

South-east China: 30 October – 10 November 2012

This was an extremely successful trip, with 233 species recorded. These included seven species of cranes, Oriental White Stork, Baikal Teal, Baer's Pochard, Scaly-sided Merganser, Pied Falconet, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Nordmann's Greenshank, Saunders and Relict Gulls and a whole host of passerines including ten thrushes and 11 buntings. The main trip was organised by Owen Roberts (owen.roberts20@yahoo.com) using Zhang Lin of Shanghai Birding Tours (www.shanghaibirdingtours.com) as guide. Initially, four people were scheduled to travel, but in the end only myself and one other, Les Colley, took part. The cost was £2250 exclusive of flights. Zhang Lin proved to be a highly competent birder and the logistics, with one exception, went very well. The accommodation and food were generally very good although Chinese breakfasts are certainly an acquired taste! Internet access was available at every hotel provided you had a laptop and mobile reception was also good.

Daily itinerary

30th October. Arrived at 0830 by Swiss airlines. Met by Lin and driver; travelled in Volkswagen Santana in heavy rain north across new bridge over Yangtze and on to Yangkou town in Rudong county, Jiangsu province. Arrived around 1330, by which time rain had stopped. Birded along shore and in scrubby area until dusk. Overnight De Feng Hotel.

31st October. Birded all day in Yangkou town area. Had dinner locally and then travelled back to Shanghai, arriving by 2100. Overnight Home Inn.

1st November. Shanghai area. Binjiang Forest Park 0830-1215, Dishui Lake and Seaview Park, Nanhui 1440-1630. Then drove inland for two hours to city of Hang Zhou. Overnight Hua Chen Hotel.

2nd November. Left 0620 for four hour drive to village of Xiao Qi, Jiangxi province. We changed to a small Mitsubishi 4x4 with our new driver/additional guide Lao Lin. Birded in nearby nature reserve in hills and around village and left at 1430. Drove through Wuyuan city to Hu Cun village and nearby Le'an river, birding 1545-1745. Overnight Jiang Wan Hotel, Wuyuan.

3rd November. Wuyuan county. Wooded area near Zhong Yun town 0830-1200, paddies/ woodland by river near Xu Cun village 1330-1630. Overnight Jiang Wan Hotel, Wuyuan.

4th November. Wuyuan county. Fields near Hu Cun village 0730-0900. Tai Bai town area 1000-1230. Then five hour drive to Yong Xiu city. Overnight Yong Xiu hotel.

5th November. Lake Poyang area all day. Bang Hu am until 1430, then Da Hu 1515-1630. Overnight Yong Xiu hotel.

6th November. Lake Poyang area all day. Nanji wetland nature reserve – wetland areas and two small islands with fields, woodland. Overnight Yong Xiu hotel.

7th November. Paddies, woodland near Sha Hu town all day; access to Lake Poyang denied due to not having permits. Early evening flight Nanchang-Shanghai (Pudong), then Maglev bullet train into city centre (300 km/hr). Overnight Home Inn.

8th November. Unsuccessful twitch for Siberian Accentor on Lesser Yangshan island, 0745-1015. This involved journey across 30 km bridge over sea to bird scrubby hillside/valley area adjacent to container port. Then four hour drive to Yancheng area. Birded 1530-1645 in agricultural area with paddies and reedbeds, but steady rain and mist. Overnight Jinhong Hotel, Xin Yang Gang town.

9th November. Xin Yang Gang town park, 0645-0715. Agricultural area (as yesterday) 0800-1200. Reserve perimeter and fish ponds 1325-1645. Rain started in late afternoon. Overnight Jin Hong Hotel.

10th November. Raining heavily early am. Decided to abort plans to bird Yancheng area and leave for Shanghai at 0900. Rain stopped by the time we reached Shanghai. Birded Century Park 1400-1545. Overnight Shanghai Airlines Travel Hotel.

11th November. JC departed for South Korea, LC for UK.

Systematic list – China

Japanese Quail: a female on the shore road at Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 flushed Sha Hu Nov 7th; 1 Lesser Yangshan island and 3 Yancheng 8th.

