



JAPAN BIRDING TOUR: SPECTACULAR WINTER BIRDS

19 FEBRUARY – 04 MARCH 2025

21 FEBRUARY – 06 MARCH 2026



Steller's Sea Eagle is one of the many spectacular highlights of this Japanese winter birding tour (photo Richard Campey).

Japan is an archipelago of 6,852 islands covering a huge area of 145,937 square miles (377,975 square kilometers) along the ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’, offering some world class birding. We will visit three of the five main islands (Honshu, Kyushu, and Hokkaido) on this exciting winter birding tour of Japan. This Japanese bird tour will start in Kagoshima and end in Tokyo, Japan’s high-tech capital and largest city (though which also offers great birding along the edge of Toyko Bay). Although one of the most populous countries in the world, around 75% of Japan is mountainous, with much of that area uninhabitable, so the population is crammed into multiple mega-cities. Japan has a fascinating cultural history and is unlike anywhere else in the world, and we will get a great sample of this as we travel around on our Japanese birdwatching tour.

This Japanese winter birding tour is designed around the spectacular gatherings of cranes and sea eagles which make Japan their winter home, as well as a range of Japanese endemic birds on offer. The first leg of this Japan bird tour will be around the island of Kyushu, this will be the furthest southwest we venture, and here we will search for the localized **Japanese Murrelet** and the wintering hordes of **Hooded Cranes** and **White-naped Cranes**, with an accompanying cast of other winter visitors, which may include tough world birds like **Black-faced Spoonbill** and **Saunders’s Gull**.



White-naped Crane will be enjoyed on our Japan birding tour (photo Richard Campey).

The second leg of this bird tour in Japan will be to the winter wonderland of Hokkaido, this will be the furthest northeast we go. Here, in a landscape dominated by dramatic volcanoes, calderas, coastal plains, and rugged peninsulas, species numbers are low, but quality is extremely high! We visit the feeding and roosting grounds of **Red-crowned Crane**, seeing them at close range where they are easily photographed, perhaps with a **White-tailed Eagle** overhead. We see flocks

of wintering **Whooper Swans** and other waterfowl, look for **Crested Kingfisher**, seek out winter roosts of **Ural Owl**, and visit a feeding site of the rare and Endangered ([BirdLife International](#)) **Blakiston's Fish Owl**. During our time on the Shiretoko and Nemuro Peninsulas we spend time watching arguably the world's largest and most spectacular raptor – **Steller's Sea Eagle**. Coastal sea-watching and offshore boat trips will allow us to search for an array of exciting wintering seabirds, including sea ducks, loons (divers), grebes, and an assortment of alcids.

The final leg of this Japanese birding trip will be on and around the island of Honshu, home to Tokyo. We will meander through the forests, hills, and lakes of central Honshu to seek out specials such as **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Japanese Green Woodpecker**, **Varied Tit**, and perhaps, if we are lucky, the shy and endemic **Copper Pheasant**. We include visits to lakes to look for **Baikal Teal** and **Mandarin Duck**, and to a valley where endemic **Japanese Macaque** and **Japanese Serow** (a goat-antelope) make their winter home. We will end our tour with a birding trip to Miyake-Jima ([Miyake Island](#)), a volcanic island in the [Izu Archipelago](#), located approximately 110 miles (180 kilometers) southeast of Tokyo. This trip will give us opportunities for **Izu Thrush**, **Owston's Tit**, and **Japanese Robin** on the island, as well as **Black-footed Albatross**, **Laysan Albatross**, **Short-tailed Albatross**, and **Tristram's Storm Petrel** out at sea.



Black-footed Albatross is one of three albatross species possible on this Japanese birding tour.

Itinerary (15 days/14 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Kagoshima

After your afternoon arrival in Kagoshima on the southern island of Kyushu, you will be met at the airport and transferred to a hotel near the airport, with the rest of the day at your leisure. We will meet for a group welcome dinner in the evening.

Overnight: Kagoshima

Days 2 – 3. Kagoshima to Izumi (Arasaki)

We will depart from Kagoshima and travel north for approximately two hours to the city of Izumi, located in Kagoshima Prefecture, our base for the next two nights. The coastal roads and harbors along the route offer opportunities for observing seabirds like **Japanese Murrelet**, **Japanese Cormorant**, **Pelagic Cormorant**, **Black-tailed Gull**, **Vega Gull**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, **Pacific Reef Heron**, **Brown Booby**, and **Streaked Shearwater**.

