

# Birding Ecotours



## TAIWAN: ENDEMIC BIRDING EXTRAVAGANZA

02– 13 MAY 2027

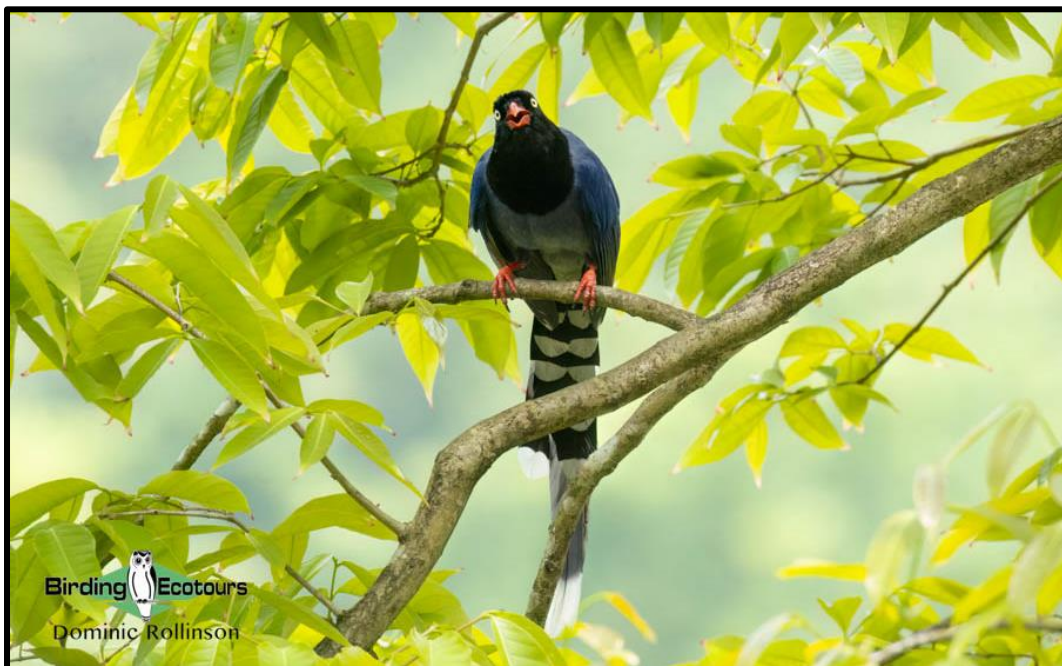


*Swinhoe's Pheasant* is one of the many stunning endemic species we will search for on this trip.

Taiwan is a compact island country situated 112 miles (180 kilometers) off continental East Asia, and the People's Republic of China. It is approximately 248 miles (400 kilometers) long and 93 miles (150 kilometers) wide, with rugged and spectacular central mountains and deep valleys. Taiwan offers remarkable biodiversity in a compact and accessible setting, with excellent roads, comfortable accommodation, and delicious food. This makes it a superb destination for a short Asian birdwatching holiday, and our small-group tour is perfectly suited whether you're embarking on your first Oriental birding adventure or returning for your tenth.

Following International Ornithological Congress (IOC) version 15.2 taxonomy, the Taiwan bird list stands at over 720 bird species, this includes 32 currently recognized endemic species and numerous endemic subspecies. In addition, there are some highly sought-after breeding (e.g. **Fairy Pitta**), wintering (e.g. **Black-faced Spoonbill**), and passage (e.g. **Chinese Egret**) birds, as well as some birds that are easier to see in Taiwan than elsewhere in the world, such as **Malayan Night Heron**. Furthermore, there are plenty of widespread Asian species too, all combining to make Taiwan a top-priority destination for world birders.

