For the fourth year in a row, we beat our previous year’s trip list with an all-time record of 185 species. Every year, the Winter Japan tour is slightly different, and this year’s could be summed up by ‘balmy weather’ and rarities. We had an almost clean sweep of available targets; and by gathering valuable gen from other birding groups and Japanese birders, we chased down some real MEGAs, like Siberian Crane, Swan Goose and Scaly-sided Merganser. Of course we also had the expected Hokkaido highlights like the mammoth Blakiston’s Fish-Owl coming in close to feed on fish, Red-crowned Cranes on the snow and close encounters with Steller’s Sea-Eagles. A bit of good luck and flexibility with our birding schedules meant that we went out on all 3 of our pelagic excursions on the main tour. Although the ice flow hadn’t arrived yet, we had a great boat ride to photograph Steller’s Sea-Eagles & White-tailed Eagles; we managed to get out to sea from the Nemuro Peninsular to photograph several species of alcids and we had beautiful conditions in Kyushu to see the Japanese Murrelet. Our redesigned extension including a morning’s birding on Miyakejima worked spectacularly well as we picked up the endemics there and also great seabirds, including 3 species of albatrosses on the way back. This year’s tour was a tremendous success birdwise, but the unique Japan experience also never fails to enchant visitors.
MAIN TOUR
6th February - Tokyo to Karuizawa
Because all the tour participants had arrived yesterday, it meant that we were able to bring the start time forward and include an extra birding site. As a few interesting species had been seen there recently, we started our birding one of the Tokyo parks called Akigase. After parking the vehicles we got out and started our birding in earnest with Dusky Thrush, White-cheeked Starling, Oriental Greenfinch and Rustic Buntings. We saw some local birders nearby and found that they were looking at some rather attractive Hawfinches. One of our main targets in the park was Long-eared Owl and one of the Japanese birders kindly took us to the spot where they had just seen it. They were roosting in some bamboo and one was in view. We had great scope views and even got some photos. We met another local birder who had just come from the nearby reservoir where there were many people twitching a rare duck. This sounded interesting and we went to check it out. On the way had scope views of a Brown-headed Thrush and also saw Black faced, Meadow and Reed Buntings. The rare duck turned out to be a Canvasback which is a vagrant from the US.

The localised Dusky Thrush is a common species throughout Japan (Sam Woods)

We located the line of bird photographers and took our place next to them. It was supposed to be mixed in with many Common Pochard and a few Tufted Ducks but most of the birds had their bills tucked away. After patiently waiting, the bird was relocated and we had good views, although it would only take its bill out for short periods. Also on the lake we saw Green-winged (or Eurasian) Teal, many Great Crested & a single Eared Grebe plus some stunning Falcated Ducks. Our time had run out here and we started making our way back to the vehicle. On the way we had great views of a beautiful male Daurian Redstart, brief views of a pair of Long-tailed Rosefinches and one person even saw a male Red-flanked Bluetail. We met a friendly British birder with whom we shared some gen, then finally had our first Bull-headed Shrike and Pygmy Woodpecker. We went for a brief convenience store lunch before setting off for Karuizawa which was to be our base for the next 2 days. We arrived early enough to take a short walk which produced Brown Dipper and the endemic Japanese Woodpecker, both of which were major targets for us here and nice to get under our belts so soon. We went to our very traditional hot spring hotel and had time to relax in our Japanese-style tatami rooms before an extravagant 9-course Japanese meal. I’m not even joking.
7th February – Karuizawa & Toden Lake
Our main target at Karuizawa was Copper Pheasant, a stunning and very shy endemic that can be difficult to find. We took a pre-breakfast walk along the forest road which was invigorating to say the least. It was so cold that most birds hadn’t started moving around yet, but we would have been happy just to see 1 pheasant. We did glimpse an interesting race of Eurasian Wren. We walked back down for breakfast after which we spent some time by the wonderful feeders at the hotel where we saw some great birds, like Long-tailed Rosefinch, Japanese Accentor, Hawfinch and Japanese Grosbeak. We saw a couple of endemic Japanese Squirrels and there were even a pair of Eastern Spot-billed Ducks paddling on the pond in front. After breakfast we took another walk up to yacho-no-mori which had warmed up a bit now had more bird activity. This time we had good views of Great Spotted Woodpecker, Brown Dipper and Eurasian Jay as well as a nice mixed flock with Japanese & Long-tailed Tits, Pygmy Woodpecker and Eurasian Nuthatch. Pheasants can be fairly predictable, and I aimed to be at a particular spot at the same time a group had seen Copper Pheasant a couple of days before. We rounded a corner and a small track lead down to the river. I peered over the edge of the road and a female Copper Pheasant shot up and flew along the road. I shouted for everybody to look along and miraculously everybody got on the bird. We chased after it but it was long gone. We all had decent flight views which was more than most people get.

We drove down to the lower part of town and checked out some open fields down there, but everything was cold and snow covered and we saw almost nothing. So next we drove on to a neighbouring town of Saku where we had lunch followed by a visit to Toden Lake. This reservoir sometimes harbours large numbers of ducks, but today there were only a few. Despite the low numbers, we saw Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Common Merganser and Eurasian Coot. Next we scanned the river and found Little Grebe and Green-winged Teal plus our target Long-billed Plover which was very close. Then the strangest thing happened. A Bull-headed Shrike flew in and viciously attacked one of the pair. It saw on top of it and almost looked like it was trying to drown the poor thing. It finally got away and we all gave a round of applause. We walked along river looking for more new birds and sound Meadow & Rustic Buntings, Japanese Wagtail and even flushed a pair of Japanese Green Pheasant. We went back to the hotel for dinner, and later took a short night drive in the lower part of town. In a patch of forest bordering the road I finally found some eye shine and we got on 3 Raccoon Dogs, a rarely seen mammal in Japan. On the way back we also saw a Red Fox before we called it a day.
8th February – Karuizawa to Komatsu via Jigokudani

We took one last walk up the forest road to try and get better views of Copper pheasant. Some people elected to stay by the feeders and get better views and photos of some of the birds there. We walked all the way up to where we flushed one yesterday but failed to see it again. We did see the endemic race of Eurasian Wren much better, plus more Brown Dippers, Eurasian Jay and our first Coal Tit. After breakfast we had our last look at the feeders, with many of the same birds as yesterday, including Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Eurasian Jay, Willow, Varied & Japanese Tits, Eurasian Nuthatch, Oriental Greenfinch and Japanese Accentor. We left our hot spring hotel in Karuizawa and set off for the Snow Monkey Park at Jigokudani a couple of hours away. It is a very famous spot to see the Japanese Macaque and there were a surprising number of tourists from around the world. It was a 2km walk and quite icy in places but most of us were wearing crampons or spikes on our boots so it was no problem. When we got up to the park, the monkeys performed very well, jumping in and out of the hot springs and rolling around it the snow. We saw a full range of behaviours including the young monkeys playing together and the adults allogrooming. After walking back down, we started our 4 hour drive to the city of Komatsu on the west coast of Japan, our base for the next 2 days. After settling in to our hotel, we all went out for a very fun meal where we ordered sushi on a touch screen.
9th February – Western Honshu wetlands
We really only had 1 full day to bird this area and we had a lot to fit in. I had received some information on a Siberian Crane associated with a family of Hooded Cranes and a Swan Goose with the large numbers of Bewick’s Swans in flooded rice fields close by. This was a great opportunity to for a couple of very rare birds in Japan. I knew the site from previous tours and found the swans straight away. Passing the fields we scanned carefully and found the Swan Goose before long. A local photographer passed by and pointed out a Tundra Swan which on careful inspection had much less yellow in the bill than the Bewick’s. He also offered to take us to where the cranes were nearby. It wasn’t long before we had one of the most wanted birds for the tour by several of the participants. We thanked the local guy for his kindness in showing them to us. The poor Hooded Cranes, normally a top bird, hardly got a mention.

