



CHINA BIRD TOUR: YUNNAN SPRING SPECIALS BIRDING TOUR

Date: TBC



Silver Pheasant is one of our gorgeous targets on this Yunnan birding trip.

This exciting birding tour explores the far southwest of China in biodiverse Yunnan Province, which packs an extraordinary range of habitats into a relatively small part of the country, from tropical forests to rugged alpine mountains. As we travel, the scenery is often spectacular and changes dramatically within a single day. Our route takes us from the Kunming basin across the dry pinewood slopes of Zixi Mountain and the dramatic snow-capped peaks around Lijiang, through to the lush forests of the Gaoligong Mountains near the Myanmar border. Here we target three highly range-restricted species - **Brown-winged Parrotbill**, **Yunnan Nuthatch**, and **White-speckled Laughingthrush**, plus many others, including a high diversity of gamebirds, barbets, parrotbills, laughingthrushes, and fulvettas. We also make a special effort to visit a remote mountain valley where the rare endemic, and beautiful **Black Snub-nosed Monkey** can be found.



Black Snub-nosed Monkey are beautiful, and we hope to see these up close during the tour (photo P. He).

This short, small-group Yunnan birding tour covers the province's top birding areas. Our tour begins by birding Zixi Mountain Forest Park, the largest natural park in Yunnan Province. Here we seek endemics such as the pine specialist **Yunnan Nuthatch**, **Spectacled Fulvetta**, the elusive **Chinese Thrush**, along with the impressive **Giant Nuthatch**, and near endemics such as **White-collared Yuhina** and **Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler**. We have a three-night stay in the beautiful city of Lijiang in the northwest of the province, and against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains and forested hills we target the high diversity possible in this area. We bird from a hide to try for the ultra-rare **White-speckled Laughingthrush**, and seek a trio of creeping thicket and scrub specialists: **Rufous-tailed Babbler**, **Brown-winged Parrotbill**, and **Eye-ringed Parrotbill**, all of which are rarely seen by global birdwatchers. Other top targets include **Black-bibbed Tit**, **Black-browed Bushtit**, **Chinese Babax**, and **Black-headed Greenfinch**. We

also have a special opportunity to see the truly stunning **Black Snub-nosed Monkey**, an endangered primate and endemic to Yunnan Province. While here, we will look for some brilliant species, such as **Lady Amherst's Pheasant**, **Elliot's Laughingthrush**, **Giant Laughingthrush**, and the beautiful Chinese endemic **Sharpe's Rosefinch**.

Travelling south, we spend three nights near Baihualing, famous among birders for its exceptional forest bird feeding setups, which provide excellent views of shy and elusive species. We will explore the nearby **Gaoligong Shan National Nature Reserve**, a protected area that holds over 525 bird species within its boundaries. At sites like Gaoligong Shan, we bird across a range of habitats and elevations to maximize diversity. Over two full days, among the many possible species, some of our key targets include stunning laughingthrushes such as **Red-tailed Laughingthrush** and **Scarlet-faced Liocichla**, **Mrs. Hume's Pheasant**, and colorful species such as barbets and sunbirds. Other highlights include **Scaly-breasted Cupwing**, **Spot-breasted Parrotbill**, **Rusty-capped Fulvetta**, and **Himalayan Cutia**. The tour concludes with a transfer to **Tengchong**, where we enjoy final birding for species such as **Silver Pheasant**, **Beautiful Sibia**, **Black-headed Sibia**, and **Black-breasted Thrush**. With its stunning scenery, exceptional birdlife, unique local cuisine, and deep cultural richness, Yunnan lives up to its name as the "Land of Eternal Spring" and makes for one of China's most rewarding birding adventures.



China is a wonderful country for rosefinches. We will look for the beautiful Sharpe's Rosefinch in Yunnan.

Our Yunnan tour is the first of three China bird tours, the others, **China Bird Tour: Sichuan Birding Tour – The Best of Chinese Birding** and **China Bird Tour: Qinghai & Tibetan Plateau Tour** follow. Combining all four tours would result in a mind-boggling, once-in-a-lifetime, incredibly memorable East Asian mega bird tour.

Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Kunming and travel to Zixi Mountain Forest Park

Today is a travel day, with our group meeting at Kunming Changshui International Airport, Yunnan, in the early afternoon (1 pm). From here, we will travel approximately three hours west to overnight near the diverse Zixi Mountain Forest Park.

If you are unable to arrive on a flight into Kunming before noon, please plan to fly in the day before. We will be happy to arrange a hotel for you and can offer some relaxed local birding in the morning before the tour begins.

Overnight: Xike Hotel, or Similar, Zixi Mountain Forest Park

Day 2. Morning birding at Zixi Mountain Forest Park, afternoon travel to Lijiang

Zixi Mountain Forest Park lies about 12 miles (20 kilometers) west of the city of Chuxiong. Covering approximately 16,000 hectares, it is the largest natural park in Yunnan Province. The landscape is dominated by both lush broadleaf, and evergreen Yunnan pine forest, providing excellent habitat for many nuthatches, including our two main targets - **Giant Nuthatch** and **Yunnan Nuthatch**. Over 250 bird species have been recorded here, including several species with limited global distribution, such as **Black-browed Bushtit**, **Spectacled Fulvetta**, **White-collared Yuhina**, **Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler**, **Black-headed Sibia**, elusive **Long-tailed Thrush**, and **Chinese Thrush**.



Yunnan Nuthatch is one of our localized targets in Yunnan (photo P. He).

Over the course of the morning we hope to see many other high-quality birds, such as **Speckled Piculet**, **Long-tailed Minivet**, **White-browed Shrike-babbler**, **Yellow-bellied Fantail**, **Brown-breasted Bulbul**, **Ashy-throated Warbler**, **Buff-barred Warbler**, **Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler**, **Yunnan Fulvetta**, **Chestnut-vented Nuthatch**, **Bar-tailed Treecreeper**, **Black-breasted Thrush**, **Rufous-bellied Niltava**, **Himalayan Bluetail**, **Ultramarine Flycatcher**, the stunning **Mrs. Gould's Sunbird**, **Brown Bullfinch**, **Black-headed Greenfinch**, and **Godlewski's Bunting**.

After our birding session we will spend the majority of the afternoon driving to Lijiang in the northwest of the province, where we will be based for the next couple of days. Aside from its excellent birding, Lijiang is also known for its beautifully preserved Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site whose architecture reflects a fascinating blend of cultural influences developed over centuries.

Overnight: Ji Hotel, or similar, Lijiang



Black-browed Bushtit can be found in Zixi Mountain Forest Park (photo P. He).

Day 3. Birding in Lijiang

We will have a full day birding the area around the small city of Lijiang, with many target birds to keep us busy against the backdrop of stunning surrounding landscapes, including the nearby Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Our main focus here will be the restricted-range trio of **White-speckled Laughingthrush**, **Brown-winged Parrotbill**, and **Yunnan Nuthatch**. There are several excellent birding sites around Lijiang, including a bird hide for shy **White-speckled Laughingthrush**, which is the best way to see the species. That afternoon we will turn our attention to other key targets around Lijiang, including the rare and endemic **Rufous-tailed**

Babbler, Spectacled Fulvetta, and Eye-ringed Parrotbill, with Lijiang being the best place globally to see the latter, along with **Salim Ali's Swift, Black-bibbed Tit, Black-browed Bushtit, White-collared Yuhina, Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, Black-headed Sibia, Chinese Babax, and Black-headed Greenfinch.**



Grey-winged Blackbird is a beautiful member of the thrush family.

We will visit some of the following sites: Lijiang Wetland Park, Lashixiang Nature Reserve, Yuquan Park and Black Dragon Pool, or possibly Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, or Tiger Leaping Gorge. Given the varied habitats, an interesting mix of species is possible across a short area, and we will hope to see **Bar-headed Goose, Gray-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Southern Nutcracker, Rufous-vented Yuhina, Grey-winged Blackbird, Himalayan Bluetail, Blue-fronted Redstart, White-capped Redstart, Hodgson's Redstart, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Godlewski's Bunting**, and the very attractive **Yellow-throated Bunting**. Fulvettas are especially diverse in this area, with more than five species possible, aside from the endemic **Spectacled Fulvetta**, other highlights include the near-endemic **Manipur Fulvetta**, along with **White-browed Fulvetta, Rusty-capped Fulvetta, and Yunnan Fulvetta**. The area is also packed with a variety of tricky warblers, including **Chinese Leaf Warbler and Grey-crowned Warbler**, to keep us on our toes.