We usually find just about all of Taiwan's endemic birds on our spring tour (**Taiwan Thrush** often proving elusive), as well as a high percentage of all subspecies likely to get elevated to full species status in the future. Some of the endemic highlights of this great birding tour include **Taiwan Partridge**, **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge**, **Swinhoe's Pheasant**, **Mikado Pheasant**, **Taiwan Barbet**, **Taiwan Blue Magpie**, **Yellow Tit**, **White-whiskered Laughingthrush**, **Taiwan Barwing**, **Taiwan (Steere's) Liocichla**, **White-eared Sibia**, **Taiwan Hwamei**, **Taiwan Bush Warbler**, **Taiwan Vivid Niltava**, **Taiwan Bush Robin**, **Collared Bush Robin**, **Taiwan Thrush**, **Flamecrest**, **Taiwan Yuhina**, **Taiwan Bullfinch**, and **Taiwan Rosefinch**.



*Taiwan Blue Magpie is a gorgeous bird, and we will be looking out for this colorful endemic during our Taiwan birdwatching tour.*

Most of the endemic birds are found in the mountains, meaning birding takes place in some absolutely gorgeous scenery with nice cool temperatures, a pleasant change from the warmer lowlands where there are also plenty of excellent birds to be found, including several more endemics, and the migratory and highly sought-after **Fairy Pitta**. A few of the species occurring in Taiwan with distinctive local subspecies (and potential future splits) include **Ryukyu Scops Owl**, **Dusky Fulvetta**, **Golden Parrotbill**, **Maroon Oriole**, and many more.



*Taiwan Scimitar Babbler is an attractive Taiwanese endemic.*

Due to Taiwan's position on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, the island offers great opportunities for connecting with numerous passage migrants from a wide range of birds, including shorebirds (waders) and numerous exciting passerines such as shrikes, warblers, and buntings as they return north after spending the winter period in Australia, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

This tour focuses on the endemics and other East Asian specials in Taiwan's well-protected forests. Most of our time will be spent in the mountains, but we will also allow some time in the lowlands and at the coast, looking for wetland birds. Orchid (Lanyu) Island also has several interesting birds, and we will spend some time there looking for localized pigeons, owls, monarchs, and bulbuls.

The Taiwanese are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality, blending the finest elements of unspoiled traditional Chinese culture with influences from colonial Japan and the island's native Austronesian heritage. Taiwan is free and democratic, has good infrastructure, and is considered safe, while also offering amazing birding and excellent photography opportunities.

## Itinerary (12 days/11 nights)

### Day 1. Arrival in Taipei, Taiwan

You can either arrive in Taiwan this morning or over the previous days. After your arrival at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, you will be met by our representative and transferred to Taipei City. We will meet at 1 pm to head out for our first Taiwanese birding on the outskirts of Taipei (with exact sites based on recent local bird sightings). This afternoon we hope to find our first few Taiwan endemics such as **Taiwan Barbet**, **Taiwan Blue Magpie**, and the endemic subspecies of **Maroon Oriole** (a possible future split). We will then meet for our welcome dinner in the evening. For those with an interest, there will be the opportunity to self-explore Taiwan's lively night markets and Taoist temple scenes after dinner.

Overnight: Taipei



*Taiwan Barbet is one of Taiwan's most widespread endemics.*

### Day 2. Taipei to Dongshi District

We will again keep plans open for our morning birding around Taipei and may visit the Pinglin District to look for the scarce **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge** as well as other endemics such as **Taiwan Scimitar Babbler** and **Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler** and perhaps our first looks at the impressive **Swinhoe's Pheasant**.

After our morning birding, we will travel south to Dongshi District (near Taichung City), close to the famed Dasyueshan region, where we will be birding over the next few days. Along the way we will look out for **Chinese Egrets**, with sites such as Xiangshan Wetland or Xucuogang Wetland

often proving reliable for this species during spring migration. At coastal sites we can also scan through an impressive assortment of shorebirds. We may also call in at Shimen Reservoir where we might find some other interesting species, such as **Taiwan Partridge**, **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge**, **Taiwan Barbet**, **Taiwan Blue Magpie**, **Grey Treepie**, and **Taiwan Whistling Thrush**.

