

TROPICAL BIRDING

Japan in Winter: Birding on Ice

Set departure tour II

27th January – 9th February, 2019 Extension: 9th – 10th February, 2019

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Our second Japan in Winter tour this year was just as spectacular as the first. One difference was that it was distinctly colder and snowier. This tour is particularly subject to changes caused by inclement weather, and unfortunately we had to cancel our trip to see the Snow Monkeys due to blizzard conditions. On the flip side, we had even better luck with rarities and picked up some unexpected species like Pallas's Rosefich, Swan Goose & White-shouldered Starling. We saw all the big draw card birds from Hokkaido including breathtaking views of dozens of Steller's Sea-Eagles at eye level, 2 separate feeding sites each with over 100 Japanese cranes on the snow, and of course our bird of the trip, Blakiston's Fish-Owl that we saw spectacularly well at its floodlit feeding pond. Other birding highlights are almost too many to mention, but the thousands of cranes flying in at dawn to Arasaki, a stunning Ural Owl on a day roost on Hokkaido, our boat ride to see Japanese Murrelets, and of course the amazing extension to Miyakejima and the incredible sea-watching on the way back were especially memorable. We had particularly good mammals on this trip, with Japanese Hare, Steller's Sea Lion and of course the amazing Raccoon Dog. The scenery, culture, hot springs and food were of course all amazing and help make this, 'hands down' my favourite trip in the world.

MAIN TOUR

27th January, 2018 – Narita to Karuizawa

We began the second Japan set departure tour the same way as the first, with a visit to Saitama Prefectural Forest Park in search of the rare Pallas's Rosefinch. Again, it took a while to get there, first on highways, then on winding mountain roads. The scenery was beautiful and made even prettier with a recent dusting of snow. We finally arrived at the parking lot and took a cold walk through the forest to the feeding site. Some photographers were milling around and after inquiring, it appeared that the **Pallas's Rosefinches** were in the bushes just along the trail. We walked along and when they saw our group approaching, some other photographers gave a distinct sigh. We tried not to get in their way too much, and all had excellent views of this rare bird. They flew across the trail and we had more excellent scope views before they took off. What an amazing start! We continued birding and saw **Japanese, Willow, Long-tailed** and the pretty **Varied Tit**. We also had a pair of the distinctive grey-bellied **Eurasian Bullfinches**, which are also a great bird. When we got back to the feeding station, there was a **Brambling**, plus more **Willow & Varied Tits**. We got a few photos of these pretty birds and also had brief views of a female **Red-flanked Bluetail** before walking back to the car. On the drive out, we added **Dusky Thrush**.



On this tour we tracked down the rare Pallas's Rosefinch.

We found a nice highway Ramen restaurant where we ordered our first Japanese meal. It was another 2-hour drive from here and on the way saw our first **White-cheeked Starling** and **Eurasian Kestrel**. When we got to Karuizawa, we spent a bit of time searching the field south of town and found large numbers of **Rustic Buntings**, plus a few **Meadow Buntings, Oriental Greenfinches** and a **Hawfinch**. We also flushed up a couple of female **Green Pheasants**. Time was short before sunset, so we went straight to the forest road alongside the Wild Bird Forest and found **Japanese & Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Japanese Accentor** and **Brown Dipper**. After the sun dropped below the hillside, the temperature quickly dropped below zero and we beat a hasty retreat to our hotel, where some of us enjoyed a dip in the hot spring before our 10-course traditional meal. After dinner we took a short night drive to my **Ural Owl** spot where we had an owl calling and flying over but it didn't offer good views so we would try again tomorrow.

28th January – Karuizawa

We started our exploration of the Karuizawa area with a pre-breakfast walk at the Wild Bird Forest. Our main target was of course the ever-elusive Copper Pheasant, and we did a big loop around the trails. New snow had fallen recently, and the trees and ground were covered with a thin layer. It looked stunning, and the only sound we could hear was the crush of snow underfoot. We thoroughly enjoyed the walk but of course there were no pheasants. We did find a mixed flock of **Pygmy Woodpecker, Willow & Japanese Tits** and **Eurasian Nuthatch**. After breakfast, we spent some time at the hotel feeders and saw **Eurasian Jay, Varied, Willow & Japanese Tits**, and the introduced **Chinese Hwamei**. We set off for the day, and first visited an area of fields and forest edge, just 10 minutes away. Here we found several male **Green Pheasants** plus numerous **Oriental Greenfinches, Meadow & Rustic Buntings**. We checked some feeders in a local garden on the forest edge. There were the usual tits, but nearby we stumbled upon a couple of very special birds, **Yellow-throated Bunting** and **Long-tailed Rosefinch**.



Unlike Clements, IOC considers the endemic Green Pheasant a full species.

We drove on to the neighbouring city of Saku, where we visited a local reservoir where we had a good variety of waterfowl, including **Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Northern Pintail, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck**, many beautiful male **Smews, Common Mergansers** and best of all, **Baikal Teal**. We walked along the river to a spot for the rare **Long-billed Plover**, and also added **Common & Green Sandpipers, Eastern Buzzard, Dusky Thrush** and **Japanese Wagtail**. After the lake, we went to a fun local diner, which was quite an experience. Back in Karuizawa, we drove around some residential areas and added our first **Pale Thrush**, and many **Bramblings**. We had enough time to revisit the Wild Bird Forest and succeeded in finding another **Japanese Accentor**, and our target **Brown Dipper** in the rushing stream. After a dip in the hot spring, we changed into our traditional Japanese Yukatas and enjoyed another traditional Japanese 10-course dinner. Then we took a night drive, and tried again for Ural Owl but today there was no sign. We drove around the fields looking for mammals, but it started snowing and we decided to call it a day.



