

TROPICAL BIRDING



Taiwan: Formosan Endemics

Set departure tour

14th – 27th April, 2014

Tour leader: Charley Hesse

Report by Charley Hesse Photos by Charley Hesse & Graham Ekins



Swinhoe's Pheasant dazzled us at the feeding station with its jewel-like plumage (Graham Ekins)

This year's Taiwan Set Departure tour was again a resounding success. Not only did we see an impressive 209 species of birds, including all the endemics (which have increased now to 24 species) and the vast majority of endemic subspecies, but thanks to the efforts of the tour participants we had the best ever lists for reptiles, amphibians and our first butterfly list. We were lucky to have fine weather for most of the trip, which made the birding comfortable and enabled us to enjoy the breath-taking scenery of this beautiful island. Again, clients were impressed at how developed, safe and friendly Taiwan is and also at the great facilities in the parks we visited. The highlights of our trip included great views of male Swinhoe's & Mikado Pheasants and Taiwan Partridge at feeding sites, great night viewing with Formosan Serow, Reeves Munjac and Red-and-white Flying Squirrel also at Dasyueshan, finding the MEGA Himalayan or Chinese Tawny Owl at Hehuanshan and the incredibly elusive, white-headed Island Thrush at Cingjing, plus amazing butterfly viewing at Shuangliou. Tropical Birding is the only major bird tour company with an office in Taiwan, and this together with our ever-growing experience and knowledge of great stake outs for difficult species mean that we are probably the premier bird tour company here.

14th April – Botanical Gardens & Riverside Park, Taipei

Although the meet up time was in the afternoon, one participant took the initiative to sneak in a bit of extra birding at the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Park in the morning, and saw **Asian Glossy Starling**, **White-bellied Pigeon**, **Yellow-browed Warbler** and **Brown-headed Thrush** amongst others. The rest of us met up after lunch for a visit to the Taipei Botanical gardens, a great place to get to grips with some of Taiwan's commoner birds. The first bird species we saw was the stunning endemic **Taiwan Blue-Magpie**, a real turn up for the books. It wasn't long before we had picked up a further 2 endemics in the shape of **Taiwan Barbet** and **Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler**. As we enjoyed our gentle stroll around the beautiful gardens we found several endemic subspecies, with **Oriental Turtle-Dove**, **Black Drongo** and **Light-vented Bulbul**, plus other common birds like **Spotted Dove**, **Japanese White-eye** and **Oriental Magpie-Robin**, the latter an escaped cage bird. Around the large pond we found **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Eurasian Moorhen** and **White-breasted Waterhen**. We also picked up our first mammal, **Pallas's Squirrel** and first amphibian, **Gunther's Brown Frog**. Our main target in the gardens, was not an endemic but a bird very difficult to see in other countries, the **Malayan Night-Heron**. We came across several of these confiding birds.



In Chinese, the Taiwan Barbet is called 'wusiniaoh' or 'five-colored' bird (Graham Ekins)

Next it was on to the Riverside Park. We parked the vehicle and walked along a footpath used by many Taipei locals out for a stroll. We walked along the edge of long grass and bushes where we saw our first **Nutmeg Mannikins**, **Red Collared-Dove**, **Brown Shrike** and **Yellow-bellied & Plain Prinias**. The path drew closer to the river and we started to see our first water birds. We saw a pair of **Eastern Spot-billed Ducks** and a pair of oddly plumaged and slightly overweight **Mallards** which we decided not to count. We also had **Grey Heron**, **Little Egret**, the introduced **Sacred Ibis**, **Common & Wood Sandpipers**. We were fairly close to the sea and the river was tidal. At the moment it was low tide and several *taivana* race **Eastern Yellow Wagtails** and many **Eurasian Magpies** were searching for invertebrates. We saw several **Black Bulbuls** in the nearby trees and found the endemic race of **Crested Myna** amongst the more common introduced **Javan & Common Mynas**. We also saw the large **Black-collared Starling**, another established exotic. Lastly we saw some nice breeding-plumaged eastern **Cattle Egrets**, showing much more orange plumage than their western counterparts. We waited with a crowd of Taiwanese bird photographers for a vagrant Black Stork to return but after a while we gave it up and went back to the hotel before dinner.

15th April – Shimen Dam & Dasyueshan

We left Taipei early and headed south on the main highway. We were heading to the wonderful forested slopes of Dasyueshan, undoubtedly the best place to see the majority of Taiwan's endemics. Our first port of call though was a small forest park next to the Shimen Reservoir near Taoyuan airport. On the way we spotted a few interesting birds from the vehicle, like **Japanese Sparrowhawk**, **House Swift** and **Eurasian Magpie**. We got out in the parking lot and set up our first of many picnic breakfasts of the trip. Part way through our breakfast cereal, a **Taiwan Barbet** turned up and showed well, followed by several other common birds including, **Light-vented & Black Bulbuls** and **Gray Treepie**. We took a walk along the road and heard **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** although we didn't manage to lure any into view. We turned onto a forest trail which was more productive and there we had scope views of a perched **Besra** plus **Gray-chinned Minivet**, **White-bellied Erpornis** and a **Brown-headed Thrush**. We went back to the vehicle and drove along the road a little and came across a flock of 4 **Taiwan Blue-Magpie**. We got out and had great views but only heard the endemic **Formosan Whistling-Thrush** and **Taiwan Partridge**. We drove down to the edge of the dam which commanded a fine view of the forested slope and we had several soaring **Crested Serpent-Eagles** and a distant **Crested Goshawk**. From the dam wall itself we saw **Little Grebe**, **Little Egret** and had numerous **Pacific Swallows** zipping to and fro. Back at the parking lot we climbed a viewing tower which had a flowering tree where we had great photographic opportunities of **Gray-capped Woodpecker** and **Japanese White-eye** which had come in to feed on nectar.



Red-and-white Giant Flying Squirrels are an added bonus at Dasyueshan (Charley Hesse)

Our birding was finished here and we set off for Dasyueshan where we were to spend the next 4 days exploring. We had a couple of stops half way up the mountain but it quickly misted over leaving us blind and only able to enjoy the chorus of the forest, with the distinctive calls of **White-eared Sibia**, **Steere's Liocichla**, **Taiwan Cupwing** and **Rufous-faced Warbler**. On one stop we got out and actually flushed a female **Swinhoe's Pheasant** from a tree. We stopped at a waterfall where we were lucky enough to spot a delightful **Little Forktail**. Higher up, we crossed an impressive bridge under which **Asian House-Martins** roosted in large numbers. We checked in and picked up the keys to our cabins but drove straight on up the road towards the summit to go in search of Mikado Pheasant. A little lower down than the feeding site, we stopped at our usual stake out for the **White-browed Bush-Robin**, a distinctive endemic race that has a good chance to be split as Taiwan Robin. The female showed well, posing on some mossy logs in the gully. We went to the feeding site higher up and waited for the Mikado Pheasant to show. Luckily there was plenty to look at while we waited, and we saw the endemic **White-whiskered Laughingthrush**, **Collared Bush-Robin** and **Flamecrest** plus endemic races of **Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler**, **Vinaceous Rosefinch**, **Coal Tit** and **Eurasian Nutcracker**, several of which are candidates to be split. **Formosan Striped & Perny's Long-nosed Squirrels** feasted on the grain that had been put out, but after an hour the pheasants still hadn't showed and we decided to try again tomorrow. After dinner we took a night drive up slope and had great views of the beautiful **Red-and-white Flying-Squirrel** by the side of the road.

16th April – Dasyueshan

We had an early picnic breakfast outside our rooms before driving back upslope to the Mikado spot. The light was much better than the previous afternoon and the birds more active. There was a Taiwanese photographer already waiting for the pheasants but we walked along the road to look for other species, all the while keeping a close eye on him in case the Mikados showed up. In the meanwhile, we saw **White-whiskered Laughingthrush**, **Eurasian Jay**, **Flamecrest**, **Collared Bush-Robin** and one client even spotted an **Oriental Cuckoo**, a real bogie bird for several people on the tour. We added **Large-billed Crow**, the very distinctive *owstoni* race of **Eurasian Nutcracker**, a pair of cute **Ferruginous Flycatchers** and some **Steere's Liocichlas** which shot quickly across the road. All of a sudden, somebody shouted out “**Mikado Pheasant!**” and we all spin round to check the feeding station. Sure enough, there was a male Mikado happily chomping down grain. We edged towards it getting better and better views and photos. The pheasants here are pretty used to people and seemed unconcerned about the row of birders snapping away. We were happy to have seen it today rather than yesterday as we were able to get much better photos than we would have. Triumphant, we drove on up to the summit where we walked a couple of trails to find **Taiwan Bush-Warbler**, **Taiwan Fulvetta**, **White-browed Bush-Robin** and **Coal Tit**.



