

TROPICAL BIRDING

Japan in Winter: Birding on Ice

Set departure tour

8th – 21st February, 2014

Extension: 21st – 22nd February, 2014

Tour leader: Charley Hesse

Report by Charley Hesse Photos by Charley Hesse & tour participants



The iconic Steller's Sea-Eagle is understandably on most birder's bucket lists (Charley Hesse)

Quite simply, Japan has some of the best winter birding in the world. Nowhere else can boast the immense Steller's Sea-Eagle in such numbers, thousands of cranes of 4 species on their wintering grounds, Red crowned Cranes in a beautiful snowy backdrop and the enormous Blakiston's Fish-Owl. We started our tour in the Japanese Alps of Nagano prefecture where we located some fantastic endemics and other rarities including Copper Pheasant, Long-billed Plover, Japanese Green Woodpecker and Japanese Accentor. From here we drove via the wonderful snow monkey park to the western Honshu wetlands where we saw the rare Baikal Teal, 3 species of geese and Bewick's Swan. On Kyushu we witnessed the incredible spectacle of almost 13,000 cranes on their wintering grounds before heading to coastal Miyazaki where we took a boat trip to find the rare Japanese Murrelet. Finally on Hokkaido we watched dozens of Red-crowned Cranes waking on the misty Setsuri River, saw many Steller's Eagles at close range and an amazing diversity of alcids and sea ducks on another boat trip on the Nemuro peninsular. Our trip was effected by unusually adverse weather conditions. Snow-storms and blizzards on Hokkaido caused the worst road closures in living memory, meaning that we were unable to reach Rausu. With additional effort we still managed to find Blakiston's Fish-Owl at another site and an extra boat trip at Nemuro made up for the one we missed. The tour concluded with our new extension, a round-trip ferry boat ride to Hachijojima on which we saw 3 albatrosses. Participants were impressed with the exquisite and incredibly varied cuisine, fascinating culture presented on this tour.

8th February – Tokyo to Karuizawa

We all met in the lobby of the hotel around 9:30 and I had to spend some time trying to shake a Japanese film crew that wanted to follow us around Japan. Our driver arrived to take us to downtown Tokyo Station where we were to board our midday train to Nagano. It had been snowing and we were concerned about road closures and train delays but we made it to the station with no problems and killed some time having a cup of coffee before braving the platform. We were soon boarding the world famous Bullet Train (*Shinkansen* in Japanese) towards Nagano. The sprawl of Tokyo seemed to stretch all the way to our destination and birdwise we saw little more than **Large-billed Crows**. It was snowing heavily when we arrived and we walked the short distance to the car rental company where we picked up our minibus. The fast toll road was closed, we were informed, and the regular roads were packed with cars, so our journey time was more than doubled. Everybody was desperately trying to spot birds through the snow but we saw little more than crows, **Brown-eared Bulbuls** and **White-cheeked Starlings**. We decided to go for dinner before driving to our pension and ate our first meal together at a delicious Soba restaurant. We were happy to have made it and keen to get stuck in to birding tomorrow.



The recently split Japanese Tit was formerly part of the Great Tit complex (Charley Hesse)

9th February – Karuizawa area

We took a morning walk along the road as all the paths were covered in heavy snow. We saw a few common birds like **Dusky Thrush**, **Brown-eared Bulbul** & **Japanese Tit** before getting to a large pond full of ducks, where we saw **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Gadwall** and some beautiful drake **Falcated Duck**. On the way back we came across better activity and saw our first **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Eurasian Jay**, **Coal Tit**, **Hawfinch**, a flock of **Japanese Grosbeaks** and a fine male **Daurian Redstart**. Just as we got back, we added **Willow & Varied Tits** at the feeder outside our pension. After a welcome breakfast, we walked to Wild Bird Forest (*yacho-no-mori*), and soon after leaving we saw a **Japanese Squirrel** high up in a conifer. At a stone bridge we saw a pair of **Brown Dippers** although they disappeared before everyone could get on them. We started up the trail into the forest through thick snow wondering whether it was even worth it, but a short distant along, there was a blurr of wings that was a female **Copper Pheasant** taking off. It was hardly a look at all but a few minutes later another bird went up and flew by, giving us longer flight views, and a look at its long tail. The going got harder as we climbed steps, but we took it slowly and ended up at a clearing in the forest. Here we heard and then got scope views of the endemic **Japanese Woodpecker**. Coming back down we saw an endemic race of **Long-tailed Tit** and **Eurasian Nuthatch** in a small mixed flock.

We got back to the pension to pick up the rest of our group and drove to the south part of town, where we explored more open areas. One spot had some productive scrubby edge where we saw several **Meadow Buntings** and 2 beautiful male **Long-tailed Rosefinches**. From here, we drove towards the nearby town of Saku. On the way we had a couple of **Pale Thrushes** cross the road and then a smaller bird which turned out to be the scarce **Japanese Accentor** which we all got good looks at even though we had to hold up a car behind to do so. After lunch in Saku, we headed to Lake Toden where we parked near the edge of the reservoir and started scanning the ducks. There weren't as many as I had expected but the number of species was impressive, with **Eastern Spot-billed & Tufted Ducks**, **Northern Pintail**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Common Pochard**, **Greater Scaup**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Smew** and **Common Merganser**. Other water birds included **Little & Red-necked Grebes**, **Great Cormorant**, **Gray Heron** and **Eurasian Coot**. We walked along the river a bit, seeing **Gray**, **White & Japanese Wagtails** plus a **Black-eared Kite** mobbing a **Common Buzzard**. A major target on the river here was **Long-billed Plover**, and sure enough Richard spotted one along with a **Green Sandpiper** from a bridge where we were scanning. It had been a great day and we finished it off with a rather frigid walk back up to the Wild Bird Forest to look for Japanese Flying Squirrel. We staked out a box where I had seen them a few days before but today they were not to show and we went back to warm ourselves by the wonderful fireplace in the pension before heading out for a delicious, traditional Japanese meal.



Some delicious fresh Sashimi is a must on any trip to Japan (Tim Bonsack)

10th February – Karuizawa & Snow Monkey Park to Komatsu

We walked up the road before breakfast to try one last time for waxwings. We saw **Japanese Green & Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers & Japanese Tit** but no sign of our target. We drove to a nearby temple to look for them too. The trees here were loaded with mistletoe berries but again, no waxwings. We did however see **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Varied Tit**, **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Meadow Bunting** and **Oriental Greenfinch**. We birded one more spot, this time a lake where Pallas' Rosefinch had been seen the year before. Here we saw **Falcated**, **Eastern Spot-billed & Tufted Ducks**, **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Eurasian Coot** as well as **White & Japanese Wagtails**.

