

Poyang Lake and South-east China

After our previous highly successful visits to this fascinating part of China, we are again pleased to offer this special tour as we go in search of some rare and still declining birds. To the north of Shanghai we visit the fen-like landscapes of Yancheng as we look for a variety of cranes, including the magnificent Red-crowned, in addition to a fine selection of buntings and the impressive Reed Parrotbill. At Poyang Hu we look for the critically endangered Siberian Crane and Oriental White Stork along with large numbers of wildfowl including Lesser White-fronted and Swan Geese. At Wuyuan we search for Scaly-sided Mergansers at one of their more regular wintering sites, whilst Pied Falconet is another potential highlight here. In the hills of Fujian we hope to find a number of pheasant species, including Elliott's and the Cabot's Tragopan. Finally, we have a good chance of finding one of the most highly sought after species in the world as we visit the Minjiang Estuary to look for Spoon-billed Sandpiper.

Day 1: Fly to Shanghai where arrival is the following morning.

Day 2: On arrival in Shanghai we travel to Dongtai in Jianggang situated to the north of Shanghai. Here we begin our birding and our first chances for specialities such as Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Black-faced Spoonbill. Other birds around Dongtai include: Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Falcated Duck, Eurasian Wigeon and Red-crested Pochard. At a nearby coastal area we may see Chinese Egret, Saunders', Vega and Heuglin's Gulls, Dalmatian Pelican and Red-necked Stint.

Days 3-4: After birding at Dongtai we travel to Yancheng, a large protected area comprising areas of farmland, reed-beds, lagoons and tree-lined embankments and a landscape reminiscent of the East Anglian fens. The area is a winter home to significant numbers of Red-crowned Cranes and we have an excellent chance of encountering this magnificent species. We will also see large numbers of Common Cranes, along with smaller numbers of Hooded Cranes and perhaps a Sandhill Crane. The area also supports large numbers of Taiga Bean Geese and large flocks of dabbling ducks including Falcated Duck and, hopefully, Baikal Teal which appear in variable numbers each winter. Large flocks

Dates

Thursday November 1st - Saturday November 17th 2018

Leaders: Chris Bradshaw and local guides

Group Size: 8

Birds: 180-200

of diving ducks are dominated by Common Pochard but we will search carefully for the critically endangered Baer's Pochard and may encounter Smew or Ferruginous Duck. In the extensive reed-beds we have a good chance of seeing Reed Parrotbill, whilst Chinese Penduline Tit and Eurasian Bittern are also likely. We should find good numbers of buntings in the Yancheng area with Pallas's Reed, Common Reed, Japanese Reed, Chestnut-eared, Elegant, Black-faced, Rustic and Little all possible. We expect to find flocks of Dusky and Naumann's Thrushes and, with luck, Pale Thrush.

Day 5: After some final birding at Yancheng we return to Shanghai Nanhui Nature Reserve for some commoner Chinese species and specialities such as Reed Parrotbill and Black-faced Spoonbill.

Day 6: After a last morning birding at



Elegant Bunting

Photo: Chris
Bradshaw

Nanhui near Shanghai airport we take a flight to Nanchang. On arrival in Nanchang we travel to Poyang Lake where we stay in a small village close to the main birding areas.

Day 7-8: We spend these two days exploring the vast Poyang Hu area which is home to huge numbers of wintering birds. We expect to see large numbers of the critically endangered Siberian Crane and Oriental Storks at their principal wintering area. White-naped, Hooded and Common Cranes are also present here and we should see these wonderful birds in good numbers. Wildfowl occur in the tens of thousands with large flocks of Bewick's Swans and geese that include Taiga Bean, Greylag, Swan, Greater White-fronted and, hopefully, Lesser White-fronted Geese. We will search through the vast flocks of ducks for rarer species such as Baikal Teal and Baer's Pochard. Eurasian Spoonbill occurs in large flocks, whilst Pied Avocet and Spotted Redshank are also common. Other species we hope to find in this fantastic place include the rare Japanese Swamp Warbler, Japanese Quail, Red-billed Starling and, with luck, perhaps Eastern Imperial Eagle.

Day 9: After some final birding at Poyang

Hu, we drive to Wuyuan where there may be some time for some initial birding on arrival.

Days 10-11: We have two full days in this quiet rural corner of Jiangxi Province. We explore low wooded hills as we look for Collared Finchbill, Mountain Bulbul, Streak-breasted and Grey-sided Scimitar-babblers, Masked, White-browed and perhaps Moustached Laughingthrushes. Clearings in the woods may host Tristram's Bunting, whilst other species include Grey-chinned Minivet, Indochinese Yuhina and, maybe, Grey-headed Parrotbill or the shy and highly elusive Elliot's Pheasant. One of our main target species is the sought after Scaly-sided Merganser which can usually be found on one of the rivers in the area, whilst quiet stretches of rivers are also home to Mandarin Ducks. We search the rocky stream beds for Long-billed Plover, with Plumbeous Redstart and Brown Dipper also likely. Exploring the farmland in the area, we should find small numbers of the striking Yellow-browed Bunting and, with luck, Bull-headed Shrike. Finally, we visit an area where we have an excellent chance of seeing the cute Pied Falconet.

Day 12: Today we travel to Emei Feng which is situated just over the border in



Eyebrowed Thrush

Photo: Chris Bradshaw

Fujian province in the county of Taining and where we have a two-night stay at a hotel on the summit of the mountain. We should arrive in time for some initial birding.

Day 13: Emei Feng mountain is situated in an area of forested hills which are home to a variety of game birds, the most notable of which is Cabot's Tragopan, a speciality of south-eastern China and which we have a good chance of seeing. A number of other pheasant species here include Silver and Koklass and we may also encounter Elliott's Pheasant. Chinese Bamboo Partridge, White-necklaced Partridge, Rufous-faced Warbler, Black-chinned Yuhina, Mountain Bulbul, Rufous-capped Babbler, Yellow-browed and Yellow-cheeked Tits are also present.

Day 14: After spending much of the day birding at Emei Feng, we travel to Fuzhou where we stay near the Fuzhou Forest Reserve

Day 15: We spend the morning exploring the Fuzhou Forest Reserve where the degraded forest provides opportunities to look for Silver Pheasant, Large Woodshrike, Grey Treepie, Scarlet Minivet, Fork-tailed Sunbird and Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker. With luck, we may encounter Spotted Wren-babbler, or White-necklaced Partridge. In the late afternoon we travel to Minjiang Estuary where we overnight.

Day 16: Today we visit the Minjiang Estuary where our main target species is the critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper (if we missed it at Dongtai). A variety of other shorebirds occur – Red-necked Stint, Terek Sandpiper and Greater Sandplover among the more interesting possibilities. Good numbers of gulls are present with Black-tailed, Mongolian and, hopefully, the rare Saunders' and Relict Gulls. In the late afternoon we take a flight to Shanghai where we overnight.

Day 17: After breakfast, departure to London where arrival is later the same day.

Prices

Ground Price: £3,995

Single room: £300

Deposit: £400

*Air Fare: £930

This holiday is fully inclusive of boat trips, accommodation and meals, transport, guidance and taxes.

Not included: drinks, insurance, and items of a personal nature, air passenger duty taxes, and excess baggage and fuel surcharges. Visa to enter China.

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