



11+3 Days Classic Xinjiang Birding Tour

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May 22 - Jun 1, 2023

3 Days Xinjiang Ground Jay Extension

Jun 1-3, 2023



Outline: Xinjiang Section

- Day 1: Urumqi, Xinjiang, China
- Day 2: Urumqi / Nanshan / Shihezi
- Day 3: Shihezi / Karamay
- Day 4: Karamay / Fuhai
- Day 5: Fuhai / Altay
- Day 6: Altay / Burqin
- Day 7: Burqin
- Day 8: Burqin / Beitun
- Day 9: Beitun / Qiakuertu
- Day 10: Qiakuertu / Urumqi
- Day 11: Urumqi / Depart



Himalayan Vulture



Outline: Luntai Section

- Day 1: Urumqi / Korla / Luntai
- Day 2: Luntai & surrounds
- Day 3: Luntai Korla / Urumqi



Xinjiang Ground Jay



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Overview:

Located in Northwest China, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is the largest provincial-level administrative region in China with an area of 1.66 million square kilometers and borderlines of 5,600 kilometers. The vast territory of Xinjiang features several major mountain ranges, of which the Altai Mountains lie on the north, Kunlun and Altun Mountains set on the south and Tianshan Mountains stretch from west to east in central Xinjiang. Lying between these mountain ranges are two vast basins named Junggar and Tarim. Numerous glaciers from the mountains serve as the headwater for most rivers in Xinjiang. Far inland, Xinjiang experiences a typical arid temperate continental climate with dry air, plenty of sunshine, and only 150mm annual precipitation.

The dry weather has turned lots of places in Xinjiang into deserts, which account for two-thirds of the total desert area in China. Most of Xinjiang's territory is sparsely populated which makes it a paradise for wildlife. Thanks to the vast territory, multiple forms of topography, and various climate conditions, Xinjiang enjoys abundant living resources with about 4,000 kinds of plants and 704 vertebrate species, of which 116 species are under national key protection.

There are about 430 bird species have been recorded in Xinjiang. Unlike the other places in China, Xinjiang owns plenty of bird species of European and Central Asia. There are also about 100 bird species and subspecies that mainly distribute in China or endemic to China. This itinerary is a classic route that covers the most special and endemic species of Xinjiang.



Highlights:

1. Searching for endemics and specials of Central Asia in the vast Gobi Desert and Populus euphratica forest in Xinjiang.
2. The breath-taking scenery of vast desert and grassland.
3. Experienced national bird guide and local guide who have guided this trip many times ensure you a lifetime traveling experience.
4. A small group size of no more than 8 travelers.
5. Years of working as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and wildlife.
6. A strong logistic team in the office to ensure our trip goes smoothly and every participant has a comfortable and memorable journey.



Tour Info Sheet

Highlight Birds	Daurian Partridge, Mongolian Ground Jay, White-tailed Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Booted Eagle, Himalayan Vulture, Golden Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Pallid Harrier, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Scops Owl, Pallid Scops Owl, Shikra, Demoiselle Crane, White-headed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Smew, Goosander, Lesser Sand Plover, Kentish Plover, European Roller, Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, White-winged Woodpecker, Yellowhammer, Great Grey Shrike, Turkestan Shrike, Bearded Tit, Coal Tit, Azure Tit, Crested Lark, Horned Lark, Northern House Martin, Great Reed Warbler, Booted Warbler, Asian Desert Warbler, Barred Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Sykes's Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Rosy Starling, Common Starling, Mistle Thrush, Blue-capped Redstart, Isabelline Wheatear, Northern Wheatear, Bluethroat, Common Rock Thrush, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Black-throated Accentor, Tawny Pipit, Tree Pipit, European Greenfinch, Common Linnet, Red-headed Bunting, European Goldfinch, Common Linnet, European Greenfinch, Mongolian Finch, Saxaul Sparrow, Spanish Sparrow, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Chukar Partridge, etc.
Numbers of Species to Expect	130-180
Ease of Birding	mostly easy with a few tricky species
Highlight Mammals	Mongolian Wild Ass, Przewalski's Horse, etc.
Other Attractions	Islamic cuisine, rich ethnic minority culture, stunning desert scenery
Photography Opportunities	birding focused but with good photography chances
Habitats Covered	subtropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, deserts
Expected Climate	comfortable, temperature varies widely from day to night, rain is possible
Physical Requirements	mostly easy, demanding but optional in certain parts
Accommodation	comfortable
Transportation	19-seat van



Map




Itinerary

Day 1: Urumqi, Xinjiang, China.