We had seen plenty of birds but missed 2 targets which may have not even been around. After breakfast we packed up the vehicle and drove to monkey park on the highway which was mercifully open. Once we arrived, we had a quick bite to eat, and then it was about a 2km (mainly flat) walked to the monkey park. On the way we saw **Eurasian Jay**, **Eurasian Siskin** and **Japanese Grosbeak** although the highlight was definitely 2 **Japanese Serow**, one of which crossed the trail and the other stood there to be admired by a crowd of people. We all made it to the monkey park and had a wonderful time watching this unique spectacle of Japanese Macaques in the snow and hopping in and out of the natural hot springs. We had to tear ourselves away as we still had a long drive to Komatsu in Ishikawa Prefecture. We took a bathroom break at a highway rest stop where we saw our first **Rook** mixed in with **Carrion Crows**. We had time to freshen up before we went out for our first sushi of the trip.



Japanese Serow was an unexpected bonus at Jigokudani (Charley Hesse)



The Snow Monkey Park was well worth the 2km walk to get there (Tim Bonsack)



Some of the monkeys have taken to keeping warm in the hot spring pools (Charley Hesse)

11th February – Western Honshu wetlands

We started our full day birding the Western Honshu Wetlands with an early morning trip to the small town of Awara in Fukui Prefecture. To get there, we passed along a large body of water where we saw many **Eurasian Wigeon** along with other common species of ducks, **Osprey**, both **Eared & Great Crested Grebes**, **Japanese Wagtail** and **Pale Thrush**. We reached an area of fields that was supposed to be the feeding grounds on large numbers of **Greater White-fronted Goose**. We saw **Northern Goshawk**, **Common Buzzard** and several **Sky Larks** here before somebody spotted a flock of geese landing in the distance. We estimated them to be in the high hundreds, maybe as many as a thousand. It was great to have found them, and we spent some time scanning through them just in case there were any lessers mixed in.



Large numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese are to be found in Western Honshu (Charley Hesse)

Next we started driving north again, finding out first **Kamchatka Gull** in a harbour, and several **Gray-headed Lapwings & Common Snipe** in a muddy field. We next called in at Katano Kamoike, a lake that has been off limits to hunters for the past 300 year, making it an important historical refuge for ducks, geese and swans. Our main target here was **Baikal Teal** which are found here in the hundreds, making it the most important site for them in Japan. Scanning through the numerous **Mallards**, **Northern Pintail & Green-winged Teal** we found many **Baikal Teal**, as well as several **Gadwall**, **Falcated Duck** and a female **Smew**. It is also a great place to see Bean Goose, and we found both forms which are now recognised species, **Taiga & Tundra Bean-Goose**. We got our first **Great Egret** of the trip before heading off to our next birding site, finding a small flock of **Japanese White-eyes** in the parking lot. Tundra (Bewick's) Swans are also usually to be found here although we were told they had gone out to the fields to feed. The helpful staff indicated where they were often to be found. First we did some seawatching from the cliff tops on the coast nearby to find our first **Japanese & Pelagic Cormorants**, **Peregrine Falcon**, an unidentified Loon species, **Slaty-backed & Vega Gulls** over the sea and an attractive male **Blue Rock-Thrush** perched on a picnic table in the parking lot. After a lunch of seafood in a port town, where we added Black-tailed Gull, we went on to Kaga City where we tracked down our **Bewick's Swans**. We watched these beautiful birds from a respectful distance and also added **Bull-headed Shrike**. Next we headed to the Sai River in Kanazawa City where that been reports of a Scaly-sided Merganser. They were seen regularly in one spot for many weeks but the last record was 2 weeks ago. We worked methodically along the banks of the river, scanning for them at every available opportunity. We picked up **Tufted Duck**, **Common Pochard**, **Eurasian Coot**, **Great Cormorant** and **Gray Heron**, but concentrated on checking out male **Common Mergansers** with which it had been associating. After a concerted effort we had to admit defeat and call it a day. It was back to Komatsu and another culinary delight with a trip to a traditional *Yakitori* restaurant.

12th February – Western Honshu wetlands to Izumi

We had another half day's birding on Honshu and I decided to head to the fields at Kahoku near Kanazawa. When we finally found the place we started driving slowly round the stubble fields where we saw many **Black-eared Kites** and a handful of **Common Buzzards, Northern & Gray-headed Lapwings** and a **Eurasian Kestrel** in flight. We also had several **Green Pheasants**, Japan's national bird, which was lumped recently with Ring-necked Pheasant although it looks different enough to warrant species status. We found several passerines too, with **Bull-headed Shrike**, a **Rook** amongst the many **Carrion Crows, Daurian Redstart, Dusky Thrush, Oriental Greenfinch** and **White Wagtail**. We also had our first **Northern Shoveler** in a creek with some **Gadwall**. We made our way to the edge of a large reservoir where we spent some time scanning through the large numbers of **Eurasian Wigeon** to find a single drake **American Wigeon**. We also saw **Green-winged Teal**, numerous male **Smews, Great Crested & Eared Grebes, Great Cormorant, Osprey, Eurasian Coot** and also several **Meadow Buntings** in a tree nearby. From here we started to drive to the airport and had 1 last stop to scan a gull roost with **Black-headed, Black-tailed, Kamchatka & Vega Gulls** plus **Common Merganser**. We made it to Komatsu airport with plenty of time to catch our flight to Fukuoka in Kyushu. From here we jumped straight on the highway and drove south towards Kagoshima Prefecture. We arrived just after sunset and saw our first cranes flying overhead.



Of the 4 species of cranes present, Hooded is the most numerous - 10,628 this year (Charley Hesse)

13th February – Izumi & Yatsushiro

It was still pretty dark when we left after breakfast and drove to Arasaki. We timed it perfectly and just as we pulled up, the first streams of cranes started to appear in the half light. More and more came and at times there were hundreds in the air. They started filling the fields and moving towards a paved road where many bags of grain had been put out. As it got lighter, we could see that the majority were **Hooded Cranes** with lower numbers of the much larger **White-naped Cranes** mixed in. Still scanning, we soon came across 2 **Sandhill Cranes** but it took a longer time to locate **Common Crane**. In the same fields we spotted **Taiga Bean-Goose** and had a couple of distant fly-bys of **Merlin**. We did find **Green Sandpiper, Common Snipe** and **Northern Lapwings** in the muddy fields and dykes and in the stubble fields, **Sky Lark, Red-throated & American Pipits, Rustic Bunting** and **Oriental Greenfinch**. The crane centre still wasn't open yet so we drove to a patch of reed beds along a river, where we found several **Chinese Penduline-Tits** and also came across a **Japanese Bush-Warbler**, a few **Reed Buntings** and a flyby of a **Northern Goshawk**. We also heard a **Ruddy-breasted Crake** but couldn't see it in the dense reeds. We went back to the Crane observation centre where we found some **Common Starlings** amongst the more common **White-cheeked Starling** and a few **Russet Sparrows** mixed in with the numerous **Eurasian Tree Sparrows**. There were also good numbers of **Rooks** but we didn't find any Daurian Jackdaws.