Overnight: Dongshi District (near Taichung)

### Days 3 - 4. Dasyueshan National Forest Recreation Area

We will spend two full days in the renowned Dasyueshan National Forest, moving through a range of elevations and habitats, from subtropical lowlands to coniferous temperate mountains at over 6,500 feet (2,000 meters). We will stay in comfortable cabins within Dasyueshan National Forest Recreation Area for two nights.

At lower elevations we may encounter **Collared Finchbill**, **Striated Prinia**, **Oriental Turtle Dove**, **Taiwan Barbet**, **Grey Treepie**, **Eastern Red-rumped (Striated) Swallow**, **Taiwan Hwamei**, **Taiwan Scimitar Babbler**, and **Rufous-capped Babbler**. Roadside birding usually produces great views of **Grey-chinned Minivet**, **Brown Dipper**, **Plumbeous Water Redstart**, **Grey-cheeked Fulvetta**, **Malayan Night Heron**, and **Striated Heron**.

As we get higher, we will hopefully find **Bronzed Drongo**, **Black Bulbul**, the striking **Taiwan Vivid Niltava**, **White-bellied Erpornis**, **White-backed Woodpecker**, **Grey-headed Woodpecker**, and probably **Formosan Rock Macaque**.



*Malayan Night Herons are incredibly confiding in Taiwan, and we usually get close-up looks at this species.*

The first big birding highlight is usually **Swinhoe's Pheasant** which often comes into seed. We also hope **Taiwan Partridge** will be enticed by our seed offerings. While waiting for one to show, we should be entertained by **White-tailed Robin, Taiwan (Steere's) Liocichla, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Yuhina, and Pallas's Squirrel. Asian House Martin** can be found nesting under bridges along the road, so we will keep our eyes peeled for these.

During our time at Dasyueshan (and Alishan) we will always be on the lookout for the rare and elusive **Taiwan Thrush**. This is without a doubt the toughest of Taiwan's endemic bird species and we will require a good dose of luck to see this species.

The main target in the higher altitude forests is the graceful **Mikado Pheasant**. While staking them out along the road, the highly confiding **White-whiskered Laughingthrush** and **Maritime (Formosan) Striped Squirrel** will likely pose for you. Nearby we will be on alert for **Taiwan (formerly White-browed) Bush Robin** and the smart **Collared Bush Robin**. As we get into hemlock and dwarf bamboo forest at the highest points, we will hopefully encounter the distinctive local version of **Southern Nutcracker** as well as **Yellow-bellied Bush Warbler, Taiwan Bush Warbler**, and the cute and highly active **Flamecrest**.



*The endemic **Mikado Pheasant** is a highly prized target species.*

Mixed flocks often include **Green-backed Tit, Yellow Tit, Black-throated Bushtit, Rufous-faced Warbler, Collared Owlet, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** with scarcer species like **Eurasian Nuthatch** and **Eurasian Wren** occasionally joining. The views along the Dasyueshan Road are breathtaking; in the distance we will have views of Taiwan's highest peak, Yushan, which rises to just under 13,000 feet (4,000 meters).

The excellent *Trochodendron* and pine forest of the higher sections of the road are the best areas for **Rusty and Rufous-crowned Laughingthrushes, Brown Bullfinch**, the local subspecies of

**Eurasian Jay**, and the scarce **Ashy Wood Pigeon**, while a local waterfall is home to the gorgeous **Little Forktail**.



*Rusty Laughingthrush is one of a few laughingthrush species we might see on this tour.*

Having two full days in Dasyueshan will ensure we have time to concentrate on scarcer species which often require extra work to find, such as the secretive **Taiwan Partridge** and the tiny **Taiwan Cupwing**. Other species we will be keeping our eyes peeled for here include **Mountain Hawk-Eagle**, **White-bellied Green Pigeon**, **Large Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Taiwan Barwing**, **Taiwan Rosefinch**, **Taiwan Fulvetta**, and **Taiwan Bullfinch**.

After dinner we can take a walk around the lodge grounds looking for **Collared Scops Owl** and **Mountain Scops Owl**, while we will need some luck to find the rare endemic subspecies of **Himalayan Owl**. The lodge grounds are particularly reliable for the large and charismatic **Taiwan (Red-and-white) Giant Flying Squirrel**, **Formosan Serow**, and **Reeves' Muntjac** may also be encountered.