The rain had held off until now but it got heavier and we decided to wait it out. We set up the scope under the cover of the back door and all had great views although we were hoping for better photos. Hopefully we would have time to come back later on to try again. Another noteworthy bird was an Eastern Marsh-Harrier which winged its way by and a couple of Sky Larks flushed up in a field. We made our way north to Kaga City, and Katano Kamoike.

This lake is a haven for waterfowl and its most famous resident are the large numbers of Baikal Teal which was new for most of the group. Unfortunately the majority of the thousand wintering birds had already left and there were only about 30 birds left. We got decent views of these along with dozens of Taiga Bean-Geese. Again, there were no Tundra Bean Goose this year. Other birds seen were large numbers of Malard, and several Falcated Duck, Northern Pintail, Common Pochard, Eurasian Teal and Northern Shovelers.

Next we headed to Awara in Fukui prefecture, which are the feeding grounds of around 1,400 Greater White-fronted Geese. We did see a few interesting birds on the way, with Eurasian Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Little Grebe, Japanese Wagtail and also our target Gray-headed Lapwing. Arriving in Awara, we found a field with about 300 white-fronts straight away. Some years apparently they have Lesser White-fronts but not this year. After a spot of lunch we drove along a wide river towards the sea. There were Japanese, Great & Pelagic Cormorants plus Kamchatka, Slaty-backed, Vega & Black-tailed Gulls. We made it to the coast but it was so windy that it made sea watching a little tricky. We did see a Black-legged Kittiwake and a Blue Rock-Thrush nearby, but in the end we gave up and made for our main target of the afternoon. We jumped on the highway and headed up to Kanazawa City about an hour away. We had also received information on a Scaly-sided Merganser, a mega bird and one of the rarest and most endangered ducks in the world. I knew the general area and that it was associating with some Common Mergansers. We started exploring the area in a car, but access was difficult so we parked and started walking along the river. We split up into 2 groups and set off in different directions to increase our chances of finding it. It was cold and raining a little but we persisted. We finally found the bird with its long pointy crest and distinctive scaling on the sides. We called the other group and after a while we were all happily enjoying close views of this fantastic bird. What a day it had been.
10th February – Komatsu (Honshu) to Akan (Hokkaido).
We had a morning flight back to Tokyo and from there up to Kushiro on Hokkaido. After breakfast we had just half an hour of birding time and we decided to use it to try and get some photos of the Siberian Crane. After packing the vehicles and a brief breakfast we returned to the extensive areas of rice fields near the airport and immediately located the large flocks of Bewick’s Swans and then the unmistakable Siberian Crane with the family of Hooded Cranes. It was associated with. It was overcast but not raining and we managed to take some photos of the distant birds before they took off and showing their beautiful flight profiles against the beautiful backdrop of snowy mountains. They landed not far away and we followed them to find them much closer to the road and we enjoyed more great views before we really had to get going to the airport. After a speedy check in, we were on our way. The flights went smoothly and we were soon touching down in Kushiro to blue skies and relatively mild temperatures. After a short drive to Akan, we quickly went to check out the Red-crowned Crane feeding site just across the road from our hotel. There were about 100 cranes feeding there but others arriving and leaving the whole time. The sight was magical and the soft afternoon light gave us some wonderful photographic opportunities. We didn’t see very many birds today but the ones we did were very special. We were hoping that in the morning we might have some cranes dancing on the snow.

The MEGA Siberian Crane was a major find on the tour (Sam Woods)

11th February – Akan to Rausu
We arrived before dawn at a bridge from where we could see over 200 Red-crowned Cranes waking up in the Setsuri River. Seemingly almost as many photographers were gathered on the bridge hoping to take photos of the cranes waking up in the misty river. Unfortunately there was no mist, but the beautiful pink reflections of the morning sky in the water and many cranes flying directly over our heads made the early start in the cold worthwhile. Several Sika Deer bounded across the river in the distance, and a few other birds were present, including our first Marsh Tit. On our way back for breakfast we stopped at a historical site for Ural Owl, but we found none. On a bridge over a small river we saw our first Crested Kingfisher, plus Eurasian Wren and Brown Dipper. After a quick breakfast back at the hotel, we walked across the road to the crane centre. There weren’t as many as yesterday afternoon, but a few pairs were present along with many Whooper Swans. There were a few aggressive interactions between them, plus a bit of bugling, strutting and jumping up and down before it was time to check out.
We had a fairly long drive ahead of us which we split up with another stakeout for Ural Owl, which again proved fruitless. As we drove east, the blue skies turned to grey and it started to snow lightly. We hit the coast and had a brief stop at a small harbour which had a few ducks including Common Goldeneye and Black Scoter plus Glauous Gull. As we drove north, the snow and the wind grew stronger and we made a beeline for the lodge while we were still able to. We met the owners of our minshuku and they showed us to our rooms, before we headed to their restaurant overlooking a stream where we would wait for one of our most wanted birds of the trip; Blakiston’s Fish-Owl. We had an early dinner, then took our places at the windows for our vigil. We had been warned that the owls were coming in quite late, and so it came to pass. They called closeby a few times but were only teasing. Several people called it a night around 9pm but the owl only came in around 10:30, rewarding people who had the patience to wait 6 hours. When it arrived, the inside of the viewing hide was mayhem as people scrambled for their cameras. There wasn’t much need to do so, as it stuck around the feeding pond for about 15 minutes allowing ample time for photography. What a relief to have this spectacular owl under our belts.