The stately Mikado Pheasant is well staked out at a feeding station on Dasyueshan (Graham Ekins)

We had done very well for endemics at the higher elevations, and from here we birded our way down lower. We stopped by a small police station where we had good views of **Rufous-capped Babbler** and **Rusty Laughingthrush**. On other stops lower down, we picked up new birds at a steady rate, with **Ashy Wood-Pigeon**, **Gray-chinned Minivet**, **Gray Treepie**, **Green-backed & Black-throated Tits**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Rufous-faced Warbler**, **Taiwan Yuhina** and **White-eared Sibia**. Driving back up we came across 2 **Formosan Rock Macaques** by the side of the road. After lunch at the restaurant, we took a break in our rooms after which we went back down slope spotting large numbers of **Asian House-Martins** at the bridge again. Another stop produced our first **Vivid Niltava**, a beautiful bird that is also a possible split. We also picked up our first **White-tailed Robin**, the beautiful endemic **Yellow Tit** and Taiwan's newest endemic (according to Clement's) the recently split **Gray-cheeked Fulvetta**. **Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush** is always one of the toughest endemics but our stake out came up trumps again and we had great views of a large group. We got down to a large car park and took a walk along a forestry trail where our main targets were **Taiwan Cupwing** and **Taiwan Shortwing**. We found both calling and lured the cupwing into view but the shortwing only offered the briefest glimpses. After dinner we took another night drive and found several **Reeve's Muntjacs** along the road and 2 **Taiwan Serows** up from the road on a scrubby hillside. Down at the car park we heard a distant **Mountain Scops-Owl** and along the road on the way back up to the lodging we had **Red-and-white Flying-Squirrels** very close to the vehicle running along a concrete wall. It climbed down to the road and for a moment I thought it might try to get in to the car with us. What a day it had been!

17th April – Daxueshan

We had pretty much cleaned up on birds at the higher elevations, so after an early breakfast, we checked out and headed downslope. We saw some **White-whiskered Laughingthrushes** crossing the road and the **Asian House-Martins** again as we drove across the bridge. We minimized stops though and tried to get down to the **Swinhoe's Pheasant** feeding station as early as possible. The plan worked and as we walked up to the spot it seemed a male **Swinhoe's Pheasant** had just arrived and the photographers cameras were snapping away. The bird seemed to mistake the shutter sounds for wing beats, and fluttered its wings in response. It gave a good show for a while, then another male showed up and the first male chased after it. Neither bird reappeared so we walked up to the parking lot to check a stake out for **Taiwan Partridge**. There were 2 possible places where they come out, so I left the clients at one and I walked down to the other. After a while a pair of partridges turned up at my spot so I sprinted back up the hill and drove the clients back down. Luckily they were still there and we got great views and photos. On the drive back up, we found a **Gray-faced Woodpecker** at one of the laybys. Next we walked along an old logging trail and found it much better than yesterday. Today we saw some great birds including **Snowy-browed Flycatcher**, **Rusty Laughingthrush** and **White-backed Woodpecker**. We played the Collared Owlet call and had **Green-backed & Black-throated Tits**, **Rufous-faced Warbler** and **White-eared Sibia** coming in.



Taiwan Partridge is another formerly difficult endemic now attending feeding sites (Graham Ekins)

After a picnic lunch, we started our drive down and picked up a few more interesting birds, including our first **Formosan Whistling-Thrush**, **Ashy Minivet** and **White-tailed Robin**. We also heard **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** but it couldn't be coaxed out of cover, so we walked to the edge of the road and one lucky participant saw it calling in a tree before it dropped down and disappeared. We had a very productive stop down a side road at a stone bridge over a small river. On the river itself we saw **Striated Heron** and **Plumbeous Redstart** but unfortunately no Brown Dipper. In the riverside vegetation we saw **Collared Finchbill**, **White-rumped Munia** and **Plain Prinia**, and added to our reptile lists with **Swinhoe's Japalura** and **Indian Forest Skink**. Lower down we stopped at a view point where we saw **Pacific Swallow**, **House Swift**, **Oriental Turtle-Dove**, a nice pair of **White-bellied Pigeons** perched and a soaring **Crested Serpent-Eagle**. Our last stops were to search for **Dusky Fulvetta**, **Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler** and **Taiwan Hwamei**. We saw all three but none satisfactorily, so we would try again tomorrow. We drove down to the small town of Dongshi where we checked in to a comfortable hotel and went out for a delicious meal.

18th April – Daxueshan & Shigang Dam

We had done remarkably well at the higher elevations, so today was devoted to searching for our remaining targets lower down. We met outside the hotel at dawn but we had left it a bit late for nightjars and just saw a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** going to roost and a Gray Treepie just waking up. After breakfast in the hotel, we drove up and tried again for **Taiwan Hwamei**, hearing it call and seeing a movement but nothing more. We did see 2 **Malayan Night-Herons** and a pair of **Bronzed Drongos**. We stopped higher up and got out to hear **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** and see **Oriental Cuckoo, White-bellied Pigeon** and a stunning male **Siberian Rubythroat** which was singing its little heart out. We went back to the stone bridge over the river and this time saw **White-rumped Munia, Collared Finchbill, Striated Prinia** and **Plumbeous Redstart**. We carried on driving up the road and tried several spots for **Dusky Fulvetta** and **Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler**. The fulvetta was as restless as ever but we finally got views. The scimitar-babbler was more of a challenge and we couldn't even hear any. I was just about to give up on it when we got a response. This is normally one of the most difficult endemics to see, but the pair responded well and were rewarded with brief but good views. We worked our way up the mountain with several stops where Collared Owlet imitations brought in **Green-backed & Black-throated Tits, Rufous-faced Warbler, Taiwan Yuhina, Rufous-capped Babbler, Gray-cheeked Fulvetta** and **Steere's Liocichla**. We also found a **Rusty Laughingthrush** which showed surprisingly well.



This singing male Siberian Rubythroat was an unexpected surprise (Graham Ekins)

After a picnic lunch at mid-elevation, we birded nearby and found **Gray-chinned Minivet, White-eared Sibia, Gray-cheeked Fulvetta** and **Vivid Niltava**, but didn't manage to call in a rather vocal **Large Hawk-Cuckoo**. We had a **Japanese Sparrowhawk** zip by, and tried one last time at the river for Brown Dipper but ironically we dipped on it. We did see **Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler**, another **Striated Heron** and a surprise **Yellow-browed Warbler**. We went to the viewpoint again and saw **Oriental Turtle-Dove, Pacific Swallow** and a handsome male **Blue Rock Thrush** of the red-bellied *philippensis* race. After all the trouble we had with Taiwan Hwamei higher up, we easily found a pair of **Chinese Hwamei** hybrids with incomplete white eye-brows. Our last stop on the road was at another river lower down where we finally added **Common Kingfisher** along with a *leucopsis* **White Wagtail** and several **Nutmeg Mannikins** coming down to drink. It was only early afternoon and we still had birding time left so decided to visit the Shigang reservoir for some waterbirds. We found a nice viewpoint over the reservoir where we saw **Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Little Grebe, Grey Heron, Great, Little & Cattle Egrets**. After that we found a park that had a great view of the river below the dam with **Little Ringed Plover, Common, Green & Wood Sandpipers, House Swift, Black Drongo, Grey-throated Martin, Striated Swallow, Eastern Yellow, Gray & leucopsis White Wagtails**. Our birding in this area was at an end and we made our way back to our hotel and dinner.

19th April – Dongshi to Tainan

We met a little earlier than yesterday and finally managed to find **Savanna Nightjar** perched on a distant building. After breakfast, we set off south and turned off the highway north of the city of Tainan for the Aogu Wetland Reserve. There was a raised road with a great view over mudflats, mangroves and ditches. We found a good diversity of ducks along the first section with **Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Garganey** and **Green-winged Teal**. Other waterbirds present included **Little Grebe, Yellow & Cinnamon Bitterns, Grey Heron, Great, Intermediate, Little & Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Sacred Ibis, Eurasian Moorhen, Little & Whiskered Terns** and **Common Kingfisher**. The main target here though was **Black-faced Spoonbill**, an endangered East Asian endemic that winters here. Most of the spoonbills in the area will have left for their breeding grounds already, but we still managed to find around 13 birds. Aogu is also probably the premier site in Taiwan for shore birds and we found a huge selection, with **Black-winged Stilt**, good numbers of **Pied Avocet, Black-bellied, Kentish Plover & Pacific Golden-Plovers, Greater & Lesser Sand-Plovers, Gray-tailed Tattler, Common Greenshank, Common Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Common, Marsh, Wood, Sharp-tailed, Curlew** & finally **Broad-billed Sandpipers**, many **Red-necked** and just a single **Long-toed Stint, Dunlin** and **Common Snipe**. Other open country birds included **Oriental Pratincole, Black-shouldered Kite** (a recent colonist in Taiwan), **Brown Shrike, Eurasian Magpie, Grey-throated Martin, Pacific & Striated Swallows, Oriental Reed-Warbler** and **Japanese White-eye**.