Overnight: Ji Hotel, or similar, Lijiang

Day 4. Black Snub-nosed Monkey National Park

We will head northwest of Lijiang to the spectacular Three Parallel Rivers Protected Area in search of the extraordinary **Black Snub-nosed Monkey** (also known as Yunnan Snub-nosed Monkey). This striking black and white primate is endemic to Yunnan and Endangered (IUCN), with an estimated 1,000 individuals remaining. Adapted to the high-altitude forests of the region, it lives at the highest elevations of any non-human primate, surviving in extreme cold and thin mountain air. This reserve offers the only reliable global site to see the species, and we will dedicate the full day to searching for it. The area is also excellent for birding, and we will be on the lookout for species such as the beautiful endemic **Sharpe's Rosefinch**, plus stunning **Koklass Pheasant**, **Lady Amherst's Pheasant**, **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker**, **Maroon Oriole**, **Stripe-throated Yuhina**, **Black-faced Laughingthrush**, **Elliot's Laughingthrush**, **Black-headed Sibia**, **Giant Laughingthrush**, **Mrs. Gould's Sunbird**, **Chinese Long-tailed Rosefinch**, and possibly the brilliant **Bar-winged Wren-Babbler**. We will spend the full day in the area and return to Lijiang for dinner.

Overnight: Ji Hotel, or similar, Lijiang

Day 5. Lijiang to Baihualing

This is essentially a travel day as we move between Lijiang and Baihualing, our base for the next few days. We will stop if we spot anything interesting along the way, of course. Baihualing has become famous over recent years due to the exceptional forest bird feeding set up, allowing for some amazing views and photographs of many often-secretive and rare forest birds.

Overnight: Chonglou Hostel, or Similar, Baihualing



The almost plastic-looking Long-tailed Broadbill can be seen on this tour, it is a real beauty.

Days 6 - 7. Birding Gaoligong Shan National Nature Reserve

Located on the western side of Yunnan Province, the Gaoligong Mountains form the southern end of the Hengduan Mountain Range, rising steeply from 2,130 feet (650 meters) to over 16,400 feet (5,000 meters). This dramatic elevation range supports a wide variety of habitats, from tropical monsoon forest and subtropical evergreen broad-leaf forest at lower altitudes to temperate deciduous forest, subalpine coniferous forest, and alpine meadows higher up. Our top targets at Gaoligong Shan include many range-restricted specials with limited global distributions, such as the charismatic **Scaly-breasted Cupwing**, **Spot-breasted Parrotbill**, **Black-throated Parrotbill**, **Brown-winged Parrotbill**, **Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler**, **Rusty-capped Fulvetta**, **Beautiful Sibia**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Blue-winged Laughingthrush**, the beautiful **Red-tailed Laughingthrush**, **Scarlet-faced Liocichla**, and possibly **Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler**.