Chinese Bamboo Partridge: 2 heard Sha Nu Nov 7th.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 6 dates China max 3.

Swan Goose: 15 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 100+ Nanji 6th.

Bean Goose: 4 taiga types Yangkou Oct 30th/31st; 300 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 3500 Nanji 6th; 10 Sha Nu 7th; 500+ Yancheng 8th/9th.

Greylag Goose: 400+ Nanji Nov 6th.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1000+ Bang Hu 5th; 500+ Nanji 6th.

Lesser White-fronted Goose: 2 ads Da Hu Nov 5th.

Bewick's Swan: heard over Zhong Yun Nov 3rd; 1000+ Bang Hu 5th; 100 Nanji 6th.

Whooper Swan: 1 Bang Hu Nov 5th.

Mandarin Duck: 4 Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 Yancheng Nov 9th.

Gadwall: 10+ Bang Hu Nov 5th; 500+ Yancheng 9th.

Falcated Duck: 290 Dishui Lake Nov 1st.

Eurasian Wigeon: 4 dates China max 300.

Mallard: 4 dates China max 10 and 2000 Yancheng Nov 9th.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck: 8 dates China max 100.

Northern Shoveler: 3 dates China max 2.

Northern Pintail: 500 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 1 Yancheng 9th.

Baikal Teal: 32 (3 males) Dishui Lake, Nov 1st.

Common Teal: 6 dates China max 1000.

Red-crested Pochard: female Yancheng fish ponds Nov 9th.

Common Pochard: 400+ Yancheng fish ponds Nov 9th.

Baer's Pochard: 2 males Yancheng fish ponds Nov 9th.
Tufted Duck: 3 dates China max 150.
Ferruginous Duck: female Yancheng fish ponds Nov 9th.
Greater Scaup: 25 Yancheng fish ponds Nov 9th.
Goosander: 5 females Yancheng NR Nov 9th.
Scaly-sided Merganser: 3 males and 4 females on Le'an River near Hu Cun village, Nov 2nd.
Little Grebe: recorded daily in China max 100.
Great Crested Grebe: 3 dates China max 50 and 1000+ Nanji Nov 6th.
Oriental White Stork: 11 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 2 Yancheng fields Nov 9th.
Black Stork: 1 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Eurasian Spoonbill: 15 Seaview Park Nov 1st; 3000+ Bang Hu 5th; 500+ Nanji 6th.
Black-faced Spoonbill: 19 Seaview Park Nov 1st.
Great Bittern: 3 Yancheng Nov 9th.
Black-crowned Night Heron: 1 Century Park, Shanghai Nov 10th.
Grey Heron: 9 dates China max 200.
Great White Egret: 5 dates China max 300 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Intermediate Egret: 1 at a lake en route, Nov 4th.
Little Egret: 6 dates China max 50.
Great Cormorant: 4 dates China max 300 Nanji Nov 6th.
Pied Falconet: 3 Xiao Qi village Nov 1st.
Common Kestrel: 7 dates China max 2.
Peregrine: 6 dates China max 3.
Black-shouldered Kite: 1 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Black-eared Kite: 1 en route Nov 2nd.
Eastern Marsh Harrier: 3 dates China max 2.
Hen Harrier: ringtails Sha Hu Nov 7th and Yancheng 9th.
Mountain Hawk Eagle: 1 Xiao Qi Nov 1st.
Besra: 1 Tai Bai Nov 4th.
Japanese Buzzard: 10 dates China max 2.
Brown Crake: 5 in roadside ditches en route to Bang Hu and Da Hu Nov 5th.
Ruddy-breasted Crake: 1 in roadside ditch en route to Da Hu Nov 5th.
Moorhen: 7 dates China max 30.
Coot: 3000 Nanji Nov 6th; 3000 Yancheng 7th.
Siberian White Crane: 45 (10 juvs) Bang Hu Nov 5th; 6 Nanji 6th.
Demoiselle Crane: 1 juv with Common Cranes Yancheng agricultural area Nov 9th.
White-naped Crane: 57 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Common Crane: 4 dates China max 250 Yancheng 9th.
Sandhill Crane: 1 Yancheng agricultural area Nov 8th and 2 there 9th.
Hooded Crane: 8 (2 juvs) Bang Hu 5th; 4 Yancheng agricultural area 9th.
Red-crowned Crane: 4, possibly 6, Yancheng agricultural area Nov 9th.
Pheasant-tailed Jacana: 1 en route Nov 4th.
Eastern Oystercatcher: 5 Yangkou Oct 31st.
Black-winged Stilt: 4 Sha Hu Nov 7th.
Pied Avocet: 1 Seaview Park Nov 1st; 100+ Bang Hu 5th.
Northern Lapwing: 2500 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 1-200 on 3 other dates China.