Izumi is home to the famed Izumi Crane Observation Centre, and this is one of the main reasons for our visit to the area and we will spend some time birding from the observation tower. This part of Japan is famous worldwide for its winter flock of almost 15,000 cranes! Most of the flock is made up of **Hooded Cranes**, with **White-naped Cranes** being the next most abundant. Annually the flock also occasionally holds low numbers of **Common Crane**, **Demoiselle Crane**, **Sandhill Crane**, or even the Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) **Siberian Crane**, so we will carefully scan through the vast flocks to see what may be lurking among the masses!



*The striking **Hooded Crane** will be enjoyed in huge numbers (photo Matt Slaymaker).*

There is plenty besides the cranes to look out for in the area (and time permitting, we will also visit the Izumi City Crane Museum). Wildfowl here might include **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Taiga Bean Goose**, **Tundra Bean Goose**, **Tundra (Bewick's) Swan**, **Whooper Swan**, **Ruddy Shelduck**, **Common Shelduck**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Falcated Duck**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**, **Northern Pintail**, **Common Pochard**, **Tufted Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, **Common Merganser** (Goosander), and **Red-breasted Merganser**.

Shorebirds here could include **Northern Lapwing**, **Kentish Plover**, **Common Ringed Plover**, **Long-billed Plover**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Dunlin**, **Common Snipe**, **Common Greenshank**, and an assortment of stints and sandpipers. Gulls could include **Black-tailed Gull**, **Vega Gull**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, and might also include the Vulnerable (BirdLife International) **Saunders's Gull**. Large wading birds might include **Eurasian Spoonbill** and if we are lucky, the Endangered (BirdLife International) **Black-faced Spoonbill**. Raptors in the area could include **Osprey**, **Eastern Marsh Harrier**, **Hen Harrier**, **Black Kite**, **Eastern Buzzard**, **Eurasian Goshawk**, **Common Kestrel**, **Merlin**, and **Peregrine Falcon**.

We often see interesting passerines in the area too, such as **Bull-headed Shrike**, **Brown Shrike**, **Rook**, **Daurian Jackdaw**, **Carrion Crow**, **Varied Tit**, **Chinese Penduline Tit**, **Eurasian Skylark**, **Zitting Cisticola**, **Asian House Martin**, **White-cheeked Starling**, **Red-billed Starling**, **Russet Sparrow**, **Red-flanked Bluetail**, **Brown-headed Thrush**, **Pale Thrush**, **Olive-backed Pipit**, **Red-throated Pipit**, (Japanese) **Buff-bellied Pipit**, and almost a dozen bunting species, including **Yellow-throated Bunting**, **Rustic Bunting**, **Common Reed Bunting**, and **Japanese Reed Bunting**.



*Sightings of the beautiful **Red-flanked Bluetail** are always a highlight.*

During the day here we will visit Kogawa Reservoir (Kogawa Dam) just outside of the city. The reservoir is great for waterbirds and the nearby river holds an interesting range of species too. Woodland surrounding the reservoir is mixed and features evergreen broadleaf trees and bamboo. An interesting range of birds are possible on the reservoir here including **Mandarin Duck**, **Baikal Teal**, **Falcated Duck**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**, **Eurasian Teal**, **Common Pochard**, **Tufted Duck**, and **Greater Scaup**.

Other possibilities in the area could include **Oriental Turtle Dove**, **White-bellied Green Pigeon**, **Long-billed Plover**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Great Cormorant**, **Grey Heron**, **Little Egret**, **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**, **Eurasian Goshawk**, **Common Kingfisher**, **Crested Kingfisher**, **Japanese Green Woodpecker**, **Brown Dipper**, **Ryukyu Minivet**, **Warbling White-eye**, **Red-flanked Bluetail**, **Daurian Redstart**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, (Japanese) **Buff-bellied Pipit**, **Japanese Wagtail**, **Yellow-throated Bunting**, **Black-faced Bunting**, and **Grey Bunting**.