Long-billed Plover & Eurasian Jay

29th January – Karuizawa to Komatsu

This morning some people were keen for another walk in the woods, while others chose to watch some birds at the feeders at our hotel. The walkers went in search of the elusive Copper Pheasant again, walking a little further than yesterday. It had snowed overnight, but despite the extra layer, it was still a pleasant walk and very picturesque. We didn't find the pheasant, but we did see a beautiful male **Red-flanked Bluetail** and a nice pair of **Brown Dippers**. The highlight though, wasn't even a bird, but rather the rarely seen **Japanese Hare**. The 'remainers' enjoyed more **Long-tailed, Varied, Marsh, Japanese & Coal Tits, Eurasian Jay** and **Chinese Hwamei** plus **Japanese Squirrel** from the relative warmth of the Hotel Lobby. After breakfast, we packed up the van and set off for the Snow Monkey park at Jigokudani, about 90-minutes drive away. As we got closer the snow fell heavier and heavier, and by the time we got near the turn off, the road got very slippery. A van ahead of us had stopped in the road with its hazard lights on. We stopped behind it and when we started again, the wheels started to spin. The entrance road was even steeper so there was no chance of getting up it and buses and cars we all starting to block the road. It was icy pandemonium. I made the decision which everybody understood, that we wouldn't risk trying to get any further.



"I didn't say I was a swan, I said Swan Goose!"

We safely turned around and started slowly back towards the highway. After lunch at a highway rest area restaurant, we were on our way to the City of Komatsu on the west coast of Honshu. Descending the mountains, we came down onto the coastal plain and the snow dissipated. With a bit of extra time on our hands, I made a plan B which was to go in search of a rare vagrant **Swan Goose**. It was officially a 'Wild Goose Chase'. It was supposedly mixed in with **Bewick Swans** and I had rough directions from a local birder. We got to the spot and started looking through some small flocks of swans without success. We saw some swans landing in the distance and we high-tailed our way across train tracks, under bridges and along narrow roads between rice fields. It was quite an adventure. We finally found the motherload of hundreds of swans. As we got close we started to scan through the **Bewicks** to find some **Whooper Swans**, a **Greater White-fronted**, **Taiga Bean** and finally our target **Swan Goose**. It had been a great success and we happily drove on to our hotel in Komatsu. In the evening we went out to a very fun sushi restaurant where we ordered food on touch screens. It was quite an experience.

30th January – Western Honshu Wetlands

We had a full day to explore the Western Honshu Wetlands and we started heading south of Komatsu to the neighbouring prefecture of Fukui. The endangered **Oriental Stork** that we had found 2 weeks ago was supposedly still around, so our first stop was to go and look for that. I found the same narrow road and drove along scanning. I didn't see it at first, but we rounded a corner, and there it was, right next to the road. We got into position and got great photos. Next, we stopped at a small lake that was full of ducks and we saw **Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Common Pochard** and the beautiful **Falcated Duck**. From here we headed to the coast where we found a **Red-throated Loon, Pelagic & Japanese Cormorants, Pacific Reef-Heron** and a beautiful male **Blue Rock-Thrush** perched on a sea wall. Leaving the coast, we explored some rice fields looking for **White-fronted Geese** and found a couple of groups flying around looking for the main flock. We drove back north to the Katano Kamoike bird reserve, an important sanctuary for waterfowl where over 1000 **Baikal Teal** winter annually. Other waterfowl seen included **Greater White-fronted, Taiga & Tundra Bean-Geese**. We also had a fly over of a **Mountain Hawk-Eagle** which was a highlight.



Oriental Stork is an endangered East Asian endemic that was extirpated from Japan.

After lunch at a local diner, we drove back to Komatsu with a stop on the way to pick up our first **Osprey, Great Crested & Eared Grebes**. We checked out the large Shibayama Lake and even took a walk along the water's edge scanning the lake for ducks and checking the reedbeds. There were hundreds of **Eurasian Teal** and **Falcated Ducks**, but the highlight was finding a flock of 5 **Long-tailed Rosefinches** including a couple of beautiful males. One member of the group was lucky enough to spot a **Japanese Weasel**. After this we explored the extensive Komatsu rice fields. This area is an important feeding ground for hundreds of **Bewick Swans**, and we saw several other birder's vehicles parked close to the birds. In the hope that there might be some rarities mixed in, stopped and found the same juvenile **Red-crowned Crane** from our previous tour. We finished the day photographing hundreds of **Bewick Swans** on a flooded rice field with ripples of soft afternoon light reflecting on their bodies and the backdrop of the snow-covered Japanese Alps in the distance. After a very successful day, we enjoyed another trip to the sushi restaurant.

31st January – Komatsu to Nemuro

Today was a travel day. Our flight to Haneda airport was on time, and we had time to kill in the airport. Our flight to Kushiro on the northern island of Hokkaido also went smoothly, and after picking up our hire car we set off to Nemuro, 2 and a half hours away. We didn't have much time to stop on the way, but we did have our first **White-tailed Eagle** perched by the road. We settled in to our hotel and enjoyed a delicious meal including some local seafood.



White-tailed Eagles are masters of the air. Mid-air squabbles are common, and a dropped fish will quickly be snapped up by another eagle.