The enormous Blakiston’s Fish-Owl gave quite a show (Sam Woods)
**12th February – Rausu & Notsuke Peninsular**

We had a mercifully leisurely start today as our ‘nature cruise’ to see the eagles left at 9am. After a hearty breakfast, we drove the short distance to the port. We were there a little early so we checked out a few birds within the harbour walls. We saw Greater Scaup, Northern Pintail and an unfortunate Red-breasted Merganser wrapped up in some fishing line. It was a popular ride with many Japanese photographers on board, but it was a big boat with plenty of space for everyone. As we left the port, the harbour walls were lined with gulls. Mainly Slaty-backed but we also picked out the odd Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gull. Unfortunately with the mild weather recently, the ice flow hadn’t arrived yet. The boat ride was still on and after leaving the harbour, they started throwing frozen fish out on the water. White-tailed and Steller’s Sea Eagles flew in from all directions and started swooping towards the fish. It wasn’t easy to get photos of the eagles swooping in and grabbing the fish, but we certainly had ample opportunity to practice. Hundreds of shots later we were well into the swing of things. After we had shot our fill, we moved back to the harbour walls where there were dozens of eagles waiting to be fed. These photos were certainly a lot more straightforward to take and we even got some with the snow-capped mountains of the Russian-occupied and Japanese-claimed island of Kunashiri in the background. Our wonderful boat ride came to an end and we spent some time at a bridge scanning through dozens of sea ducks, including Common Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck and some Whooper Swans.

Despite the lack of ice flow, we had an incredible boat ride to see Steller’s Sea-Eagle (Sam Woods)

We drove further south to check out another stake out for Ural Owl which turned out not to be there. We would just have to keep trying. We moved on to the Notsuke Peninsular where we had a few more sea-watching stops, adding a female White-winged Scoter mixed in with the much more numerous Black Scoters and also several very beautiful Long-tailed Ducks. One more special bird at Notsuke is the Asian Rosy Finch. We drove all the way to the end with no luck, but on the way back we flushed a flock of 8 birds. We had brief views but we managed to relocate them next to the side of the road. We went back for dinner at the lodge followed by a slightly shorter wait for the Blakiston’s Fish-Owl to come out. Several people who had left early without seeing it yesterday, tonight were determined to see it. More good views and some photos of it diving in and out of the small pool to catch some fish brought another memorable day to a close.
13th February – Rausu to Nemuro Peninsular

After an early breakfast we left our lodge at Rausu, stopping briefly by the port to scan the sea for ducks. We saw Whooper Swan, Greater Scaup, Harlequin Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common & Red-breasted Mergansers, Slaty-backed, Vega & Glaucous Gulls. We also saw plenty of White-tailed & Steller’s Sea-Eagles dotted in the trees waiting for their breakfast of frozen fish. Conditions were good as we headed south in contrast to recent year’s tours. We stopped at a viewpoint called Hakuchodai, a famous place to look at Whooper Swans (Hakucho in Japanese). While scanning a flat area below I also saw some small passerines fly in and putting them in the scope I found they were Snow Buntings, including a nicely plumaged male. It seemed that tomorrow the weather was turning bad with strong winds so our planned boat ride would probably not go out. I found out that there was still a chance to get out today, so we drove straight from there to the Nemuro area. We dropped in at our lodge for tonight and he gave us some good gen for the afternoon. We made it in time for the 11:30 departure and we were soon chugging our way out of Habomai port. In the harbour itself we saw Harlequin & Long-tailed Ducks, Black Scoter, Vega, Slaty-backed & Glaucous Gulls and out at sea we saw Pelagic Cormorant, Common Murre, Least Auklet, Pigeon Guillemot plus lots of Spectacled Guillemots and Ancient Murrelets. It was pretty choppy, especially on the way back but it had definitely been worth it as we had seen many of these alcids at close range and got some photos.

After a quick convenience store lunch we headed to Cape Nosappu. On the way we crossed a bridge where there were lots of ducks, including Eurasian Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Common Merganser. We got out at Cape Nosappu and checked some cliffs where Red-faced Cormorant was supposed to roost. We check for this every year, but it is always a long shot. That’s why I was totally flabbergasted that the first cormorant I put in the scope was actually a Red-faced Cormorant. On the sea, there were large rafts of Pelagic Cormorants and some Red-breasted Mergansers. We walked over to a viewing hide where we spent some time sea-watching. It was very productive and we saw Horned, Red-necked and Eared Grebes. We also saw several alcids, with more Pigeon & Spectacled Guillemots, Ancient Murrelet plus our first Thick-billed Murre. It had been a very productive stop and we started driving back along the peninsular towards Nemuro. On a roadside pole we saw a Rough-legged Hawk before our final stop at the Onnemoto Bird hide. Another bird that always seems to leave just before we arrive is Rock Sandpiper, which regularly over winter on a rocky islet just offshore. Our luck continued and we had views of around 15 of these uncommon birds. It had been a great day and we drove back to our cosy family run lodge next to Lake Furen.
14th February – Lake Furen to Tsuruimura (Hokkaido)
We had planned a pre-breakfast walk at the Shunkunitai Nature Centre nearby but it was raining heavily outside, so this was postponed until after breakfast. At the lodge feeders we saw **Coal, Marsh & Japanese Tits** plus the very beautiful and pale race of **Eurasian Nuthatch**. Afterwards we drove up to the nature centre which had just opened. At the feeders there we added **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and the very distinctive race of **Eurasian Jay** which has an orange head. Some people stayed inside the centre to watch the feeders while the rest of us tried to take a walk in the woods. It was still raining and we saw very little other than several very confiding **Sika Deer**. We had a long drive ahead of us so we went back, packed up and said goodbye to our wonderful hosts who had made us feel very at home. There had been talk of a Steller’s Eider at the Notsuke Peninsular so we were keen to go and check it out. Even though it was a fairly mild zero degrees Celsius, the snow and rain formed an icy slush which made driving unpleasant. There was a strong wind and big waves which meant that we saw very little out at sea and we would have to give up on our search. Next we headed to several points inland in search of Ural Owls, but none of the stake outs produced one. The grim weather continued as we made our way back to the coast and Kiritappu. We finally got a new bird with over 150 **Brants** mixed in with many ducks. We had time for one last birding stop at the Kiritappu peninsular itself where we scanned from the cliffs, but it was so cold and miserable, we called it a day and drove back to our comfortable lodge for a dip in the hot spring and a nice hot supper.

15th February – Kushiro (Hokkaido) to Izumi (Kyushu)
Today we were flying to Kagoshima via Tokyo so there was no time for birding in the morning. On the drive to the airport we did however see our last **White-tailed Eagle** perched by the side of the road. During our layover at Haneda airport in Tokyo we had a quick lunch before our onward flight. After picking up our rental car in Kagoshima, we were on our way to Izumi city where we would spend the next 2 nights and enjoy the spectacle of thousands of wintering cranes. We had just enough time for a quick birding stop at a bridge over the Sendai River. We scanned the river so find several duck species, including **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**, **Eurasian Teal** and **Tufted Duck** plus **Eurasian Coot** and a **Great Cormorant**. We had several **Black-eared Kites** circling overhead, **Common Sandpiper** and a pair of uncommon **Long-billed Plovers** on rocks in the middle of the river and a nice perched **Crested Kingfisher** which we had scope views of. Passerines were also out in force and we saw **Bull-headed Shrike**, **White-cheeked Starling**, **Black-backed & Japanese Wagtails**, **Buff-bellied Pipit** and **Black-faced Bunting**. The unusually numerous **Barn Swallows** laid testament to the mild winter. We drove on to Izumi city and enjoyed a nice meal ahead of our big day tomorrow.
16th February – Arasaki & Yatsushiro