Next we drove north to Yatsushiro in neighbouring Kumamoto Prefecture, a great site for shorebirds and other mudflat rarities. We started at the south of river mouth and scanning from the sea wall we soon found our main target, the threatened **Saunders's Gull** along with the more common **Black-headed Gull**. We also saw **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Falcated Duck** and **Red-breasted Merganser** as well as **Dunlin**, **Black-bellied & Little Ringed Plovers**, **Great Crested Grebe**, **Osprey**, **Common Greenshank** and **Common Shelduck**. We moved on to north wall by which time it was raining. We persevered to find **Vega & Heuglin's Gulls** and **Kentish Plover**. On the way back we stopped along the coast to find **Slaty-backed & Black-tailed Gulls**. We had missed the spoonbills at the crane centre in the morning so we dropped back in when on our return to find 3 birds with their heads tucked away. The larger of the 3 was a **Eurasian Spoonbill** and cooperated by taking its bill out but the other 2 refused. Still, the head-shape, size and black color around the face were all characteristic of **Black-faced Spoonbill**. We drove around the spot we had been indicated for **Ruddy Shelduck** and sure enough it was exactly where we had been told. The last site of the day was some scrubby habitat along a small stream. This turned out to be fairly productive and we saw **Meadow & Black-faced Buntings**, our first **Brambling**, **Japanese White-eye**, **Pale Thrush** and **Daurian Redstart**. Another tasty Japanese meal to finish off a great day of birding.



The larger White-naped Crane numbered 1,919 individuals this year (Charley Hesse)

14th February – Izumi to Miike

We went back to Arasaki in the morning and witnessed the cranes flying in again. Our main target though were rallids. We drove along the edge of some likely habitat until we heard the unmistakable call of **Ruddy-breasted Crake**. We jumped out and managed to entice this secretive bird in close for great views. Then we tried the same technique successfully with **Brown-cheeked Rail** (split from Water Rail). After that we drove around a bit and got good views of a **Eurasian Kestrel** on a post and then many **Sky Larks** and **American Pipits** in a field nearby. We were just leaving the area when we spotted a couple of small corvids mixed in with a large flock of **Rooks** and stopped to look at our first **Daurian Jackdaws**. From here we drove up a road into the mountains along the Komenotsu river where we saw **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**, **Brown Dipper**, **Daurian Redstart** and **Meadow Bunting**. Our main target here was the **Crested Kingfisher** and Eric spotted one on top of a post, but by the time we had got out to look at it, it had flown up stream. We followed it and had more brief views from a stone bridge. Next we went up to the Kogawa Dam in search of **Mandarin Duck** which we found easily out on the reservoir. There was also a **Great Cormorant**, another **Crested Kingfisher** and in the trees some **Japanese Grosbeaks** and **Oriental Greenfinches**. We were really ticking off the targets today.

We started our drive towards Miike in Miyazaki, stopping to check the Sendai River in Satsuma Town. We found a nice view over the river where we found some overwintering **Barn Swallows** and **Asian House Martin**, **Gray, White & Japanese Wagtails**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Green-winged Teal** and 2 pairs of the rare **Long-billed Plover**. We drove further along keeping an eye out for possible Scaly-sided Mergansers, which had shown up in recent years, but only managed to find the introduced **Mute Swan**. We continued our drive into Miyazaki Prefecture and stopped at a wonderful Korean BBQ restaurant for lunch. Afterwards we had a semi-cultural activity in visiting the wonderful Kirishima Shrine, where we were also on the look out for birds, and despite the rain, we still managed to find **Varied, Japanese & Long-tailed Tits**, **Pale Thrush** and **Japanese White-eye**. We went straight on to Miike, which is a lake in a small volcanic crater. We went up to a small temple where we saw **Rustic Bunting** and also had a possible Grey Bunting sighting. From here we drove to the lake which we scanned to find **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Pintail** and even **Mandarin Duck**. On an open lawn near the lake we had our first **Olive-backed Pipits** and **Yellow-throated Buntings**. We took a short walk through the forest finding **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** and just brief views of **White-backed Woodpecker**. One more trip up to the temple produced **Black-faced** and more **Yellow-throated Bunting** before we drove to our comfortable lodging back at Kirishima. We had an incredible full course meal followed for some of us by a wonderful outside bath in natural hot spring water.



One of the joys of a Japan trip is soaking in an outdoor hot spring (Tim Bonsack)

15th February – Miike to Kadogawa

It was back to Miike early in the morning. We drove slowly along the entrance road and I stopped when I heard the distinctive high-pitched chipping call of a bunting. I spotted a female **Gray Bunting** feeding down on the ground in a ditch, but unfortunately it flew off before the others could get on it. We drove back up to the temple where we stood around for a while. We had a nice **Daurian Redstart** and then the endemic **Ryukyu Minivet** whose high-pitched trilled calls preceded the sighting. We also had **Long-tailed Tit** (a different race than on Honshu), more **Yellow-throated Buntings** and **Eurasian Jay**. Driving back down, we lucked upon a small group of **Sika Deer** which eyed us suspiciously. We parked the car and walked down to the trail head and entered the forest once more. There was a good deal more activity than yesterday and we had a nice mixed flock with **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Varied & Japanese Tits**. We got to the same riverbed but only managed to hear the **White-backed Woodpecker** drumming. We got great views of the endemic *fumigatus* race of **Eurasian Wren** with its smoky brown color and also picked up the colourful but non-native **Red-billed Leiothrix**.

It was time to leave and we jumped on the highway and drove down to coastal Miyazaki and the port town of Kadogawa. At the boat office we were told that as it was very windy, we might not be able to see the Japanese Murrelet, a major target for the tour. Even if it was only a small chance everybody was still keen. As the boat left pulled into the harbour, we saw many **Black-eared Kites** flying overhead, and on the water, **Great Crested Grebe, Temminck's Cormorant, Pacific Reef-Heron** and **Black-tailed, Vega, & Slaty-backed Gulls**. It was a little choppy out to sea as we left the harbour walls but after a short while, Tim thought he spotted some small birds on the water. We went towards them to find they were actually **Japanese Murrelets**. What a relief! There were 3 birds which we got pretty close to until 2 flushed leaving just one in the water. We got very close and had great photo opportunities but realised later that the bird seemed to have its wing tangled in something and was unable to fly.