1st February – Nemuro Peninsular

We started the day at the coast and a cliff top with a good view over the ocean below. The thermometer on the dashboard read -10°C, but the strong wind probably dropped it a further 10 degrees. Scanning below, we saw our first sea ducks with many **Black Scoters** and had a couple of **White-tailed Eagles** flying. Looking into the wind, my eyes were watering and I could feel it freezing on my face. It wasn't possible to stay out for long so we decided to move on. Unfortunately, with the strong winds, our boat ride had been cancelled, but there were plenty of other places in the area to explore. We drove down into the Hanasaki port and had some excellent photo opportunities of **Long-tailed Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Greater Scaup**. Having missed our boat ride, we decided to go to the Eagle feeding site at Lake Furen instead. We made it just as the eagles were coming in to start feeding. There were dozens of **White-tailed Eagles** and **Steller's Sea-Eagles** and they were joined with large numbers of **Large-billed Crows** and **Black-eared Kites**. Many eagles were flying around, and we had good opportunities for flight shots. Occasionally there was a skirmish over a fish which gave quite a spectacle. There was a stiff, cold wind coming straight off the frozen lake, and after we had taken our photos, we retreated to the warmth of our heated vehicle.

From here, we went on to the Shunkunitai Nature Center and then took a drive to the other side of the small forest, where we found **Pygmy & Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Coal, Marsh** & the beautiful northern race of **Long-tailed Tit**. Next, we stopped at Nemuro Harbour where we found 5 species of gull, including **Glaucous** and **Glaucous-winged** which were both new for the trip. After our first convenience store lunch, we drove to the Onnemoto Bird Hide. I had found Rock Sandpiper on a rocky island off the coast a couple of weeks ago but with the cold snap, they had moved on. We did get our first **White-winged Scoter** and **Pigeon Guillemot**, though. Seawatching from the lighthouse at Cape Nosappu, we found **Spectacled Guillemot**, **Common Murre**, **Ancient Murrelet** and **Red-necked Grebe**. We carried on along the coast, dropping in at Habomai and Okineppu harbours but didn't pick up anything new. We finished the day back at Cape Nosappu where a **Red-faced Cormorant** was roosting on a rock with several **Pelagic Cormorants**. It had been a very productive day and we were happy to return to the hotel for a nice hot bath and a delicious seafood dinner.



Pygmy Woodpecker & white-headed race of Long-tailed Tit.

2nd February – Lake Furen to Rausu

After a relatively leisurely breakfast, we packed up and set off towards Rausu. Our first birding stop was back at Hanamisaki harbour where we saw more of the same sea ducks, and then Kurumaishi where we did a bit of seawatching. It wasn't quite as cold as yesterday but still well below freezing and we hadn't added any new species. Next, we stopped at a rest area with a viewpoint over the frozen Lake Furen where we had a couple of **White-tailed Eagles** perched up in the trees. We took a long roundabout route and checked out a few old Ural Owl day roosts but none were at home. After a quick convenience store lunch, we drove on to the Notsuke Peninsular, a thin spit of land that juts out into the Sea of Okhotsk. As we started driving along the road, we looked out for a Short-eared Owl that had been frequenting the area recently. We were also on the lookout for Asian Rosy-Finch which is sometimes seen around here, but it was blowing a gale, and any bird in its right mind would be sheltering. We did see single **Red-throated Loon** plus several **Sika Deer** including some impressive stags. We checked out the Todowara Nature Centre and then drove back along the peninsular and on to Rausu.



This Brown Dipper braves the icy stream.

We arrived mid-afternoon and were welcomed by some Brown Dippers. We were shown to our lodging, just five-minutes away from the owl-viewing site. We had time to get settled in before driving back to the restaurant where we enjoyed a traditional Japanese meal and some hot sake. Towards the end of the meal, the **Blakiston's Fish-Owl** showed up and we scrambled to our positions. The huge owl had landed in a tree above the feeding pond, and after peering down intently for a few minutes, flew down to the edge of the pond. It didn't take long before it had spotted a fish and jumped in to grab it. It sat there on the edge of the pond with it in its mouth before flying upstream. The owner of the lodge who has been watching the birds for many years, said that they had started courtship and the male would take the fish to the female and come back for its own. He was right, and a short time later it returned and came down for another fish, giving us more fantastic views. It came back a third time, but another foreign group had arrived late and disturbed the bird. It had been a resounding success and it meant that we didn't need to be up pre-dawn to try again.



Blakiston's Fish-Owl was the undisputed bird of the trip.

3rd February – Rausu

After our success last night in seeing the owl, there was no need for an early start. After a leisurely 7:30am breakfast, we drove down to the harbour for our boat ride to see the eagles. It had been cancelled due to high winds on the last trip, but today conditions looked good. The skies were clear and winds moderate. There were 3 different boat companies going out for the eagles this morning, but there were plenty of eagles to go around. We spent a wonderful 90 minutes watching and photographing **White-tailed & Steller's Sea-Eagles** swooping in and catching the frozen fish that the crew of our boat were tossing out for them. The captain was experienced and knew just how to position the boat for the best photos. Despite the ice flow not having arrived yet (it seems to be getting later every year), we still got some great shots. It really is one of the world's great wildlife viewing spectacles. Back on dry land, we went back to our lodge to pack up and change to the premier rooms over-looking the owl pool which we had managed to secure.



A Red Fox with one of the disputed Kuril Islands in the background.

After this, we set off south where we stopped at a nice local restaurant before heading to the Notsuke Peninsular. The sun was out, and wind had died right down and with snow forecast for tomorrow, I felt it wise to revisit Notsuke today. We were still on the lookout for Short-eared Owl and Asian Rosy-Finch, and although we didn't find either of those, we did get more views of **Spectacled Guillemot**, **Red-throated Loon** and lots of great sea ducks, plus plenty of **Sika Deer** and **Red Foxes**. We didn't want to be late for the owls and set off back to Rausu. It was a full house tonight in the blind, so I made sure we were there nice and early to grab the best windows at the blind before settling down for an early dinner. The **Blakiston's Fish-Owl** had come in early last night, then not again until early this morning by which time the pond was frozen. The owner felt that they would be hungry and come in early again. He was right and we had even better views than yesterday. We retired to the comfort of our rooms and an hour later had a second visit with more awesome action of the owl hunting in the pool.