After an early breakfast, we drove to the crane feeding site before dawn. The site of thousands of calling cranes flying in waves to the feeding site was incredible and most of the clients agreed this was one of the most under-rated nature-watching sites in the world. The majority of the birds were Hooded Cranes (13000+) with lower numbers of White-naped Crane (3000+) and just a handful of Sandhill & Common Cranes. We had great views of all 4 species plus a few other species which were around the fields like Peregrine Falcon, Buff-bellied Pipit, Sky Lark and Rook. In a nearby flooded field, we also had Common Shelduck, Northern Shoveler and Northern Lapwing. We drove to a nearby creek next to which we saw a lot of Bramblings and a single Chestnut-eared Bunting. In the creek we managed to get brief views of Brown-cheeked Rail but only heard Ruddy-breasted Crake. We did see plenty of other birds including Meadow, Black-faced & Reed Buntings, Daurian Jackdaw, Pale Thrush and Japanese Bush-Warbler. We moved onto a larger set of reeds where we managed to locate a tiny pair of Chinese Penduline-Tits. We started driving towards the crane observation centre and on the way we saw Green Pheasant, Osprey and Eastern Buzzard. In some flooded fields we also located a Eurasian and a Black-faced Spoonbill and a very close Common Snipe which posed for photos. We went into the Crane centre where we looked at some interesting displays and saw hundreds more cranes below.

It was time to move on and leaving Arasaki we saw Green Sandpiper and Dunlin in some flooded rice field and then passed a pond filled with Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Teal and a single American x Eurasian Wigeon hybrid. We made our way to the small city of Yatsushiro in southern Kumamoto prefecture; an area of mudflats and one of the best sites for shorebirds on Kyushu. On the way we saw hundreds of small birds on roadside wires which we found to be Oriental Greenfinches and Russet Sparrows, a new bird for our trip. We arrived at Yatsushiro at high tide, although it looked like it was starting to go out. On a high tide roost we saw dozens of Common Shelduck with smaller numbers of Falcated Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Red-breasted Merganser and Great Crested Grebe. As the tide dropped and mud became exposed, several species of shorebirds started flying in to feed, including Kentish Plover, Terek & Common Sandpipers, Common Greenshank and Eurasian Curlew. Our main target though was the rare Saunder’s Gull. Yatsushiro is a fantastic sites for gulls in general and we saw Vega, Black-headed, Black-tailed, Slaty-backed and Heuglin’s Gulls. After the mud was more exposed we finally found 2 Saundere’s Gulls feeding on the mud. It had definitely been worth sticking around but now it was time to get back to Izumi.
17th February – Arasaki to Miike
It was our last morning birding at Arasaki and we started at the crane feeding site at dawn and enjoyed another impressive spectacle of Hooded, White-naped, Sandhill & Common Cranes flying in. There were also Common Shelduck and 2 Eurasian Spoonbills in a nearby flooded field. Next, we went to the little creek where we had brief views of Brown-cheeked Rail and Ruddy-breasted Crake. We saw a small raptor mobbing a much larger one, which turned out to be a Merlin and Northern Goshawk. Soon after this we also saw Eastern Marsh-Harrier and Osprey. Also along the creek we had Pale Thrush, Black-faced & Meadow Buntings and in the nearby fields, much better views of Chestnut-eared Bunting. It was time to leave Arasaki but on the way out we saw the same Eurasian x American Wigeon hybrid mixed in with a large flocks of Eurasian Wigeon. A bird that everybody was very keen to see was Mandarin Duck. A good site for this is at Kogawa Dam, just a short distance from Izumi city. I stopped at my usual vantage point and we saw Common Pochard and Great Cormorant. We crossed the dam wall for a different view of the reservoir and saw Common Sandpiper and a pair of Crested Kingfishers in the stream below. We then drove through forest stopping occasionally to scan the water or look for birds in the forest and we picked up Japanese Tit, Japanese Bush-Warbler, Daurian Redstart and Black-faced Bunting. At the far end of the lakes we found a male Falcated Duck and Sam finally spotted a male Mandarin Duck but it soon swam behind some bamboo and disappeared.

We left Kogawa and started our drive into the mountains. We arrived at Kirishima Shrine where we had a short cultural stop, but also saw a few birds, including Pygmy Woodpecker, Coal Tit and Red-flanked Bluetail, plus our first Goldcrest and introduced Red-billed Leiothrix. Next we drove on to Miike, a volcanic crater lake surrounded by beautiful forest. We drove first to a shrine overlooking the lake. We didn’t see too many birds there, but we did see a large male Wild Boar poking its head out of the forest. Next we drove down to the lake and watched the feeders for a bit. Fortunately the annual Forest Wagtail was still around and on the feeders themselves we saw Red-billed Leiothrix, Pale Thrush, Yellow-throated Bunting and the normally very skulking Gray Bunting. There was also a beautiful Daurian Redstart perched on the roof of the building behind. In the trees behind the feeders there was a lot of activity and we saw Pygmy & Japanese Woodpecker, Ryukyu Minivet, Coal, Varied, Japanese & Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Nuthatch and after some deliberation, we identified a Siberian Chiffchaff. Next we scanned the lake to find Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Tufted Duck, Little Grebe and 2 more male Mandarin Ducks plus a pair of Olive-backed Pipits nearby. We went back to the hotel for what was to be the best meal of the trip and afterwards, a few of us returned to try a bit of owling but instead had great views of Japanese Flying Squirrel.
18th February – Miike & Kadogawa

After a leisurely breakfast we were back at Miike looking for just a couple of new birds. We started on the forest trail looking for our main target which was the White-backed Woodpecker. The forest was eerily quiet as we walked along the well-marked trail. Sam found us a pair Ryukyu Minivets which came down low and gave good views to most of the group. Then we heard some tapping which turned out to be Pygmy & Japanese Woodpeckers. We continued on and finally found a pair of White-backed Woodpeckers which showed well, long enough for the whole group to get on them. With our 2 main targets under our belts, we went back to the feeders for better photos of the birds we saw yesterday. It started slow, but soon we had Red-billed Leiothrix, Pale Thrush, Forest Wagtail plus Yellow-throated & Gray Buntings coming in. The light was much better than yesterday afternoon and we got some nice photos. Nearby we saw Daurian Redstart, Coal & Long-tailed Tits. After chatting with a local birder and getting some good gen we were on our way to the small fishing port of Kadogawa on the Pacific Ocean. Here was a boat waiting there to take us out onto the sea in search of the rare Japanese Murrelet.