A single Black-faced Spoonbill showing off its beautiful, golden breeding plumage (Graham Ekins)

It had been an incredibly productive start, but by late morning the tide had come in and subsequent stops at Haomei and the Bazhang River mouth produced little more than **Great Crested Tern, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew** plus large numbers **Terek Sandpiper** roosting at high tide on floating oyster platforms. We had a delicious lunch in a rather splendid banquet hall, after which we checked in to our hotel and had a short rest before heading out for more shore birding in the afternoon. We went to the Black-faced Spoonbill reserve which had the introduced **Oriental Magpie-Robin** in the bushes of the parking lot. The tide was high and all the nearby mud covered with few shorebirds evident. We drove up to another site a little further north which had exposed mud but no birds and it seemed with the fine weather in the past few days, many birds had cleared out. We drove back to the reserve and saw an **Osprey** perched on a post and a handful of other birds, like **Terek Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit** and **Caspian Tern**. Our birding time was over and we made our way back to Tainan for dinner.

20th April – Tainan to Taidong

Having done so well on shorebirds yesterday, we brought the schedule forward. We left Tainan after breakfast and drove south. Today we were crossing over to the eastern side of Taiwan, but along the southernmost cross-island highway we would first stop at the wonderful Shuangliou Reserve. I paid for our entry tickets and parked before setting off on the main trail along the river. It was blue skies again today and the river's edge was alive with butterflies. We spotted a pair of **Crested Serpent-Eagles** soaring over the forest ahead, then had our first **Styan's Bulbul**, our final Taiwan endemic. Along the trail, we also had great views of a pair of **Taiwan Scimitar-Babblers** coming down to drink, a group of **Formosan Rock Macaques** up in a tree but only heard the distinctive endemic race of **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge**. It was a great morning for reptiles and we saw **Swinhoe's Japalura**, **Long-tailed Mabuya** and Michael even found us a **Brahminy Blind Snake** under a rock. We turned back towards the visitor centre where we ate out picnic lunch and afterwards took a walk around to find **Taiwan Blue-Magpie**, **Gray Treepie** and **Black Bulbul**. From the bridge we also saw **House Swift** and **Little Egret**.



Taiwan Blue Magpie became the national bird by popular vote (Charley Hesse)

We had another drive in the afternoon up the quieter east coast with its much narrower coastal plain and smaller towns. Just before the town of Taitung where we would spend the night, we had a birding stop at the Zhiben grasslands. Along the entrance road we found **Taiwan Hwamei**, **White-breasted Waterhen** and the endemic race of **Ring-necked Pheasant**. We took a walk around a scrubby area where we found **Lesser Coucal**, **Little Chestnut & Black-faced Buntings**, **Yellow-bellied & Plain Prinias**, **Japanese White-eye**, **Arctic Warbler** and after quite a bit of searching, **Golden-headed Cisticola**. At another spot further along the entrance road, we saw **Long-tailed Shrike** but only heard **Black-naped Oriole**. At the edge of the beach we found **Oriental Skylark** on the ground and had several **Oriental Pratincoles** and **Grey-throated Martins** flying over. There was a small river mouth which had **Little Ringed Plover**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Cinnamon Bittern** which flushed out of the long grass on the water's edge. We cut back to the vehicle through some grassland where we flushed our first **Richard's Pipit**. We had one last birding spot, a small river mouth in Tainan. This spot had been pretty productive in the past, but today all we found were **White Wagtail**, **Brown Shrike** and a **Chinese stripe-eared Terrapin**. We checked in to our rather grand but somewhat kitsch hotel which had the added bonus of having free popcorn and ice cream in the lobby.

21st April – Taidong to Lanyu

Before our flight to Lanyu, we went back to the Zhiben grasslands and found many of the same birds as yesterday, including **Styan's & Black Bulbuls**, **Zitting & Golden-headed Cisticolas** doing flight displays and vocalizing, **Yellow-bellied & Plain Prinias**, **Taiwan Hwamei** and **Lesser Coucal**, but we also added **Gray-capped Woodpecker**, **Striated Swallow**, **Long-tailed Shrike**, the incredibly bright **Black-naped Oriole**, **Gray Treepie** and a **Pale Thrush** in flight. The highlight though was coming across a **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** calling in some scrub which we managed to flush up. Our birding time here was up and we drove to Taitung airport where we found a **Malayan Night-Heron** in the parking lot. Our flight left on time and we spotted several **Oriental Pratincoles** on the runway during takeoff. We were met on Lanyu by the guy from our lodge who delivered our rental vehicle. We dropped him off and went straight out birding around the island. Our first stop was at a bridge from where we spotted **White-breasted Waterhen**, a calling **Emerald Dove**, a few **Lowland White-eyes**, **Brown-eared Bulbul** and some **Pacific Swifts** flying over. The highlight here though was having scope views of several perched **Whistling Green-Pigeons**, a lifer for all the clients.



Whistling Green-Pigeons (Graham Ekins)

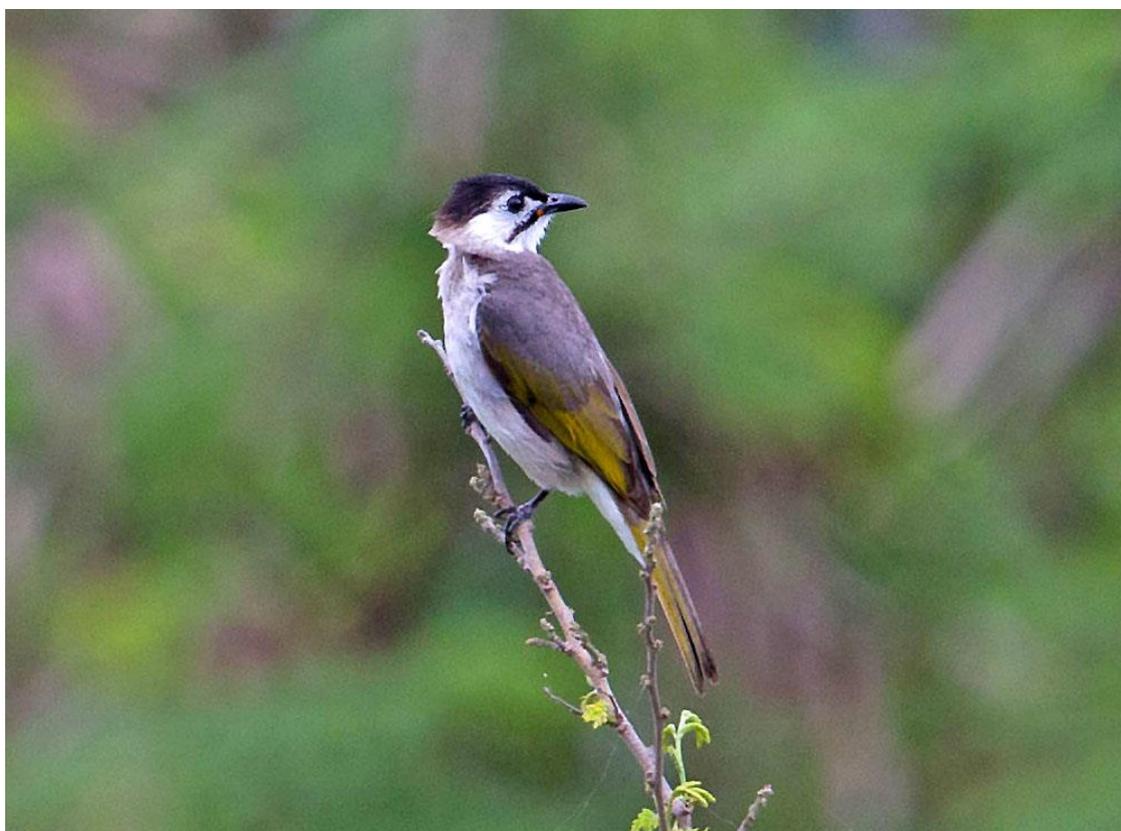


Ryukyu Scops-Owl (Charley Hesse)

We drove further round the island, stopping at an impressive volcanic rock in the shape of a lion to take some photos. Along this stretch of coast we also found the red-bellied *phillipensis* race of **Blue Rock Thrush** and **Pacific Reef-Heron**. After that we went to a patch of forest where we usually search for Japanese Paradise-flycatcher. We parked and walked in and almost straight away found several **Northern Boobooks** which seemed to be migrating birds that had fallen in. **Philippine Cuckoo-Dove** was pretty common here but it took us a while to find **Japanese Paradise-Flycatcher**. We also had a **Japanese Sparrowhawk fly** by but only heard the endemic subspecies of **Ryukyu Scops-Owl**, which if split would be called the Lanyu Scops-Owl. After lunch we went back to the same forest and again heard the **Ryukyu Scops-Owl**. Invariably it would only call a few times which was not long enough to locate it. It gave us the run around for quite a while until I managed to locate one up in the canopy and we all had good scope views. On the drive back we lucked upon a **Chinese Egret** perched on a rock and tried to do a bit of sea watching but it was devoid of life. After dinner we went out for more views of **Ryukyu Scops-Owl** and found a bird easily which posed nicely for photos.