Overnight (two nights): Izumi



*The mighty **Crested Kingfisher** is one impressive bird that we shall seek in Japan.*

Day 4. Izumi to Hyuga

We will travel from Izumi to Hyuga City. On arrival in the Hyuga area we have a range of sites to check, depending on what we are still targeting after the previous few days birding, such as Cape Hyuga, Hyuga Port, Kadogawa Harbor, and Tomi Peninsula. One of the main target species in this area is **Japanese Murrelet**. They breed nearby on Birojima Islet during the summer, an Important Bird Area (IBA) (BirdLife International) and can often be observed from the areas we will visit during our time here. Their numbers increase in the late winter and early spring as they return to the area to prepare for the onset of the breeding season.

Other species we will look for in the area include **Chinese Bamboo Partridge**, **Japanese Wood Pigeon**, **Japanese Cormorant**, **Japanese Green Woodpecker**, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Japanese Bush Warbler**, **Ryukyu Minivet**, **Warbling White-eye**, **Red-billed Leiothrix**, **Daurian Redstart**, **White-cheeked Starling**, **Brown-eared Bulbul**, and **Black-faced Bunting**. We will potentially have time to drive inland through some beech forests, where with luck, **Copper Pheasant** can occasionally be found.

Overnight: Hyuga



Daurian Redstart adds a splash of color to the Japanese woodlands.

Day 5. Travel from Hyuga to Miyazaki, fly to Tokyo, and travel to Kushiro

We will leave Hyuga and drive back to Miyazaki, where we will connect with a flight to Tokyo. From Tokyo we will pick up another flight to Kushiro on the incredible island of Hokkaido. We will arrive in the evening and head to our hotel for the night.

Overnight: Tsurui

Day 6. Kushiro to Yorouchi

We will begin the day with sunrise over a **Red-crowned Crane** roosting site, where they emerge from the mist. After breakfast we will visit Tsurui-Ito Tancho Sanctuary, the world famous **Red-crowned Crane** site, and what a spectacular sight they are! Though the cranes will be the main targets here, there are a few other interesting birds to look out for in the local area, such as **Whooper Swan**, **Common Crane**, **Hazel Grouse**, **Ural Owl** (with luck we might find a

roosting bird), **White-tailed Eagle**, **Crested Kingfisher**, **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **Northern Raven**, **Marsh Tit**, **Willow Tit**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Bohemian Waxwing**, **Grey-capped Greenfinch**, **Common Redpoll**, **Pallas's Rosefinch**, and **Asian Rosy Finch**. We will also hope to see **Japanese Wagtail**. Today we could also see the magnificent **Steller's Sea Eagle** for the first time on the tour, certain to be a tour highlight.



***Red-crowned Crane**, one of the most elegant birds to be enjoyed while birding in Hokkaido, surely one of the most graceful birds in the world too (photo Matt Slaymaker)?*

As we travel north from Tsurui towards the Shiretoko Peninsula (our base for the next couple of nights), we will pass by Lake Kussharo and Lake Mashū and we will look out along the way for the ginormous duo of both **Steller's Sea Eagle** and **White-tailed Eagle** (along with anything else that grabs our attention).

In the evening, we will try to find another one of our big tour targets, the huge and Endangered (BirdLife International) **Blakiston's Fish Owl**. They inhabit mature boreal forest close to rivers and streams within which they forage, mainly on fish, occasionally in the ponds outside our lodging (but it can be a long wait). There is often a **Solitary Snipe** in the area too.

Overnight: Yoroushi

Day 7. Yoroushi / Rausu (Shiretoko Peninsula)

We have a full day birding the fascinating Shiretoko Peninsula and nearby area, and it promises to be an exciting experience. We will take a boat cruise for a couple of hours along the picturesque Rausu Coast and within the Nemuro Strait (it is really magnificent scenery). During the winter, drift ice is usually present, this ice brings with it plankton which in turn attracts fish,

which further attracts a range of amazing birds (and whales later in the year). During the winter, the area becomes the best place in the world for observing the magnificent **Steller's Sea Eagle**, one of the main targets of the day.