Over half the world's population of Japanese Murrelet breeds on islands close to the small town of Kadogawa, in Miyazaki Prefecture (Charley Hesse)

We got back to port victorious and had a nice cup of Japanese tea with the family that runs the boat trips. We said goodbye to them and went looking for Japanese Woodpigeon nearby. We found **Oriental Greenfinch, Pale Thrush** and even a **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** but no sign of the pigeons. We hit one more spot where I had seen them, a wonderfully scenic location called Umagase (which means 'horses back'). Here we had fine views of **Peregrine Falcon, Ryukyu Minivet** and a few other birds like **Barn Swallow, Japanese White-eye** and **Blue Rock-Thrush**. On the drive further south we came across a flock of **American Pipits** before getting to Hitotsusegawa. This is normally a great spot for shore birds, but it was high tide. We found a **Northern Lapwing** in the fields nearby, then looking across the estuary there was a single exposed patch of mud, loaded with birds. On here we saw a single **Greater White-fronted Goose, Gadwall**, many **Northern Pintail** and **Eurasian Wigeon**, a **Great Cormorant**, some **Eurasian Curlews** and even an **Osprey**. We went to the local town to check in to our hotel and enjoyed a buffet dinner.

16th February – Miyazaki to Tsuruimura, Miyazaki

We only had a short time to bird this morning, and after an early breakfast we drove to the Hitotsusegawa estuary. It was actually high tide again, but we found a nice pond full of ducks, and scanning closer I spotted some **Black-faced Spoonbill** flying in to join several more by some reeds, over 10 birds in total. This was a fantastic sighting and much better views than before. There was an impressive array of ducks, with **Common Shelduck**, **Gadwall**, **Falcated Duck**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Northern Pintail**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Common Pochard** and **Tufted Duck** as well as **Little & Great Crested Grebes** and **Osprey**. Brooke also spotted a **Northern Goshawk** flying in and perching and we all had scope views of this powerful raptor. The nearby reed beds held **Meadow & Reed Buntings** and behind us we scanned the 1 remaining exposed sand bar to see **Great Cormorant**, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Black-bellied Plover**, **Eurasian Curlew** and **Vega Gull**. Our time was up here and we started driving along the water's edge back towards the main road and saw a **Common Sandpiper** on the way. Bridget spotted **Asian House Martin** on the drive to Miyazaki airport, which concluded our birding on Kyushu.



Black-faced Spoonbills at Hitotsuse River, Miyazaki prefecture (Kathleen Moon)

Our flight to Tokyo was a little delayed and we were held up before landing at Haneda due to air traffic congestion, meaning our short layover was whittled down to nothing. With true Japanese efficiency though, we were hustled to our next gate and made the connection. Then it was on to Hokkaido although due to inclement weather we almost were prevented from landing at Kushiro. The pilot pulled up at the first pass but we made it on the second one. We seemed to be keeping on track by the skin of our teeth. A film crew who had found us early in the trip were there to meet us and followed us to our hotel. We stopped on the way at a bridge where we found **Whooper Swan**, **Common Goldeneye** and even had an early fly over of **Steller's Sea-Eagle**. We saw **Common Buzzard** and several corvids including **Rook** and then somebody spotted a pair of **Red-crowned Cranes** from another bridge. We pulled up and got them in the scope for fine views along with a cooperative **Crested Kingfisher**. We went off to our comfortable and warm lodge where we enjoyed a gourmet meal.

17th February – Tsuruimura to Nakashibetsu

A very famous scene in Hokkaido is that of the cranes at dawn on the Setsuri river. We were up well before dawn and drove the short distance to a bridge over the river to where the birds were roosting. There were busloads full of photographers gathered on the bridge and we took our place to watch the **Red-crowned Cranes** start their day. In the half light, they were already starting to move around. As the light improved the cranes became more active and began interacting. Meanwhile we were getting colder and colder with icy winds chilling us. Pairs of cranes began dancing and jumping in the air, all the while our attendant Japanese film crew asked for our impressions. Also in the group were a pair of **Whooper Swans** and a flock of **Mallard** and a single drake **Common Merganser** also entered the picture. On the other side of the bridge, **Sika Deer** had come down to the river's edge. When we had our fill of the spectacle, we agreed to head back to the hotel for breakfast, spotting a beautiful **Great Spotted Woodpecker** on the way. The hotel's dining room was warm and cosy and we enjoyed a nice breakfast while looking at **Marsh Tit**, **Eurasian Nuthatch** and **Brown-eared Bulbul** outside the window. After a leisurely breakfast we went to one of the nearby feeding stations called Tsuruidai.



Red-crowned Cranes dancing in the Setsuri River (Charley Hesse)



A family of Red-crowned Cranes arriving at their feeding grounds (Charley Hesse)



The beauty and elegance of Red-crowned Crane in the snow (Charley Hesse)

The cranes still hadn't arrived when we got there so we checked out the nearby shop for a bit. The shopkeeper turned out to be a big fan of the show that we were being filmed for. He said with the wind, the cranes arrived late yesterday but he thought they would be arriving soon today. We walked out to the viewing area, and sure enough, there was a single **Red-crowned Crane** waiting there. After a short while it was joined by a further 4 birds, an adult pair and 2 young birds with brown rather than black heads. No more cranes arrived, although we did see both **White-tailed** and **Steller's Sea-Eagles** fly over giving reasonable views. We decided to move on to the Ito Crane sanctuary to see if more birds would turn up there. There were quite a few photographers waiting, and talking with them it seemed that the wind was keeping the cranes away. There were some bird feeders for small birds and we saw the distinctive race of **Eurasian Jay** along with **Marsh, Willow & Japanese Tits, Dusky Thrush** and some smart **Bramblings**. We decided that we were happy with the cranes we had seen and started driving towards Rausu. As we drove north, the weather deteriorated further into blizzards. The road ahead was closed and we had to back track. We went along another road in unpleasant driving conditions and found that yet another road had been closed, this time due to an accident. We turn back, heading to the coast and for a while things started to get better, but finally this road too was blocked. We were for all intents and purposes trapped in the town of Nakashibetsu still an hour and a half from our destination. It became clear that the only thing that we could do was to find a hotel and spend the night here. It was a nice place with natural hot spring and we enjoyed another fine Japanese meal, hoping that the weather would improve tonight and the road reopen in the morning.