22nd April – Lanyu to Hualien

We just had a short time to bird on Lanyu before boarding our flight back to Taitung. We had seen all the main targets so just tried to take a look for any migrants that might be around. We did see **Osprey** and **Peregrine Falcon** perched on large rocks, just off shore, **Brown Shrike** and **Brown-headed Thrush** along a path behind our hotel. Otherwise there was just many of the same birds, like **Intermediate**, **Little Egret & Cattle Egrets**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Lesser Coucal** and **Pacific Swallow**. We were dropped off at the airport and we were soon back in Taitung and on the way out of town we saw **Ring-necked Pheasant**, more **Oriental Pratincoles**, **House Swift**, **Eurasian Magpie** and **Styan's Bulbul**. I wanted to check out a place in the mountains called Wulu forest. We drove up a narrow winding road, spotting an **Emerald Dove** on the way, to a stake out for **Maroon Oriole** and there we had a birding picnic lunch. We only had the oriole fly by but there were plenty of other good birds, like **Crested Serpent-Eagle**, **Crested Goshawk**, **Gray-chinned Minivet**, **Bronzed Drongo**, **Black-naped Monarch**, **Collared Finchbill**, **Gray-cheeked Fulvetta** and **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker**. We tried another spot after that where we saw **Black Bulbul**, **Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler**, **Grey-throated Martin**, **White Wagtail** and **White-rumped Munia** but none of the interesting migrants from last year. We drove to on Hualien passing through some pretty heavy rain and decided to knock off a little early today.



Styan's Bulbul is threatened by hybridization with the Chinese Bulbul (Graham Ekins)

23rd April – Hualien to Taroko Gorge, Wuling Pass & Chingjing

In the morning we went to the Hualien river mouth which we had skipped yesterday because of the rain. On the drive in, we saw a number of **Brown Shrikes**, indicating that a few migrants may have dropped in. We also saw **Taiwan Hwamei** before we got to the river mouth itself. Here we saw a good variety of shorebirds and other waterbirds, including **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**, **Grey Heron**, **Great, Little & Cattle Egrets**, **Lesser & Greater Sand-Plovers**, **Terek**, **Sharp-tailed & Curlew Sandpipers**, **Gray-tailed Tattler**, **Common Redshank**, **Whimbrel**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, our first **Great Knot** of the trip, **Red-necked Stint**, **Dunlin**, several **Oriental Pratincoles** and **Little & Common Terns**. In the nearby scrub we saw **Spotted Dove**, **Lesser Coucal** and **White Wagtail**. It had been a short but productive stop, but now it was time to make our way up the famous Taroko gorge. The scenery here was absolutely spectacular and we had a few stops for photos. We also saw a **Striated Heron** and several species of raptor, with **Crested Serpent-Eagle**, **Mountain Hawk-Eagle**, **Crested Goshawk** and **Besra**. Scanning the river from one of the bridges we saw **Little Ringed Plover**, **Plumbeous Redstart** and **Formosan Whistling-Thrush** and a little further on **Pacific & House Swifts** and our first **Silver-backed Needletail**, a highlight for one swift lover in the group.

We reached the top of the gorge at Tienxiang and birded the trees around the parking lot to find **Gray-chinned Minivet, White-bellied Erpornis, Large-billed Crow**, a rather concerning mixed pair of **Styan's & Light-vented Bulbuls** and **Taiwan Yuhina**. The road from there wound higher and higher and we stopped to look at a nesting colony of **Asian House-Martins**. Just below the Wuling Pass, we birded an area of pine trees where we saw several high-elevation species like **White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Collared Bush-Robin, Vinaceous Rosefinch** and even an **Oriental Cuckoo**. Our main target here though was the **Gray-headed Bullfinch**, a very distinctive endemic subspecies and possible split. I played the call and we heard a distant response. We walked closer and tried again, to have several birds fly in to the nearby pines. Just below the pass, we stopped in a large parking lot for lunch after which we found the endemic subspecies of **Eurasian Wren**. We also searched for the high elevation Alpine Accentor but failed to find them in the mist. We drove on up to the Wuling pass where we searched again around for the **Alpine Accentor** in the smaller parking lot. Here we finally found one rather confiding bird despite the adverse viewing conditions. We drove on down to our hotel in Cingjing where we checked in after a long rainy day. After dinner we undertook an owling expedition back up and over the pass to a stakeout for **Himalayan Owl**. We tried the call at the location and heard a bird responding downslope. It flew up closer and we walked along the road to find it perched in a pine tree. What a MEGA bird! A lifer for the whole group including the guide. Needless to say, none of the other bird tour companies staying at the hotel that night saw this bird.

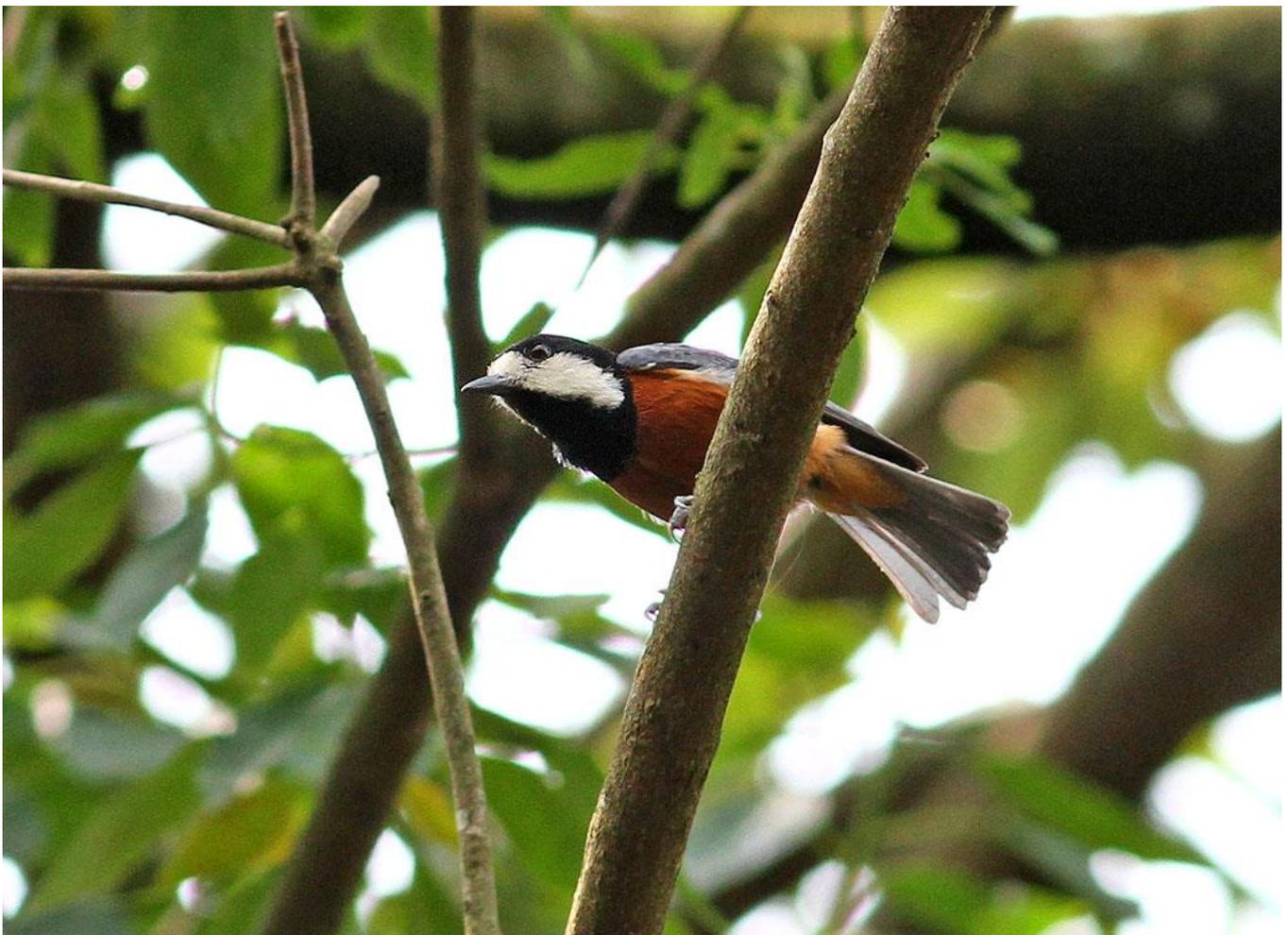


The rarely seen Himalayan or Chinese Tawny Owl (Graham Ekins)

24th April – Chunyang, Huisun & Cingjing

We started the day at Chunyang, the experimental farm belonging to one of the Taiwan Universities. As the crow flies it was very close to our hotel, but it was almost straight down, which meant that we had to drive all the way down the winding road and back along a road along the river below. We set up our picnic breakfast in the parking lot and afterwards, walked up through the complex which was a mixture of forest patches, grass and agricultural plots. Our main target here was the **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**, but on the way up to the site, we saw **White-bellied Pigeon, Collared Finchbill, Light-vented & Black Bulbuls, Rufous-capped Babbler & Taiwan Hwamei**. The parrotbills are usually in the same place but today there was no sign so we walked further up and tried and tried there before it started to rain and we turned round to head back down. As we passed the spot we had tried already, I heard the call and we finally managed to get great views of this distinctive race of **Vinous-throated Parrotbill**. As a bonus we also found **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** which rushed across the road in front of us. Next we headed to a new site called Huisun Forest, where I wanted to try for the distinctive endemic race of **Varied Tit**. On the drive there we had a **Formosan Whistling-Thrush** flying across the road in front of us. After buying our entrance tickets we drove along the entrance road and soon found a very photogenic **Taiwan Blue-Magpie** in a tree next to us.