Pacific Golden Plover: 10 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Grey Plover: 350 Yangkou Oct 30th/31st; 5 Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Kentish Plover: 3000+ Yank Kou Oct 30th/31st.
Little Ringed Plover: 1 Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 Seaview Park Nov 1st; 1 Nanji 6th.
Lesser Sand Plover: 10 Yangkou Oct 30th/31st.
Greater Sand Plover: 2 Yangkou Oct 30th.
Common Snipe: 6 dates China max 15.
Woodcock: 2 Yangkou Oct 30th.
Eastern Black-tailed Godwit: 3000+ Bang Hu Nov 5th; 3000+ Nanji 6th; 750+ Sha Hu 7th.
Bar-tailed Godwit: 1 Yangkou 31st.
Whimbrel: 1 Yangkou Oct 30th/31st.
Eurasian Curlew: 400+ Yangkou Oct 30th/31st.
Far Eastern Curlew: 60 Yangkou Oct 30th/31st.
Spotted Redshank: 3000+ Bang Hu Nov 5th; 1000+ Nanji 6th; 2-95 on 3 other dates China.
Common Greenshank: 7 dates China max 100.
Nordmann's Greenshank: 8 Yangkou 30th; 4 there 31st.
Green Sandpiper: 4 dates China max 4.
Marsh Sandpiper: 200+ Bang Hu Nov 5th; 3 Nanji 6th.
Common Sandpiper: 3 Yancheng Nov 9th.
Great Knot: 1 Yangkou Oct 30th; 2 there 31st.
Sanderling: 100+ Yangkou Oct 30th/31st.
Red-necked Stint: 10 Yank Kou Oct 30th/31st.
Temminck's Stint: 12 Nanji Nov 6th.
Dunlin: 4300+ Yangkou Oct 30th/31st; 1000+ Bang Hu Nov 5th; 2 other dates China max 100.
Spoon-billed Sandpiper: 6-12 Yangkou Oct 30th; 1+ there 31st.
Broad-billed Sandpiper: 20 Yangkou Oct 30th.
Vega Gull: 4 dates China max 100.
Mongolian Gull: singles Yangkou Oct 31st, Bang Hu Nov 5th, Yancheng 9th.
Heuglin's Gull: 5 Yangkou Oct 30th; 1 there 31st.
Black-tailed Gull: 4 Yangkou Oct 30th.
Black-headed Gull: 4 dates China max 100.
Saunders's Gull: 7 first-winters Yangkou Oct 31st.
Relict Gull: 25 first-winters Yangkou Oct 31st.
Caspian Tern: 3 dates China max 40+ Yangkou Oct 31st.
Rock Dove: recorded.
Oriental Turtle Dove: 9 dates China max 50.
Spotted Dove: 8 dates China max 20.
Northern Boobook: 1 Yangkou Oct 30th.
Long-eared Owl: 2 Xin Yan Gang park Nov 9th.
White-throated Kingfisher: 2 dates China max 2.
Common Kingfisher: 5 dates China max 1.
Crested Kingfisher: 1 Le'an River near Hu Cun Nov 2nd.
Pied Kingfisher: 1 Le'an River near Hu Cun Nov 2nd.
Hoopoe: 3 dates China max 2.
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker: 2+ Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.