18th February – Nakashibetsu

As we met in the lobby before breakfast with our bags packed, it was still blowing a gale outside. After breakfast, I made a couple of calls, one to check if the boat ride in Rausu was going (it wasn't) and another to the local road department to see if the roads were open (they weren't). All that was left to do was hang around in the lobby checking periodically to see if the roads were open. It wasn't even snowing that hard, it was the wind that was blowing the snow and reducing visibility. Everybody accepted the fact that there was absolutely nothing we could do and we played the waiting game. We called several times to see if there was any change in the roads, but they all remained closed. Our friends from the television channel did some last interviews and bid us farewell as they were going to make a run for it back to Kushiro along the only road still open. Several people in our group had mild colds and we took a walk along the road to a nearby drugstore for some medicine. Outside the hotel a few poor birds were getting blown about in the wind. We saw **Brown-eared Bulbul** and **Marsh Tit** so it wasn't a totally birdless day. We had lunch and by mid-afternoon conditions had only got worse and we decided to check in again. Some people went to rest in our room while the others braved the cold to try and pick up a bird or 2. We walked behind the hotel to a bridge over a river where we saw **Common Goldeneye**, **Whooping Swan** and **Brown Dipper**. We walked round the hotel to the entrance spotting **Eurasian Nuthatch** on the way. We were impressed how any birds could survive in such a hostile environment. One unexpected surprise was coming across Mark Brazil (the author of the field guide) checking in with his group. He was good enough to sign our books before we retired to our rooms.



Harlequin Ducks are a common sight around the coast of Japan in Winter (Charley Hesse)

19th February – Nakashibetsu to Nemuro

We looked out of the window to see that the wind had died and no new snow had fallen. A quick call to the road department confirmed our suspicions that we would in fact be able to leave. Some roads were still blocked but we could work our way around these, so after breakfast, we packed up and set off. On the way we drove along a forest lined road where we saw a **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. We got to the coast road where we jumped out at the first opportunity to scan the sea. Birds, glorious birds! What a relief to get back to birding. The spot we found ourselves was the small harbour town of Odaito. The sea was full of ducks, with close **Northern Pintail**, **Common Pochard**, **Tufted Duck** and many **Greater Scaup** plus **Harlequin Duck**, **Black Scoter**, **Common & Red-breasted Mergansers** further out. Eric even picked out a **Common Raven** flying overhead. **White-tailed & Steller's Sea-Eagles** were also in evidence with several birds flying around and perched on the harbour wall. An important birding site that we did not want to miss was the Notsuke Peninsular. We were still unsure if the road along it would be open but mercifully it was. As we drove along the first stretch of it we saw **Dusky Thrush** and then came to where the road bordered the open sea. Here we scanned the numerous **Black Scoters** to find a few female type **White-winged Scoters**.



The colors of the *shrencki* race of Red Fox on Hokkaido are especially vivid (Charley Hesse)

As we passed along the peninsula we stopped to let Richard work his way through **Kamchatka, Vega, Slaty-backed & Glaucous Gulls** and we also had several stops to look at the numerous **White-tailed & Steller's Sea-Eagles** which we had great views of. Another nice addition was our first **Red Fox**, spotted by Tim. We were also lucky enough to spot an Asian Rosy-Finch from the car. We watched it hopping on the ground but then it flew off and a bracing stroll through the icy wind could not help us relocate it. The nature centre was closed but one last sea watch added a distant pair of **Long-tailed Ducks**. We headed back south along the coast road and stopped to pick up some lunch supplies which we ate at Odaito port while watching **Common Goldeneye, Long-tailed & Harlequin Ducks** at close range as well as our first **Glaucous-winged Gull**. We carried on south with a short stop at Hakuchodai for many **Whooper Swans**. As we reached the Lake Furen area, the road became lined with trees and we stopped to find some **Marsh & Japanese Tits** and a bonus **Laxmann's Shrew** which was scurrying about on the snow. We also had a herd of **Sika Deer** next to the road. Some members of the group had colds and decided to keep warm inside our *minshuku* (traditional Japanese-style inn) while the rest of us braced ourselves for one last seawatch. We drove to Cape Hanamisaki where we scanned the sea from the top of the cliff to find large numbers of **Harlequin Duck** and **Black Scoter** with a group of *stejnegeri* race **White-winged Scoters** (including some nicely plumaged males). We didn't manage to locate any alcids but did turn up a **Pelagic Cormorant** and added **Red-throated Loon** to the trip list. The *minshuku* was delightful and our host served us a delicious home-cooked Japanese dinner.



Long-tailed Ducks can be seen at close range inside the harbours (Charley Hesse)

20th February – Nemuro area

We hoped to have been going out on a boat trip this morning, but with the bad weather, none were going out and several roads on the peninsular were still being cleared. We gathered in the dining room after dawn and watched the feeders for a bit, and saw **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Japanese Tit**, **Eurasian Nuthatch** and **Brown-eared Bulbul**. We took a short walk to the Shunkunitai Nature Centre where we saw 2 cheeky **Japanese Squirrels**, plus some **Marsh Tits** and **Eurasian Jays** hanging around the feeders. After breakfast we got in the van but had to jump straight out again to take a look at **White-backed Woodpecker** which Richard had spotted. We drove back to the nature centre to see if we could see the squirrels again but they were not there and a short drive along the road afterwards didn't produce much either. We were killing time before the eagle feeding time when some enterprising locals threw fish out on the ice. Dozens of **Black-eared Kites** and **Large-billed Crows** had gathered in advance but the **White-tailed & Steller's Sea-Eagles** only showed up after 2 men had started walking out onto the frozen lake. The subsequent antics of the birds, squabbling, flying to and thro was a fantastic photo opportunity and made up somewhat for the Rausu boat trip that we had missed. A **Red Fox** even showed up and several **Sika Deer** were present around the edge of the frozen lake.



Despite their smaller size, White-tailed Eagles often dominate the Steller's Sea-Eagles (Charley Hesse)

By now the nature centre was open and we went inside so watch the feeders and I inquired about an Ural Owl day roost I had heard about. There gave me the location details hesitantly and some of us ploughed through deep snow to get there only to find the owls were not there. We heard that the road to Nosappu peninsular was now open which was great news as it was our best chance for several alcids. We set off and stopped on the way at a bridge to scan though a flock of ducks from a bridge which comprised of **Greater Scaup Common Goldeneye** and **Common Merganser**. Further on we checked out a viewing blind where Rock Sandpiper had recently been seen. We didn't see any, but did find **Black Scoter**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Spectacled Guillemot**, **Common Murre** and **Common Redpoll**. We made it to the cape and started scanning from the cliff top hide to find many **Harlequin Duck**, a single winter-plumaged **Arctic Loon**, **Horned Grebe**, **Pelagic Cormorant**, both **Spectacled & Pigeon Guillemots**, **Thick-billed Murre** and **Kamchatka & Glaucous-winged Gulls**. We even got a couple of new mammals with **Sea Otter** and **Harbour Seal**. On the way back we tried for Ural Owl again but still no sign. Blakiston's Fish-Owl had been the biggest miss of the trip and after receiving some info on where they could possibly be found, we drove there before dusk. I drove over a bridge, parked the car and chatted to a worker from the adjacent nature reserve who told us the best place to stand to get a chance of seeing the owl. We started by seeing a **Crested Kingfisher** on the river and had a flyby of **Common Buzzard** before we started our vigil. We waited till after dusk still with no sign. I got a bit impatient and started walking along the road. I notice a large shape silhouetted against the sky and checked through my bins to see if it was a bundle of twigs but was delighted to find it was a **Blakiston's Fish Owl**. I called the others over and we all got good views before it flew across the road and disappeared inside the dark forest. We were all absolutely ecstatic to have found our bird and went back to the minshuku for another delicious home-cooked meal.