This trip could well be one of the tour highlights (and that is quite something, given what we will have already experienced!). Along with the sea eagles, we could find other exciting species like **White-tailed Eagle**, **Harlequin Duck**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Stejneger's Scoter**, **Black Scoter**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Common Murre** (Common Guillemot), **Thick-billed Murre** (Brünnich's Guillemot), **Spectacled Guillemot**, **Long-billed Murrelet**, **Ancient Murrelet**, **Least Auklet**, **Crested Auklet**, **Rhinoceros Auklet**, **Black-tailed Gull**, **Vega Gull**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, **Glaucous Gull**, **Glaucous-winged Gull**, **Common (Kamchatka) Gull**, **Red-throated Loon** (Red-throated Diver), **Black-throated Loon** (Black-throated Diver), **Pacific Loon** (Pacific Diver), **Pelagic Cormorant**, and **Japanese Cormorant**.



*The list of spectacular birds in Japan is long and **Steller's Sea Eagle** is normally right at the top of this list (photo Richard Campey).*

We will also spend time birding from land, and will visit the excellent Notsuke Peninsula, where we will call in to the Notsuke Peninsula Nature Center. Here we are likely to see several species already enjoyed during the morning or earlier in the tour, but others may include (Black) **Brant Goose**, **Harlequin Duck**, **Stejneger's Scoter**, **Smew**, several alcids, gulls, loons (divers), and cormorants, **Steller's Sea Eagle**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Asian Rosy Finch**, and **Snow Bunting**.

In the evening we will again try for **Blakiston's Fish Owl** at our accommodation, where we hope again to get good views of this mega bird.

Overnight: Yorouchi



Blakiston's Fish Owl is one of the special targets on this tour (photo Richard Campey).

Day 8. Yoroushi to Nemuro

In the morning we will head to Nemuro on the scenically spectacular Nemuro Peninsula jutting out into the Okhotsk Sea, another excellent birding area. If weather conditions allow, we will take an exciting boat trip from Habomai Harbor, where we may again see a range of most-wanted sea ducks, grebes, loons (divers), gulls, and alcids.

Possibilities in the harbor and on the boat trip include **Harlequin Duck**, **Stejneger's Scoter**, **Black Scoter**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Red-necked Grebe**, **Horned (Slavonian) Grebe**, **Pigeon Guillemot**, **Spectacled Guillemot**, **Ancient Murrelet**, **Least Auklet**, **Crested Auklet**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, **Glaucous-winged Gull**, **Pacific Loon** (Pacific Diver), **Red-faced Cormorant**, and **Pelagic Cormorant**.

We will also spend time birding on land around the Nemuro Peninsula looking for a range of birds, including the rare **Rock Sandpiper**, **Common (Kamchatka) Gull**, **Red-faced Cormorant**, **White-tailed Eagle**, **Steller's Sea Eagle**, **Rough-legged Buzzard**, **Lapland Longspur** (Bunting), **Pine Bunting**, and the elusive **Asian Rosy Finch**. Additional sites that we will likely check during the day (and potentially the following morning) include Lake Furen, Nemuro Harbor, and the Shunkunitai Wild Bird Sanctuary, it is another great birding area.

Overnight: Nemuro

Day 9. Nemuro and Furen to Kushiro and fly to Tokyo, then travel to Chiba

We will have some additional time in the Nemuro area and gradually make our way back to Kushiro before flying to Tokyo. Around Nemuro we might pick up some of the birds listed

above and we may (depending on our flight time) call in at Hamanaka Port, Cape Kiritappu, and Kiritappu Wetlands Center along the way, where we could find more of the birds listed above.

Once we reach Kushiro, we will take a flight back to Tokyo. On arrival in Tokyo, we will drive to Chiba Prefecture where we will spend the night.

Overnight: Narita



*Gulls abound in Japan, such as this **Slaty-backed Gull** (photo Matt Slaymaker).*

Day 10. Chiba to Karuizawa

This morning we will head out to some great wetland areas close to Narita. Here we can look for species hard to find elsewhere on the tour, including **Japanese Reed Bunting**, **Green Pheasant**, and **Brown-headed Thrush**. Lakes in the area often have large flocks of the stunning **Baikal Teal** which are sure to impress, and we might also see **Mandarin Duck**, **Falcated Duck**, and **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**.

In the mid-afternoon, we will head towards the town of Karuizawa in Nagano Prefecture, our base for the next couple of nights. Along the way we will make some stops, including at a regular site for **Mountain Hawk-Eagle**.