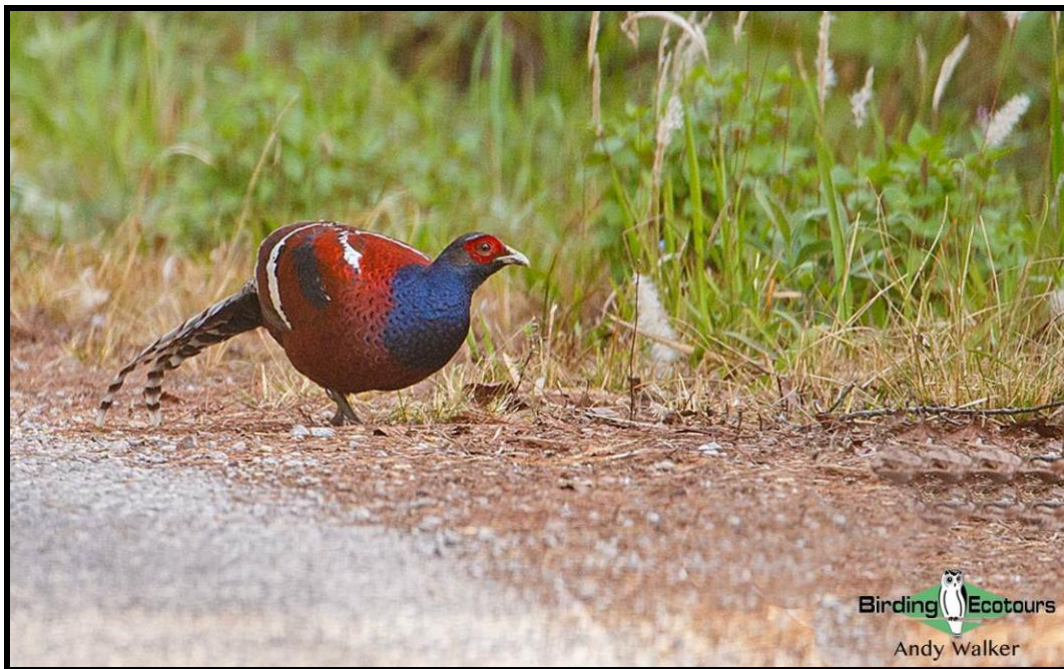


*We will look for **Spot-breasted Parrotbill** in the Gaoligong Shan area.*

The Gaoligong Shan area offers some of the best birding in Yunnan, if not all of China, and we will enjoy two full days exploring a range of forest locations here. Possible species we will be looking out for include an exciting list of gamebirds such as **Hill Partridge**, **Rufous-throated Partridge**, **Mrs. Hume's Pheasant**, **Silver Pheasant**, and **Mountain Bamboo Partridge**; colorful birds like **Greater Yellowape**, **Bay Woodpecker**, **Great Barbet**, **Golden-throated Barbet**, **Blue-throated Barbet**, **Red-headed Trogon**, **Long-tailed Broadbill**, **Orange-bellied Leafbird**, **Maroon Oriole**, and **Black-faced Warbler**; and a brilliant diversity of sunbirds, including **Mrs. Gould's Sunbird**, **Green-tailed Sunbird**, **Black-throated Sunbird**, **Crimson Sunbird**, and **Fire-tailed Sunbird**.

More than 525 bird species have been recorded here, and a few highlights of the species we hope to see include **Speckled Wood Pigeon, Black Eagle, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Short-billed Minivet, White-browed Shrike-babbler, Black-eared Shrike-babbler, Yellow-cheeked Tit, Crested Finchbill, Grey-cheeked Warbler, Grey-crowned Warbler, Bianchi's Warbler, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Chestnut-headed Tesia, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Whiskered Yuhina, Striated Yuhina, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Long-tailed Sibia, Rusty-fronted Barwing, Red-tailed Minla, Small Niltava, Lesser Shortwing, Brown Bullfinch,** and potentially a late **Scarlet Finch**.

Overnight: Chonglou Hostel, or Similar, Baihualing



Mrs. Hume's Pheasant is one of our targets here, this is one of the best places in the world to find this often-secretive species.