21st February – Nemuro to Tokyo

Before breakfast, we went once again to the Ural Owl stake out near the nature centre but had no more luck than before. I did hear the high pitched called of **Goldcrest** and after some effort we found a pair to add to our list. Another welcome addition was **Eurasian Treecreeper**. We went back to the minshuku for an early breakfast during which we had the usual suspects of **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh & Japanese Tit** and **Eurasian Nuthatch** coming in to the feeders. We set off for the Habomai harbour along freshly cleared roads and located the boat trip office. I sorted out tickets while everyone else scanned the harbour to find **Harlequin Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common & Red-breasted Mergansers** and **Kamchatka, Slaty-backed & Glaucous-winged Gulls**. We started out Boat trip to Cape Nosappu cutting through the icy waters scanning to find **White-winged & Black Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Arctic Loon** and a **Red-necked Grebe** in flight. An ice flow had moved in overnight and very cautiously the captain eased his way through it.



Scenes from the ice flow. Ancient Murrelet, Spectacled Guillemot and Steller's Sea-Eagle (Charley Hesse)

We had wonderful **Steller's Sea-Eagles** perched on the ice flow which gave us some photographic opportunities we had missed at Rausu. We saw our first alcids in the shape of several **Spectacled Guillemots** and a single **Ancient Murrelet**. We made it to the cape but already it was time to head back. Before getting back to port, we added **Pigeon Guillemot** which was the major target of one of the Japanese photographers on the boat. We thanked the captain and started back to Kushiro. On the way, we had just enough time to check out the Kiritappu peninsular quickly. On the drive out there we saw some **Whooper Swans, Red Fox** and **Sika Deer**. At the Cape we saw many **White-tailed & Steller's Sea-Eagle** and scanning out to sea we had several **Pelagic Cormorants** and some distant unidentified alcids. We were hoping for better views of Asian Rosy Finch but the closest we came was a small flock of **Common Redpolls**. We drove back to Kushiro, boarded our flight to Haneda and once there said goodbye to those not joining us for the extension. Then we headed to Hamamatsucho where we had dinner and waited at the terminal for the ferry to leave. The boat left on time and we enjoyed a beautiful night view of Tokyo before heading to our bunks to get some rest ahead of a full day of seawatching.

22nd February – Ferry to Hachijojima

We were all keen to get on deck at first light to start our sea watching. Before long we had our first bird, a **Laysan Albatross** followed quickly by an unexpected juvenile **Brown Booby**. After that, we had a string of **Black-footed Albatrosses**, some close and some distant. The boat docked in Hachijojima just after 9am and we had just 30 minutes to explore nearby the port looking for the endemic Izu Thrush. As we left the port, we entered an area of vegetable gardens on the forest edge which I thought looked ideal for the thrushes. We saw **Oriental Turtle-Dove**, **Bull-headed Shrike**, **Japanese Tit** and many **Brown-eared Bulbuls** but there was no sign of our target. Our short time was soon up and we had to head back to the boat. On the way we saw several soaring raptors, with **Osprey**, **Black-eared Kite** and **Common Buzzard**. There were also some **Japanese Cormorants** on the harbour wall and a female **Blue Rock-Thrush** actually perched on the railing of the boat.



Top left to bottom right: **Black-footed, Laysan, Short-tailed Albatross - immature & adult (Richard Lowe)**

We were back out at sea which was now getting rougher and all we saw were several **Black-footed Albatrosses**. Some of the group started to feel a little seasick and had to go and lay down below deck. We started to feel better and back up on deck we were informed that we had missed the first **Short-tailed Albatross**. After another rough stretch another distant adult bird appeared before some had to retire again below deck again. The hardcore seawatchers battled on above deck through rough seas, which were fairly unproductive, After a few hours, the seas calmed and we entered a wonderfully productive patch which Tim was kind enough to come and tell us about. We saw several **Short-tailed Albatrosses** (some close up and on the water), **2 Northern Fulmars**, hundreds of **Streaked Shearwaters**, a single **Pomarine Jaeger** and several **Black-legged Kittiwakes**. Further on we passed through a fairly dense patch of **Laysan Albatrosses** and as we got closer to Tokyo, many **Black-tailed & Slaty-backed Gulls**. Our final tally of albatrosses was 11 **Short-tailed**, 16 **Laysan** and 37 **Black-footed**. It had been a wonderful day of seawatching, even for those maligned with seasickness. After dark we retired below deck to do our final checklist, reminisce about highlights of the tour and work out our top birds of the trip, which stood as follows: **1st** – Blakiston's Fish-Owl, **2nd** – Short-tailed Albatross **3rd** – Japanese Murrelet **4th** – Steller's sea-Eagle **5th** – Red-crowned Crane **6th** – Baikal Teal **7th** – White-naped Crane **8th** - Copper Pheasant, Asian Rosy Finch, Hooded Crane, Mandarin Duck

Bird list

Taxonomy follows Clements 6.8 online checklist. Updated Aug 2013

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

1	Taiga Bean-Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Seen at Katano Kamoike & Arasaki.
2	Tundra Bean-Goose	<i>Anser serrirostris</i>	Seen at Katano Kamoike.
3	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Hundreds seen at Awara & a single bird at Hitotsusegawa.
4	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Introduced. A single bird seen at Satsuma.
5	Tundra (Bewick's) Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	Seen near Kaga city.
6	Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Seen at Kushiro, Tsuruimura, Nakashibetsu, Hakuchodai & Kiritappu.
7	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Seen at Arasaki, Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.
8	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	A single bird seen at Arasaki.
9	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	East Asian Endemic. Seen at Kogawa Dam & Miike.
10	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Katano Kamoike, Kahoku & Hitotsusegawa.
11	Falcated Duck	<i>Anas falcata</i>	Near-threatened. Seen at Karuizawa, Katano Kamoike, Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.
12	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas Penelope</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
13	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	Seen at Kahoku.
14	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
15	Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
16	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Seen at Kahoku, Hitotsusegawa & Kaisairinkai Park.
17	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
18	Baikal Teal	<i>Anas formosa</i>	Many seen at Katano Kamoike.
19	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
20	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya farina</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
21	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.
22	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Odaito, Nosappu Peninsular, Kiritappu & Kaisairinkai Park.
23	Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>	Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
24	White-winged Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca stejnegeri</i>	Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
25	Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta Americana</i>	Near-threatened. Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
26	Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Vulnerable. Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito & Cape Nosappu.
27	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Kushiro, Nakashibetsu, Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
28	Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Katano Kamoike & Kahoku.
29	Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Saigawa, Kahoku, Tsuruimura, Notsuke, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
30	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro, Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

31	Copper Pheasant	<i>Syrnaticus soemmerringii</i>	Near-threatened. Endemic. Two seen in flight at Karuizawa.
32	Ring-necked (Green) Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus versicolor</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Kahoku.

GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae

33	Red-throated Loon	<i>Gavia stellate</i>	Seen at Hanamisaki.
34	Arctic Loon	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.

PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedida

35	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.
36	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.
37	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	Seen at Lake Toden & Cape Nosappu.

38	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.
39	Eared Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Seen at Awara, Kahoku & Kaisairinkai Park.
PROCELLARIIFORMES: Diomedidae			
40	Laysan Albatross	<i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i>	Near-threatened. Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
41	Black-footed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria nigripes</i>	Near-threatened. Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
42	Short-tailed Albatross	<i>Phoebastria albatrus</i>	Vulnerable. Breeding Endemic. Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
PROCELLARIIFORMES: Procellariidae			
43	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
44	Streaked Shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae			
45	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Saigawa, Kahoku, Arasaki, Kogawa Dam, Hitotsusegawa.
46	Japanese (Temminck's) Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capillatus</i>	Seen at Hashitate, Kadogawa & Hachijojima.
47	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>	Seen at Hashitate, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.
SULIFORMES: Sulidae			
48	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae			
49	Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Katano Kamoike, Saigawa, Kahoku, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa & Kasai Rinkai park.
50	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Katano Kamoike, Kahoku, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
51	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Seen at Kahoku, Arasaki, Hitotsusegawa & Kadogawa.
52	Pacific Reef-Heron	<i>Egretta sacra</i>	Seen at Kadogawa.
PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae			
53	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
54	Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	Endangered. East Asian Breeding Endemic. Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae			
55	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Seen at Awara, Saigawa, Kahoku, Hitotsusegawa, Kadogawa & Hachijojima.
ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae			
56	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Seen at Arasaki, Komenotsu River & in the Hyuga area.
57	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Seen at Awara, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
58	Black(-eared) Kite	<i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i>	Commonly seen at most sites throughout.
59	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	Seen at Tsuruimura, Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki, Shunkunitai & Cape Nosappu.
60	Steller's Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i>	Vulnerable. East Asian Endemic. Seen at Kushiro, Tsuruimura, Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki, Shunkunitai & Cape Nosappu.
61	Common (Eastern) Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo japonicus</i>	Seen at Lake Toden, Awara, Kahoku, Kirishima, Miike, Kushiro, Hataushi & Hachijojima.
GRUIFORMES: Rallidae			
62	Brown-cheeked Rail	<i>Rallus indicus</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
63	Ruddy-breasted Crake	<i>Porzana fusca</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
64	Eurasian Moorhen		Seen at Kaisairinkai Park.
65	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	Seen at many sites on Honshu & Kyushu.
GRUIFORMES: Gruidae			
66	Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
67	White-naped Crane	<i>Grus vipio</i>	Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki.
68	Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
69	Hooded Crane	<i>Grus monacha</i>	Vulnerable. Seen at Arasaki.
70	Red-crowned Crane	<i>Grus japonensis</i>	Endangered. East Asian Endemic. Seen at Kushiro & Tsuruimura.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

71	Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro & Hitotsusegawa.
72	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Seen at Kahoku, Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.
73	Gray-headed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus cinereus</i>	Seen at Katano Kamoike, Awara & Kahoku.
74	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro.
75	Long-billed Plover	<i>Charadrius placidus</i>	Seen at Lake Toden & Satsuma.
76	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro & Kaisairinkai Park.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

77	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Seen at Satsuma, Komenotsu River, Hitotsusegawa & Kaisairinkai Park.
78	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Seen at Lake Toden & Arasaki.
79	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro.
80	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Near-threatened. Seen at Hitotsusegawa.
81	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Seen at Arasaki & Yatsushiro.
82	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Seen at Katano Kamoike & Arasaki.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae

83	Pomarine Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Seen at on the Hachijojima ferry.
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CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae

84	Common Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.
85	Thick-billed Murre	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.
86	Pigeon Guillemot	<i>Cephus columba</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu & Cape Nosappu boat trip.
87	Spectacled Guillemot	<i>Cephus carbo</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu & Cape Nosappu boat trip.
88	Ancient Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus antiquus</i>	Seen on the Cape Nosappu boat trip.
89	Japanese Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus wumizusume</i>	Vulnerable. Seen at Kadogawa.

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

90	Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Seen on the Hachijojima ferry.
91	Saunders's Gull	<i>Saundersilarus saundersi</i>	Vulnerable. Seen at Yatsushiro.
92	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Seen at Kahoku, Yatsushiro & in Tokyo.
93	Black-tailed Gull	<i>Larus crassirostris</i>	Seen at Hashitate, Kahoku, Yatsushiro, Kadogawa & on the Hachijojima ferry.
94	Mew (Kamchatka) Gull	<i>Larus canus kamtschatschensis</i>	Seen at Awara, Saigawa, Kahoku, Notsuke Peninsular & Cape Nosappu.
95	Herring (Vega) Gull	<i>Larus argentatus vegae</i>	Seen at most coastal sites on Honshu & Hokkaido.
96	Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull	<i>Larus fuscus heuglini</i>	Seen at Yatsushiro.
97	Slaty-backed Gull	<i>Larus schistisagus</i>	East Asian Endemic. Seen at many coastal sites.
98	Glaucous-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>	Seen at Odaito & Cape Nosappu.
99	Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Odaito, Hanamisaki & Cape Nosappu.

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

100	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Introduced. Commonly seen throughout.
101	Oriental Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	Commonly seen on Honshu & Kyushu.

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

102	Blakiston's Fish-Owl	<i>Ketupa blakistoni</i>	Seen near Nemuro.
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CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

103	Crested Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>	Seen at Kogawa Dam, Komenotsu River, Kushiro & Hataushi.
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PICIFORMES: Picidae

104	(Japanese) Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos kizuki</i>	Seen at Karuizawa & Miike. Heard at Shunkunitai.
105a	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos namiyei</i>	Seen at Miike.
b	White-backed Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos leucotos subcirris</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Shunkunitai.
106	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Tsuruimura & Shunkunitai.
107	Japanese (Green) Woodpecker	<i>Picus awokera</i>	Endemic. Seen at Karuizawa.