4th February – Rausu to Akan

We had our last breakfast at the fish-owl lodge, before hitting the road. It was snowing, but the snow ploughs were busy keeping the roads were clear. As I had predicted, the road to the Notsuke Peninsular had a thick layer of snow and I was glad I had decided to do it yesterday. We had a distance to cover to get to our next birding location, called Kiritappu. With the snow-covered roads, I drove slowly to make sure we arrived safely. The Kiritappu peninsular on the way back to Kushiro is a famous spot for Asian Rosy-Finch. It was still snowing when we got there, but the road out to the cape was still open. The fields for were all covered with snow, so we kept a lookout on the wires and in the bushes, but the chances were that they would be hunkered down somewhere. The snow was still coming down, so rather than risk getting stranded up here, we set off back to the highway and continued on our way back to Kushiro.



We now have a regular day roost of Ural Owl staked out.

After lunch at a restaurant on the outskirts of Kushiro, we found our first **Goldcrest** in a pine tree by the parking lot. Before going to see the cranes, we went looking for a day roost of Ural Owl. I have been trying to get information on this roost for many years and finally had the GPS point. The info was accurate and after parking and walking along a path, we reached a view point over a narrow valley. There was an old tree facing us with a hole in it, and a beautiful, pale **Ural Owl** looking out of it. There are several winter feeding-sites for **Red-crowned Cranes**, and we chose to visit the Ito Sanctuary. We arrived by mid-afternoon and the light on the gathered birds was breath-taking. There were about 100 cranes, and we spent time getting photos of them feeding and strutting around on the snow. Every once in a while, birds would fly in or out or do their courtship dance. It was a magical location, but the cold wind picked up and we decided that we were happy with our views. It was a 30-minute drive to Akan where we checked in to our rooms, enjoyed a nice hot bath and delicious Japanese dinner.



5th February – Tsurui-mura to Izumi, Kyushu

Today was mainly a travel day and we only had a short time with the cranes. After breakfast, we drove the very short but icy road to the crane centre across from our hotel. It was closed but they graciously leave the gate open for early birds, and you can pay when you leave. We stationed ourselves at a view point and after about 5 minutes, we had our first **Red-crowned Cranes** flying by. We had timed it perfectly. In our half an hour, we saw dozens of cranes flying in, calling and jumping up in the air. What a wonderful way to start our day. We went back to the hotel, changed out of our winter gear and set off for Kushiro airport. Our flight from Kushiro airport left on time and we had a very brief lunch at Haneda airport before boarding our connecting flight to Kagoshima on the southern island of Kyushu.



Red-crowned Cranes are as graceful in the air as they are on the ground.

The drive to our hotel was about an hour and a half but we had time for a couple of quick stops. The first was at a bridge over a river where I had seen **Mandarin Duck** in previous years. We scanned both sides and found a pair, although in typical fashion, they swam around the corner and out of view. I ran back to the main road and relocated them and a total of 4 pairs of this most beautiful of ducks. We had one last stop at the Sendai River in the town of Satsuma. Some years, you get some interesting birds here but today we just had **Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Tufted Duck & Common Sandpiper**, plus dozens of **White Wagtails** and a single **Grey Wagtail**. We also saw a few passerines, with **Dusky Thrush, Meadow Bunting** and our first **Russet Sparrow**. We made it to the city of Izumi, and on the outskirts of town and saw many **Rooks** going to roost in the surrounding powerlines and trees. We arrived at our hotel where we were to spend the next 2 nights. The hotel restaurant was full tonight so we had to venture out, but found an absolute gem of a local *Izakaya*, or 'Japanese Pub' where we had a wonderful time.

6th February – Izumi & Yatsushiro

This morning we visited Arasaki, where over 14,000 cranes gather at the feeding site. It was cloudy and raining slightly, so the cranes arrived a little later than usual. It was a seriously impressive sight, as hundreds at a time, flocks left the flooded fields where they roosted and came down near the roads in front of us, where they poured bags of grain daily. **White-naped & Hooded Cranes** formed the majority, but after some searching, we also found **Sandhill** and **Common Cranes**. As we observed the cranes, huge flocks of **Northern Pintail** passed us, and we also found **Greater White-fronted Goose** and the uncommon **Red-throated Pipit**. There were large numbers of **Carrion Crows** and **Rooks** in the fields and we also picked out a couple of the rare **Daurian Jackdaws**. Next, we checked out a flooded field to find **Common Shelduck**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Eurasian Spoonbill** and **Dunlin**. We checked a reed-filled ditch where we heard a **Ruddy-breasted Crake**, then drove by more fields, to find **Eurasian Skylark** and large numbers of **Oriental Greenfinches**. Next, we went to the Crane Centre where we enjoyed the displays on cranes, and scanned from the top floor to add more cranes, a **Black-winged Stilt** and a vagrant **American Wigeon**. Then we went to an extensive reedbed where we found **Reed Buntings** and our target **Chinese Penduline-Tits**.



Brown-cheeked Rail is rarely seen, let alone photographed.

