

Birding Ecotours



CHINA: SICHUAN TOUR

21 MAY - 07 JUNE 2023

19 MAY - 05 JUNE 2024



Temminck's Tragopan is one of the many spectacular target birds on this amazing Sichuan tour (photo Summer Wong).

Sichuan offers an excellent introduction to birdwatching in China with large numbers of endemic and special 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 Pheasant, White Eared Pheasant, Blue Eared Pheasant, Golden Pheasant, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, 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, Sichuan Tit, Wallcreeper, Crested Tit-warbler, and Przevalski's Finch** along with a near-endless list of interesting thrushes, chats, and warblers. Throw in some excellent food, friendly local people, with a great infrastructure, and a fantastic, bird-filled trip is on the cards.



Przevalski's Finch (formerly *Pink-tailed Rosefinch*, and also known as *Przevalski's Pinktail*) is a highly sought-after monotypic family which is found on the Tibetan Plateau. Sichuan being one of the best places to see this species in the world.

This Sichuan tour can be combined with our **China: Yunnan Tour** (before) and/or with our **China: Qinghai Tour** (after) to make a mind-boggling 43-day China mega tour. It is even possible to combine it with our **Taiwan: Birding Extravaganza** tour, which precedes the Yunnan tour.

Itinerary (18 days/17 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Chengdu

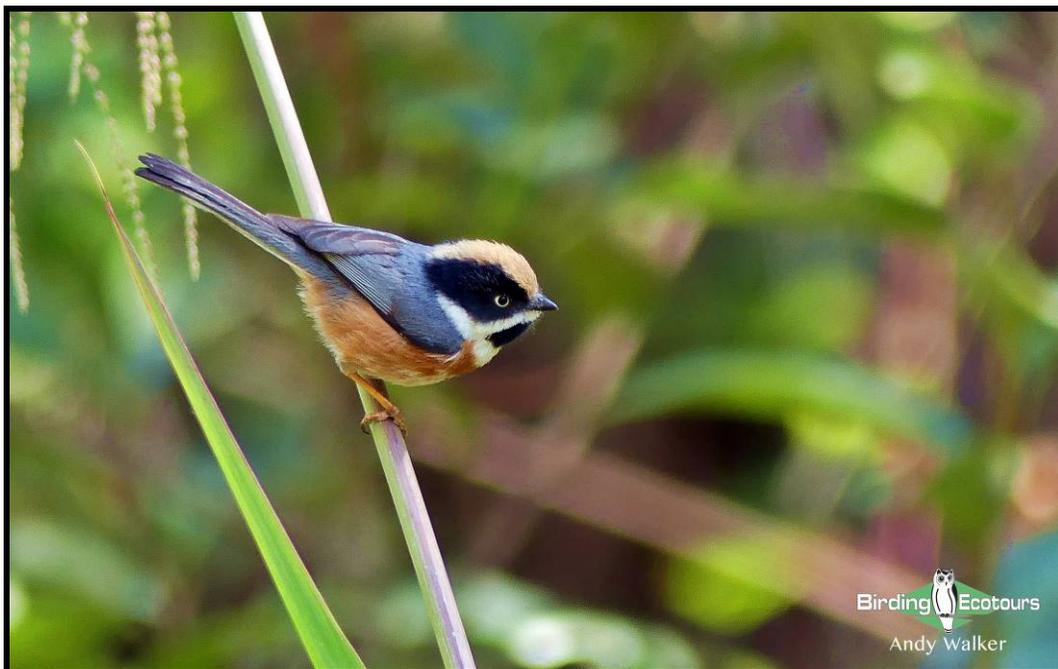
Arrival into Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, where you will be met and taken to our nearby hotel and welcome dinner. Depending on arrival times there may be time for some relaxed birding in the city.

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 **Giant 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 search the Chengdu parks for **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, **Black-throated Bushtit**, **Chinese Grosbeak**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Rufous-faced Warbler**, **Chinese Bamboo Partridge**, and **White-browed Laughingthrush**, as well as a range of other more widespread and common species. After lunch, on our drive to Longcanggou Forest Park, we will look for **Ashy-throated Parrotbill**.

Overnight: Longcanggou Forest Park



*The tiny **Black-throated Bushtit** is a gorgeous little bird and is always a delight to see.*

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. This is a fantastic area to bird and is sure to be an early tour highlight. We will look for a range of spectacular gamebirds, such as **Temminck's Tragopan**, **Chinese Bamboo Partridge**, **Lady Amherst's Pheasant**, **Golden Pheasant**, **Common Pheasant**, and **Silver Pheasant**.