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

108	Eurasian Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Seen at Kahoku, Arasaki & in the Hyuga area.
109	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Seen at Arasaki.

110	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Seen at Hashitate & Umagase.
PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae			
111	Ryukyu Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus tegimae</i>	Endemic. Seen at Miike, Kadogawa & Umagase.
PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae			
112	Bull-headed Shrike	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i>	Seen at Kaga, Kahoku, Arasaki & Hachijojima.
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae			
113a	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius japonicus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Karuizawa, Jigokudani.
b	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius hiugaensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Miike.
c	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius bambergi</i>	Seen at Tsuruimura & Shunkunitai.
114	Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus dauuricus</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
115	(Eastern) Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus pastinator</i>	Seen at on the way to Komatsu, Kahoku, Arasaki & Kushiro.
116	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Commonly seen throughout.
117	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Commonly seen throughout.
118	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	A single bird was seen at Odaito.
PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae			
119	(Japanese) Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis japonica</i>	Seen at Awara & Arasaki.
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundidae			
120	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Seen at Satsuma & Hyuga area.
121	Asian House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	Seen at Satsuma & Hitotsusegawa.
PASSERIFORMES: Paridae			
122	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris hensoni</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Tsuruimura, Nakashibetsu & Shunkunitai.
123	Willow Tit	<i>Poecile montanus restrictus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Karuizawa, Tsuruimura & Shunkunitai.
124	Varied Tit	<i>Poecile varius</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Miike, Kirishima Shrine & Miike.
125	Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
126	Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Toden, Awara, Miike, Kirishima, Tsuruimura, Shunkunitai & Hachijojima.
PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae			
127	Chinese Penduline-Tit	<i>Remiz consobrinus</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae			
128a	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus trivirgatus</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
b	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus kiusiuensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Miike & Kirishima.
PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae			
129a	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea asiatica</i>	Seen at Tsuruimura, Nakashibetsu & Shunkunitai.
b	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea amurensis</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
PASSERIFORMES: Certhidae			
130	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Seen at Shunkunitai.
PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae			
131	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes fumigatus</i>	Seen at Miike.
PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae			
132	Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasi</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Komenotsu River & Nakashibetsu.
PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae			
133a	Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes amaurotis hensoni</i>	Commonly seen at many sites on Hokkaido.
b	Brown-eared Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes a. amaurotis</i>	Commonly seen throughout Honshu & Kyushu.
PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae			
134	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Seen at Shunkunitai.
PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae			
135	Japanese Bush-Warbler	<i>Horornis diphone</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae			
136	Japanese White-eye	<i>Zosterops j. japonicus</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Katano Kamoike, Arasaki, Miike, Hyuga area & Kaisairinkai Park.
PASSERIFORMES: Leiiothrichidae			
137	Red-billed Leiothrix	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	Introduced. Seen at Miike.

PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

138	Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Toden, Kahoku, Arasaki, Komenotsu River, Miike, Hyuga area & Kaisairinkai Park.
139	Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	Seen at Hashitate, Saigawa, Hyuga area & Hachijojima

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

140	Pale Thrush	<i>Turdus pallidus</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Katano Kamoike, Awara, Arasaki, Miike & Kirishima Shrine.
141	Brown-headed Thrush	<i>Turdus chrysolaus</i>	Seen at Kaisairinkai Park.
142	Dusky Thrush	<i>Turdus eunomus</i>	Seen at many sites throughout.

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

143	White-cheeked Starling	<i>Sturnus cineraceus</i>	Commonly seen throughout Honshu & Kyushu.
144	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Introduced. Seen at Arasaki.

PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae

145	Japanese Accentor	<i>Prunella rubida</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
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PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

146	Gray Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Seen at Lake Toden & Satsuma.
147	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Commonly seen throughout.
148	Japanese Wagtail	<i>Motacilla grandis</i>	Breeding Endemic. Seen at Lake Toden, Karuizawa, Awara, Satsuma,
149	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
150	American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens japonicus</i>	Seen at Arasaki & Hyuga area.
151	Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	Seen at Miike.

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

152	Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides ciopsis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Karuizawa, Lake Toden, Kahoku, Arasaki, Kogawa Dam, Komenotsu River & Hitotsusegawa.
153	Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>	Seen at Arasaki & Miike.
154	Yellow-throated Bunting	<i>Emberiza elegans</i>	Seen at Miike.
155	Black-faced Bunting	<i>Emberiza spodocephala</i>	Seen at Arasaki, Miike, Kadogawa & Kaisairinkai Park.
156	Gray Bunting	<i>Emberiza variabilis</i>	East Asian Endemic. Seen at Miike.
157	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Seen at Arasaki & Hitotsusegawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae

158	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Seen at Arasaki & Tsuruimura.
159	Asian Rosy-Finch	<i>Leucosticte arctoa</i>	Seen at Notsuke Peninsular.
160	Long-tailed Rosefinch	<i>Uragus sibiricus</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
161	Oriental Greenfinch	<i>Chloris sinica</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Kahoku, Arasaki, Kogawa Dam, Kirishima Shrine & Kadogawa.
162	Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	Seen at Kushiro, Cape Nosappu & Kiritappu.
163	Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Seen at Jigokudani.
164	Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Seen at Karuizawa.
165	Japanese Grosbeak	<i>Eophona personata</i>	Seen at Karuizawa, Jigokudani & Kogawa Dam.

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

166	Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer rutilans</i>	Seen at Arasaki.
167	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Commonly seen throughout.

Mammal list

SORICIDAE: Shews

1	Laxmann's Shrew	<i>Sorex caecutiens</i>	Seen near Lake Furen,
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CERCOPITHECIDAE: Old World Monkeys

2	Japanese Macaque	<i>Macaca fuscata</i>	Endemic. Seen at Jigokudani.
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SCIURIDAE: Squirrels

3	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris orientis</i>	Seen at Shunkunitai.
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4	Japanese Squirrel	<i>Sciurus lis</i>	Endemic. Seen at Karuizawa.
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CANIDAE: Canids

5	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes shrencki</i>	Seen at Notsuke Peninsular, Lake Furen, Shunkunitai & Kiritappu.
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6	Raccoon Dog	<i>Nyctereutes procyonoides</i>	Heard at at Karuizawa.
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MUSTELIDAE: Mustelids

7	Sea Otter	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.
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PHOCIDAE: Seals

8	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Seen at Cape Nosappu.
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CERVIDAE: Deer

9a	Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon nippon</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Miike.
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9b	Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon yessoensis</i>	Endemic subspecies. Seen at Tsurumura, Lake Furen, Shunkunitai & Kiritappu.
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BOVIDAE: Bovids

10	Japanese Serow	<i>Capricornis crispus</i>	Endemic. Fantastic views at Jigokudani. A trip highlight.
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