Overnight: Anmashan Lodge (or similar), Dasyueshan

### Day 5. Dasyueshan to Tainan

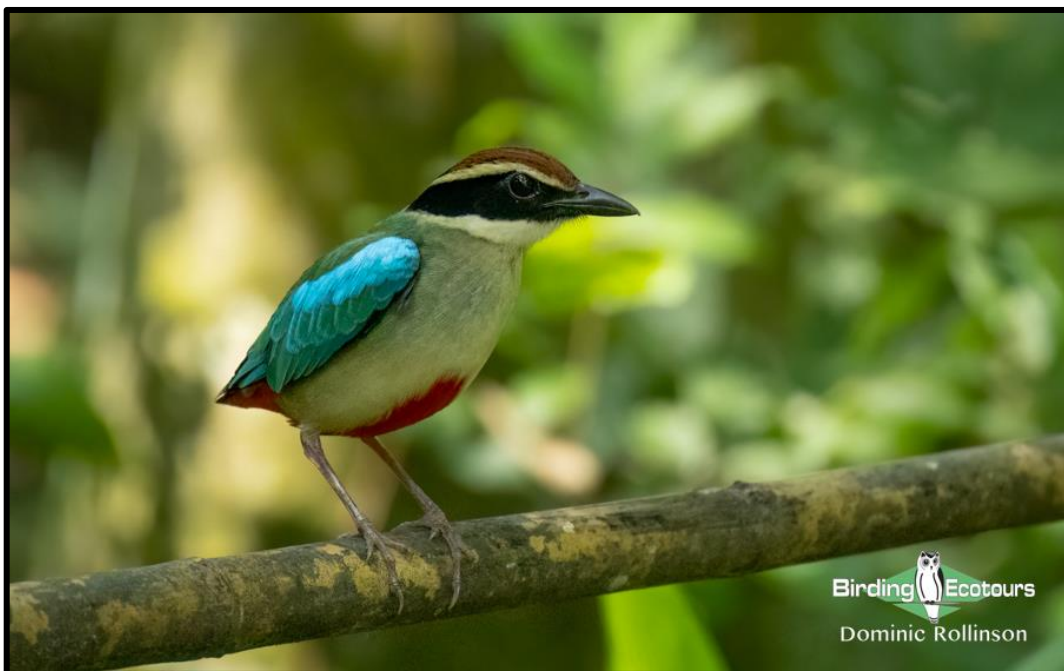
We will have a final morning wrapping up the birding in Dasyueshan, potentially finding one or two new birds or gaining better views of birds already seen over the previous two days. In the late morning we will drive down to the lowlands where we will likely enjoy an assortment of water-associated species north of Tainan, such as **Whiskered** and **Little Terns**, **Pacific Swallow**, **Eastern Yellow Wagtail**, along with good numbers of shorebirds. We will leave the schedule

flexible for this afternoon, to perhaps make a diversion or two for special species such as **Oriental Stork**, which have recently nested in the lowlands of western Taiwan.

Overnight: Tainan City

### Day 6. Lowland and coastal birding

Today, we will likely make an early start to bird patches of lowland forest for the colorful and charismatic **Fairy Pitta** which breed in low numbers in Taiwan. This species often requires some patience and while waiting for it we will also look for the likes of **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge**, **Asian Emerald Dove**, **Black-naped Monarch**, and the introduced **White-rumped Shama**.



*Fairy Pittas breed near Huben in Taiwan, which is probably one of the most reliable places to see this gorgeous species in the world.*

We will then head back towards the coast and bird in areas such as Aogu and Budai wetlands. Our targets will be any lingering **Black-faced Spoonbill** and passage delights such as **Great Knot** and **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**. **Black-faced Spoonbill** is listed as Endangered by BirdLife International and Taiwan, along with Japan, is one of the best places to see this bird during the non-breeding season. Birds usually persist at a few sites in Taiwan into April and May, and we will be looking out for them today.