We parked the vehicle and straight away found ourselves in the middle of a large mixed flock, with **Gray-chinned Minivet**, **White-bellied Erpornis**, **Japanese White-eye**, **Gray-cheeked Fulvetta**, **White-eared Sibia** and our target **Taiwan Varied Tit**. We took a walk around the picnic areas and found **Taiwan Barbet**, **Gray-capped Woodpecker**, **Malayan Night-Heron** stalking the lawn, a group of **Formosan Rock Macaques** and another pair of **Chinese Bamboo-Partridges**. After a packed lunch here, we drove out of the forest park and down to the town of Puli. There we stopped a beautiful temple garden where we searched for the bright red *ardens* race of **Maroon Oriole** which is a possible split. We first found **Bronzed Drongo**, **Black-naped Monarch**, **Chinese Hwamei** hybrids and a pair of introduced **White-rumped Shamas** before finally finding our target. We had great views of 2 male 'Red' Orioles before we went on our way. We drove back up to Cingjing, passed our hotel and back up to the Continuation trail. We had pretty good bird activity and we found **Green-backed**, **Yellow & Black-throated Tits**, **Rufous-faced Warbler**, **Taiwan Yuhina**, **Steere's Liocichla**, **Taiwan Barwing**, **Ferruginous Flycatcher**, **Vivid Niltava**, glimpses of the skulking **Taiwan Shortwing**, and brief views of **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker**, but we only heard **Brown Bullfinch** which we would try again for tomorrow. We also added to our amphibian lists with **Central Formosan Toad** and the bright green **Moltrecht's Treefrog**. We retired to the hotel for dinner after a very productive day.

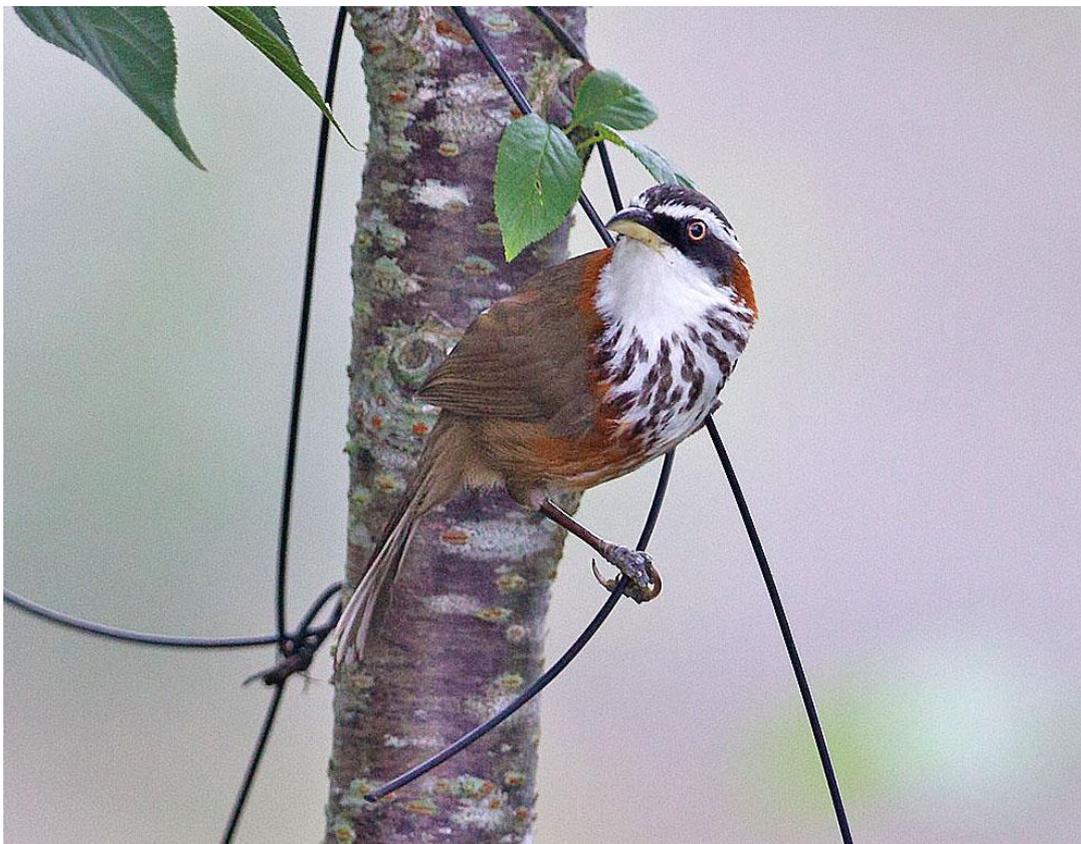


The 'Taiwan' Varied Tit is one of several possible future splits (Charley Hesse)

25th April - Cingjing to Alishan

In the morning we were back at the Continuation trail and we enjoyed our picnic breakfast with birds calling around us. As we started down the trail, 2 **Ashy Wood-Pigeons** flew over. We had all the regular common forest birds, with **Gray-chinned Minivet**, **Green-backed & Black-throated Tits**, **Rufous-faced Warbler**, **Gray-cheeked Fulvetta**, **White-eared Sibia**, **Steere's Liocichla** and **Taiwan Yuhina**, but we had our best views of **Fire-breasted Flowerpecker** and **Taiwan Barwing**. We also had a pair of **Brown Bullfinches** although they flew before I could get them in the scope. The highlight of the morning though was the white-headed endemic race of **Island Thrush**, which if split would become Taiwan Thrush. I heard a thrush call and after playback it flew in closer. This is an incredibly difficult bird at this time of year, so we were delighted to have seen it. We left Cingjing and started the long drive to Alishan.

We stopped on the way to pick up some supplies for our picnic lunch before starting the ascent to Yushan National Park. There were some road works and we had to wait at some traffic lights, this turned out well as John spotted us a **Formosan Serow** up on a hillside as we waited. We also had stopped at **Asian House-Martin** colonies and saw **Formosan Rock Macaque** on the way up. At the top we saw several high elevation species such as **Coal Tit**, **White-whiskered Laughingthrush**, **Collared Bush-Robin**, **Vinaceous Rosefinch**, **Eurasian Nutcracker** and heard **Yellowish-bellied & Taiwan Bush-Warblers**. The main target here was **Golden Parrotbill** and after lunch we walked along the road and had good views of 2 birds. We stopped on the way down and heard **Collared Owlet** and **Taiwan Shortwing**. The owlet wouldn't come in, but we finally found a responsive shortwing and we managed to get views as it crossed back and forth across a gap in the long grass. Further down, we saw **Striated Swallow** and **Plumbeous Redstart** before arriving at our lodge. The owner took us straight up to the hide he had set up for **Taiwan Partridges** in the forest above. We had already seen these well but additional views of them, **Swinhoe's Pheasant** and **White-tailed Robin** didn't hurt. After the hide we started walking down and heard a **Large Hawk-Cuckoo** calling nearby but it wouldn't come in. We did get our best views of **Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler**. We did some owling after dinner but it was very misty and we only heard **Mountain Scops-Owl**.



Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler is normally one of the more skulking endemics (Graham Ekins)

26th April – Alishan to Huben

There were many moths that had come in to the lights at night, and several birds had come to breakfast on them, including **Light-vented & Black Bulbuls**, **Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler** and **Japanese White-eye**. There was a caged **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** kept nearby in a cage and wild ones were responding to its call. After breakfast, we packed up our stuff and set off. Driving down the long winding road we saw **Asian House-Martin**, **Striated Swallow** and **Black Drongo**. We drove straight to Huben, well ahead of schedule, to maximizing our chances of seeing Fairy Pitta. The first site we tried was the place we had seen a pitta on last year's tour. Here we saw **Little Egret** in the stream, **Crested Serpent-Eagle** soaring overhead, plus **Lesser Coucal**, **Taiwan Barbet**, **Bronzed Drongo**, **Brown Shrike** and also had great views of **Maroon Oriole** in some nearby trees. There was no response of the Fairy Pitta at the site but on the way back to the vehicle, I heard one calling way up slope. We found a path up the hillside, but it was quiet now and it couldn't be persuaded to call again. We went down to the nearby temple on the other side of the hill but we heard no pittas there either. We did see Taiwan Blue-Magpie there though.

