



*20 Days Classic Sichuan Birding Tour*

# 20 Days Classic Sichuan Birding Tour

May 30 - Jun 18, 2023



## Outline

- Day 1: Chengdu, Sichuan, China
- Day 2: Chengdu / Tangjiahe NR
- Day 3-4: Tangjiahe NR
- Day 5: Tangjiahe NR / Chuanzhusi
- Day 6: Chuanzhusi / Ruoergai
- Day 7: Ruoergai Grassland
- Day 8: Ruoergai / Maerkang
- Day 9: Mengbi Mountain
- Day 10: Maerkang / Rilong
- Day 11-12: Balang Mountain
- Day 13: Balang Mountain / Labahe
- Day 14: Labahe NR
- Day 15: Labahe / Erlang Mountain
- Day 16: Erlang Mountain / Longcanggou
- Day 17-18: Longcanggou
- Day 19: Longcanggou / Chengdu
- Day 20: Chengdu / Depart



**Golden Pheasant**



## Highlights:

1. The combination of our experienced western guides and local guides ensures your needs are well met.
2. We run the trip in the best season. Not only birds are in the breeding season, but all the destinations have the most beautiful sceneries in this season.
3. Small groups with more flexibility. The group is limited to 8 so that we can maximize the chances of each participant. Besides, we can use a smaller and convenient bus versus a big bus required for bigger groups.
4. This trip covers the most popular and classic birding sites of Sichuan.
5. Explore the Tibetan areas of Sichuan to see some plateau specials.
6. We have been a reliable local partner for some prestigious western birding and wildlife travel companies for over a decade.
7. We have a strong logistic team to ensure your trip goes smoothly and ensures you a comfortable and enjoyable journey.



## Tour Info Sheet

<b>Highlight Birds</b>	Snow Partridge, Temminck's Tragopan, Golden Pheasant, Tibetan Snowcock, Chestnut-throated Partridge, Chinese Monal, Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, White Eared Pheasant, Grandala, Chinese Rubythroat, Firethroat, Sichuan Jay, Sichuan Wood Owl, Black-necked Crane, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Brown Parrotbill, Fulvous Parrotbill, Ashy-throated Parrotbill, Great Parrotbill, Three-toed Parrotbill, Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Golden Parrotbill, Przevalski's Pinktail, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Goldcrest, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Slaty Bunting, Crested Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Sichuan Tit, White-browed Tit, Wall Creeper, Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Common Rosefinch, Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch, Crimson-browed Finch, Red-fronted Rosefinch, etc.
<b>Numbers of Species to Expect</b>	250-300
<b>Ease of Birding</b>	mostly easy with a few tricky species
<b>Highlight Mammals</b>	Red Panda, Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Fox, Wolf, Leopard Cat, Hog Badger, Takin, Tibetan Macaque, Reeves's Muntjac, Chinese Goral, Tufted Deer, Sambar, Masked Palm Civet, etc.
<b>Other Attractions</b>	Tibetan culture, wild panda habitat, delicate food
<b>Photography Opportunities</b>	birding focused but with good photography chances
<b>Habitats Covered</b>	subtropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, snow mountains, wetlands
<b>Expected Climate</b>	mostly comfortable, windy and cold on the plateau, humid in the basin, rain is possible
<b>Physical Requirements</b>	mostly easy, demanding but optional in certain parts
<b>Accommodation</b>	very comfortable
<b>Transportation</b>	19-seat van



## Map




## Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Chengdu, China.

On the first day of the tour, a private guide or driver will meet you once you arrive at Chengdu Shuangliu Airport or Tianfu International Airport. After meeting our guide and driver, you will be transferred to the downtown hotel for one night stay. For early arrivals, we will go for a relaxing birding at a local park near the hotel.

### Day 2: Chengdu to Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve.

We will have a short visit to the Chengdu Botanical Garden before we start our long drive to the national nature reserve in Tangjiahe. Chengdu Botanical Garden is considered one of the best city parks for birding due to its big diversity of flora and high forest coverage. We can find some urban and special resident birds here, including Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Chinese Bulbul, White-browed Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leiothrix, Japanese White-eye,



Chinese Bulbul

Chinese Blackbird, Chinese Grosbeak, Collared Finchbill, Long-tailed Shrike, Fork-tailed Sunbird, Hoopoe, etc.