As we left the harbour we saw Great Crested & Eared Grebes, Great & Temmink’s Cormorants, plus Black-headed, Black-tailed & Vega Gulls. In no time, the captain had found us a pair of tiny pair of Japanese Murrelets which were bobbing on the ocean like miniature penguins. After seeing and photographing 4-5 pairs, we started heading back to the port. On the way we saw collections of egrets perching on top of the oyster rafts. Among the Great & Little Egrets we picked out a Pacific Reef-Heron which was new for the trip. Back on land we saw an Osprey, Eurasian Kestrel and Blue Rock-Thrush before wishing the friendly family farewell and setting off for our next site. Near the city of Hyuga we explored the very picturesque Umagase. In the subtropical forest covering the rocky peninsula we found Pygmy Woodpecker, Varied Tit, Japanese White-eye and Red-billed Leiothrix but unfortunately no Japanese Woodpigeon. Our last birding site of the day was Hitotsusegawa, a river with a very productive estuary and ponds nearby. In the estuary we found Osprey, Kentish Plover, Eurasian Curlew, Sanderling and Dunlin plus a surprise Little Tern. In nearby fields Northern Lapwing and Sky Lark; and in the ponds Common Shelduck, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Tufted Duck, Eared Grebe, Common Sandpiper, Common Snipe, a probable Long-billed Dowitcher and several endangered Black-faced Spoonbills which we saw feeding. It had been a very productive day and we retired to our nearby hotel.
19th February – Miyazaki to Tokyo
Today we planned to start back at Hitotsugawa in the hope of picking up one or 2 extra birds. T was only about 10 minutes from our hotel and on the way we managed nice views of Hawfinch and Daurian Redstart. As we arrived at the pond we saw an Osprey perched up on a post and the water absolutely filled with birds, including Common Shelduck, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. On closer inspection, we added Eurasian Moorhen, Northern Lapwing, Common Snipe and the same dowitcher as yesterday which we managed to get some photographs of. We heard our first Chinese Bamboo-Partridges although they couldn’t be tempted out into the open, saw our first Black-crowned Night-Heron and had fantastic views of at least 12 Black-faced Spoonbill. We moved on to the estuary where we saw Falcated Duck, Great Crested Grebe, many Kentish & Black-bellied Plovers, Sanderling, Dunlin and Eurasian Curlew. After chatting to a local dog-walker we were directed to a spot where Greater Spotted Eagle had been roosting recently. The bird seemed to be off hunting for the day but we did see Buff-bellied Pipit & Bull-headed Shrike. The blue skies, with many Barn Swallows, plus singing Sky Larks and Japanese Bush-Warblers made this warm winter’s day feel very much like the start of spring.

We had birded this area pretty thoroughly so we moved on to our final birding site which was a small lake called Kota Oike. This is a good place for Mandarin Duck and we found about 12 birds mixed in with the hundreds of Mallard and Eastern Spot-billed Ducks plus a few Common Pochard, Little Grebe and Great Cormorant. There was a picturesque temple there and we had this wonderfully peaceful place all to oourselves. In the trees surrounding the lake we had great views of Ryukyu Minivet, plus Varied Tit, Japanese White-eye, Red-billed Leiothrix, Meadow, Yellow-throated & Black-faced Buntings. It was so warm that we even managed to see some unseasonal butterflies. It was time to leave and on the drive out we also saw Bull-headed Shrike, Chestnut-eared Bunting, Oriental Greenfinch and Russet Sparrow. After a nice sit down lunch we got to the airport with plenty of time before our flight back to Tokyo where the main tour ended.
IZU ISLAND EXTENSION

19th – 20th February – Miyakejima to Tokyo

We had plenty of time to repack, put our big bags into lockers and have dinner before boarding the ferry to Miyakejima at 10pm. The ferry docked at 5am and it was pitch black, so we decided to wait an hour before being taken to Taro-ike, just a few kilometres away. The driver dropped us at the Akakokko-kan, or Izu Thrush information centre. On the walk in, we had our first fly over of Japanese Woodpigeon. The centre was still closed but we enjoyed the feeders in the first light. Straight away we saw Owston’s Tit, and were surprised how different it looked and we were in no doubt of its species status. We also had some Eurasian Siskins at the feeders and Sam found us a Japanese Robin behind the building. We decided to set off on a walk around the volcanic crater lake, and saw a few common birds like Pygmy Woodpecker, Brown-eared Bulbul and Oriental Turtle-Dove. We walked up to an ancient oak tree and finally saw the endemic race of Eurasian Wren that had been taunting us with their songs. We also saw a pair of the endemic race of Eastern Buzzard. We went down a side trail where we found our target Izu Thrush. We walked back up and found some Japanese White-eyes singing and a female Blue Rock-Thrush on the roof of a greenhouse. Back near the centre we found another Japanese Robin and managed better looks and some photos of these pretty birds. On the way to the ferry terminal we saw a pair of Chinese Bamboo-Partridges scuttling across the road.

The Varied Tit on Miyakejima is now split by the IOC as Owston’s Tit (Sam Woods)

