



Qinghai-Tibet Birding Tour & Lhasa Extension

14 Days Classic Qinghai-Tibet Birding Tour

Jun 20 - Jul 3, 2021

4 Days Lhasa Culture & Birding Extension

Jul 3-6, 2021



Outline: Qinghai Section

- Day 1: Xining, Qinghai, China
- Day 2: Xining / Huzhu Beishan
- Day 3: Huzhu Beishan
- Day 4: Huzhu Beishan / Heimahe
- Day 5: Heimahe / Chaka
- Day 6-7: Chaka
- Day 8: Chaka / Wenquan
- Day 9: Wenquan / Maduo
- Day 10: Maduo / Yushu
- Day 11: Yushu / Nangqian
- Day 12: Nangqian
- Day 13: Nangqian / Yushu
- Day 14: Yushu / Depart

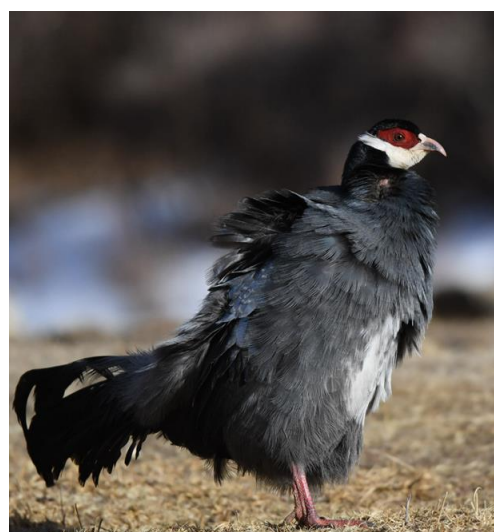


Tibetan Partridge



Outline: Lhasa Section

- Day 1: Lhasa, Tibet, China
- Day 2-3: Lhasa and surrounds
- Day 4: Lhasa / Depart



Tibetan Eared Pheasant

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Overview:

Our trip starts in Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province, followed by about 14 days birding in some carefully-picked sites. The high elevation has made this vast and sparsely populated plateau different from tropical areas in the regard of bird varieties, only a small group of bird species can survive in the highland. So this trip will highlight the real endemics and plateau specials instead of varieties, we can expect birds like Hume's Ground Jay, Tibetan Rosefinch, Tibetan Snowcock, Buff-throated Partridge, Tibetan Lark, Tibetan Bunting, etc.

Though the birding on the high-elevation and remote areas is quite tough, we will be rewarded by the good view of some rare endemics you can only see them here beside the stunning landscapes, beautiful wildflowers, authentic Tibetan culture and different wild animal flocks. In the alpine lakes, we will see some summer breeders such as Black-necked Crane, Ibisbill, Ruddy Shelduck, Pallas's Gull, Brown-headed Gull, etc.

Following the main tour, we will take an internal flight to Lhasa to look for some endemics such as Tibetan Eared Pheasant, Tibetan Blackbird, Tibetan Babax, etc., and immerse in the spectacular and unique culture by visiting the world-famous Potala Palace, Jokhang Monastery and Norbulingka.



Highlights:

