



CHINA: QINGHAI TOUR

7th – 21st JUNE 2021



Grandala is one of our targets on this trip.

This tour focuses on the northwestern Chinese province of Qinghai, the fourth-largest province in China, but with the third-smallest population in the country. Known as the ‘roof of the world’, much of the province is over 3000 m in elevation (9,800 ft) and formed by the famed Tibetan Plateau. Our tour starts and ends in Xining, the capital of the province, which is also close to the huge, saline Qinghai Lake, after which the province is named.

Our two-week tour traverses across some stunning landscape in pursuit of some exceptional birds of this high-elevation zone, such as **Tibetan Sandgrouse, Pallas’s Sandgrouse, Tibetan Snowcock, Tibetan Partridge, Himalayan Snowcock, White Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Szechenyi’s Monal-Partridge, Ibisbill, Crested Tit-warbler, Snow Pigeon, Black-necked Crane, Tibetan Snowfinch, Tibetan Rosefinch, Tibetan Bunting, Tibetan Babax, Tibetan Serin, Henderson’s Ground Jay, and Grandala.**

This tour can be combined with our two preceding China tours, **China: 9-day Yunnan pre-tour 2021** tour and **China: 18-day Sichuan 2021** into a mind-boggling 43-day China mega tour. It is even possible to also combine it with our **Taiwan Birding Extravaganza 2021** tour, which precedes the Yunnan pre-tour of the Sichuan main tour.

Itinerary (15 days/14 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Xining

Arrival at Xining Caojiabao International Airport, where you will be met and transferred to our hotel. We will spend some time birding the Xining hills. Possible species here may include **Pale Rosefinch, Red-billed Chough, Pied Wheatear, Meadow Bunting, Godlewski’s Bunting, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Common Rock Thrush, Common Pheasant, Little Owl,** and **Przevalski’s Partridge.**

Overnight: Xining

Day 2. Morning birding at Dongxia Forest Park and drive to Gonghe

The morning will be spent birding in the Dongxia Forest Park, where we will look for **Gansu Leaf Warbler, Przevalski’s and Chinese Nuthatches, Crested Tit-warbler, Goldcrest, Chinese White-browed and Common Rosefinches, White-throated Redstart, Chinese Thrush, Elliot’s Laughingthrush, White-winged Grosbeak, Black-faced Bunting,** and **Grey-headed Bullfinch.** Afterwards we will drive to Gonghe, ready for the next day's birding.

Overnight: Gonghe

Day 3. Birding Gonghe and Ela Mountain and travel to Madoi

The morning's birding will see us in Gonghe, where we will look for **Mongolian Finch, Desert Finch, Lesser Whitethroat, Pine and Black-faced Buntings, Isabelline and Desert Wheatears, Rock Sparrow, Twite,** and **White-rumped and Rufous-necked Snowfinches.** Afterwards at Ela Mountain we will be trying to find **Tibetan Rosefinch, Gldenstdt’s Redstart, White-winged Snowfinch,** and **Brandt’s and Plain Mountain Finches.**

Overnight: Madoi

Day 4. Madoi to Nangqen

We'll have a full day's drive between Madoi and Nangqen, our base for the next few nights. There's a range of birds possible along the way, and we will keep our eyes peeled for some great roadside birds such as **Upland Buzzard, Himalayan Vulture, Bearded Vulture** (Lammergeier), **Saker Falcon, Daurian Jackdaw, Little Owl, Ruddy Shelduck, Lesser Sand Plover, Bar-headed Goose, Common Redshank, Pallas's Gull, Brown-headed Gull, Common Tern, Tibetan Lark, Pale Martin, Citrine Wagtail, Salim Ali's Swift, Eurasian Crag Martin, Asian House Martin, White-rumped and Rufous-necked Snowfinches, Eurasian Hoopoe, Kessler's Thrush, Chinese Grey Shrike, Ibisbill, Brown Dipper, Hodgson's and Blue-fronted Redstarts, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Red-rumped Swallow, and Common and Great Rosefinches.**