We arrived back at the terminal and sat in the waiting room until the ferry arrived. The best sea birding of the trip back would be the first couple of hours so we dumped our stuff on our bunks and went straight up on deck. Apart from Black-tailed & Slaty-backed Gulls, the first seabirds we saw were several Pomarine Jaegers. Next we had a couple of Streaked Shearwaters before the albatrosses started showing up, and when they started it was like we had opened the flood gates. First we had a few Black-footed Albatrosses, then our first Laysan Albatross. When we saw our first Short-tailed Albatross, it was a big relief to have achieved the hat trick. After that we were running from one side of the boat to the other and we racked up numbers of 18/15/13 Black-faced/Laysan/Short-tailed Albatrosses. Other interesting species were Japanese Murrelet and many Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels. It had been an incredible end to an incredible trip, on which we racked up an extremely impressive 185 species of birds, another Tropical Birding Japan tour record. More importantly we had found practically all our major targets and had a wonderful time exploring this amazing country.
**BIRD LIST**
Avian taxonomy follows ebird/Clements v2015
*Note: Only endemic races and potential splits are given to subspecies level.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swan Goose</strong></td>
<td><em>Anser cygnoides</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single bird seen in with the Bewick’s Swans near Komatsu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taiga Bean-Goose</strong></td>
<td><em>Anser fabalis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Katano Kamoike.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater White-fronted Goose</strong></td>
<td><em>Anser albiatrons</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Awara.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snow Goose</strong></td>
<td><em>Anser caerulescens</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 birds seen the day before the tour in Tokyo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brant</strong></td>
<td><em>Branta bernicla</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 165 birds seen at Kiritappu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tundra (Bewick's) Swan</strong></td>
<td><em>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hundreds seen in fields near Komatsu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tundra Swan</strong></td>
<td><em>Cygnus c. columbianus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single bird seen with hundreds of Bewick's Swans in fields near Komatsu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whooper Swan</strong></td>
<td><em>Cygnus cygnus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Akan, Setsuri River, Tsuruimura, Kiritappu, Rausu &amp; Hakuchodai.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Shelduck</strong></td>
<td><em>Tadorna tadorna</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Arasaki &amp; Hitotsuse River.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandarin Duck</strong></td>
<td><em>Aix galericulata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Kogawa Dam, Miike &amp; Kota Oike</td>
<td><strong>East Asian Endemic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gadwall</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas strepera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Toden Lake &amp; Awara.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Falcated Duck</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas falcata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near-threatened. Seen at Aigase, Katano Kamoike, Yatsushiro, Kogawa Dam &amp; Hitotsuse River.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eurasian Wigeon</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas penelope</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at many sites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mallard</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas platyrhynchos</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonly seen throughout.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern Spot-billed Duck</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas zonorhyncha</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonly seen on Honshu &amp; Kyushu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Shoveler</strong></td>
<td><em>Anas clypeata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen at Katano Kamoike, Arasaki &amp; Hitotsuse River.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Pintail</td>
<td><em>Anas acuta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baikal Teal</td>
<td><em>Anas formosa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal</td>
<td><em>Anas c. crecca</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Pochard</td>
<td><em>Aythya ferina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvasback</td>
<td><em>Aythya</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufted Duck</td>
<td><em>Aythya fuligula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Scaup</td>
<td><em>Aythya marila</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlequin Duck</td>
<td><em>Histrionicus histrionicus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-winged (Siberian) Scoter</td>
<td><em>Melanitta fusca stejnegeri</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Scoter</td>
<td><em>Melanitta americana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-tailed Duck</td>
<td><em>Clangula hyemalis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Goldeneye</td>
<td><em>Bucephala clangula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smew</td>
<td><em>Mergellus albellus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Merganser</td>
<td><em>Mergus m. merganser</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-breasted Merganser</td>
<td><em>Mergus serrator</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaly-sided Merganser</td>
<td><em>Mergus squamatus</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ring-necked (Green) Pheasant</td>
<td><em>Phasianus colchicus tanensis</em></td>
<td>Endemic subspecies; a pair seen in flight at Lake Toden and great views of males at Satsuma &amp; Arasaki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Pheasant</td>
<td><em>Syrmaticus soemmerringii</em></td>
<td>Endemic; a female seen in flight at Karuizawa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green Pheasant is Japan’s National Bird (Sam Woods)
Chinese Bamboo-Partridge *Bambusicola thoracicus*
Introduced. Seen on Miyakejima and heard at Hitotsusegawa.

**PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, Sendai River, Miike, Hitotsusegawa, Kota Oike & Miyakejima.

**Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*
Seen at Cape Nosappu & Kadogawa.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*
Seen at Cape Nosappu.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*
Seen at Cape Nosappu, Awara, Yatsushiro, Miike, Kadogawa & Hitotsusegawa.

**Eared (Black-necked) Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*
Seen at Akigase, Cape Nosappu & Hitotsusegawa.

**PROCELLARIIFORMES: Diomedeidae**

**Laysan Albatross** *Phoebastria immutabilis*
Near-threatened. 18 seen on the Miyakejima ferry.

**Black-footed Albatross** *Phoebastria nigripes*
Near-threatened. 15 seen on the Miyakejima ferry.

**Short-tailed Albatross** *Phoebastria albatrus*
Vulnerable. 13 seen on the Miyakejima ferry.

**PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae**

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*
Breeding endemic

Many seen on the Miyakejima ferry.

**PROCELLARIIFORMES: Hydrobatidae**

**Tristram’s Storm-Petrel** *Oceanodroma tristrami*
Many seen on the Miyakejima ferry.
**SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae**

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo hanae*  
Endemic subspecies  
Seen at Akigase, Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike. Arasaki, Satsuma & Hitotsusegawa.

**Japanese Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax capillatus*  
Seen near Awara, Rausu & Kadogawa.

**Red-faced Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax urile*  
A single bird seen at Cape Nosappu.

**Pelagic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*  
Seen near Awara, Kiritappu, Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular, Habomai & Cape Nosappu.

**PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae**

**Gray Heron** *Ardea cinerea*  
Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*  
Seen at Kaga, Arasaki & Hitotsuse River.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*  
Seen at Akigase, Kaga, Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsuse River.

**Pacific Reef-Heron** *Egretta sacra*  
Seen at Kadogawa.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*  
Seen at Hitotsuse River.

**PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae**

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
Seen at Arasaki.

**Black-faced Spoonbill** *Platalea minor*  
East Asian Breeding Endemic  
Endangered. Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*  
Seen at Komatsu, Arasaki, Kadogawa & Hitotsuse River.

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**

**Eastern Marsh-Harrier** *Circus spilonotus*  
Seen at Komatsu & Arasaki.

**White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*  
Seen at Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular, Cape Nosappu, Lake Furen, Habomai & Kiritappu.

**Steller’s Sea-Eagle** *Haliaeetus pelagicus*  
East Asian Endemic  
Vulnerable. Seen at Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular, Cape Nosappu & Lake Furen.

Two heavyweights of the raptor world: Steller’s Sea-Eagle & White-tailed Eagle (Sam Woods)

**ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**

**Eastern Marsh-Harrier**  
Seen at Komatsu & Arasaki.

**White-tailed Eagle**  
Seen at Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular, Cape Nosappu, Lake Furen, Habomai & Kiritappu.

**Steller’s Sea-Eagle**  
East Asian Endemic  
Vulnerable. Seen at Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular, Cape Nosappu & Lake Furen.
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
*Accipiter nisus*
Seen at Kogawa Dam.

Northern Goshawk
*Accipiter gentilis fujiyamae*  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Arasaki.

Black(-eared) Kite
*Milvus migrans lineatus*
Commonly seen throughout.

Rough-legged Hawk
*Buteo lagopus*
Seen at Saku & Cape Nosappu.

Eastern Buzzard
*Buteo japonicus*  
Endemic subspecies

*B.j.japonicus* was seen at Akiyage, Toden Lake, Akan, Arasaki, & Hitotsuse River. A pair of the endemic race *B.j.toyoshimai* was seen on Miyakejima.

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae
Brown-cheeked Rail
*Rallus indicus*
Seen briefly at Arasaki.

Ruddy-breasted Crake
*Porzana fusca*
Seen by some at Arasaki.

Eurasian Moorhen
*Gallinula chloropus*
Seen at Akiyage, near Awara, Arasaki & Hitotsuse River.

Eurasian Coot
*Fulica atra*
Commonly seen throughout.

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae
Siberian Crane
*Grus leucogeranus*
Critically endangered. Seen in fields near Komatsu airport associating with a family of Hooded Cranes.

Sandhill Crane
*Grus canadensis*
Seen at Arasaki.

White-naped Crane
*Grus vipio*
Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki.

Common Crane
*Grus grus*
Seen at Arasaki.

Hooded Crane
*Grus monacha*
Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki and in fields near Komatsu airport associating with the Siberian Crane.

Red-crowned Crane
*Grus japonensis*  
East Asian Endemic
Endangered. Seen at Akan & Setsuri River.
CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover  *Pluvialis squatarola*

Seen at Hitotsusegawa.

**Northern Lapwing**  *Vanellus vanellus*

Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsuse River.