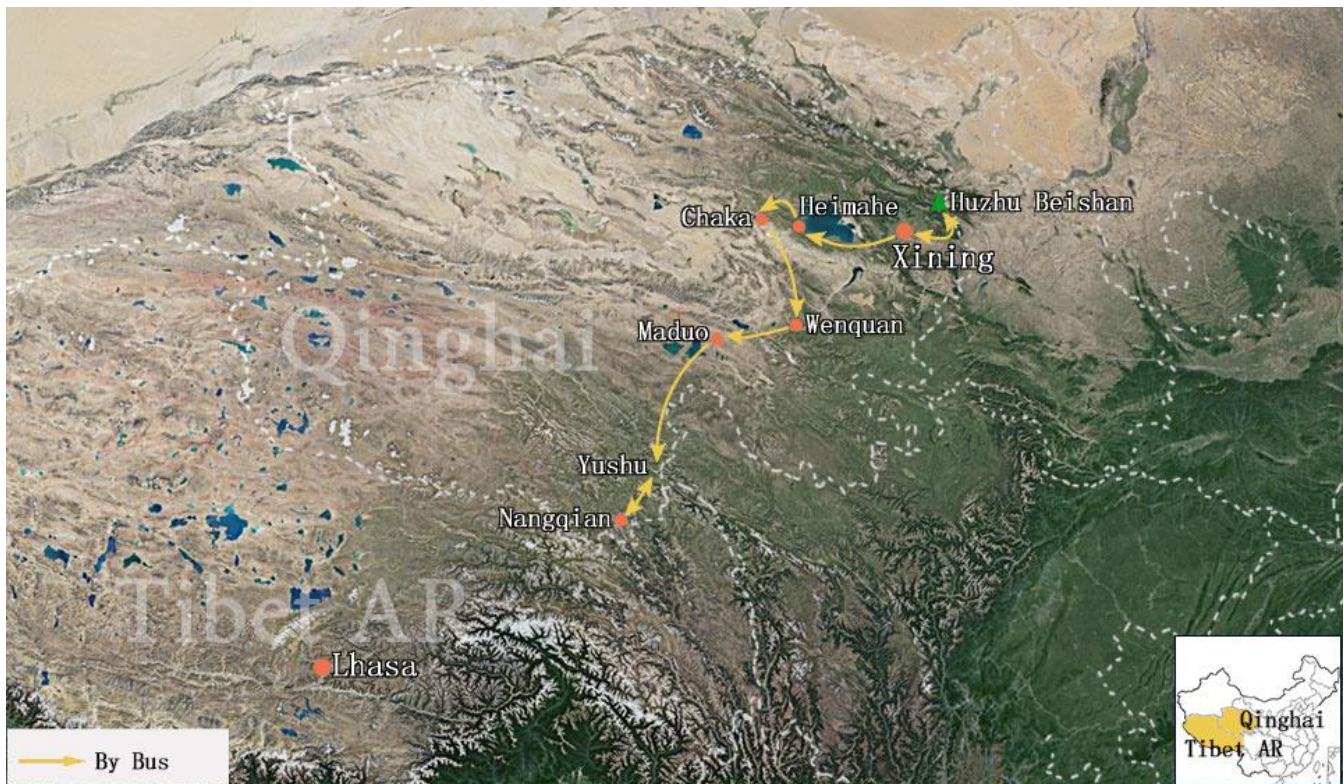
1. The combination of our experienced western guides and local guides ensure your needs are well met.
2. See some of the most extraordinary plateau specials in the most popular and classic birding sites of the plateau.
3. We run the trip in the best season. Not only birds are in the breeding seasons, but all the destinations have the most beautiful sceneries in this season.
4. A small group size of no more than 8 birders.
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	Black-necked Crane, Ibisbill, Rusty-necklaced (Przevalski's) Partridge, Tibetan Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, Buff-throated Partridge (Szechenyi's Monal Partridge), White Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, Hume's Ground Jay, Pink-tailed Bunting (Przewalski's Finch), Tibetan Rosefinch, Common Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Przevalski's (Ala Shan) Redstart, Güldenstädt's Redstart, Tibetan Bunting, Crested Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Gansu Leaf Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Chinese Nuthatch (Snowy-browed Nuthatch), Przevalski's Nuthatch (White-cheeked Nuthatch), Tibetan Babax, Plain Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Chinese Thrush, Kessler's Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, Hume's Short-toed Lark, Asia Short-toed Lark, Mongolian Lark, Tibetan Lark, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Pere David's Snowfinch, Tibetan Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Blanford's Snowfinch, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Brown Accentor, Robin Accentor, Sichuan Tit, Ground Tit, etc.
Numbers of Species to Expect	130-180
Ease of Birding	moderate with a few tricky species
Highlight Mammals	Przewalski's Gazelle, Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass), Tibetan Fox, Black-lipped Pika, Himalayan Marmot, Tibetan Gazelle, Wolf, etc.
Other Attractions	Anduo Tibetan culture, Kangba Tibetan culture, minority culture of Hui and Tu, gorgeous plateau scenery
Photography Opportunities	birding focused but with good photography chances
Habitats Covered	grasslands, subtropical forests, desert, snow mountains, wetlands
Expected Climate	windy and cold in the morning, strong sunlight at daytime, snow is possible
Physical Requirements	moderate, demanding but optional on certain parts
Accommodation	comfortable
Transportation	19-seat van



Map



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Xining, China (Alt.: 2,260m).

To begin this tour, you need to arrive at Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province and the largest city on the Tibetan Plateau. From there, you will be met by your AlpineBirding bird guide or driver, then get transferred to the hotel in the city. Depending on your time of arrival, you can join an easy birding exploration on a nearby mountain this afternoon to look for some forest birds like Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Plain Laughingthrush, Oriental Turtle Dove, Hill Pigeon, Chestnut Thrush, Godlewski's Bunting, Meadow Bunting, Red-billed Chough, Black Redstart and Daurian Redstart. Additionally, we will also try to spot Pale Rosefinch here.