On the first day of the tour, a private guide or driver will meet you at the airport upon your arrival at Urumqi Diwopu International Airport. After that, 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 nearby.

Day 2: Urumqi to Shihezi via Baihu Lake and Nanshan.

We will have a short visit to Baihu Lake before we drive to Nanshan Mountain. Located in the west of Urumqi City, Baihu Lake is an important breeding place for many waterfowls including White-headed Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Tufted Duck, Black-necked Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed Plover, Common Redshank, Common Tern, Turkestan Shrike, Bearded Tit, Pale Sand Martin, Common Starling, Isabelline Wheatear, etc.

Following the exploration, we will drive further south about 60km to Nanshan Mountain which was an important hunting ground in the Chinese Tang and Qing dynasties. Nowadays, the multiple eco-environments and big elevation differences here have made it home to a big diversity of bird



species including Daurian Partridge, Booted Eagle, Himalayan Vulture, Golden Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Upland Buzzard, Rock Pigeon, Stock Dove, European Roller, Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Yellowhammer, Rufous-tailed Shrike, Eurasian Jackdaw, Coal Tit, Azure Tit, Crested Lark, Horned Lark, Northern House Martin, Barred Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Rosy Starling, Common Starling, Mistle Thrush, Blue-capped Redstart, Northern Wheatear, Isabelline Wheatear, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Black-throated Accentor, Tawny Pipit, Tree Pipit, European Greenfinch, Common Linnet, Red-headed Bunting, etc.

After our exploration in the mountain, we will drive on to Shihezi.

Day 3: Shihezi to Karamay.

We will spend the day searching for birds in different habitats. Our morning time will be spent on Mushroom Lake. Located about 30 kilometers to the northwest of Shihezi, Mushroom Lake is the largest plain reservoir in Shihezi. The surrounding vegetation is rich, and the microorganisms, algae, fishes, and insects in the lake are also abundant. During the annual migration season, the reservoir attracts more than 30 species of birds that are under the first and second national protections including gulls, herons, ducks, etc. We can expect birds like Whooper Swan, Tufted Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Smew, Goosander, Lesser Sand Plover, Kentish Plover, Ruff, Caspian Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, White-winged Black Tern, White-tailed Eagle, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, European Bee-eater, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Isabelline Shrike, Great Grey Shrike, Paddyfield Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Barred Warbler, Black-throated Thrush, Common Chaffinch, European Greenfinch, etc.

Following the exploration, we will complete a fairly long (around 4 hours) journey to Karamay. There are many Gobi deserts and Euphrates poplar forests around Karamay. We will have chances to find some interesting forest species like Eurasian Scops Owl, Pallid Scops Owl, Shikra, White-winged Woodpecker, European Bee-eater, Turkestan Shrike, Lesser Kestrel, Sykes's Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Common Whitethroat, Common Nightingale, Bluethroat, Common Rock Thrush, Common Redstart, Saxaul Sparrow, Isabelline Wheatear, Pied Wheatear, Desert Wheatear, Tree Pipit, etc.

Day 4: Karamay to Fuhai.

This morning we will have chances to try some key species we may still need to find before driving to Fuhai. We will have several stops along the way looking for Demoiselle Crane, Steppe Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Greater Short-toed Lark, Eurasian Skylark, Crested Lark, Great Reed Warbler, Booted Warbler, Asian Desert Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Northern Wheatear, Great Grey Shrike, European Goldfinch, Common Linnet, European Greenfinch, etc.



After arriving in Fuhai, we will go to the surrounding villages and parks for birding. These villages and parks are good places searching for many forest birds including European Roller, European Bee-eater, Red-backed Shrike, Turkestan Shrike, Isabelline Shrike, Bearded Tit, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Mistle Thrush, Barred Warbler, Fieldfare, Spotted Flycatcher, etc.

Day 5: Fuhai to Altay.