**Gray-headed Lapwing**  *Vanellus cinereus*

Several birds seen near Kaga.

**Kentish Plover**  *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Seen at Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.

**Long-billed Plover**  *Charadrius placidus*

Seen at Toden Lake & Satsuma Sendai.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

**Terek Sandpiper**  *Xenus cinereus*

A single bird seen at Yatsushiro.

**Common Sandpiper**  *Actitis hypoleucos*

Seen at Satsuma Sendai, Yatsushiro, Arasaki, Hitotsuse River & Miyakejima.

**Green Sandpiper**  *Tringa ochropus*

Seen at Arasaki.

**Common Greenshank**  *Tringa nebularia*

Near-threatened. Seen at Yatsushiro & Hitotsuse River.

**Sanderling**  *Calidris alba*

Seen at Hitotsuse River.

**Dunlin**  *Calidris alpina*

Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

**Rock Sandpiper**  *Calidris ptilocnemis*

Seen near Cape Nosappu.

**Dowicher sp.**  *Limnodromus sp.*

Seen at Hitotsuse River.

**Common Snipe**  *Gallinago gallinago*

Seen at Toden Lake & Arasaki.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

**Black-legged Kittiwake**  *Rissa tridactyla*

Seen at coastal Fukui.

**Black-headed Gull**  *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Seen at Akiyase, Yatsushiro, Hitotsuse River & on the Miyakejima ferry.

**Saunders's Gull**  *Saundersilarus sandersi*

Vulnerable. Two birds seen at Yatsushiro.

**Black-tailed Gull**  *Larus crassirostris*

Seen near Awara, Rausu, Yatsushiro, Umagase & on the Miyakejima ferry.

**Mew (Kamchatka) Gull**  *Larus canus kamtschatschensis*

Seen near Awara & Rausu.

**Glaucous-winged Gull**  *Larus glaucescens*

Seen at Rausu & Notsuke Peninsular.

**Glaucous Gull**  *Larus hyperboreus*

Seen at Rausu, Notsuke Peninsular & Cape Nosappu.

**Herring (Vega) Gull**  *Larus argentatus vegae*

Commonly seen at coastal sites throughout.

**Slaty-backed Gull**  *Larus schistisagus*

East Asian Endemic

Commonly seen at coastal sites throughout.

**Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull**  *Larus fuscus heuglini*

Seen at Yatsushiro.

**Little Tern**  *Sternula albifrons*

A single bird seen at Hitotsuse River.
CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae
Underline Pomarine Jaeger  
*Stercorarius pomarinus*

Seen on the Miyakejima ferry.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae

**Thick-billed Murre**  
*Uria lomvia*

Seen at Cape Nosappu.

**Common Murre**  
*Uria aalge*

Seen on Habomai boat ride.

**Pigeon Guillemot**  
*Cephus columba*

Seen at Habomai boat ride & Cape Nosappu.

**Spectacled Guillemot**  
*Cephus carbo*

Seen at Rausu, on the Habomai boat ride & Cape Nosappu.

**Ancient Murrelet**  
*Synthliboramphus antiquus*

Seen at Rausu, Cape Nosappu & on the Habomai boat ride.

**Japanese Murrelet**  
*Synthliboramphus wumizusume*

Vulnerable. Seen at Kadogawa & on the Miyakejima ferry.

**Least Auklet**  
*Aethia pusilla*

Seen on the Habomai boat ride.

---

**COLUMBIIFORMES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon**  
*Columba livia*

Introduced. Commonly seen throughout.

**Japanese Wood-Pigeon**  
*Columba j. janthina*

North-east Asian Endemic

Near-threatened. Seen Miyakejima & heard at Umagase.

**Oriental Turtle-Dove**  
*Streptopelia orientalis*

Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.

---

**STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae**

**Long-eared Owl**  
*Asio otus*

Seen at Akiqase.

**Blakiston’s Fish-Owl**  
*Ketupa b. blakistoni*

Endangered. Seen at Rausu.

---

**CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae**

**Common Kingfisher**  
*Alcedo atthis*

Seen at Lake Toden & Satsuma Sendai.

**Crested Kingfisher**  
*Megaceryle lugubris*

Endemic subspecies

Seen at Akan, Satsuma Sendai & Kogawa Dam.
PICIFORMES: Picidae
Pygmy Woodpecker  *Dendrocopos kizuki*
Seen at Akigase, Karuizawa, Kogawa Dam, Miike, Umagase & Miyakejima.
White-backed Woodpecker  *Dendrocopos leucotos*
Seen at Miike.
Great Spotted Woodpecker  *Dendrocopos major*
Seen at Karuizawa, Setsuri River & Lake Furen.
Japanese Woodpecker  *Picus awokera*  Endemic
Seen at Karuizawa, Kogawa Dam & Miike.

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae
Eurasian Kestrel  *Falco tinnunculus*
Seen en route to Karuizawa, Komatsu, Arasaki, Kadogawa.
Merlin  *Falco columbarius*
Seen at Arasaki.
Peregrine Falcon  *Falco peregrinus*
Seen en route to Karuizawa, Rausu & Arasaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae
Ryukyu Minivet  *Pericrocotus tegima*  Endemic
Seen at Miike & Kota Oike.

PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae
Bull-headed Shrike  *Lanius bucephalus*
Seen at Akigase, Toden Lake, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae
Eurasian Jay  *Garrulus glandarius japonicus*  Endemic subspecies
The endemic G.g.japonicus seen at Karuizawa & Jigokudani G.g.bambergi seen at Lake Furen.
Daurian Jackdaw  *Corvus dauricus*
A single bird seen at Arasaki.
(Oriental) Rook  *Corvus frugilegus pastinator*
Seen at Arasaki.
Carriorn (Oriental) Crow  *Corvus corone orientalis*
Commonly seen throughout.
Large-billed Crow  *Corvus macrorhynchos japonensis*
Commonly seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae
(Japanese) Sky Lark  *Alauda arvensis japonica*  Endemic subspecies
Seen near Komatsu, Arasaki & Hitotsuse River.

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundidae
Barn Swallow  *Hirundo rustica*
Seen at Satsuma Sendai & common in coastal Miyazaki.
Asian House Martin  *Delichon dasypus*
Seen briefly by some on the drive to Miyazaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae
Coal Tit  *Periparus ater*
Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Furen, Kirishima Shrine & Miike.
(Owston’s Tit  *Poecile owstoni*)
Seen Miyakejima. Considered a subspecies of the previous species by Clements but split by IOC.
Marsh Tit  *Poecile palustris hensoni*  Endemic subspecies
Seen at Setsuri River & Lake Furen.
Willow Tit  *Poecile montanus restrictus*  Endemic subspecies
Seen at Karuizawa.
Varied Tit  
*Poecile varius*

Seen at Karuizawa, Kirishima Shrine, Umagase, Miike & Kota Oike.