At Karuizawa we will visit the Karuizawa Wild Bird Sanctuary (Karuizawa Yacho no Mori). The sanctuary was established in 1974 and is an area of mixed woodland including beautiful Japanese chestnut and larch trees. The sanctuary is covered by a network of paths that provide great access to this excellent and “birdy” forest. We will enjoy a range of exciting birds here during our birding sessions, and some of the highlights could include **Copper Pheasant**, **Green Pheasant**, **Oriental Turtle Dove**, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **White-backed Woodpecker**, **Japanese Green Woodpecker**, **Japanese Tit**,

Varied Tit, Willow Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, Eurasian Treecreeper, Eurasian Wren, Brown Dipper, Brown-eared Bulbul, Eurasian Jay, Carrion Crow, Large-billed Crow, Dusky Thrush, Pale Thrush, Daurian Redstart, Japanese Waxwing, Bohemian Waxwing, Chinese Hwamei, Goldcrest, Japanese Accentor, Japanese Wagtail, Japanese Grosbeak, Rustic Bunting, Meadow Bunting, Yellow-throated Bunting, Brambling, Pallas's Rosefinch, and Long-tailed Rosefinch.

Overnight: Karuizawa



*The highly camouflaged **Dusky Thrush** foraging on the ground.*

Day 11. Karuizawa and snow monkeys

We will visit the famous snow monkeys at Jigokudani Yaen Koen (Monkey Park), here we can watch the endemic **Japanese Macaques** frolic in the snow and soak in the hot springs. We will also be looking here for **Japanese Serow** (a goat-antelope).

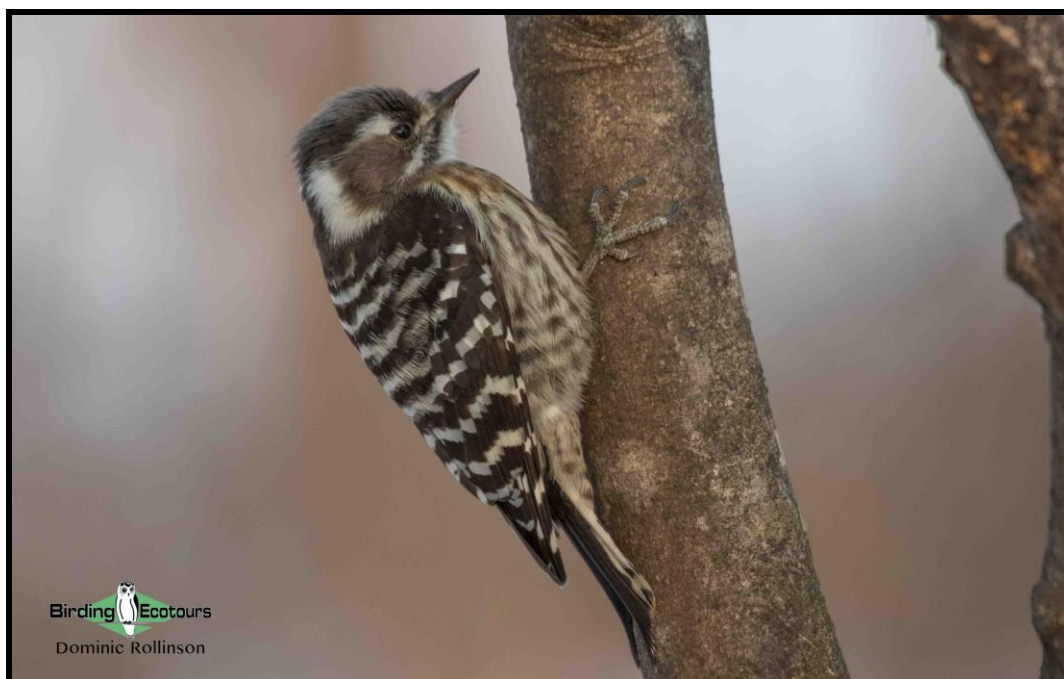
While the focus at the site will be on the amazing spectacle of the monkeys, we should also keep our eyes peeled for a range of birds that might be moving through the area, such as **Golden Eagle, Eurasian Jay, Varied Tit, Willow Tit, Japanese Tit, Brown-eared Bulbul, Brown Dipper, Alpine Accentor, Japanese Accentor, and Eurasian Siskin**. Nearby ponds can hold **Baikal Teal, Japanese Wagtail, and Long-billed Plover**, so we will check those out as needed.

