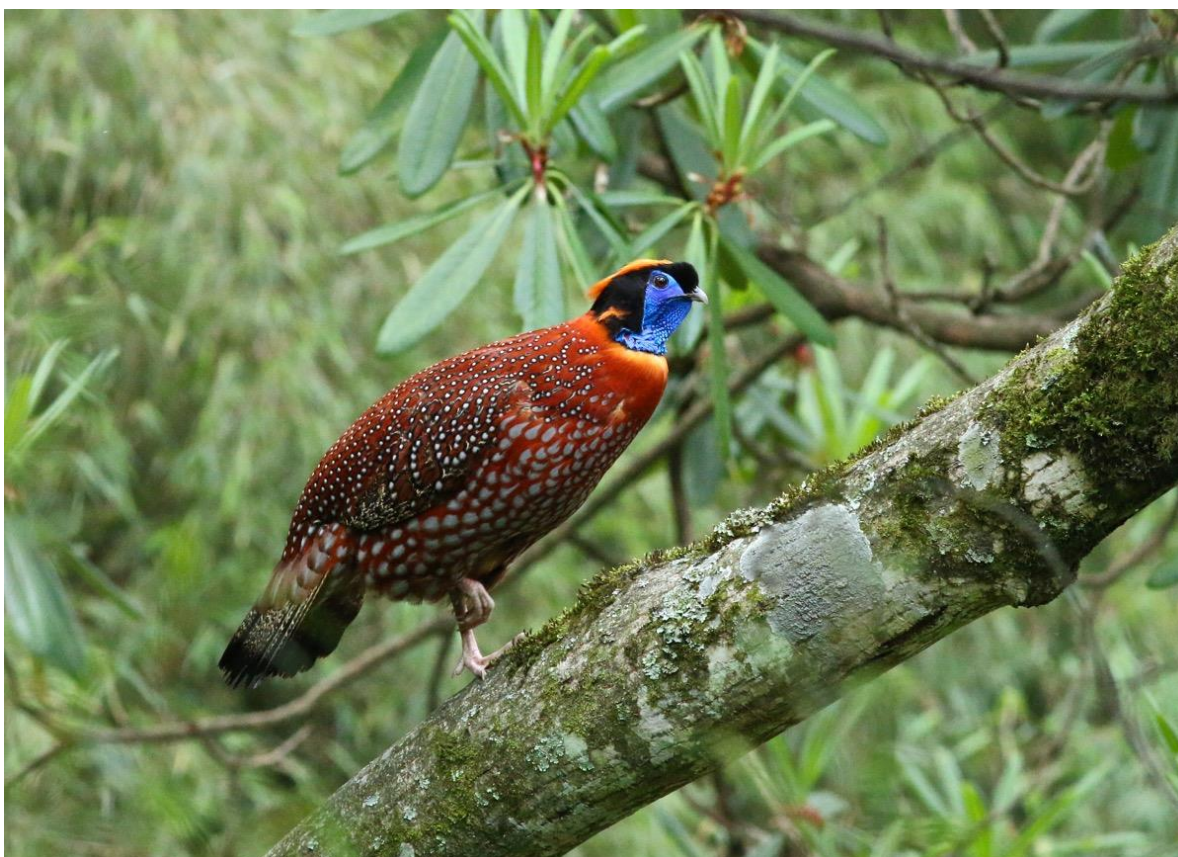




CHINA: SICHUAN TOUR

21st MAY - 7th JUNE 2019



Temminck's Tragopan is one of our targets on this trip.

Sichuan offers an excellent introduction to birdwatching in China with large numbers of endemic and specialty species, set in some seriously stunning mountain landscapes. The huge, mountainous province of Sichuan is blessed with a range of interesting habitats, and we will ensure that we visit a representative sample of as many of these as possible in our quest to find the region's exciting birds. The tour will start and end in Chengdu, the capital of the province, and we will visit the renowned Longcanggou Forest Park, Labahe Nature Reserve, Wolong National Nature Reserve with Balang Shan, the slopes of Mengbi Shan, and the Baxi Forest areas in our search for birds.