*The gorgeous **Golden Pheasant** is one stunning member of the family and one of many we will see during the tour (photo Summer Wong)!*

There are so many wonderful birds here it is tough to know where to start, over 300 species have been recorded from the local area. Parrotbills are particularly well represented, and we will be looking for five species: **Grey-hooded Parrotbill**, **Three-toed Parrotbill**, **Golden Parrotbill**, **Great Parrotbill**, and **Brown Parrotbill**.

The area holds plenty of small birds (more on those later) and so it is no surprise to find out that a good selection of brood-parasitic cuckoos can be found here. We will keep our ears, and eyes, open for **Large Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Lesser Cuckoo**, **Himalayan Cuckoo**, **Common Cuckoo**, and **Oriental Cuckoo** while overhead we will keep our eyes peeled for the agile **White-throated Needletail** and **Pacific Swift**, both huge swifts. Also overhead we might find **Crested Honey Buzzard**, **Black Baza**, **Mountain Hawk-Eagle**, **Grey-faced Buzzard**, and a range of migratory Accipiters, including **Chinese Sparrowhawk** and **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**. At night we will have the chance for **Oriental Scops Owl** and **Himalayan Owl**, and during the day, **Collared Owlet**.

The forests themselves hold some amazing birds and we could find **Red-headed Trogon**, **Great Barbet**, **Speckled Piculet**, **White-backed Woodpecker**, **Darjeeling Woodpecker**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Crimson-breasted Woodpecker**, **Bay Woodpecker**, and **Grey-headed Woodpecker**. Open areas in the woodlands could hold **Tiger Shrike**, **Brown Shrike**, **Long-tailed Shrike**, **Grey-backed Shrike**, and **Eurasian Hoopoe**. Corvids, tits, and flycatchers are well represented, with five, ten, and 14 species possible respectively, as are leaf warblers, with at least 22 species available! **Emei Leaf Warbler**, **Kloss's Leaf Warbler**, and **Sichuan Leaf Warbler** being the top picks.



*One of the most highly sought-after and beautiful birds in the world, we will have a good opportunity to find **Firethroat** while in the Longcanggou area (photo Summer Wong).*

Some of the other highlights possible over the two days include **Golden-breasted Fulvetta**, **Streaked Barwing**, **Sichuan Treecreeper**, **Red-winged Laughingthrush**, **Spotted Laughingthrush**, **Elliot's Laughingthrush**, **White-browed Laughingthrush**, **Black-faced Laughingthrush**, **Chinese Babax**, **Emei Shan Liocichla**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Chinese Blue Flycatcher**, **Yellow-throated Bunting**, **Forest Wagtail**, **Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler**, **Firethroat**, **Chestnut-headed Tesia**, **Spotted Bush Warbler**, **Sichuan Bush Warbler**, and **White-bellied Redstart**.

Along the beautiful watercourses of the area, we might find **Common Kingfisher**, **Brown Dipper**, **Little Forktail**, **White-crowned Forktail**, and **Spotted Forktail**, all great birds.

Overnight: 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 at, and around the excellent Labahe Nature Reserve, where we will look for plenty more exciting birds like **Temminck's Tragopan**, **Lady Amherst's Pheasant**, **Specked Wood Pigeon**, **Himalayan Swiftlet**, **Salim Ali's Swift**, **Bearded Vulture**, **Himalayan Vulture**, **Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker** (and eight other species), **Long-tailed Minivet**, **Spotted Nutcracker**, **Fire-capped Tit**, **Pere David's Tit**, **Chinese Cupwing**, **Pygmy Cupwing**, **Asian House Martin**, **Collared Finchbill**, **Black Bulbul**, **Sichuan Leaf Warbler**, and **Large-billed Leaf Warbler**.



*There are many stunning gamebirds possible on this Sichuan tour, one of the best must be **Lady Amherst's Pheasant** (photo Summer Wong).*

Other birds we will look for during the day include **Great Parrotbill**, **Brown Parrotbill**, **Fulvous Parrotbill**, **Three-toed Parrotbill**, and **Golden Parrotbill**, **Emei Shan Liocichla**, **Stripe-throated Yuhina**, **White-collared Yuhina**, **Elliot's Laughingthrush**, **Black-faced Laughingthrush**, **Red-winged Laughingthrush**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **White-throated Dipper**, **Chinese Thrush**, **Chestnut Thrush**, **Ferruginous Flycatcher**, **Fujian Niltava**, **Daurian Redstart**, **Grey-headed Bullfinch**, **Slaty Bunting**, 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



We should see *Chestnut Thrush* (above) and the closely related *Kessler's Thrush* on the tour.

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 4,900 feet (1,500 meters), we will spend two days birding across a wide altitudinal range to beyond 14,750 feet (4,500 meters) in the impressive mountains of Balang Shan. 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 (including the famous 'Balang Shan Tunnel' where around 200 species have been recorded).