After finishing up with the monkeys and birds around Jigokudani Yaen Koen, we will head back to Karuizawa to look for more of the birds mentioned in Day 10.

Overnight: Karuizawa



We will seek out **Brown Dipper** in suitable areas of water at Karuizawa and at suitable areas during this tour (photo Richard Campey).



Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker will be searched for in woodland areas.

Day 12: Birding Karuizawa to Tokyo then overnight ferry from Tokyo to Miyake-Jima

We will spend the day around Karuizawa looking for the birds mentioned above, before heading back to Tokyo. After transferring to the ferry port in Tokyo we will depart on a late evening ferry for Miyake-Jima (Miyake Island). We will spend the night in cabins on the ferry.

Overnight: Ferry between Tokyo and Miyake-Jima

Day 13. Miyake-Jima endemic birding, then afternoon ferry departure to Tokyo (pelagic birding from ferry)

We will arrive at Sabigahama Port in Miyake-Jima in the early morning where we may spot a range of gulls and other species, like **Japanese Cormorant**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, and **Meadow Bunting**. We will then have until around lunchtime on the island looking for the special birds found here. Top of the list will be **Izu Thrush**, **Owston's Tit**, **Japanese Robin**, **Japanese Wood Pigeon**, and **Grey Bunting**. One of the best sites on the island is the area surrounding Tairo-ike in the south of the island (this is an important breeding ground for the rare Ijima's Leaf Warbler during the summer, but they won't be present during our stay, they will likely be overwintering further south in Taiwan or the Philippines).

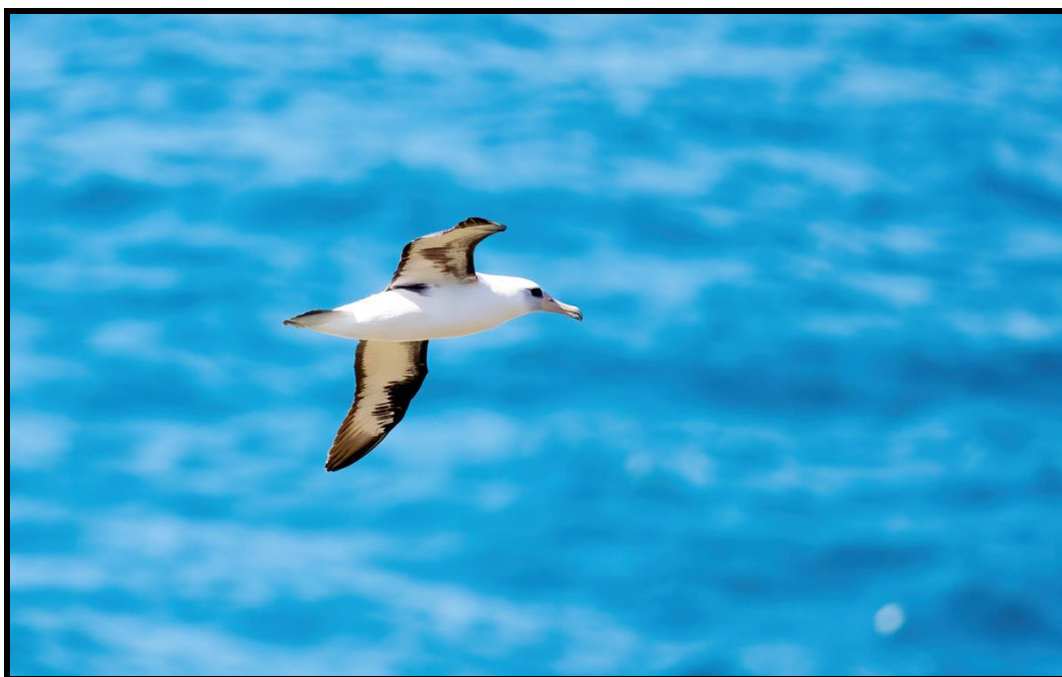
Other species we could discover during our time on the island include **Oriental Turtle Dove**, **Japanese Scops Owl**, **Northern Boobook**, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Bull-headed Shrike**, **Japanese Tit**, **Brown-eared Bulbul**, **Japanese Bush Warbler**, **Warbling White-eye**, **Eurasian Wren**, **Pale Thrush**, **Red-flanked Bluetail**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, **Grey-capped Greenfinch**, **Eurasian Siskin**, **Meadow Bunting**, and **Black-faced Bunting**.