We drove to the city of Yatsushiro, which was about an hour and a half north. After the drive, we first had lunch and then began our search for the globally threatened **Saunders's Gull**. We timed it perfectly and the tide was just half way out when we arrived. **Saunders's Gull** was one of the first birds we saw and we had several of these rare gulls as they flew over the mudflats looking for crabs. We also added **Black-tailed & Lesser Black-backed Gulls**. There were many shorebirds feeding in the distance. **Kentish & Black-bellied Plovers** and **Dunlin** were the most numerous but there were also several **Eurasian Curlews** and **Common Greenshank** plus **Common Shelduck** and **Osprey**. We continued driving along the sea wall and found a little park, where we found some **Russet Sparrows**. We drove back to Arasaki and had some last birding at the end of the day, adding a **Hen Harrier**, **Ruddy-breasted Crake** and **Brown-cheeked Rail**. We also had a chance to get some more photos of cranes in the last light of the day.

7th February – Izumi to Miike

We went back to see the cranes this morning and the spectacle of them flying in from their roost was even more amazing. They were a bit late in putting the food out for them, and when the drove the little truck around pouring out seed on the road, the already waiting cranes, shot up in the sky again in a cacophony of raucous calls. It wasn't even just the cranes, but we had many thousands of **Northern Pintails** flying by and hundreds of **Rooks**. Some people had missed **Common Crane** yesterday but it took quite a while to pick out amongst the thousands of **Hooded** and **White-naped Cranes**. We had good views of 5 **Eurasian Spoonbills** flying by, and we also saw a **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Buff-bellied Pipits** and **Northern Lapwing**. We drove to a nearby river where we found a beautiful **Common Kingfisher** scanning from the bridge. Next, we drove up into the mountains where we found **Brown Dipper** and our first **Japanese Grosbeak**. We tried several spots up the valley for the Crested Kingfisher, but it would have to wait for tomorrow. Further up in the town of Isa, we checked some further bridges and found several **Asian House Martins**. We drove on up to Kirishima, and after a nice lunch, visited the shrine. It had started raining, and just as we were about to get out, the rain got heavier.



Hooded & White-naped Cranes at Arasaki.

We decided instead to visit Miike first and come back later. However, when we got to the turn off, a road worker was standing by a barrier blocking the road. He said that there had been an accident, but was of little use with no further information. Looking at the map, I saw there was a long way around, so we took an interesting drive in the rain over a forested mountain road. Miike is a small volcanic crater lake surrounded by lush forest. We first went to check out the shrine overlooking the lake but the place was shrouded in mist so we decided to come back later. Instead, we drove down to the campsite inside the crater, and braved the rain to see **Pygmy Woodpecker** plus **Varied & Long-tailed Tits**. We took a brief look from the lake edge to find an assortment of ducks included **Tufted Duck**. We took a short walk around the campsite and added **Olive-backed Pipit**. I tried for **White-backed Woodpecker** and one replied up the slope in the forest. We walked up a steep set of stairs and some of us got views of one before it flew off, not to return. At the bottom, Peter spotted a pair of our main target here, the **Ryukyu Minivet**. We called it a day and drove back to Kirishima where we made a short visit to the shrine in the rain and then drove up to our cosy if somewhat quirky guesthouse. The outdoor hot springs, and what most people in the group agreed was one of the best meals they had ever eaten, made for a memorable stay.

8th February – Miike to Kadogawa & Hitotsusegawa

After a delicious breakfast, we drove up towards Miike and explored a side road. We tried my spot for **Ural Owl** which we heard inside the forest, but it wouldn't come in. We had a couple of **Black-faced Buntings** hopping along the road but none of our hoped-for Grey Buntings. Further along the road, we saw some **Sika Deer** which looked very different than those we had seen on Hokkaido. We drove to the temple at Miike, and whilst enjoying the beautiful view, spotted a **Yellow-throated Bunting** and also picked up the difficult **White-bellied Pigeon**. We took one last walk around the camp site below where we had **Japanese Grosbeak**, **Pale Thrush**, **Common Kingfisher** and **Eurasian Nuthatch**. It was time to move on, and we decided to go in search of the **Crested Kingfisher**. We stopped at a bridge over a large river and had great views of a group of 7 **Mandarin Duck** males displaying and fighting over a female. Scott also found our target **Crested Kingfisher** which we all had scope views of. We also had our first **Barn Swallows** of the trip. It was now time to head down to the coast.



Drake Mandarin Ducks vying over a female.

After a convenience store lunch, we went to the small fishing village of Kadogawa, where a boat takes people out in search of **Japanese Murrelets**. The Captain located both **Japanese & Ancient Murrelets** which we got nice and close to for photos. He then took the scenic route back, past some beautiful rock formations and sea caves and we also saw **Eared & Great Crested Grebe**, **Black-tailed & Vega Gulls**, **Japanese Cormorant**, **Pacific Reef-Heron** and a nice male **Blue Rock-Thrush**. Next, we went on to a coastal site a bit further south where sometimes the rare **Japanese Wood-Pigeon**, normally a bird of small offshore islands, comes to the coastal forest. Inside the forest we found **Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Varied Tit & Japanese White-eye**. We enjoyed the scenery along the coast at the end of the rocky peninsular. Finally, we spotted the wood-pigeons and we all had good, close views of this seldom seen bird. We had just enough time to check out one last birding site, called the Hitotsuse River. As soon as we arrived, we found our target **Greater Spotted Eagle** flying to roost. This is an annual bird here but seen almost nowhere else in Japan. We had timed our arrival to perfection. We visited a pond with the endangered **Black-faced Spoonbill**, **Common Shelduck**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Common Pochard**, **Common Snipe**, many **Northern Lapwings** and a surprise **Common Redshank**. The grand finale for the day was a group of 4 **Raccoon Dogs**.