Today we will mostly watch birds on the road. In the forests and wetlands along the road, we will look for Caspian Gull, Common Goldeneye, Goosander, Daurian Partridge, Booted Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Long-legged Buzzard, Red-footed Falcon, Eurasian Scops Owl, Long-eared Owl, European Roller, Rock Dove, Stock Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Red-footed Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Azure Tit, White-crowned Penduline Tit, Paddyfield Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Savi's Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Cetti's Warbler, Barred Warbler, Common Starling, Spotted Flycatcher, etc.

Day 6: Altay to Burqin.

On the way to Burqin, we will have several stops looking for Montagu's Harrier, Pallid Harrier, Western Marsh Harrier, Demoiselle Crane, Gull-billed Tern, Richard's Pipit, Common Reed Bunting, Paddyfield Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Turkestan Shrike, Red-backed Shrike, etc.

Day 7: Burqin & surrounds.

Today we will go to some famous birding sites in Xingjiang including Burqin Magic Forest, Burqin Magic Pond, and Chong Hu'er that have different habits to look for some unique local birds. Burqin Magic Forest is a riverine woodland at the confluence of the Burqin and Irtysh rivers where has recorded over 100 bird species. Our main targets here are Common Goldeneye, Goosander, Common Quail, Black Stork, Eurasian Scops Owl, Little Owl, White-backed Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Eurasian Hobby, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Red-backed Shrike, Turkestan Shrike, Lesser Grey Shrike, Azure Tit, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Common Whitethroat, Common Chiffchaff, Fieldfare, Spotted Flycatcher, Common Chaffinch, etc.

Chong Hu'er is a small town in the north of Burqin. It has a good natural environment with some characteristic birds inhabit here, such as Ortolan Bunting, Pine Bunting, Yellowhammer, Rock Bunting, European Goldfinch, Common Linnet, Great Rosefinch, Common Rosefinch, Common Rock Thrush, Black Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Black Stork, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, etc.

Day 8: Burqin to Beitun.

We will spend most of the day trying for the key species we may still need to find in Burqin before driving to Beitun.



Day 9: Beitun to Qiakuertu.

Here in Beitun, we will focus on two places, namely the Ulungur River and Ulungur Lake. On the shore and both sides of the two areas, the reeds are thick and lush. Many water birds breed here including Mute Swan, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Shelduck, Common Shelduck, Common Pochard, White-headed Duck, Slavonian Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Little Tern, White-winged Black Tern, Whiskered Tern, Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Barred Warbler, etc. Followed that, we will drive on to Qiakuertu.

Day 10: Qiakuertu to Urumqi.

Today we will drive back to Urumqi. There are many desert habitats on the way. We will have good chances to see some desert specials such as Mongolian Ground Jay, Saker Falcon, Mongolian Finch, Saxaul Sparrow, Spanish Sparrow, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Chukar Partridge, etc. We will also have chances of seeing some exciting desert mammals like Mongolian Wild Ass, Przewalski's Horse, etc.

Day 11: Urumqi / Depart.

Following a lovely breakfast at the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport to depart from Urumqi or start the 3-day "Xinjiang Ground Jay Extension". This will conclude the services for this scheduled itinerary from AlpineBirding.

3 Days Xinjiang Ground Jay Extension

Jun 1-3, 2023



Outline

- Day 1: Urumqi / Korla / Luntai
- Day 2: Luntai & surrounds
- Day 3: Luntai Korla / Urumqi