Great Spotted Woodpecker: 2+ Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.
Grey-headed Woodpecker: heard Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.
Grey-chinned Minivet: 3+ Zhong Yun 3rd.
Long-tailed Shrike: recorded daily China max 30.
Chinese Grey Shrike: 1 Yangkou 31st; 1 Yancheng agricultural area 9th.
Bull-headed Shrike: 2 Yangkou 31st; 1 en route Nov 4th.
Eurasian Jay: 2 dates China max 3.
Azure-winged Magpie: 4 dates China max 20.
Red-billed Magpie: 5 en route Nov 2nd.
Grey Treepie: 80+ Zhong Yun/Xu Cun Nov 3rd.
Magpie: 5 dates China max 100.
Daurian Jackdaw: 30 juvs in fields en route to Bang Hu Nov 5th; 14 (3 adults) Sha Hu 7th.
Rook: 700 in fields en route to Bang Hu Nov 5th; 800+ Sha Hu 7th.
Carrion Crow: 15 en route Nov 4th.
Eastern Great Tit: 9 dates China max 8.
Varied Tit: 2 Yangkou 30th.
Yellow-bellied Tit: 3 dates China max 30.
Black-throated Tit: 10 Xu Cun Nov 3rd.
Chinese Penduline Tit: 5 dates China max 20.
Sand Martin: 1 Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 Yancheng Nov 9th.
Barn Swallow: 100 Yancheng Nov 9th.
Eurasian Skylark: 3 dates China max 2; under-recorded.
Oriental Skylark: 8 dates China max 100.
Zitting Cisticola: 3 dates China max 10.
Yellow-bellied Prinia: heard Sha Hu 7th.
Plain Prinia: 5 dates China max 5.
Collared Finchbill: 3 dates China max 30+ Wuyuan county Nov 3rd.
Chinese Bulbul: 10 dates China including 1000 SW Hu Cun Nov 4th.
Brown-breasted Bulbul: 4 near Xiao Qi Nov 2nd.
Black Bulbul: 5+ Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.
Mountain Bulbul: 1 Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.
Chestnut Bulbul: 2+ Zhong Yun Nov 3rd.
Marsh Grassbird: 5 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 5 Nanji 6th.
Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler: 4 dates China max 15.
Japanese Bush Warbler: 5 Yangkou Oct 30th; 5 there 31st.
Manchurian Bush Warbler: 1 Nanji Nov 6th.
Black-browed Reed Warbler: 1 Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 Bang Hu Nov 5th; 1 Nanji 6th.
Manchurian Reed Warbler: 1 Nanji 6th.
Dusky Warbler: 3 dates China max 2.
Pallas's Leaf Warbler: 11 dates China max 30.
Yellow-browed Warbler: 10 dates China max 25.
Rufous-faced Warbler: 2 Xu Cun Nov 3rd.
Goldcrest: 5 dates China max 10.
Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler: 2 by Le'an River near Hu Cun Nov 2nd; 10+ Zhong Yun 3rd.
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler: 2 near Xiao Qi Nov 2nd; 2 Xu Cun 3rd.