*Pale Thrush (above) is one of several thrush species we will be looking for on Miyake-Jima, the others being **Izu Thrush** and **Brown-headed Thrush** (photo Richard Campey).*

In the early afternoon we will depart Sabigahama Port on Miyake-Jima for our return ferry trip back to Tokyo. The first part of this pelagic trip will be during daylight hours through a good area for pelagic species. During this section of the crossing, we will look for **Black-footed Albatross**, **Short-tailed Albatross**, and **Laysan Albatross**. At this time of year, we also have a good chance of seeing **Tristram's Storm Petrel** (this is a winter-breeding seabird species). Other pelagic species we might encounter include **Japanese Murrelet**, **Streaked Shearwater**, **Northern Fulmar**, **Pomarine Jaeger** (Skua), and **Pelagic Cormorant**. A wide range of gulls are also possible in this section of water so we will grill those, as opportunities arise, though our prime focus will be on observing the three species of albatross and other truly pelagic species, as this is a great opportunity to see them. We will arrive in Tokyo in the evening and have a final group dinner together.

Overnight: Tokyo



Laysan Albatross can be found on the sea around Miyake-Jima (photo Mollee Brown).

Day 14. Departure from Tokyo

Time at leisure prior to your international departure from Tokyo (please see the important note below regarding your international departure).

Overnight: Not included

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 must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	14 days / 13 nights
Group Size:	6 - 10
Dates:	19 February - 04 March 2025 21 February - 06 March 2026
Start:	Kagoshima
End:	Tokyo
Prices:	US\$7,980 per person sharing – based on 6 - 10 participants (2025) which includes the domestic flights occurring within the tour US\$8,890 per person sharing – based on 6 - 10 participants (2026) which includes the domestic flights occurring within the tour
Single Supplements:	US\$650 (2025) US\$700 (2026)

In the event of fewer than six participants signing up to the tour there will be the option of a surcharge to guarantee departure. The amount of the surcharge will depend on how many participants are signed up to the tour and will occur if all participants agree.

Price includes:

All accommodation (Day 1 until Day 13 as described above, or similar)
Domestic flights during tour (Miyazaki to Kushiro via Tokyo and Kushiro to Tokyo)
Meals (from dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 14)
Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle
Expert tour leader
Local bird and wildlife guide fees
Birdwatching site entrance fees (including all national park fees) and travel permits
Boat trips as referred to in itinerary
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

International flights to Kagoshima (Kyushu) and from Tokyo (Honshu)
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)
Visa fees if visa required
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 excursions

Soft/alcoholic drinks

Personal travel insurance

Customary gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Important Note:

The boat usually (and currently) leaves Tokyo at 22:30 hrs. and arrives in Miyake-Jima at 05:00 hrs. The ferry then leaves Miyake-Jima at 13:35 hrs. arriving back in Tokyo at 19:40 hrs.

During the winter there is a moderate chance that the ferry service might get cancelled due to poor weather. If that happens, we have an alternative plan that will involve some birding in the Tokyo area. We will only have the one chance for the pelagic and island birding trip. If the weather prevents the trip, we will be unable to go and we are unable to reschedule the trip.

There is a small chance that if the weather deteriorates while we are on the island, we may need to spend a night on the island unexpectedly. In this rare scenario, we might not get back to Tokyo at the time/date planned in the itinerary. It would therefore be prudent to book an extra night in Tokyo for the night of Day 14 (not included in the tour cost) and then have an international flight booked for the following day (i.e.: 24 hrs, later than in this itinerary, so what would be “Day 15”). We can help book that extra ‘security’ night if you wish, in the same hotel, and we can also arrange additional birding or sightseeing excursions in Tokyo, if you should wish to explore this fascinating city, or just relax after an exciting couple weeks’ winter birding in Japan.

You could also opt to fly out of Tokyo on Day 14, if you wish, as indicted in the itinerary. It is impossible to predict if the weather will cause any issues with this pelagic trip until the day before/day of this trip. We will of course monitor the situation and check with the ferry operator ahead of time to try and reduce any chance of issues due to cancellations and delays, though those factors are clearly out of our hands.