*We will hope for a lingering **Black-faced Spoonbill** or two during our time in the Aogu wetlands of western Taiwan.*

These huge wetland areas hold hundreds of bird species, and this is sure to be an exciting day with a large number of species possible. We will also target **Oriental Pratincole**, **Roseate Tern**, **Medium Egret**, **Greater Sand Plover**, **Terek Sandpiper**, **Marsh Sandpiper**, and **Broad-billed Sandpiper**.

Local fields and ditches attract **Pacific Golden Plover**, **Greater Painted-snipe**, **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Ruddy-breasted Crake**, **Yellow Bittern**, **Cinnamon Bittern**, **Far Eastern Curlew**, **Red-necked Stint**, and **Long-toed Stint**. **Osprey**, **Black-winged Kite**, or **Eastern Marsh Harrier** may also make a showing. Other familiar shorebirds (waders), terns, and ducks are likely.

Scrubby embankments can hold **Zitting Cisticola**, **Golden-headed Cisticola**, **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, and various starlings, so there are plenty of quality birds to keep us occupied throughout the day.

Overnight: Tainan City

### Day 7. Lanyu (Orchid) Island

We will spend the morning traveling south to Kenting, with occasional birding stops. We will depart Kenting on the midday boat to Lanyu (Orchid) Island. On the ferry between Kenting and Lanyu (and back) we will look for **Bulwer's Petrel**, **Streaked Shearwater**, **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, **Black-naped Tern**, and **Little Tern**, as well as for dolphins and flying fish. We will then spend the rest of the afternoon, and the following morning, birding on Lanyu Island.

With an indigenous culture that is closer to that of the Philippines, Lanyu is a nice contrast to mainland Taiwan. **Taiwan Green Pigeon**, **Philippine Cuckoo-Dove**, **Brown-eared Bulbul**, **Black (Japanese) Paradise Flycatcher**, the endemic subspecies of **Ryukyu (Lanyu/Elegant) Scops Owl**, and **Lowland White-eye** are the main targets here and can be expected, as well as other passage passerines, possibly including raptors, shrikes, warblers, and buntings. It is a fun, small island to explore and gives the opportunity to find some interesting species.

Overnight: Lanyu Island



*The endemic subspecies of **Ryukyu Scops Owl** can only be found on Lanyu Island and might warrant full species status as **Lanyu Scops Owl** in the future.*

### Day 8. Lanyu Island birding and ferry to Kenting

We will have the morning and early afternoon on Lanyu Island to find any of our missing targets or try to find any migrants on passage (perhaps large accumulations of migrating **Chinese Sparrowhawks**, with a few **Japanese Sparrowhawks** and **Grey-faced Buzzards** dotted in too) and then we will catch the mid-afternoon ferry back to Kenting where we will spend the night.

Overnight: Kenting

### Day 9. Kenting to Alishan National Scenic Area

The early morning will likely be spent birding open areas and wetlands in the Kenting area. One of our major targets in the area will be **Styan's Bulbul** which is surprisingly numerous in the south of the island. Other species to look out for include **Taiwan Hwamei**, **Oriental Skylark**, **Scaly-breasted Munia**, **Zitting Cisticola**, and perhaps even **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge**. Many

migrating birds make landfall here and when conditions are right, we might find migrants such as **Chinese Sparrowhawk**, **Oriental Cuckoo**, **Brown Shrike**, **Grey-streaked Flycatcher**, and **Richard's Pipit**.

Depending on our remaining targets, we will likely bird wetlands or parks en route to the Alishan area where we are based for the next two nights. The tea plantations around the small village that we stay in often host a few interesting lowland species such as **Collared Finchbill**, **Striped Prinia**, **Grey Wagtail**, and **Eastern Red-rumped Swallow**, with migrants like **Arctic Warbler**, **Olive-backed Pipit**, and **Siberian Rubythroat** occasionally seen too. At night, we can also look for the elusive **Mountain Scops Owl** which regularly haunts us with its ventriloquistic call, while **Savanna Nightjars** are more easily found.