We moved on to a second site and straight away we saw **Black-naped Monarch** and **Gray Treepie**, but soon we also came across a responsive **Fairy Pitta**. We got closer and closer to it and found it was on a small hill behind a house that had barking dogs. The bird could not be coaxed into view and we realised that we would have to go up if we were to stand any chance of seeing it. As luck would have it, there was a path going up there, and we followed it even closer to the incessantly calling bird. It seemed to be moving away from us but we kept after it. At the front, I spotted it perched low in some bamboo and managed to get the first 2 people in the line on it. It moved on again and this time we were not able to follow it. The other 2 clients of course wanted to see the bird but had actually seen it previously on migration in coastal China. We would try again in the afternoon. Walking back down the path we saw a couple of lizards, namely **Swinhoe's Japalura** and **Indian Forest Skink**. We went down to the city of Douliou where we had a quick buffet lunch, checked in and had a short rest before heading out again in the afternoon. Unfortunately by now it had started raining pretty heavily and the bird was not calling. We went back to Douliou and on the way stopped at a huge temple complex to take some photos. **House Swift** and **Pacific Swallow** were flying above and we also saw many **Chinese stripe-eared Terrapins** in the temple ponds. At night we went out to a small restaurant nearby.



The riverside park is the best place to see the attractive Black-collared Starling (Charley Hesse)

27th April – Douliou to Taipei

As everybody that needed the pitta had seen it, we opted for a leisurely breakfast before driving to the airport to drop off one client, spotting a few common birds along the road like **Great Egret**, **Crested Serpent-Eagle** and **Black Drongo**. The rest of us went to our hotel to check in and had an early lunch, after which we went for one last bit of birding again at the Riverside park and saw **Gray Treepie** on the drive in. We saw a good variety of common water birds, including **Little Grebe**, **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**, **Grey Heron**, **Little & Cattle Egret**, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, **Sacred Ibis**, **White-breasted Waterhen** and **Common Sandpiper** but had some more interesting additions like **Cinnamon Bittern**, **Common Snipe** and **Common Kingfisher**. In the parkland, we saw **Red Collared- & Spotted Doves**, **Brown Shrike**, **Eurasian Magpie**, **Light-vented Bulbul** and **Japanese White-eye**. The starling family was well represented, with **Black-collared Starling** and **Crested Myna** amongst the much more common **Javan & Common Mynas**, as were hirundines, with **Grey-throated Martin**, **Striated**, **Pacific & Bank Swallows**, the latter new for the trip. In the riverside vegetation, we saw **Oriental Reed-Warbler**, **Black-faced Bunting** and **Plain & Yellow-bellied Prinias**, and in the muddy creeks, **Eastern Yellow Wagtail**, both **Chinese stripe-eared Terrapin** and **Red-eared Slider**. We thought we had an interesting starling at one point, which turned out to be **Asian Glossy Starling**, also a **Black-shouldered Kite** and one last addition to the trip list, the surprisingly rare **Black Kite**. We drove back to the airport hotel where we ended the trip. With a bumper 209 bird species, including all the endemics, the vast majority of endemic subspecies, plus Black-faced Spoonbill and Fairy Pitta, record breaking reptile, amphibian and butterfly lists, it was one of our most successful trips to date.

Bird list

Taxonomy follows Clements 6.8 online checklist. Updated Aug 2013

DUCKS, GEESE and SWANS: Anatidae

- Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*
Seen at Aogu.
- Eastern Spot-billed Duck** *Anas zonorhyncha*
Seen at Riverside park, Shigang, Aogu & Hualien.
- Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*
Seen at Aogu.
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
Seen at Aogu.
- Garganey** *Anas querquedula*
Seen at Aogu.
- Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*
Seen at Aogu.

PHEASANTS and PARTRIDGES: Phasianidae

- Taiwan Partridge** *Arborophila crudigularis* **endemic**
Near-threatened. Seen at Dasyueshan & Alishan. Heard at Shimen Dam.
- Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** *Bambusicola thoracicus sonorivox* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan, Zhiben, Chunyang & Huisun. Heard at Shimen Dam, Shuanliou, Wulu, Hualien & Alishan. This is a very distinctive subspecies and potential split.
- Swinhoe's Pheasant** *Lophura swinhoii* **endemic**
Near-threatened. Seen at Dasyueshan & Alishan,
- Mikado Pheasant** *Syrmaticus mikado* **endemic**
Near-threatened. Seen at Dasyueshan.
- Ring-necked Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus formosanus* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Zhiben & Taitung.

GREBES: Podicipedidae

- Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Seen at Shimen & Shigang Dams, Aogu, Hualien & Riverside park.

HERONS, EGRETS and BITTERNs: Ardeidae

- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*
Seen at Aogu.
- Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*
Seen at Aogu, Zhiben & Riverside park.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*
Seen at Riverside park, Shigang, Aogu & Hualien.
- Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
Seen at Shigang, Aogu, Hualien & in Taipei.
- Intermediate Egret** *Mesophoyx intermedia*
Seen at Aogu & on Lanyu.
- Chinese Egret** *Egretta eulophotes*
Endangered. Seen on Lanyu.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*
Commonly seen in aquatic habitats throughout.
- Pacific Reef-Heron** *Egretta sacra*
Seen on Lanyu.
- Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
Commonly seen throughout.
- Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*
Seen at Dasyueshan & Taroko,
- Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Riverside park, Dongshi, Aogu, Hualien & Huben.

Malayan Night-Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus*
Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Dasyueshan, Taitung, Puli & Huisun.

IBISES and SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Introduced. Seen at Riverside park & Aogu.

Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*

Endangered. Seen at Aogu & Hualien.

OSPREY: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Seen at Cigu & Lanyu.

HAWKS, EAGLES and KITES: Accipitridae

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Seen at Aogu & Riverside park.

Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela hoya* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at most forest sites. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis*

Seen at Taroko.

Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*

Seen by the guide at Dasyueshan and heard by the clients.

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus formosae* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Shimen Dam, Wulu & Taroko.

Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis*

Seen at Shimen Dam, Dasyueshan and Lanyu.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus fuscipectus* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Shimen Dam & Taroko.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans formosanus*

Seen at Riverside Park in Taipei. A surprisingly uncommon bird in Taiwan.

RAILS, GALLINULES and COOTS: Rallidae

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Riverside park, Zhiben & Lanyu.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at Taipei botanical gardens & Aogu.

AVOCETS and STILTS: Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Seen at Aogu.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Good number seen this year at Aogu.

PLOVERS and LAPWINGS: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Seen at Aogu.

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Seen at Aogu.

Lesser Sand-Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

Seen at Aogu & Hualien.

Greater Sand-Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Seen at Aogu & Hualien.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Seen at Aogu.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Seen at Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben & Taroko.

SANDPIPERS: Scolopacidae

Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>
Seen at Cigu & Hualien.	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Seen at Riverside park, Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben & Lanyu.	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Seen at Shigang and heard at Dongshi.	
Gray-tailed Tattler	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Seen at Aogu.	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Seen at Aogu.	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Seen at Aogu, Riverside park & Shigang.	
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>
Seen at Aogu, Hualien.	
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Seen at Bazhang River mouth & Hualien.	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Near-threatened. Seen at Bazhang River mouth	
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>
Near-threatened. Seen at Aogu.	
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>
Seen at Cigu & Hualien.	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>
Vulnerable. Seen at Hualien.	
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Seen at Aogu,	
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>
Seen at Aogu,	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>
Seen at Aogu,	
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Seen at Aogu & Hualien.	
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>
Seen at Aogu & Riverside park.	

PRATINCOLES: Glareolidae

Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>
Seen at Aogu, Zhiben, Taitung & Hualien.	

GULLS & TERNS: Laridae

Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
Seen at Aogu, Cigu & Hualien.	
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Seen at Aogu, Cigu,	
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Seen at Aogu, Cigu,	

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
 Seen at Hualien.
Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*
 Seen at Haomei.

PIGEONS and DOVES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
 Introduced. Commonly seen in urban areas throughout.
Ashy Wood-Pigeon *Columba pulchricollis*
 Seen at Dasyueshan & Gingjing.
Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis orii* **endemic subspecies**
 Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Dasyueshan, Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben & Puli.
Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
 Seen at Riverside park, Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben, Taitung & Hualien.
Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
 Commonly seen at most sites.
Philippine Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia tenuirostris*
 Seen on Lanyu.
Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
 Seen on Lanyu & at Wulu,
White-bellied Pigeon *Treron sieboldii*
 Seen at CKS Memorial Park, Dasyueshan & Chunyang.
Whistling Green-Pigeon *Treron formosae formosae* **endemic subspecies**
 Near-threatened. Seen on Lanyu.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae

Large Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx sparveroides*
 Heard at Dasyueshan & Alishan.
Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus*
 Seen at Dasyueshan & Hehuanshan. Heard at Alishan.
Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis*
 Seen at Zhiben, Lanyu, Hualien & Huben.

OWLS: Strigidae

Mountain Scops-Owl *Otus spilocephalus hambroeki* **endemic subspecies**
 Heard at Dasyueshan & Alishan.
Ryukyu (Lanyu) Scops-Owl *Otus elegans botelensis* **endemic subspecies**
 Near-threatened. Potential split. Seen at Lanyu.
Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei pardalotum* **endemic subspecies**
 Heard at Dasyueshan & Yushan.
Himalayan Owl *Strix nivicola yamadae* **endemic subspecies**
 Seen at Hehuanshan.
Northern Boobook *Ninox japonica*
 Seen at Lanyu.