Followed the exploration, we will complete a fairly long (around 6 hours) journey to Tangjiahe. By the time we arrive, it should be around sunset time when animals normally come down close to the river-side meadow for water and salt. We will likely encounter our first Takin. Besides, Reeves's Muntjac and Masked Civet are relatively easy and often found by the road. By contrast, although the elusive Leopard Cat is also active at night, but is not so easy to see it. We will continue our search in the coming days and prioritize spotting all of the species here.



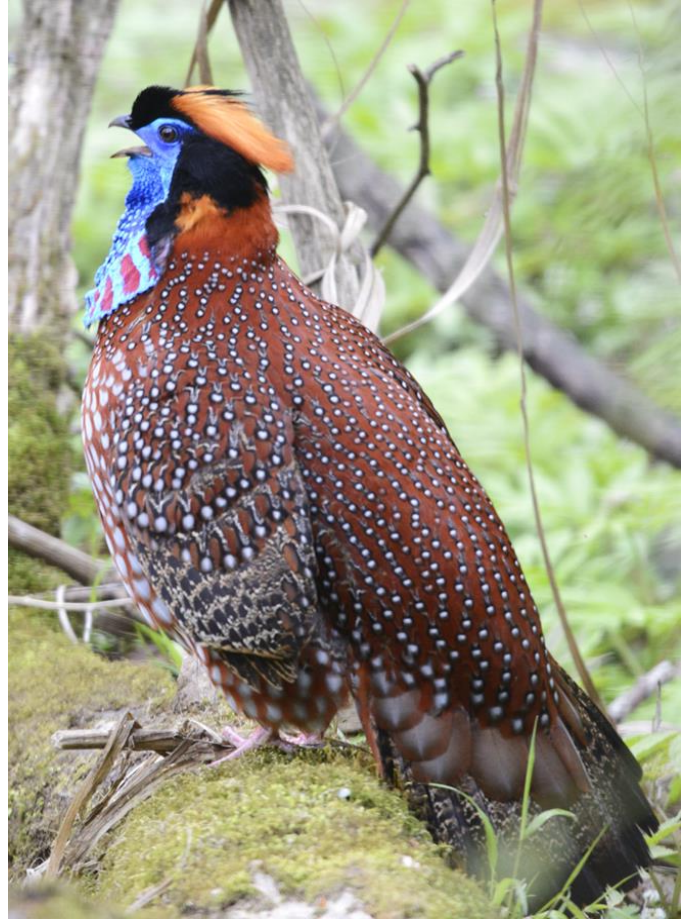
**Takin**

### **Day 3-4: Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve.**

Hiding in the depth of Mingshan Mountain, Tangjiahe is one of the panda reserves in China and hosts a variety of rare mammals and birds. Tangjiahe is also known as a premier biodiversity hotspot, consisting of murmuring streams, lush mixed broadleaf-conifer forest, and cliffs. These factors have made it one of the best places to search for mammals and birds in China. Our main activities here will be arranged in the mornings and late afternoons. We will focus on two main valleys at low elevation and one trail that winds up to the middle elevation area. The Golden Pheasant will be our very top target at low elevation, we should have a good chance of spotting some. With some patient search along the streams, we can encounter Brown Dipper, Plumbeous Water Redstart, White-capped Water Redstart, without much difficulty, we can also find Crested Kingfisher, White-crowned Forktail, Little Forktail, and Blue Rock Thrush. There is a chance to find the spectacular Tawny Fish Owl, but it requires a good amount of work and some luck.

In the broad-leaved forest, we will look for Speckled Wood Pigeon, Asian Koel, Large Hawk Cuckoo, Himalayan Cuckoo, Pacific Swift, Grey-capped Woodpecker, White-backed Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Mountain Bulbul, Spectacled Fulvetta, Pygmy Cupwing, Yellow-bellied Tit, Sooty Bushtit, White-collared Yuhina, Slaty Bunting, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Bianchi's Warbler, Martens's Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Rufous-faced Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, etc.

On one morning, we will do a special hike. We will get there early to ensure we get the best chance to try Temminck's Tragopan. The dense, broadleaf foliage and bamboo forest are also home to other interesting species including Rufous-capped Babbler, Barred



**Temminck's Tragopan**

Laughingthrush, White-throated Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Red-winged Laughingthrush, Indian Blue Robin, Blue Whistling Thrush, etc. Occasionally, we can see Spectacled Parrotbill and Koklass Pheasant in this area.