Japanese Woodpigeon & Japanese Murrelets

9th February – Hitotsusegawa to Tokyo

We picked up where we had left off, back at the Hitotsuse River. It was high tide again, so no shorebirds in the estuary, but on the pond, we had **Common Shelduck** and **Northern Shoveler**, **Black-faced Spoonbills**, **Common Snipe**, **Common Redshank**, **Common Kingfisher**, **Pale Thrush** and **Hawfinch**. We also managed a new bird for the trip, a **Brown-headed Thrush**. We took a drive on the other side of the estuary and flushed a female **Green Pheasant**. We also came across a perched **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** which we had great scope views of. We started to drive upstream to Kota Oike; a beautiful lake by an apparently disused shrine. We parked and walked along a short track through some forest. We came to the edge of the duck-filled pond where we found hundreds of **Mallard**, with smaller numbers of **Northern Shoveler** and **Common Pochard**. Our main goals here were **Mandarin Duck** and **Baikal Teal**, but the ducks here were so skittish, that as soon as they saw us they all took off to the back of the lake. We got good scope views of **Mandarin Duck** and **Baikal Teal**, and also **Green Sandpiper**, **Barn Swallow** and **Daurian Redstart**. We drove back to Miyazaki where we had a last sushi lunch before flying back to Tokyo where we finished the main tour.



A Black-faced Spoonbill contemplating its reflection.

EXTENSION

24th to 25th January – Tokyo to Miyakejima

From Haneda Airport, we made our way to Takeshiba Ferry Terminal where we ate dinner and repacked an overnight bag, leaving the rest of our luggage in the large lockers here. We boarded our ferry late at night, and after a few precious hours sleep, we were woken by the tannoy at 4:30am. After getting off the boat, we waited in the ferry terminal until 6 when our driver came to pick us up and drive us to the biding site called Taro-ike. Taro-ike is a small volcanic crater lake surrounded by lush forest and it also has a visitor's centre called Akakokko-kan, named after the Japanese endemic **Izu Thrush**. It was still a bit dark and we waited in the parking lot for a short while until there was enough light to begin our birding. Looking along the entrance road to the visitor's centre, I spotted our main target, the **Izu Thrush**, hopping along the curb. It got a bit lighter and we managed decent scope views of this endemic species, before it hopped off into the forest, not to return.



Owston's Tit is a Japanese endemic restricted to the southern Izu islands.

We found the trail heading down towards the lake and enjoyed a pleasant morning's birding. We saw our other endemic target, **Owston's Tit**, plus endemic subspecies of **Eastern Buzzard**, **Eurasian Wren** and **Japanese White-eye**. I heard a **Grey Bunting** calling under a bush but we only managed a glimpse. It was a successful walk and we made our way back up to the visitors centre where they had some feeders. **Owston's** and **Japanese Tits** were coming in constantly and made good photographic subjects. Our time was up here, and our driver took us back to the ferry terminal where we had lunch before our ferry back to Tokyo. After boarding the ferry, we went straight up to the deck to start our seawatch on which we had good views of many **Laysan**, **Short-tailed** and **Black-footed Albatrosses**. It was a busy couple of hours, but as we started to get close to Tokyo, it quietened down and the sun dropped lower in the sky. At the Takeshiba Port in Tokyo, we were transferred to our hotels where we all said goodbye after an unforgettable tour.



Short-tailed & Black-footed Albatrosses on our extension.

BIRD LIST

Avian taxonomy follows ebird/Clements v2018

Note: Only endemic races and potential splits are given to subspecies level.

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

- Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*
Seen at Toyama, Katano Kamoike, Awara & Arasaki.
- Taiga Bean-Goose** *Anser fabalis*
Seen at Toyama & Katano Kamoike.
- Tundra Bean-Goose** *Anser serrirostris*
Seen at Katano Kamoike.
- Tundra (Bewick) Swan** *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*
Seen at Kaga & Toyama.
- Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*
Seen at Toyama, Nemuro & Akan.
- Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*
Seen at Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsuse River.
- Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata* **East Asian Endemic**
Seen at Anagawa, Nojiri & Kota Oike
- Baikal Teal** *Sibirionetta formosa*
Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike and Kota Oike.
- Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*
Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, coastal Fukui, Kota Shrine & Hitotsuse River.
- Falcated Duck** *Mareca falcata*
Near-threatened. Seen in the Awara & Komatsu areas, Toden Lake & Kota Oike.
- Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*
Seen at many sites.
- American Wigeon** *Mareca americana*
Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
- Eastern Spot-billed Duck** *Anas zonorhyncha*
Seen at Toden Lake, Arasaki, Yatsushiro, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike.
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
Commonly seen throughout.
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, Nemuro, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike.
- Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal** *Anas c. crecca*
Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, Awara, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
- Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*
Seen at Toden Lake, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike.
- Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*
Seen at Toden Lake, Kaga, Satsuma Sendai, Miike, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike.
- Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*
Seen in the Nemuro area.
- Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*
Seen in the Nemuro area.
- White-winged (Siberian) Scoter** *Melanitta fusca stejnegeri*
Seen in the Nemuro area.
- Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana*
Near-threatened. Seen in the Nemuro area.
- Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*
Vulnerable. Seen at Nemuro & Notsuke Peninsular.
- Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*
Seen in the Nemuro area.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Seen at Toden Lake, Kaga & Costal Fukui.

Common Merganser *Mergus m. merganser*

Seen at Toden Lake, Nemuro & Notsuke.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Seen at Nemuro & Notsuke.

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

Ring-necked (Green) Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus tanensis* **Endemic subspecies**

Split by IOC. Japan's national bird. Seen at Karuizawa & Hitotsusegawa.

PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Seen at Toden Lake, Awara, Kota Shrine, Hitotsusegawa & Miyakejima.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Seen in the Nemuro area.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Seen at Kaga, Yatsushiro & Kadogawa.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Seen at Kaga, Kadogawa & Hitotsusegawa.