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae

Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis stictomus* **endemic subspecies**
 Seen at Dongshi & Douliou. Heard at Taitung.

SWIFTS: Apodidae

Silver-backed Needletail *Hirundapus cochinchinensis formosanus* **endemic subspecies**
 Seen at Taroko.
Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*
 Seen at Lanyu, Wulu & Taroko.
House Swift *Apus nipalensis kuntzi* **endemic subspecies**
 Seen at many sites.

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Seen at Dasyueshan, Shigang, Aogu & Riverside park.

ASIAN BARBETS: Megalaimidae

Taiwan Barbet *Megalaima nuchalis* **endemic**
Seen or heard at most lowland forest sites.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae

Gray-capped Woodpecker *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

Seen at Shimen Dam, Taitung & Huisun. Heard at Huben.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos insularis* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan.

Gray-faced Woodpecker *Picus canus*

Seen at Dasyueshan.

FALCONS: Falconidae

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Seen at Lanyu.

PITTAS: Pittidae

Fairy Pitta *Pitta nympha*

Vulnerable. Seen at Huben.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES: Campephagidae

Gray-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris*

Seen at Shimen Dam, Dasyueshan, Wulu, Taroko, Chunyang, Huisun & Cingjing.

Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus*

Seen at Dasyueshan.

SHRIKES: Laniidae

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

Seen at Riverside park, Aogu, Zhiben, Lanyu, Hualien, Huben.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Seen at Zhiben.

VIREOS: Vireonidae

White-bellied Erpornis *Erpornis zantholeuca*

Seen at Shimen Dam, Taroko & Huisun.

ORIOLES: Oriolidae

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*

Seen at Zhiben.

Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii ardens* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Wulu, Puli & Huben. This is a very distinctive subspecies and potential split.

DRONGOS: Dicruridae

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus harterti* **endemic subspecies**

Commonly seen in open areas.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus braunianus* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Wulu, Puli & Huben.

MONARCH-FLYCATCHERS: Monarchidae

Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea oberholseri* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Wulu, Puli & Huben.

Japanese Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone atrocaudata*

Near-threatened. Seen at Lanyu.

CROWS: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius taivanus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan.		
Taiwan Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa caerulea</i>	endemic
Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Shimen Dam, Shuanliou, Huisun & Huben.		
Gray Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae formosae</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Taipei, Shimen Dam, Dasyueshan, Shigang, Shuanliou, Chunyang & Huben.		
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	
Seen at Riverside park, Shimen Dam, Aogu, Tainan & Taitung.		
Eurasian Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes owstoni</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan & Yushan.		
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	
Seen at Dasyueshan, Taroko, Huisun, Cingjing & Huben.		

LARKS: Alaudidae

Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	
Seen at Zhiben.		

SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae

Grey-throated Martin	<i>Riparia chinensis</i>	
Seen at Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben, Wulu, Taroko & Riverside park.		
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	
Seen at Riverside park.		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
Commonly seen throughout.		
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>	
Commonly seen throughout.		
Striated Swallow	<i>Cecropis striolata</i>	
Seen in Taipei, Shigang, Aogu, Taitung, Puli & Huben.		
Asian House-Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	
Seen at Dasyueshan, Taroko, Cingjing, Yushan & Alishan.		

TITS: Paridae

Varied Tit	<i>Poecile varius castaneoventris</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Huisun. This is a very distinctive subspecies and potential split.		
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater ptilosus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan & Yushan.		
Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus insperatus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing. Heard at Alishan.		
Yellow Tit	<i>Parus holsti</i>	endemic subspecies
Near-threatened. Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing.		

LONG-TAILED TITS: Aegithalidae

Black-throated Tit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>	
Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing.		

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae

Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	
Seen at Dasyueshan.		

WRENS: Troglodytidae

Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes taivanus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Hehuanshan.		

BULBULS: Pycnonotidae

Collared Finchbill	<i>Spizixos semitorques cinereicapillus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan, Wulu, Chunyang & Alishan.		

Styan's Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus taivanus</i>	endemic
Vulnerable. Seen at Shuanliou, Zhiben, Taitung & Taroko.		
Light-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus sinensis formosae</i>	endemic subspecies
Commonly seen in the lowlands of the north and west.		
Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus nigerrimus</i>	endemic subspecies
Commonly seen throughout.		
Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis harterti</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Lanyu.		
<u>KINGLETS: Regulidae</u>		
Flamecrest	<i>Regulus goodfellowi</i>	endemic
Seen at Dasyueshan.		
<u>CUPWINGS: Pnoepyidae</u>		
Taiwan Cupwing	<i>Pnoepyga formosana</i>	endemic
Seen at Dasyueshan. Heard at Taroko & Cingjing.		
<u>BUSH-WARBLERS: Cettidae</u>		
Rufous-faced Warbler	<i>Abroscopus albogularis</i>	
Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing.		
Brownish-flanked Bush-Warbler	<i>Horornis fortipes robustipes</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan & Wulu. Heard at Chunyang. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.		
Yellowish-bellied Bush-Warbler	<i>Horornis acanthizoides concolor</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan. Heard at Hehuanshan & Yushan.		
<u>LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae</u>		
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	
Seen at CKS Memorial Park & Dasyueshan.		
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	
Seen at Zhiben.		
<u>REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae</u>		
Oriental Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>	
Seen at Aogu & Riverside park.		
<u>GRASSBIRDS & ALLIES: Locustellidae</u>		
Taiwan Bush-Warbler	<i>Locustella alishanensis</i>	endemic
Seen at Dasyueshan. Hehuanshan & Yushan.		
<u>CISTICOLAS: Cisticolidae</u>		
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	
Seen at Zhiben.		
Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis volitans</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Zhiben.		
Striated Prinia	<i>Prinia crinigera striata</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Dasyueshan.		
Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	
Seen at Riverside park, Shigang, Aogu, Zhiben & Huben. Heard at Shimen Dam.		
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata flavirostris</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Riverside park, Dasyueshan, Aogu & Zhiben.		
<u>PARROTBILLS & ALLIES: Paradoxornithidae</u>		
Taiwan Fulvetta	<i>Fulvetta formosana</i>	endemic
Seen at Dasyueshan.		
Vinous-throated Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis webbianus bulomachus</i>	endemic subspecies
Seen at Chunyang.		

Golden Parrotbill *Paradoxornis verreauxi morrisonianus* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Yushan & heard at Dasyueshan,

YUHNAS, WHITE-EYES & ALLIES: Zosteropidae

Taiwan Yuhina *Yuhina brunneiceps* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Taroko & Cingjing,

Japanese White-eye *Zosterops japonicus*

Commonly seen in the lowlands.

Lowland White-eye *Zosterops meyeri*

Seen on Lanyu.

BABLERS: Timaliidae

Rufous-capped Babbler *Cyanoderma ruficeps praecognitum* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Chunyang & Cingjing. Heard at Shimen Dam, Wulu & Alishan.

Taiwan Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus musicus* **endemic**

Seen at Taipei botanical gardens, Dasyueshan, Shuanliou & Alishan. Heard at Shimen Dam, Hualien & Huben.

Black-necklaced Scimitar-Babbler *Megapomatorhinus erythrocnemis* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan.

FULVETTAS & GROUND BABBLERS: Pellorneidae

Dusky Fulvetta *Schoeniparus b. brunnea* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan. Heard at Shimen Dam & Wulu.

LAUGHINGTHRUSHES: Leiothrichidae

Gray-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe m. morrisonia* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Wulu, Huisun & Cingjing.

Chinese Hwamei *Garrulax canorus*

Introduced. Hybrids of this species with Taiwan Hwamei were seen at Dasyueshan & Puli.

Taiwan Hwamei *Garrulax taewanus* **endemic**

Near-threatened. Seen at Dasyueshan, Zhiben, Hualien & Chunyang.

Rufous-crowned Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla ruficeps* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan.

Rusty Laughingthrush *Ianthocincla poecilorrhynchus* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan & heard at Wulu.

White-whiskered Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron morrisonianum* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Hehuanshan & Yushan.

White-eared Sibia *Heterophasia auricularis* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Huisun & Cingjing.

Steere's Liocichla *Liocichla steerii* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Cingjing & Alishan, Heard at Taroko.

Taiwan Barwing *Actinodura morrisoniana* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing.

FLYCATCHERS: Muscicapidae

Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*

Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing.

Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*

Introduced. Seen at Taipei botanical gardens & Cigu.

White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*

Introduced. Seen at Puli.

Vivid Niltava *Niltava v. vivida* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan & Cingjing. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.

White-browed Shortwing *Brachypteryx montana goodfellowi* **endemic subspecies**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Cingjing & Yushan. Heard at Taroko. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.