Xinjiang Ground Jay

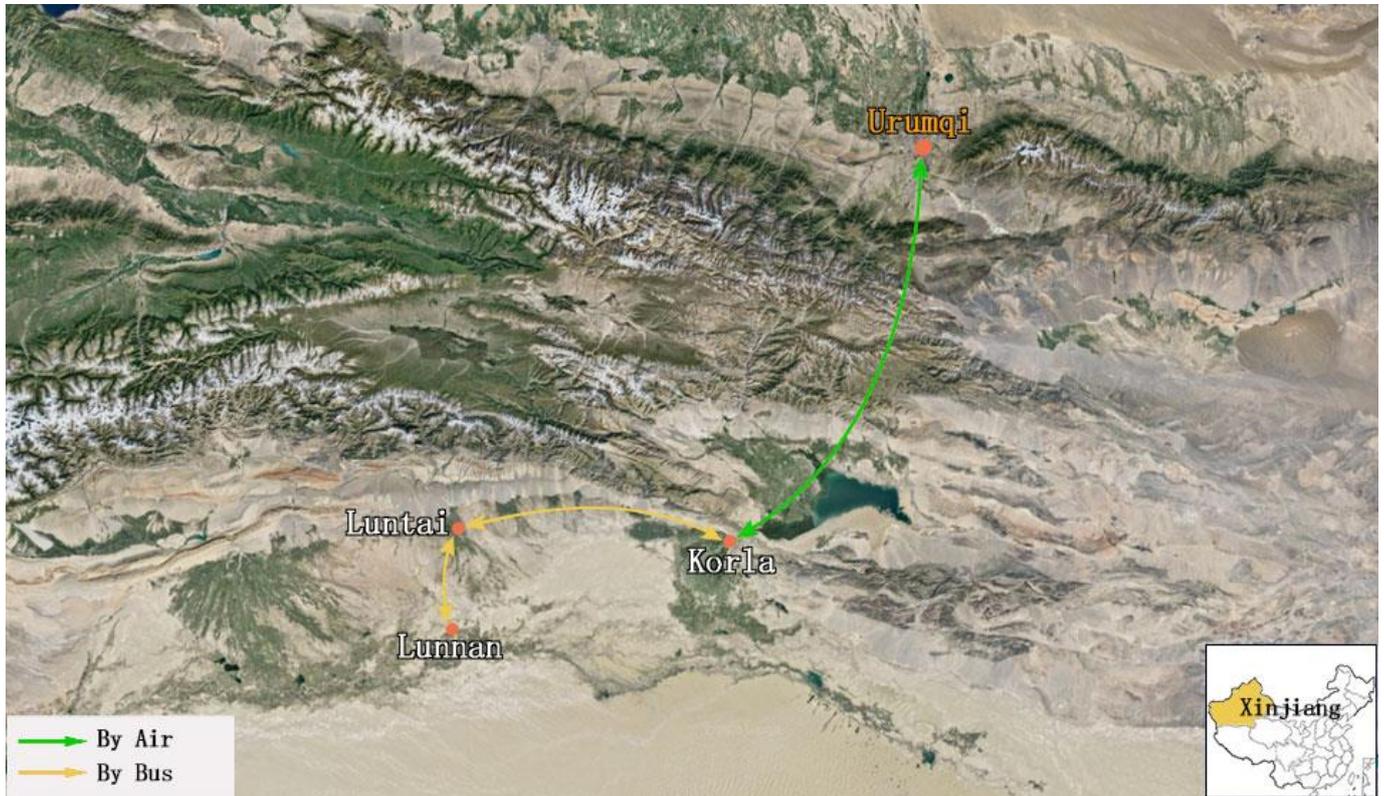


Highlights

1. Searching for the incredible endemic Xinjiang Ground Jay and Tarim Babbler.
2. The breath-taking scenery of vast desert and grassland.
3. Experienced local guide who has guided this trip many times ensures you a lifetime traveling experience.
4. A small group size of no more than 8 travelers.
5. Years of working as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and wildlife.
6. A strong logistic team in the office to ensure our trip goes smoothly and every participant has a comfortable and memorable journey.



Map




Itinerary

Day 1: Urumqi to Korla by air and drive to Luntai.

This morning, we will catch an early flight from Urumqi to Korla, then drive about 2 hours to Luntai. We will have several birding stops on the way.

Day 2: Luntai & surrounds (Lunnan).

Today we will visit Lunnan, as a small town in the south of Luntai County, there are some Euphrates poplar forests and deserts. We will spend the whole day birding in Lunnan to search for the endemic Xinjiang Ground Jay and Tarim Babbler. Other birds like Stock Dove, White-winged Woodpecker, Azure Tit, Booted Eagle, Saxaul Sparrow, Desert Wheatear, Desert Finch, etc., are also our targets.

Day 3: Luntai to Korla and fly back to Urumqi.

We will go birding around Lunnan in the early morning before driving back to Korla to catch our flight back to Urumqi. Depart from Urumqi, AlpineBirding services end. If you need to spend extra nights in Urumqi, please let us know in advance so that we can assist with the hotel booking.



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info@alpinebirding.com; www.alpinebirding.com