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Introduced. Commonly seen throughout Honshu & Kyushu.

Japanese Wood-Pigeon *Columba j. janthina*

Near-threatened. Seen at Umagase.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Seen at Karuizawa, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa, Kota Oike & Miyakejima.

White-bellied Pigeon

Seen at Miike.

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

Brown-cheeked Rail *Rallus indicus*

Seen at Arasaki.

Eurasian Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at Arasaki.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, coastal Fukui, Hitotsusegawa, Kota Oike & Miyakejima.

Ruddy-breasted Crake *Zapornia fusca*

Seen at Arasaki.

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*

Seen at Arasaki.

White-naped Crane *Antigone vipio*

Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Seen at Arasaki.

Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*

Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki.

Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis*

Endangered. Seen at Komatsu, Tsurui & Akan.

East Asian Endemic

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Seen at Arasaki.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Seen at Yatsushiro.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Seen at Awara, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
Seen at Yatsushiro.

Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus*
Seen at Toden Lake.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Near-threatened. Seen at Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Seen at Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Seen near Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Seen at Lake Toden, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki & Hitotsuse River.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Seen at Lake Toden, Arasaki & Kota Oike.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Seen at Yatsushiro.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Seen at Hitotsusegawa.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae

Common Murre *Uria aalge*
Seen at Cape Nosappu.

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba*
Seen at Cape Nosappu & Onnemoto.

Spectacled Guillemot *Cephus carbo*
Seen at Cape Nosappu & Notsuke Peninsular.

Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*
Seen at Cape Nosappu & on a boat ride out of Kadogawa.

Japanese Murrelet *Synthliboramphus wumizusume*
Vulnerable. Seen on a boat ride out of Kadogawa.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
Seen coastal Fukui & on the Miyakejima ferry.

Saunders's Gull *Saundersilarus saundersi*
Vulnerable. Seen at Yatsushiro.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Seen at Nemuro, Yatsushiro & Kadogawa.

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris*
Seen at Yatsushiro, Kadogawa & Miyakejima.

Mew (Kamchatka) Gull *Larus canus kamtschatschensis*
Seen at Kaga, Nemuro & Rausu.

Herring (Vega) Gull *Larus argentatus vegae*
Seen at coastal Fukui, Yatsushiro, Kadogawa, Hitotsusegawa & Miyakejima.

Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull *Larus fuscus heuglini*
Seen at Yatsushiro.

Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*
Seen at coastal Fukui, Nemuro, Rausu, Kadogawa & Miyakejima.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*
Seen at Nemuro & Rausu.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Seen at Nemuro, Notsuke & Rausu.

East Asian Endemic

GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*
Seen at coastal Fukui & Notsuke Peninsular.

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Diomedidae

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

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

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

CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae

Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana*
Endangered A single bird seen at Awara.

East Asian Endemic

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

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

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*
Seen at coastal Fukui, Nemuro & Rausu.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo hanedae*
Widely seen throughout Honshu & Kyushu.

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

Endemic subspecies

PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae

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

Great Egret *Ardea alba*
Several seen on Kyushu.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

Pacific Reef-Heron *Egretta sacra*
Seen at coastal Fukui.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Seen at Kota Oike.

PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae

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

Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*
Endangered. Seen at Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.

East Asian Breeding Endemic

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Seen at Kaga, Arasaki, Yatsushiro, Kadogawa & Miyakejima.

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus nipalensis*
Seen at Katano Kamoike.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*
Seen at Hitotsuse River.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Seen at Arasaki.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Seen at Tsurui & Hitotsusegawa.

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

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*
Seen in the Nemuro area & Rausu.

Steller's Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus pelagicus* **East Asian Endemic**
Vulnerable. Seen in the Nemuro area & Rausu.

Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicus* **Endemic subspecies**
B.j.japonicus was seen at Toden Lake, Katano Kamoike, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike. The endemic *B.j.toyoshimai* was seen on Miyakejima.

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

Blakiston's Fish-Owl *Ketupa b. blakistoni* **Endemic subspecies**
Endangered. Seen at Rausu.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis* **Endemic subspecies**
S.u.hondoensis seen near Karuizawa. *S.u.japonica* seen near Tsurui. *S.u.fuscescens* heard near Miike.

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
Seen at Arasaki, Miike & Hitotsusegawa

Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* **Endemic subspecies**
Seen near Nojiri.

PICIFORMES: Picidae

Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus kizuki*
Y.k.ijimae seen at Shunkunitai. *Y.k.seebohmi* seen at Saitama & Karuizawa. *Y.k.kizuki* seen at Miike, Umagase & Miyakejima.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos namiyei*
Seen at Miike.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
Seen at Karuizawa & Lake Furen.

Japanese Woodpecker *Picus awokera* **Endemic**
Seen at Karuizawa.

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
Seen in Kyushu.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Seen at Kaga.

PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae

Ryukyu Minivet *Pericrocotus tegimae* **Endemic**
Seen at Miike & Kota Oike.

PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae

Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius bucephalus*
Seen at Kaga, Awara, Yatsushiro & Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* **Endemic subspecies**

The endemic *G.g.japonicus* seen at Karuizawa. *G.g.bambergi* seen at Lake Furen.

Azure-winged Magpie *Cyanopica cyanus japonica* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen on route to Komatsu from Karuizawa.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*

Seen at Arasaki.

(Oriental) Rook *Corvus frugilegus pastinator*

Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

Carrion (Oriental) Crow *Corvus corone orientalis*

Commonly seen throughout.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos japonensis*

Commonly seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

(Japanese) Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis japonica* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen at Arasaki & heard at Hitotsuse River.