Formosan Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus insularis* **endemic**

Seen at Dasyueshan, Taroko & Huisun. Heard at Shimen Dam,

Little Forktail Seen at Dasyueshan.	<i>Enicurus scouleri fortis</i>	endemic subspecies
Siberian Rubythroat Seen at Dasyueshan.	<i>Calliope calliope</i>	
White-tailed Robin Seen at Dasyueshan & Alishan, Heard at Taroko.	<i>Cinclidium leucurum montium</i>	endemic subspecies
White-browed Bush-Robin Seen at Dasyueshan. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.	<i>Tarsiger indicus formosanus</i>	endemic subspecies
Collared Bush-Robin Seen at Dasyueshan, Hehuanshan & Yushan.	<i>Tarsiger johnstoniae</i>	endemic
Snowy-browed Flycatcher Seen at Dasyueshan.	<i>Ficedula hyperythra innexa</i>	endemic subspecies
Plumbeous Redstart Seen at Dasyueshan, Shigang, Taroko, Alishan & Yushan NP. Heard at Dongshi.	<i>Phoenicurus fuliginosa affinis</i>	endemic subspecies
Blue Rock-Thrush Seen at Dasyueshan & Lanyu.	<i>Monticola solitarius phillipensis</i>	
Siberian Stonechat Seen on Lanyu.	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>	

THRUSHES & ALLIES: Turdidae

Scaly Thrush Seen at Dasyueshan.	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>	
Island Thrush Seen at Cingjing. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.	<i>Turdus poliocephalus niveiceps</i>	endemic subspecies
Pale Thrush Seen at Zhiben.	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	
Brown-headed Thrush Seen at Shimen Dam & Lanyu.	<i>Turdus chrysolais</i>	

STARLINGS : Sturnidae

Asian Glossy Starling Introduced. Seen at CKS Memorial Park & Riverside park.	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	
Crested Myna Seen at Riverside park, Zhiben & Taitung.	<i>Acridotheres cristatellus formosanus</i>	endemic subspecies
Javan Myna Introduced. Commonly seen in the lowlands.	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	
Common Myna Introduced. Seen at Riverside park, Shimen Dam & Aogu.	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	
Black-collared Starling Introduced. Seen at Riverside park.	<i>Gracupica nigricollis</i>	

FLOWERPECKERS: Dicaeidae

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker Seen at Wulu & Cingjing. Heard at Dasyueshan & Taroko.	<i>Dicaeum ignipectum formosum</i>	endemic subspecies
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ACCENTORS: Prunellidae

Alpine Accentor Seen at Hehuanshan.	<i>Prunella collaris fennelli</i>	endemic subspecies
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WAGTAILS and PIPITS: Motacillidae

Eastern Yellow Wagtail Seen at Riverside park & Shigang.	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis taivana</i>	
Gray Wagtail Seen at Lanyu.	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	
White Wagtail Seen at Shigang, Zhiben, Wulu, Hualien, Taroko, Huisun & Alishan.	<i>Motacilla alba (leucopsis & ocularis)</i>	

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*
Seen at Zhiben.

BUNTINGS: Emberizidae

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
Seen at Zhiben.

Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila*
Seen at Zhiben.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*
Seen at Zhiben & heard at Riverside park.

FINCHES, SISKINS, CROSSBILLS: Fringillidae

Brown Bullfinch *Pyrrhula nipalensis uchidaei* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Cingjing.

Gray-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythaca owstoni* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Hehuanshan. This is a distinctive subspecies and potential split.

Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus formosanus* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan, Hehuanshan & Yushan. This species has already been split by the IOC and is a potential split on the Clement's checklist.

SPARROWS: Passeridae

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Commonly seen throughout.

WAXBILLS and ALLIES: Estrildidae

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*
Seen at Dasyueshan & Wulu.

Nutmeg Mannikin *Lonchura punctulata*
Seen at Riverside park, Dasyueshan & Aogu.

Mammal list

Taxonomy follows en.wikipedia.org

OLD WORLD MONKEYS: Cercopithecidae

Formosan Rock Macaque *Macaca cyclopsis* **endemic**
Seen at Dasyueshan, Shuanliou, Taroko, Huisun & Yushan.

SQUIRRELS: Sciuridae

Red-and-white Flying-Squirrel *Petaurista alborufus lena* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan.

Maritime Striped Squirrel *Tamiops maritimus formosanus* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan.

Perny's Long-nosed Squirrel *Dremomys pernyi owstoni* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan.

Pallas's Squirrel *Callosciurus erythraeus taiwanensis* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Taipei botanical gardens.

DEER: Cervidae

Reeve's Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi micrurus* **endemic subspecies**
Seen at Dasyueshan & heard at Cingjing.

BOVIDS: Bovidae

Formosan Serow *Capricornis swinhoei* **endemic**
Seen at Dasyueshan & Yushan.

Reptile list

Taxonomy follows 台灣兩棲爬行類圖鑑 (2009)

TERRAPINS: Geoemydidae

Chinese stripe-eared Terrapin *Mauremys sinensis*
Seen at Zhiben, Huben & Riverside park.

TERRAPINS: Emydidae

Red-eared Slider *Trachemys scripta elegans*
Introduced. Seen at Riverside park.

AGAMAS: Agamidae

Swinhoe's Japalura *Japalura swinhonis* **endemic**
Seen at Dasyueshan, Shuanliou, Lanyu & Huben.

GECKOS: Gekkonidae

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus frenatus*
Seen at Taitung & heard at Alishan.

Yami's Scaly-toed Gecko *Lepidodactylus yami* **endemic**
Seen at Lanyu.

SKINKS: Scincidae

Long-tailed Mabuya *Eutropis longicaudata*
Seen at Shuanliou & Lanyu.

Brown Forest Skink *Sphenomorphus incognitus*
Seen at Shuanliou.

Indian Forest Skink *Sphenomorphus indicus*
Seen at Dasyueshan & Huben.

BLIND SNAKES: Typhlopidae

Brahminy Blind Snake *Rhamphotyphlops braminus*
Seen at Shuanliou.

SNAKES: Colubridae

Checkered Keelback *Xenochrophis piscator*
Seen at Shigang.

Amphibian list

Taxonomy follows 台灣兩棲爬行類圖鑑 (2009)

TOADS: Bufonidae

Central Formosan Toad *Bufo bankorensis* **endemic**
Seen at Cingjing.

Speckled Toad *Bufo melanostictus*
Seen on Lanyu.

FROGS: Ranidae

Kuhli's Wart Frog *Limnonectes kuhlii*
Seen on Lanyu.

Gunther's Brown Frog *Rana guentheri*

Seen at Taipei botanical gardens,
Japanese Buerger's Frog *Buergeria japonica*
Seen at Shuanliou.

TREEFROGS: Rhacophoridae

Meintin Treefrog *Kurixalus idiotocus* **endemic**
Seen at Alishan.

Moltrecht's Treefrog *Rhacophorus moltrechtii* **endemic**
Seen at Cingjing.

BUTTERFLY LIST

SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLIES: Papilionidae

Heng-chin Birdwing	<i>Troides aecus kaguya</i>
Common Rose	<i>Pachliopta aristolochiae interposita</i>
Common Bluebottle	<i>Graphium sarpedon connectens</i>
Chinese Peacock Butterfly	<i>Papilio bionor thrasymedes</i>
Common Mormon	<i>Papilio polytes pasikrates</i>

PIERID BUTTERFLIES: Pieridae

Psyche Blue	<i>Leptosia nina niobe</i>
Spotted Sawtooth	<i>Prioneris thestylis formosana</i>
Plain Puffin	<i>Appias indra aristoxemis</i>
Great Orange Tip	<i>Hebomoia glaucippe formosana</i>

MILKWEED BUTTERFLIES: Danaidae

Glassy Tiger	<i>Parantica aglea maghaba</i>
Striped Blue Crow	<i>Euploea mulciber barsine</i>

SATYRS & WOOD-NYMPHS: Satyridae

Taiwan Wave-eye	<i>Ypthima multistriata</i>
Painted Brushbrown	<i>Mycalesis sangaica mara</i> <i>PentHEMA formosanum</i>

BRUSH-FOOTED BUTTERFLIES: Nymphalidae

Lemon Pansy	<i>Junonia lemonias aenaria</i>
Chocolate Pansy	<i>Junonia iphita</i>
Jester sp	<i>Symbrenthia javanus formosanus</i>
Danaid Eggfly	<i>Hypolimnas misippus</i>
Great Eggfly	<i>Hypolimnas bolina kezia</i>
Orange Oakleaf	<i>Kallima inachus formosana</i>
Common Mapwing	<i>Cyrestis thydomas formosana</i> <i>Timelaea albescens formosana</i>

GOSSAMER-WINGED BUTTERFLIES: Lycaenidae

Pale Grass Blue	<i>Zizeeria maha okinawa</i> <i>Tongeia hainani</i>
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BUTTERFLY GALLERY (Photos by Charley Hesse unless otherwise stated)



Chinese Peacock Butterfly *Papilio bionor thrasymedes* (Graham Ekins)



Hebomoia glaucippe formosana



Prioneris thestylis formosana



Parantica aglea maghaba



Junonia lemonias aenaria



Timelaea albescens formosana



Graphium sarpedon connectens



Pachliopta aristolochiae interposita



Hypolimnas bolina kezia



Papilio polytes pasikrates