This is one of the best areas in Sichuan for gamebirds, 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 in the mountains.



We will look for **White Eared Pheasant** at higher elevations and we will also look for **Blue Eared Pheasant** later in the tour (photo Summer Wong).



Chinese Rubythroat is a gorgeous bird and may show well when checking their territory for interlopers (Summer Wong)

There are plenty of other magnificent birds to be found here too (especially rosefinches), with opportunities for species such as **Red-fronted Rosefinch**, **Streaked Rosefinch**, **Spot-winged Rosefinch**, **Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch**, **Chinese White-browed Rosefinch**, **Dark-breasted Rosefinch**, 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 Grosbeak**, **White-winged Grosbeak**, **Snow Pigeon**, **Spotted Bush Warbler**, **Sichuan Tit**, **Kessler's Thrush** and **Chestnut Thrush**.

Overnight: Wolong National Nature Reserve



*There are a lot of spectacular birds on this tour and **Grandala** is one of the best (photo Summer Wong)!*

Day 10. Wolong to Maerkang

Essentially a travel day as we move between Wolong and Maerkang. We will look for birds along the way, like **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 Rosefinch**,

Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Three-banded Rosefinch, and Black Woodpecker.

Overnight: Maerkang



Himalayan Bluetail can be found around Mengbi Shan and is a really good-looking bird.

Day 12. Travel from 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 Tit, White-browed Tit, Tibetan Snowfinch, Przevalski's Finch** (a monotypic and highly sought-after family), **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 Lark, Horned Lark, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, and White-rumped Snowfinch.**

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**. The highly sought-after **Black-necked Crane** is possible here too. We will also have the chance of seeing the amazing

Tibetan Fox, **Tibetan Wolf** (a subspecies of **Grey Wolf**), **Himalayan Marmot**, and **Plateau Pika** here.

Overnight: Ruoergai



Black-necked Crane is a top target on the tour, it has a fairly restricted global range.



Rufous-necked Snowfinch can be found in the pretty wildflower meadows around Flower Lake.

Day 14. Travel Ruoergai to Chuanzhusi

We will have a final morning birding around the Ruoergai 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



Wallcreeper (a monotypic family) will be looked for at higher elevations on this tour.

Day 15. Birding at Gonggangling

We will spend time in the forest area of Gonggangling, looking for **Chinese Grouse**, **Blue Eared Pheasant**, **Crested Tit-warbler**, **White-browed Tit-warbler**, **Three-banded Rosefinch**, **Przevalski's Nuthatch**, **Maroon-backed Accentor**, **Hodgson's Treecreeper**, **Sichuan Treecreeper**, **White-bellied Redstart**, **Spectacled Fulvetta**, and **Pere David's Owl**. Other possibilities include **Golden Eagle**, **Himalayan Buzzard**, **Upland Buzzard**, **Sichuan Jay**, **Oriental Magpie**, **Spotted Nutcracker**, **Red-billed Chough**, **Rufous-vented Tit**, **Grey Crested Tit**, **Sichuan Tit**, **Giant Laughingthrush**, **Plain (Pere David's) Laughingthrush**, **Goldcrest**, **Eurasian Wren**, **Kessler's Thrush**, **Chestnut Thrush**, **Long-tailed Thrush**, **Siberian Rubythroat**, **White-throated Redstart**, and **White-winged Grosbeak**.

Overnight: Jiuzhaigou



White-browed Tit-warbler is always one of the most desired birds on the trip, no wonder given its beauty (photo Summer Wong).

Day 16. Birding Jiuzhai Valley National Park

Jiuzhai National Park is a beautiful place full of exciting and stunning birds (around 300 species have been recorded here), and we will try and find as many of these as possible, focusing on the birds we have not yet seen on the tour including, with luck, the rare **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 have just concluded.

Overnight: Chengdu

Day 18. Departure from Chengdu

A none birding day. Departure from Chengdu or continue on our **China: Qinghai Tour**.

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

Please note that the itinerary 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 from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 18 days
Group Size: 4 - 8
Dates: 21 May - 07 June 2023
 19 May - 05 June 2024
Start: Chengdu, Sichuan
End: Chengdu, Sichuan
Prices: US\$6,492 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2023)
 US\$6,817 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements: US\$560 (2023)
 US\$588 (2024)

Price includes:

All accommodation (from Day 1 to Day 17 as described)
 Meals (from evening dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 18)
 Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle
 Expert tour leader
 Local bird and wildlife guides fees
 Birdwatching site entrance fees and travel permits
 All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights
 Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)
 Visa fees if visa required (we will provide you with an ‘Invitation Letter’, usually required to get your Chinese visa)
 Departure tax
 Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions

Soft/alcoholic drinks

Personal travel insurance

Camera permits

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))