Rufous-capped Babbler: 3 dates Wuyuan county max 8.
Masked Laughingthrush: 15+ Hu Cun Nov 4th; 4+ Sha Hu 7th.
Chinese Hwamei: 6 dates China max 10.
White-browed Laughingthrush: 10+ Hu Cun Nov 4th.
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush: 2+ Xu Cun Nov 3rd.
Dusky Fulvetta: 2 near Tai Bai Nov 4th.
Grey-cheeked Fulvetta: 3 dates Wuyuan county max 130+ Nov 3rd.
Indochinese Yuhina: 20 Zhong Yun 3rd.
Vinous-throated Parrotbill: 3 dates China max 25.
Grey-headed Parrotbill: heard Zhong Yun 3rd.
Reed Parrotbill: 12+ Yangkou Oct 31st.
Japanese White-eye: 2 dates China max 5.
Crested Myna: 6 dates China max 100.
Black-collared Starling: 5 dates China max 30.
Red-billed Starling: 250 SW Hu Cun Nov 4th; 4 other dates China max 30.
White-cheeked Starling: 500+ near Bang Hu Nov 5th; 6 other dates China max 30.
Common Starling: 7 near Bang Hu Nov 5th; 1 Sha Hu 7th; 24 Yancheng 9th.
White's Thrush: 20+ Binjiang Forest Park Nov 1st; 3 other dates China max 2.
Grey-backed Thrush: 7 dates China max 3.
Chinese Blackbird: 8 dates China max 30.
Pale Thrush: 6 dates China max 30.
Eye-browed Thrush: 5 dates China max 2.
Japanese Thrush: 5 Yangkou Oct 31st; 2 Lesser Yangshan island Nov 8th.
Naumann's Thrush: 50 Yancheng Nov 9th; 2 other dates China max 2.
Dusky Thrush: 350 in off sea Yangkou Oct 31st; 7 other dates China max 50.
Blue Whistling Thrush: 1 Binjiang Forest Park Nov 1st.
Blue Rock Thrush: male Lesser Yang Shan island Nov 8th.
Oriental Magpie Robin: 4 Nanji Nov 6th; 2 Sha Hu 7th.
Daurian Redstart: recorded daily China max 20.
Plumbeous Redstart: 1 Le'an River near Hu Cun Nov 2nd.
White-crowned Forktail: 1 Le'an River near Hu Cun Nov 2nd; 1 Zhong Yun 3rd.
Siberian Stonechat: 8 dates China max 8.
Red-flanked Bluetail: 10 dates China max 50.
Rufous-tailed Robin: 1 Binjiang Forest Park Nov 1st.
Asian Brown Flycatcher: 2 Seaview Park Nov 1st.
Mugimaki Flycatcher: 2 Yangkou Oct 30th; 1 Binjiang Forest Park Nov 1st.
Tree Sparrow: 7 dates China.
Russet Sparrow: 15 Xiao Qi Nov 2nd.
White-rumped Munia: 5 Xiao Qi Nov 2nd; 15 Tai Bai 4th.
Scaly-breasted Munia: 3 Sha Hu Nov 7th.
Eastern Yellow Wagtail *taivana*: 3 Seaview Park Nov 1st; 15 Yancheng fish ponds 9th.
White Wagtail *leucopsis*: 8 dates China max 20.
White Wagtail *lugens*: 2 Binjiang Forest Park and 1 Seaview Park, Nov 1st.
White Wagtail *ocularis*: 10+ fields near Bang Hu Nov 5th.
Richard's Pipit: 3 dates China max 3.

Olive-backed Pipit: 10 dates China max 25.
Red-throated Pipit: 30 Nanji Nov 6th.
Buff-bellied Pipit: 2 Seaview Park Nov 1st; 500+ Bang Hu 5th; 100+ Nanji 6th; 20+ Sha Hu 7th; 10+ Yancheng 9th.
Water Pipit: 10+ Nanji Nov 6th.
Brambling: 6 dates China including 250 SW Xiao Qi Nov 2nd and 500 SW Hu Cun 4th.
Oriental Greenfinch: 4 dates China max 50 Hu Cun 4th.
Siskin: 6 dates China max 100.
Chinese Grosbeak: 5 dates China max 100 entrance to Bang Hu Nov 7th.
Japanese Grosbeak: 1 Binjiang Forest Park Nov 1st.
Northern Bullfinch: 5 Yangkou Oct 31st.
Hawfinch: 2 Yangkou Oct 31st; 7 Xin Yan Gang Nov 9th.
Meadow Bunting: male near Xiao Qi Nov 2nd; 2 Lesser Yangshan island Nov 8th.
Tristram's Bunting: 6 dates China max 15 Yangkou 31st.
Chestnut-eared Bunting: 2 Sha Hu 7th.
Little Bunting: 7 dates China max 25 Yangkou 31st.
Yellow-browed Bunting: 5 Sha Hu 7th.
Rustic Bunting: 5 dates China max 20 Yangkou 31st.
Yellow-throated (Elegant) Bunting: 7 dates China max 50 Yangkou 31st.
Chestnut Bunting: 5 dates China max 4.
Black-faced Bunting: 8 dates China max 25.
Pallas's Reed Bunting: 50+ Yancheng agricultural area Nov 9th.
Japanese Reed Bunting: male Bang Hu Nov 5th.

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