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundidae

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen at Kota Oike.

Asian House Martin *Delichon dasypus*

Seen at Minamata & Isa.

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae

Coal Tit *Periparus ater insularis*

Seen at Saitama, Karuizawa, Shunkunitai & Nemuro.

Varied Tit *Sittiparus varius*

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest, Karuizawa & Miike.

Owston's Tit *Sittiparus owstoni* **Endemic**

Seen on Miyakejima.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris hensoni* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen at Lake Furen.

Willow Tit *Poecile montanus restrictus* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest & Karuizawa.

Japanese Tit *Parus minor*

Seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae

Chinese Penduline-Tit *Remiz consobrinus* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen at Arasaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* **Endemic subspecies**

A.c.trivirgatus seen at Satama, Karuizawa & Lake Toden. The distinctive white-headed *A.c.caudatus* seen at Shunkunitai. The endemic *A.c.kiusiuensis* seen at Umagase.

PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae

Eurasian Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Endemic subspecies

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

PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae

Eurasian Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Endemic subspecies

T.t.fumigatus seen at Karuizawa. *T.t.mosukei* seen on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae

Brown Dipper

Cinclus pallasii

Seen at Karuizawa, Rausu & near Kogawa Dam.

PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae

Brown-eared Bulbul

Hypsipetes amaurotis

Commonly seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Seen near Kushiro.

PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae

Japanese Bush-Warbler

Horornis diphone

Endemic subspecies

H.d.cantans seen at Toden Lake, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Shrine. *H.c.diphone* seen on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

Seen at Arasaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae

Japanese White-eye

Zosterops j. japonicus

Endemic subspecies

Z.j.japonicus seen at Miike & Umagase. *Z.j.stejereri* seen on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae

Chinese Hwamei

Garrulax canorus

Introduced. Seen at Karuizawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

Red-flanked Bluetail

Tarsiger cyanurus

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest & Karuizawa.

Daurian Redstart

Phoenicurus aureoreus

Seen at Saitama, Kaga & Kota Oike.

Blue Rock-Thrush

Monticola solitarius

Seen at coastal Fukui & Kadogawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

White's Thrush

Zoothera aurea

Seen at Miike by one participant.

Brown-headed Thrush

Turdus chrysolaus

Seen at Hitotsusegawa.

Izu Thrush

Turdus celaenops

Endemic

Seen on Miyakejima.

Pale Thrush

Turdus pallidus

Seen at Karuizawa, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa & Miyakejima.

Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus*
Commonly seen throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

White-shouldered Starling *Sturnia sinensis*

Seen at Arasaki.

White-cheeked Starling *Spodiopsar cineraceus*

Seen at Kadogawa & Kota Oike.

PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae

Japanese Accentor *Prunella rubida fervida*

Seen at Karuizawa.

Near endemic

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seen at Satsuma Sendai & Arasaki.

Japanese Wagtail *Motacilla grandis*

Seen at Toden Lake & coastal Fukui.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba lugens/ocularis*

Seen at Toden Lake, coastal Fukui, Satsuma Sendai & Arasaki.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Seen at Miike.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Seen at Arasaki.

American (Buff-bellied) Pipit *Anthus rubescens japonicus*

Seen at Arasaki.

Breeding Endemic

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest, Karuizawa & Arasaki.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes japonicus*

Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Toden & Hitotsusegawa.

Japanese Grosbeak *Eophona p. personata*

Seen at Kogawa Dam & Miike.

Long-tailed Rosefinch *Carpodacus sibiricus*

Seen at Karuizawa & Kaga.

Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus*

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest Park.

Euraian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seen at Saitama Prefectural Forest Park.

Oriental Greenfinch *Chloris sinica*

Seen at Karuizawa, Arasaki & Kota Oike.

Endemic subspecies

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata*

Seen at Kota Shrine.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides ciopsis* **Endemic subspecies**

Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Toden, Satsuma Sendai, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans*

Seen at Karuizawa & Miike.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Seen at Arasaki.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Seen at Karuizawa, Toden Lake & Awara.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*
 Seen at Arasaki, Miike, Hitotsusegawa & Kota Oike.
Grey Bunting *Emberiza variabilis*
 Seen on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
 Seen at Satsuma Sendai, Yatsushiro & Kota Oike.
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
 Commonly seen throughout.

MAMMAL LIST

Taxonomy follows <http://www.wikipedia.org>

SCIURIDAE: Squirrels

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

LEPORIDAE: Rabbits & Hares

Japanese Hare *Lepus brachyurus* **Endemic**
 Seen at Karuizawa.

SORCIDAE: Shrews

Laxmann's Shew *Sorex caecutiens*
 Seen at Rausu.

CANIDAE: Canids

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* **Endemic subspecies**
 The endemic *V.v.schrenki* was seen at Notsuke Peninsular.
Raccoon Dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides viverrinus* **Endemic subspecies**
 Seen at Hitotsusegawa.

MUSTELIDAE: Mustelids

Japanese Weasel *Mustela itatsi* **Endemic**
 Seen by one participant near Komatsu.

OTARIIDAE: Eared seals

Steller's Sea Lion *Eumetopias jubatus*
 Seen at Rausu.

PHOCIDAE: Seals

Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina*
 Seen at Cape Nosappu.
Largha Seal *Phoca largha*
 Seen at Cape Nosappu.

CERVIDAE: Deer

Sika Deer *Cervus nippon* **Endemic subspecies**
C.n.yesoensis was seen several times in Hokkaido. *C.n.nippon* was seen near Miike.



Raccoon Dog was the undisputed mammal of the trip.