Pale Rosefinch

After the exploration, we will go to a nice local restaurant to have our welcome dinner there. It is also the time for your guide to brief the trip and trip participants get to know each other.



Crested Tit Warbler

Day 2: Xining to Huzhu Beishan Mountains via Dongxia Forest Park.

This morning, we will depart from Xining city in the early morning and drive towards Dongxia Forest Park to the north of Xining. The evergreen conifer woods are the dominant tree species in the forest, and lush shrubs occupy the forest gaps and openings; both provide great habitats for small forest species. Here, we will focus on nuthatches, warblers, tits, etc. We can seek out some exciting species such as Crested Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Gansu Leaf Warbler, Chinese

Nuthatch (Snowy-browed Nuthatch), Przewalski's Nuthatch (White-cheeked Nuthatch), Plain Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Siberian Rubythroat, and Chinese Thrush. We will explore different hills here patiently, the dense forest is also home to other noteworthy species like Daurian Jackdaw, Rook, Kessler's Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, Common Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Grey-capped Greenfinch, Red Crossbill, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, White-throated Redstart, Rufous-vented Tit, as well as the shy Smoky Warbler.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we will head on to Huzhu, an Autonomous County of Tu ethnic minority. We will have a stop at a viewing deck where we will carefully scan the mountain slope and look for the endemic Blue Eared Pheasant.

Day 3: Huzhu Beishan Mountains (Alt.: up to 4,000m).

We will spend the whole day birding inside the mountain area. Our first target here will be the superb and endemic Blue Eared Pheasant that generally feeds on the openings around the forest line in the early morning. In the lower forest area, we will focus on some other spectacular birds including Crested Tit Warbler, Himalayan Bluetail, Chestnut Thrush, Common Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Goldcrest, Rufous-breasted Accentor, White-winged Grosbeak, Spotted Bush Warbler, Large-billed Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, etc. With some luck, we may spot Wallcreeper, Eurasian Eagle Owl on the cliffs, and in rock crags.



Blue Eared Pheasant

In addition, we can see some rather common species near the stream at the bottom of the mountain, such as White-throated Dipper, White-capped Water Redstart, Plumbeous Water Redstart, etc.



Black-necked Crane

Day 4: Huzhu to Heimahe via Qinghai Lake (Alt.: 3,200m).

Spending the morning birding in the Huzhu area, then we will drive to Heimahe in the afternoon. Along the way to Heimahe, we will take some time to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of Qinghai Lake. We will see some waterfowls, including Black-necked Crane, the only crane breeds on the plateau. Other sought-after species we can expect including Bar-headed Goose, Northern Pintail, Red-crested Pochard, Eurasian Wigeon, Whooper Swan, Ferruginous Duck, Ruddy

Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Black-necked Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Pallas's Gull, Kentish Plover, Pale Martin, Green Sandpiper, Common Redshank.

We will also spend some time in the nearby grassland as we search for Twite, Hume's Short-toed Lark, Asia Short-toed Lark, Mongolian Lark, Tibetan Lark, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Pere David's Snowfinch, Isabelline Wheatear, Ground Tit, etc. After an enjoyable birding time around the lake, we head on to Heimahe to check in at our hotel.

Day 5: Heimahe to Chaka via Rubber Mountain (Alt.: 3,200m).

This morning we will drive a short distance to Rubber Mountain that further east to Heimahe. The mixed shrubs and meadows are perfect habitats for Pink-tailed Bunting (Przewalski's Finch), which is a bird in a family all of its own. There are many other exciting bird species that hide in the scrubs on the mountain slopes such as the shy Tibetan Partridge, Saker Falcon, Streaked Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Tibetan Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Brown Accentor, Robin Accentor, White-browed Tit, Ground Tit, Himalayan Griffon and Upland Buzzard. After our exploration in the Rubber Mountain, we head on to Chaka.



Przewalski's Finch



Blanford's Snowfinch

Day 6 & 7: Chaka area (Alt.: 3,200m).

Our next two days will be spent on the harsh desert and arid mountain ranges of Chaka searching for some plateau and desert species. Some of these birds require a level of patience as they are well-adapted to staying hidden in this vast ecosystem, but these birds are well worth the effort. For instance, the Pallas's Sandgrouse is a gorgeous desert species and is adept at camouflaging itself in the ochre desert steppe. We will also look for other sought-after species including Henderson's Ground Jay, Isabelline Shrike, Isabelline Wheatear, Desert Wheatear, Crested Lark, Asian Short-toed Lark, Hume's Short-toed Lark,

Mongolian Finch, Pere David's Snowfinch and Blanford's Snowfinch. In the forest bordering the nearby villages, we will focus on some arboreal species such as Eurasian Golden Oriole, Great Spotted Woodpecker, White-cheeked Starling, Eurasian Hoopoe, Azure-winged Magpie, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, etc. Additionally, we will spend some time in the nearby valleys of bush fallows and meadows to search for birds such as the rare and elusive Przevalski's (Ala Shan) Redstart, Rusty-necklaced (Przevalski's) Partridge, Tibetan Partridge, Hill Pigeon, Black Redstart, Pine Bunting, etc.