Overnight: Zhuqi Township (near Alishan National Scenic Area)

### Day 10. Alishan National Scenic Area and Yushan National Park

Today we will have the entire day to bird the spectacular Alishan National Scenic Area as well as the neighboring Yushan National Park where, in the mountains, we will look for the last of the remaining Taiwanese endemics. Some of our most important targets as we make our way into the park will include **Taiwan Cupwing**, **Taiwan Shortwing**, **Taiwan Barwing**, **Taiwan Bush Robin**, **Collared Bush Robin**, **Taiwan Bush Warbler**, and **Brown-flanked Bush Warbler**. In the higher areas we will keep a lookout for **Southern Nutcracker**, **Taiwan Rosefinch**, **Taiwan Bullfinch**, and **Golden Parrotbill**.



*Taiwan Cupwing is normally extremely skulking but occasionally they show as well as this bird!*

We will keep a lookout for raptors such as **Crested Honey Buzzard**, **Crested Goshawk**, **Japanese Sparrowhawk**, **Black Eagle**, and **Mountain Hawk-Eagle**. Summer visitors to this area include **Large Hawk-Cuckoo** and **Oriental Cuckoo**, and we will listen out for their far-carrying calls.

In the secondary forest we can look for **Rusty Laughingthrush**, **Dusky Fulvetta**, **Taiwan Bamboo Partridge**, **Common Emerald Dove**, **Taiwan Green Pigeon**, and **Black-necklaced Scimitar Babbler**.

As always, we will be mindful of the rare **Taiwan Thrush** while birding around Alishan for the day and will keep trying for this species in suitable habitat.

Overnight: Zhuqi Township (near Alishan National Scenic Area)



*Taiwan Bullfinch is one of our many endemic targets around Alishan.*

### Day 11. Alishan/Yushan to Douliu

We will have a final morning birding in the higher elevations around the Alishan and Yushan, maybe having a final look at the delightful **Swinhoe's Pheasant** or **Mikado Pheasant**, both likely to feature prominently among the tour highlights.

After our birding in the mountains, we will descend back to the lowlands where in the late afternoon we may have another look for **Fairy Pitta** (if still needed), or perhaps look for any other outstanding targets along the way, such as **Golden-headed Cisticola**, **Yellow-bellied Prinia**, **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, or the attractive **Chestnut Munia**.

Overnight: Douliu

**Day 12. Huben to Taipei and international departure**

We keep this day's birding plans open, so we can target whatever species might still be missing from our list. We might spend more time looking for **Fairy Pitta**, or perhaps bird the forests of Xitou Nature Education Area in the hopes of finding the rare **Taiwan Thrush**.

After our morning's birding, we will grab lunch en route to Taipei, perhaps making a final stop at a coastal site such as Xucuogang Wetland before heading to nearby Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport where the tour will conclude.

We will spend a full day out birding today, slowly making our way back to the airport, so we ask that you only book flights departing from 8 pm (we will get to the airport by 5 pm).

Overnight: Not included



*Taiwan Whistling Thrush* is rather widespread in evergreen forests across Taiwan.

*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.*

<b>Duration:</b>	12 days
<b>Group size:</b>	6–8
<b>Dates:</b>	02–13 May 2027
<b>Start:</b>	Taipei, Taiwan
<b>End:</b>	Taipei, Taiwan
<b>Prices:</b>	US\$ TBC per person sharing – based on 6 - 8 participants (2027)
<b>Single supplements:</b>	US\$ TBC (2027)

*If fewer than six participants join, a surcharge may be added to guarantee departure, depending on group size and only with everyone's agreement.*

**Price includes:**

All accommodation (from Day 1 to Day 11 as described)  
Meals (from evening meal on Day 1 until lunch on Day 12)  
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  
Airport pick-up and drop-off on Day 1 and Day 12 only

**Price excludes:**

Flights  
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)  
Visa fees, if a visa is 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/monument excursions  
Soft/alcoholic drinks  
Personal travel insurance  
Camera permits  
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))