**Japanese Tit**  
*Parus minor*

Commonly seen throughout.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae**

**Chinese Penduline-Tit**  
*Remiz consobrinus*

Seen at Arasaki.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae**

**Long-tailed Tit**  
*Aegithalos caudatus*

*Endemic subspecies*

*A.c.trivirgatus* seen at Karuizawa & near Awara. The endemic *A.c.kiusiuensis* seen at Miike.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae**

**Eurasian Nuthatch**  
*Sitta europaea*

*Endemic subspecies*

*S.e.amurensis* seen at Karuizawa, *S.e.asiatica* seen at Akan & Lake Furen, The endemic *S.e.roseillia* seen at Miike.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae**

**Eurasian Wren**  
*Troglodytes troglodytes*

*Endemic subspecies*

*T.t.fumigatus* seen at Karuizawa, Akan & heard at Miike. The endemic *T.t.mosukei* seen on Miyakejima.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae**

**Brown Dipper**  
*Cinclus pallasii*

Seen at Karuizawa, Awara & Akan.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae**

**Brown-eared Bulbul**  
*Hypsipetes amaurotis*

Commonly seen throughout.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae**

**Goldcrest**  
*Regulus regulus*

Seen at Kirishima Shrine.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae**

**Japanese Bush-Warbler**  
*Horornis diphone*

Seen at Arasaki, Kogawa Dam, Hitotsuse River, Miike & on Miyakejima.

---

**PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae**

**Dusky Warbler**  
*Phylloscopus borealis*

Seen at Narita before the tour by one participant.
Siberian Chiffchaff  *Phylloscopus tristis*
Seen at Miike.

**PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae**
Zitting Cisticola  *Cisticola juncidis*
Seen at Akigase.

**PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae**
Japanese White-eye  *Zosterops j. japonicus*  
*Endemic subspecies*
Seen at Akigase, Arasaki, Umagase, Hitotsuse Rive, Kota Oike & on Miyakejima.

**PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae**
Red-billed Leiothrix  *Leiothrix lutea*
Introduced. Seen at Kirishima shrine & Miike.

**PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae**
Japanese Robin  *Larvivora akahige*
Seen on Miyakejima.
Red-flanked Bluetail  *Tarsiger cyanurus*
Seen at Akigase, Karuizawa & Kirishima shrine.
Daurian Redstart  *Phoenicurus auroreus*
Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.
Blue Rock-Thrush  *Monticola solitarius*
Seen at Kaga, Kadogawa & Miyakejima.

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**
Pale Thrush  *Turdus pallidus*
Seen at Akigase, Katano Kamoike, Arasaki, Miike & Miyakejima.
Brown-headed Thrush  *Turdus chrysolaus*
Seen at Akigase.
Izu Thrush  *Turdus celaenops*
*Endemic*
Seen on Miyakejima.
Dusky Thrush  *Turdus eunomus*
Commonly seen throughout.

**PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae**
White-cheeked Starling  *Sturnus cineraceus*
Commonly seen throughout.
PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae
Japanese Accentor  
Prunella rubida  
Endemic
Seen at Karuizawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae
Forest Wagtail  
Dendroanthus indicus
A single bird at Miike.
Gray Wagtail  
Motacilla cinerea
Seen at Lake Toden, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki, & Yatsushiro.
White Wagtail  
Motacilla alba
M.a.lugens (Black-backed Wagtail) commonly seen throughout. M.a.ocularis seen at several sites.
Japanese Wagtail  
Motacilla grandis  
Breeding Endemic
Seen at Karuizawa, Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, Akan, Rausu, Kiritappu, Satsuma Sendai & Arasaki.

Olive-backed Pipit  
Anthus hodgsoni
Seen at Miike.
American (Buff-bellied) Pipit  
Anthus rubescens japonicus
Seen at Arasaki, Satsuma Sendai & Hitotsusegawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Calcariidae
Snow Bunting  
Plectrophenax nivalis
Seen at Hakuchodai.

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae
Meadow Bunting  
Emberiza c. ciopsis  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Akigase, Karuizawa, Toden Lake, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki, Kirishima & Kadogawa.

Chestnut-eared Bunting  
Emberiza fucata
Seen at Arasaki & Kota Oike.

Rustic Bunting  
Emberiza rustica
Seen at Akigase & Toden Lake.

Yellow-throated Bunting  
Emberiza elegans
Seen at Miki & Kota Oike.

Black-faced Bunting  
Emberiza spodocephala
Seen at Akigase, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki, Miike, Kota Oike & Miyakejima.

Reed Bunting  
Emberiza schoeniclus
Seen at Akigase, Toden Lake & Arasaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae
Brambling  
Fringilla montifringilla
Seen at Arasaki.
Asian Rosy-Finch  
Leucosticte arctoa
Seen at Notsuke Peninsular.

We had cracking views of Yellow-throated & Gray Buntings at the Miike feeders (Sam Woods)
Eurasian Bullfinch, *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
Heard at Miyakejima.

Long-tailed Rosefinch, *Uragus sibiricus*
Seen at Akiigase & Karuizawa.

Oriental Greenfinch, *Chloris sinica*
Seen at most sites.

Eurasian Siskin, *Spinus spinus*
Seen at Miyakejima.

Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
Seen at Akiigase, Karuizawa & Hitotsusegawa.

Japanese Grosbeak, *Eophona p. personata*  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Karuizawa, Kogawa Dam & Sadowara.

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

Russet Sparrow, *Passer rutilans*
Seen at Yatsushiro & near Kota Oike.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*
Commonly seen throughout.

**MAMMAL LIST**


**CERCOPITHECIDAE: Old World Monkeys**

Japanese Macaque, *Macaca fuscata*  
Endemic
Seen at Jigokudani.

**SCIURIDAE: Squirrels**

Japanese Squirrel, *Sciurus lis*  
Endemic
Seen at Karuizawa.

Japanese Flying Squirrel, *Petaurista leucogenys*  
Endemic
Seen at Miike.

**CANIDAE: Canids**

Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*  
Endemic subspecies
The endemic V.v.japonica was seen at Karuizawa. The endemic V.v.schrenki was seen at Rausu, Akan, Notsuke Peninsular & Lake Furen.

Raccoon Dog, *Nyctereutes procyonoides viverrinus*  
Endemic subspecies
Seen at Karuizawa.

**MUSTELIDAE: Mustelids**

Siberian Weasel, *Mustela sibirica*
Introduced. Seen at Kota Oike

**PHOCIDAE: Seals**

Harbour Seal, *Phoca vitulina*
Seen at Rausu, Kiritappu & Cape Nosappu.

**CERVIDAE: Deer**

Sika Deer, *Cervus nippon*  
Endemic subspecies
The endemic C.n.nippon was seen at Karuizawa & Miike. The endemic C.n.yesoensis was seen at Setsuri River, Tsuruimura, Notsuke Peninsular & Lake Furen.

**SUIDAE: Pigs**

Wild Boar, *Sus scrofa*
A single animal seen at Miike.