Our mammal safari is sure to be one of the highlights of this trip. We will spend one morning looking for the spectacular Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, a stunning animal that is known for its golden fur and blue face. Besides, Takin is relatively easy to find and sometimes can be spotted from a close distance. Other widespread species like Tibetan Macaque, Reeves's Muntjac, Asian Wild Boar like wandering along the riverside, while Chinese Goral is often spotted along the steep cliffs. We may also see some challengeable species like Hog Badger, Leopard Cat, Serow, Yellow-throated Marten, Tufted Deer, and with some luck, even the elusive Asiatic Black Bear.

### **Day 5: Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve to Chuanzhusi.**

We will have a short birding hike around the hotel in the early morning before we complete a 6-hour drive to Chuanzhusi. We will have a stop to look for Collared Crow and stretch our legs.



**Golden Snub-nosed Monkey**

**Day 6: Chuanzhusi to Ruoergai via Gonggangling.**

Gonggangling has lush Alpine coniferous forests where are home to many special alpine forest



**Sichuan Wood Owl**

birds. We will search for the endemic and rare Sichuan Wood Owl (Pere David's Owl) here, as well as the elusive Chinese Grouse and other forest species like Blue Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Three-banded Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Goldcrest, Chinese Rubythroat, Sichuan Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey-crested Tit, Buff-barred Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Grey-backed Shrike, White-backed Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, White-bellied Redstart, Blue-fronted Redstart, Himalayan Bluetail, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Maroon-backed Accentor, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, etc.

After searching the Gonggangling area, we will drive on to Ruoergai, a vast grassland of the Tibetan Plateau known as 'the lung of Sichuan'. We will enjoy picturesque views of the high mountains on either side of the road along the drive. Once we arrive, we can expect some grassland species like Himalayan Griffon, Upland Buzzard, Black Kite, Common Kestrel, Amur Falcon, Daurian

Jackdaw, Horned Lark, Azure-winged Magpie, Oriental Skylark, Carrion Crow, Grey-backed Shrike, Rock Sparrow, Siberian Stonechat, Citrine Wagtail, etc.

We should also keep an eye on the plateau mammals. The adorable Plateau Pika usually emerges from their nests and grazes on the grassland. And Himalayan Marmot is always prone upon the ground. Other interesting mammals we can expect are Tibetan Fox, Red Fox, Hog Badger, Tufted Deer, Chinese Mountain Cat, Tibetan Gezelle, and the scarce Wolf.



**Plateau Pike**



**Tibetan Fox**

### **Day 7: Ruergai Grassland—Flower Lake & Baxi Valley (Alt.: ~3,500m).**

We will spend the day searching for birds in different habitats. Our morning time will be spent in the mountain with virgin forests at the edge of the plateau that provides good habitats for forest birds such as the rare Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared Pheasant, Sichuan Jay, the elusive Black Woodpecker, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Snowy-browed Nuthatch, Plain Laughingthrush (Pere David's Laughingthrush), Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush (Sukatschev's Laughingthrush), Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Sichuan Tit, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Spectacled Parrotbill, White-throated Redstart, Hodgson's Redstart, Black Redstart, Common Rosefinch, Common Crossbill, Godlewski's Bunting, etc.

In the afternoon, we will visit Flower Lake. As one of the most important plateau wetlands in China, it attracts many migrant birds breeding here in the summertime. We should have a good observation of the elegant Black-necked Crane, which is the only crane species breeds on the plateau. We will slowly walk on the well-paved wood boardwalk searching for waterfowls and grassland birds including Greylag Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Tufted Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Ruddy Shelduck, Brown-headed Gull, White-winged Black Tern, Whiskered Tern, Black



Stork, Great Bittern, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Chinese Pond Heron, Lesser Sand Plover, Common Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Citrine Wagtail, Little Ringed Plover, White-rumped Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Oriental Skylark, Tibetan Lark, Horned Lark, Saker Falcon, Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Himalayan Vulture, Upland Buzzard, Common Kestrel. Some difficult species like Whooper Swan and Bar-headed Goose are occasionally spotted from distance.