We will find many gorgeous game birds, parrotbills, laughingthrushes, and rosefinches during the tour, with particular highlights likely to include **Chinese Monal, Blood, White Eared, Blue Eared, Golden, and Lady Amherst's Pheasants, Tibetan Snowcock, Temminck's Tragopan, Snow Partridge, Black-necked Crane, Giant Laughingthrush, Firethroat, Golden Bush Robin, Chinese Rubythroat, Siberian Rubythroat, Emei Shan Liocichla, Grandala, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Pere David's Tit, Wallcreeper, and Crested Tit-warbler**, along with a near endless list of interesting thrushes, robins, and warblers. Throw in some excellent food, friendly local people, and a great infrastructure, and a fantastic, bird-filled trip is on the cards

This tour can be combined with our **China: 9-day Yunnan pre-tour 2019** tour and/or with our **China: 15-day Qinghai extension 2019** tour into a mind-boggling 43-day China mega tour. It is even possible to also combine it with our **Taiwan Birding Extravaganza 2019** tour, which precedes the Yunnan pre-tour of the Sichuan main tour.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide to the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Itinerary (18 days/17 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Chengdu

Arrival into Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, where you will be met and taken to our nearby hotel and welcome dinner. Depending on arrival time there may be time for some relaxed birding in the city.

Overnight: Chengdu

Day 2. Morning birding at Chengdu Panda Base and afternoon travel to Longcanggou

This morning we will drive to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Built in 1987 jointly by the Chinese government and WWF, the base aims at helping captive pandas to increase their population in order to help pandas in the wild. After years of construction this base now covers about 100 hectares of land. The peaceful environment of the research base has made it an excellent habitat for birds. During the morning we will look for **Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Black-throated Bushtit, Chinese Grosbeak, Red-billed Leiothrix, Rufous-faced Warbler, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, and White-browed Laughingthrush** in the Chengdu

parks, as well as a range of other more widespread and common species. After lunch on our drive to Longcanggou Forest Park we will look out for **Ashy-throated Parrotbill**.

Overnight: Longcanggou Forest Park

Days 3-4. Birding Longcanggou Forest Park

We will have two full days birding here in some beautiful landscapes and a range of forested and more open habitats, and we will look for **Temminck's Tragopan, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Streaked Barwing, Sichuan Treecreeper, Red-winged, Spotted, and Elliot's Laughingthrushes, Emei Shan Liocichla, Chinese Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Bunting, Forest Wagtail, Scaly-breasted Wren-babbler, Firethroat, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Spotted and Sichuan Bush Warblers, and White-bellied Redstart**. The area is also great for parrotbills, and we will be looking for **Grey-hooded, Three-toed, Golden, Great, and Brown Parrotbills**.

Overnight (two nights): Longcanggou Forest Park

Day 5. Longcanggou Forest Park to Labahe Nature Reserve

After a final morning birding at Longcanggou we travel to Labahe. We will keep an eye open for any interesting birds along the way.

Overnight: Labahe Nature Reserve

Day 6. Birding Labahe Nature Reserve

We will spend the full day birding in Labahe, where we will look for **Temminck's Tragopan, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Great, Brown, Fulvous, Three-toed, and Golden Parrotbills, Pere David's Tit, Fire-capped Tit, Emei Shan Liocichla, Elliot's Laughingthrush, and the stunning Firethroat** along with many more interesting species. We also have a possibility of finding the rare and beautiful Red Panda while here.

Overnight: Labahe Nature Reserve

Day 7. Labahe to Wolong National Nature Reserve

After a final morning birding at Labahe we travel to Wolong National Nature Reserve; again we will look out for interesting birds along the way.

Overnight: Wolong National Nature Reserve

Days 8-9. Birding Balang Shan

Based in Wolong National Nature Reserve at around 1,500m (4900ft) we will spend two days birding across a wide altitudinal range to beyond 4,500m (14,750ft) in the mountains of Balang Shan. Due to the changes in altitude we will spend time birding in and around a stunning landscape made up of wooded valleys, raging mountain rivers, alpine scrubs and meadows, and rocky scree slopes. This is one of the best areas in Sichuan for game birds, and we will look for **Chinese Monal, White Eared Pheasant, Tibetan Snowcock, Snow Partridge, Golden Pheasant, Verreaux's Monal-Partridge, Koklass Pheasant, and Blood Pheasant** during our time on the mountains. There are plenty of other magnificent birds to be found here too (especially rosefinches), such as **Red-fronted, Streaked, Spot-winged, Chinese Beautiful, Chinese White-browed, and Dark-breasted Rosefinches and Crimson-browed Finch**. Other exciting birds include **Grandala, Wallcreeper, Firethroat, Himalayan Bluetail, Golden Bush Robin, White-browed Bush Robin, Giant Laughingthrush, Chinese Rubythroat, Crested**

Tit-warbler, Collared and White-winged Grosbeaks, Snow Pigeon, Spotted Bush Warbler, Sichuan Tit, and Kessler's and Chestnut Thrushes.