Day 8. Baihualing to Tengchong

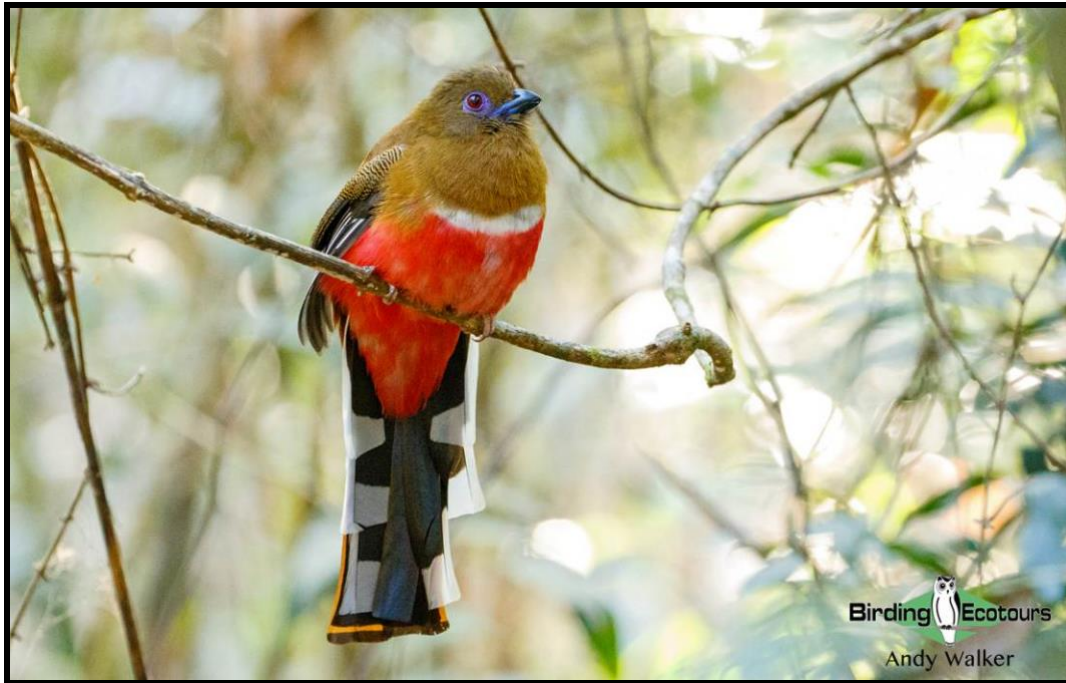
After a final morning birding, looking for the above listed species and more in the Baihualing area, we will travel to Tengchong for the final night of this short birdwatching tour in one of the most diverse areas in China.

Overnight: Donghu Spring Hotel, or Similar, Tengchong

Day 9. Laifengshan National Forest Park and tour concludes

Tengchong is located close to the border with Myanmar, and is well known for its ancient volcanoes, and geothermal springs. We will visit the nearby Laifengshan National Forest Park for the morning, where we will find more interesting birds before the tour concludes. This is a

nice park with a mix of lowland forests, set against the backdrop of the Laifeng Mountains. Here we will look for the stunning **Silver Pheasant**, **Burmese Shrike**, **Whiskered Yuhina**, **Beautiful Sibia**, **Black-headed Sibia**, **White-browed Laughingthrush**, **Chestnut-vented Nuthatch**, **Black-breasted Thrush**, **Hill Blue Flycatcher**, **White-tailed Robin**, and **Little Pied Flycatcher**.



*A female **Red-headed Trogon** quietly watches us. The male is even more spectacular!*

For those ending their trip here, you will be taken to the airport in Tengchong, where this tour will conclude. For those continuing with our **China Bird Tour: Sichuan Birding Tour – The Best of Chinese Birding**, you will fly from Tengchong to Chengdu.

Overnight: Not included (unless you are continuing onto the Sichuan Birding Tour)



White-browed Laughingthrush is one of many laughingthrush species possible on the 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 guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Duration: 9 days
Group Size: 4 - 8
Dates: TBC
Start: Kunming Airport, Yunnan
End: Tengchong Airport, Yunnan
Prices: US\$TBC per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants
Single Supplements: US\$TBC

Price includes:

Accommodation based on two sharing (from Day 1 to Day 8 as described)
 Meals (from lunch dinner on Day 1 until lunch on Day 9)
 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

Price excludes:

Flights to Kunming Changshui International Airport, and from Tengchong Tuofeng Airport
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)
Airport transfers if you arrive before the tour starts or depart after the tour ends
Visa fees if visa required (we will provide you with an 'Invitation Letter', usually required to obtain 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
Alcoholic, soft drinks, teas, coffees etc. unless provided as part of a meal package (e.g. with breakfast)
Personal travel insurance
Camera permits where necessary
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))