**Black-necked Crane**

**Day 8: Ruergai to Maerkang.**

This morning we will have chances to try for some key species we may still need to find before driving to Maerkang. We will have several stops along the way looking for Black-necked Crane, Pink-tailed Rosefinch (Przevalski's Pinktail), Ground Tit, White-browed Tit, Robin Accentor, Tibetan Partridge, etc.



**Przevalski's Pinktail**

**Day 9: Mengbi Mountain area. (Alt.: up to 4,000m).**

Standing between Xiaojin County and Maerkang, Mengbi Mountain is another important birding site that we visit on this trip. The significant differences in elevations along with well-protected virgin forest, abundant flowers, and few people have made this site a paradise for birds, including endemic birds like Chestnut-throated Partridge (Verreaux's Partridge), the rare Sichuan Jay.

In the early morning, we will drive to the top of the mountain standing at 3900 meters, and either walk or drive slowly down the mountain to search for birds. We will spend the whole day birding in different elevations of the mountain looking for the endemic targets and other fascinating birds like Blood Pheasant, Crested Tit Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, the range-limited Crimson-browed Finch, Three-banded Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, White-throated Needletail, Golden Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Himalayan Buzzard, Long-tailed Thrush, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Goldcrest, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey Crested Tit, Hodgson's Treecreeper, White-winged Grosbeak, Spotted Nutcracker, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Hume's Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Buff-barred Warbler, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, etc.



**Sichuan Jay**

**Day 10: Maerkang to Rilong.**

We will spend some time birding around Maerkang looking for Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Great-spotted Woodpecker, etc. We will also have a short stop on Mengbi Mountain to look for our targets again if needed. Then we drive on to Rilong and visit Balang Mountain to look for Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough, Grandala, Pink-rumped Roesfinch, Beautiful Rosefinch,



**Chinese Monal**

Dark-breasted Roesfinch, Common Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, Plan Mountain Finch, Brand's Mountain Finch, White-winged Grosbeak, etc.

**Day 11-12: Balang Mountain area (Alt.: up to 4,484m).**

We will spend two days birding on this fascinating birding site. Balang Mountain is the first high mountain standing between the Sichuan Basin and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, from the foot to the pass, the elevation rises sharply from 2,000m to 4,500m which provides a wide variety of habitats to support a lot of creatures. The mountain pass, around 4,500 meters, is the highest point we'll reach

on this entire tour. Around the snow line of the alpine flowstone slope, we will search for the scurrying Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, and Grandala. Other high altitude specialties we can see include Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Golden Eagle, Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough, Alpine Accentor, Brandt's Mountain Finch, Snow Pigeon, Red-fronted Rosefinch, Rosy Pipit, etc.



**Scenery on Balang Mountain**

We will also spend some time at the lower elevations around the timberline where alpine meadows and scrubs carpet the snow-covered mountain. We will visit this area several times in search of birds including the endemic Chinese Monal, White Eared Pheasant, Chestnut-throated Partridge, as well as Blood Pheasant, Koklass Pheasant, Firethroat, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Chinese Fulvetta, Chinese Rubythroat, Golden Bush Robin, Streaked Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Crimson-browed Finch, Common Rosefinch, Kessler's Thrush (White-backed Thrush), Rufous-vented Tit, Sichuan Tit, Asian House Martin, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Giant Laughingthrush, White-throated Redstart, etc.

Additionally, we will visit broad-leaved forest and bamboo undergrowth lower down for Large Hawk-Cuckoo, Himalayan Cuckoo, Eurasian Nutcracker, Green-backed Tit, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Buff-throated Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Martens's Warbler, Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, White-collared Yuhina, Chinese Babax, Chestnut Thrush, Verditer Flycatcher, Daurian Redstart, Slaty Bunting, Yellow-throated Bunting, etc. Golden Pheasant's call normally can be heard here, but it normally hides in the bush, we may see it with luck.

### Day 13: Rilong to Labahe Nature Reserve.

This morning we will have another chance to search for our targets again before driving to Labahe National Nature Reserve. Upon arrival, we will go birding around the hotel to look for some low-elevation species, including Red-billed Blue Magpie, White-capped Water Redstart, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Collared Finchbill, Elliot's Laughingthrush. We may encounter our first mammal here, the Tibetan Macaque. Followed dinner at the hotel, we will go out to look for nocturnal creatures such as Masked Palm Civet, Red and White Giant Flying Squirrel, Sambar, etc.