Overnight (two nights): Wolong National Nature Reserve

Day 10. Wolong to Maerkang

We will travel between Wolong and Maerkang during the day and will look for birds along the way, particularly **Long-tailed Rosefinch, Blue Rock Thrush, and Yellow-streaked Warbler.**

Overnight: Maerkang

Day 11. Birding at Mengbi Shan

The mountain of Mengbi Shan is in the transitional zone between the Sichuan Basin and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and provides some important habitat for a wide range of species. There are a number of target birds for us here, such as **Sichuan Jay, Verreaux's Monal-Partridge, Blood Pheasant, Giant Laughingthrush, Himalayan Bluetail, Chinese Beautiful, Pink-rumped, Chinese White-browed, and Three-banded Rosefinches, and Black Woodpecker.**

Overnight: Maerkang

Day 12. Travel Maerkang to Ruorgai

We will travel between Maerkang and Ruorgai; along the way we will look for **Tibetan Partridge, Plain Laughingthrush, Azure-winged Magpie, Saker Falcon, White-browed Tit-warbler, Sichuan and White-browed Tits, Tibetan Snowfinch, Przevalski's Finch, Little Owl, and Black-necked Crane.**

Overnight: Ruorgai

Day 13. Birding at Baxi Forest and Flower Lake

There are many exciting birds and other wildlife at the Baxi Forest and Flower Lake, such as **Blue Eared Pheasant, Chinese Grouse, Three-banded Rosefinch, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Tibetan and Horned Larks, and Rufous-necked and White-rumped Snowfinches.** The wetlands here are known as 'the lungs of Sichuan' and are the most important wetlands in the province. The abundant food resources attract a range of waterbirds such as **Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, and Ferruginous Duck, and Black-necked Crane** is possible here too. We will also have the chance of Tibetan Fox and Tibetan Wolf here.

Overnight: Ruorgai

Day 14. Travel Ruorgai to Chuanzhusi

We will have a final morning birding around the Ruorgai area and then will travel to Chuanzhusi. Along the way we will look for **Collared Crow, Wallcreeper, Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, Eastern Crowned Warbler, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Spectacled Fulvetta, Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler, Spotted Bush Warbler, Pere David's Tit, Olive-backed Pipit, and Giant Laughingthrush.**

Overnight: Chuanzhusi

Day 15. Birding at Gonggangling

We will spend time in forest area of Gonggangling, looking for **Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared Pheasant, Crested Tit-warbler, Three-banded Rosefinch, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Maroon-**

backed Accentor, Hodgson's Treecreeper, White-bellied Redstart, Spectacled Fulvetta, and Pere David's Owl.

Overnight: Jiuzhaigou

Day 16. Birding Jiuzhai Valley National Park

This beautiful national park is full of exciting and stunning birds, and we will try and find as many of these as possible, with luck possibly even **Rufous-headed Robin**. Other targets will include **Spectacled Parrotbill, Spectacled Fulvetta, Sooty Bushtit, Fujian Niltava, Sichuan Treecreeper, White-cheeked Laughingthrush, Indian Blue Robin, Pere David's Tit, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Chinese Nuthatch, Eurasian Nuthatch, Black Woodpecker, White-bellied Redstart, Brown Dipper, and White-throated Dipper.**

Overnight: : Jiuzhaigou

Day 17. Jiuzhaigou to Chengdu

We will spend the day traveling between Jiuzhaigou and Chengdu. We will have a final evening meal together and reminisce about the wonderful tour we just concluded.

Overnight: Chengdu

Day 18. Departure

Departure, or continue on our Qinghai tour.

Overnight: Not included (unless you continue onto the Qinghai Tour)

Duration: 18 days

Limit (Group Size): 4 - 8

Date: 21st May – 7th June 2019

Start: Chengdu, Sichuan

End: Chengdu, Sichuan

Tour Price: US\$6,931 per person sharing, assuming 4-8 people

Single Supplement: US\$500

Price includes:

Meals and drinking water during the tour (from dinner on day 1 until breakfast on Day 18)

Accommodation

Expert tour leader and local bird/wildlife guide fees

National reserve/birdwatching reserve entrance fees

All transport while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Tolls

Price excludes:

International flights

Internal flights if you take part in a pre-tour or extension

Visa (we will provide you with an 'Invitation Letter', usually required to get your Chinese visa)

Gratuities

Meals and drinking water before/after tour as described above

Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls etc.

Soft/alcoholic drinks

Camera permits

Personal insurance