Overnight: Nangqen

Day 5. Birding the Kanda Shan Pass

We will have a full day birding at the Kanda Shan Pass, where we will target **Tibetan Bunting, Tibetan Snowcock, Tibetan Partridge, Sichuan Tit, Tibetan Babax, White Eared Pheasant, Szechenyi's Monal-Partridge, Chinese Rubythroat, Grandala, Chinese Beautiful, Red-fronted, and Streaked Rosefinches, White-browed Tit, White-browed Tit-warbler, Snow Pigeon, White-capped Redstart, Golden Eagle, Plain Mountain Finch, White-winged Grosbeak, and Eurasian Eagle Owl.**

Overnight: Nangqen

Day 6. Birding at Baizha Forest

We will spend a full day birding at Baizha Forest, where we will look for **Szechenyi's Monal-Partridge, Blood Pheasant, Giant Laughingthrush, White Eared Pheasant, Three-banded and Common Rosefinches, White-throated Dipper, Tibetan Babax, Hodgson's Treecreeper, Long-tailed Thrush, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Chinese Grey Shrike, Black and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Himalayan Bluetail, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Rosy Pipit, Japanese and Rufous-vented Tits, Grey Crested Tit, Tibetan Serin, Chinese Fulvetta, Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, Maroon-backed Accentor, Salim Ali's Swift, Aberrant Bush Warbler, and Sichuan Leaf Warbler.**

Overnight: Nangqen

Day 7. Travel between Nangqen and Qumalai

Today we have another long drive as we make our way through gorgeous mountain landscapes between Nangqen and Qumalai, but we will bird along the way.

Overnight: Qumalai

Day 8. Travel between Qumalai and Budongguan

We will travel the mountain roads between Qumalai and Budongguan but we will bird along the way, with our main target being **Tibetan Sandgrouse.**

Overnight: Budongguan (very basic accommodation)

Day 9. Travel between Budongguan and Golmud

During morning birding we will search for **Tibetan Sandgrouse, Pallas's Sandgrouse, and Tibetan Rosefinch.** Later we will continue traveling across the stunning mountain landscapes.

We make our way to Golmud, birding along the way and keeping our eyes peeled for **Mongolian Finch** and **Great Rosefinch**.

Overnight: Golmud

Day 10. Travel between Golmud and Dulan

We will travel between Golmud and Dulan. One of the chief targets of the day will be the interesting **Henderson's Ground Jay**, and we might also spot **Przevalski's Redstart** and **Daurian Partridge**.

Overnight: Dulan

Day 11. Birding in Dulan and travel to Chaka

We will do some birding around Dulan, where we will look for **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, **Przevalski's Redstart**, and **Daurian Partridge**, among others. Afterwards we will travel the short distance to Chaka, where we will spend the next couple of days birding.

Overnight: Chaka

Days 12 - 13. Birding at Chaka

We will enjoy two full days birding around the Chaka area, with some very special birds being possible, such as **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, **Tibetan** and **Himalayan Snowcocks**, **Tibetan Chukar**, and **Daurian Partridges**, **Chinese Grey Shrike**, **Henderson's Ground Jay**, **Przevalski's Redstart**, **Wallcreeper**, **Desert** and **Isabelline Wheatears**, **Pine Bunting**, **White-winged Grosbeak**, and **Mongolian Lark**.

Overnight (two nights): Chaka

Day 14. Birding at Rubber Mountain and Qinghai Lake, followed by drive to Xining

Our final birding of the tour will take us to Rubber Mountain, where we will look for **White-browed Tit**, **White-rumped** and **Tibetan Snowfinches**, and the pretty **Robin Accentor**. At Qinghai Lake we hope to find **Bar-headed Goose**, **Pallas's Gull**, **Black-necked Crane**, **Ground Tit**, **Mongolian Lark**, **Hume's Short-toed Lark**, **Tibetan Lark**, and **Pere David's Snowfinch**.

Overnight: Xining

Day 15. Departure

The tour will conclude with your departure from Xining Caojiabao International Airport.

Duration: 15 days

Limit (Group Size): 4 - 8

Date: 7 - 21 June 2021

Start: Xining, Qinghai

End: Xining, Qinghai

Price: US\$7,092 per person sharing, assuming 4-8 participants

Single Supplement: US\$449

Price includes:

Meals and drinking water during the tour (from lunch day 1 until breakfast on day 15)

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:

Flights

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

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

Gratuities

Please note that the detailed itinerary above 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.