Red Panda

### Day 14: Labahe Nature Reserve.

Lying deep in the Hengduan mountain range, Labahe is a significant wild panda habitat and by far one of the best places in China to see Red Panda. The mixed alpine forest and dense bamboo understory make an ideal habitat for Red Panda, though it will still require an amount of hard work and patience to find one. In addition, Labahe is a very good birding site. We will walk on the paved road and search both sides and the rugged mountains surrounded carefully. We will likely encounter a variety of interesting species including Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Temminck's Tragopan, Brown Parrotbill, Fulvous Parrotbill, Sichuan Treecreeper, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Spotted Nutcracker, Yellow-browed Tit, Fire-capped Tit, Coal Tit, Pere David's Tit, Black-browed Tit, Brown Bush Warbler, Aberrant Bush Warbler, Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler, Chinese Cupwing, Pygmy Cupwing, Ashy-throated Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Grey-hooded Fulvetta, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Stripe-throated Yuhina, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Golden Bush Robin, etc.

### **Day 15: Labahe Nature Reserve to Luding.**

We will spend the morning in Labahe to search for our targets again. After that, we will spend the rest day traveling to Luding.

### **Day 16: Luding to Longcanggou National Forest Park via Erlang Mountain.**

Erlang Mountain is the first high mountain that can be seen from the national road running from Chengdu to Lhasa. The completion of the Erlang Mountain tunnel has transformed the old road to the mountain pass an ideal birding route. In the dense forest, we will first look for some rare species such as the elegant Lady Amherst's Pheasant, brilliant Firethroat, and endemic Rufous-tailed Babbler. Besides, we will also look for Lesser Cuckoo, Eurasian Jay, Yellow-bellied Tit, Buff-throated Warbler, Grey-crowned Warbler, Greenish Warbler, White-browed Fulvetta, Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Brown Parrotbill, Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler, Black-streaked Scimitar-Babbler, Chinese Babax, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Streaked Barwing, Chinese Thrush, White-tailed Robin, Golden Bush Robin, Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, White-winged Grosbeak, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Sharpe's Rosefinch, Vinaceous Rosefinch, Yellow-throated Bunting, etc.



**Lady Amherst's Pheasant**

After our exploration in the mountain, we will drive on and finish our 3-hour journey to Longcanggou. We should have some time birding around the guesthouse looking for Ashy-throated Parrotbill, Hwamei, Red-billed Leiothrix, Oriental Greenfinch, etc.

### **Day 17-18: Longcanggou National Forest Park.**

Located on the western edge of the Sichuan Basin, Longcanggou is in the core area of the transition zone between the basin and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The special location makes the geological structures here very diverse. One of the densest subtropical evergreen broad-leaved

forests is found here and is home to a lot of range-restricted and endemic species. If needed, Temminck's Tragopan and Lady Amherst's Pheasant are also found here. Despite this, in the lush bamboo forest of high elevation, we will look for Great Parrotbill, Brown Parrotbill, Three-toed Parrotbill, Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Golden Parrotbill, Emei Shan Liocichla, Grey-hooded Fulvetta, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Red-winged Laughingthrush, Spotted Laughingthrush, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Vinaceous Rosefinch, White-throated Needletail, Coal Tit, Fire-capped Tit, Ashy-throated Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Emei Leaf Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler, Aberrant Bush Warbler, etc.

In the broadleaf forest of lower elevation, we will look for Gold-fronted Fulvetta, David's Fulvetta, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Speckled Piculet, Yellow-browed Tit, Yellow-bellied Tit, Black-throated Tit, Sichuan Bush Warbler, Pygmy Cupwing, Black Bulbul, Emei Leaf Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, Rufous-capped Babbler, Red-billed Leiothrix, Red-tailed Minla, Blue-winged Minla, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Taiga Flycatcher, Brown Bullfinch, etc.



**Brown Parrotbill**



**Three-toed Parrotbill**

**Day 19: Longcanggou National Forest Park to Chengdu.**

Continuing our exploration in Longcanggou in the early morning. Afterward, we will drive back to Chengdu to have a nice stay.



## Day 20: Departure from Chengdu.

Following a lovely breakfast at the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport to depart from Chengdu. This will conclude the services for this scheduled itinerary from AlpineBirding.



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