Day 8: Chaka to Wenquan (Alt.: 3,450m).

We will depart Chaka early this morning. The drive to our next destination will be full of surprise if we always have alert eyes towards the sky and vast scrubby plateau. We can expect some predators and grassland birds such as eagles and pipits, shrikes, finches, snowfinches, and larks. We will arrive Gonghe around lunchtime where we can search for Rusty-necklaced (Przewalski's) Partridge again if we have not seen any yet.

Before we arrive at our guesthouse in the small town of Wenquan at around 3,450m, we will drive pass Ela Mountain Pass in the mid-afternoon. The highway here climbs to nearly 4,500m, and the road is surrounded by snow-capped peaks that stretch away toward the distant horizon. Here is the place we focus on searching for Tibetan Sandgrouse and Tibetan Rosefinch the next morning. Around the pass, we can also spot other birds like Gldenstdt's Redstart, Shore Lark, Tibetan Lark, Black Redstart, Black-winged Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Plain Mountain Finch, Black-headed Mountain Finch, etc.



Przewalski's Partridge



Tibetan Rosefinch

Day 9: Wenquan to Maduo via Ela Mountain (Alt.: up to 4,500m).

We will spend the morning around Ela Mountain Pass at around 4,500m, especially on the alpine screes in search of some endemic and alpine species. Our first target is highly range-restricted and rare Tibetan Rosefinch. While slowly hiking up the mountain in search of this bird, we will also scan the mountain slope and try another difficult target, the Tibetan Sandgrouse, though we do need some luck to find it. Other species we can expect around this area are Güldenstädt's Redstart, Tibetan Lark, White-rumped

Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Henri's Snowfinch, Black-headed Mountain Finch, Bearded Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Tibetan Snowcock, etc.

Following our exploration of Ela Mountain, we will drive on towards Maduo where the elevation is lower (around 4,200m) to stay the night. Along the way, we will have an excellent chance to see some plateau mammals like Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass), Tibetan Fox, Black-lipped Pika, Himalayan Marmot, Tibetan Gazelle, etc. While the telephone poles along the road are excellent for spotting some raptors including the Upland Buzzard, Himalayan Vulture, Saker Falcon, etc.

Day 10: Maduo to Yushu (Alt.: 3,680m).

Today we will drive through the famous Yellow River area and drive further west towards the eastern part of Tibet Autonomous Region. As we depart Maduo, the scenery will start changing after a short drive. Once we get closer to Yushu city, the capital of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, we will begin seeing the magnificent valleys populated by people living and working in this area. The changing environment gives us the ideal opportunity to see species unique to different habitats. Before we head into the valley, we will spend some time on the grassland, which is a vital breeding place for the summer migrations of a lot of birds, including Black-necked Crane and Bar-headed Goose.

Before we check in our hotel in Yushu city, we will spend some time searching the pebbled river shoals outside the city where is an ideal habitat of a stunning summer breeder, the Ibisbill.



Ibisbill

Day 11: Yushu to Nangqian via Kangda Mountain (Alt.: 3,650m).

This morning, we will depart Yushu and drive further west along the rugged and grand valleys towards Nangqian, our last destination in Qinghai on this trip. This site holds fantastic birding resources, especially the three range-limited endemic species, namely the Buff-throated Partridge (Szechenyi's Partridge), Tibetan Bunting, and Tibetan Babax. Our two days' searching in this area typically provides many bird sightings. Before arriving in Nangqian County, we will visit Kanda Mountain on the way in search of some specials inhabit in the eastern of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. We can expect some exciting species like Tibetan Bunting, Tibetan Babax, Tibetan Partridge, White Eared Pheasant, Snow Pigeon, and other birds like Hill Pigeon, Red-billed Chough, Grey-backed Shrike, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Kessler's Thrush (White-backed Thrush), Blue-fronted Redstart, Hodgson's Redstart, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, and Godlewski's Bunting. We can search for Ibisbill again in the river shoals at the foot of the mountain.



Godlewski's Bunting

Day 12: Nangqian area (Alt.: 3,650m).

We will leave early this morning to visit another well-forested mountain area, the Baizha Forest, and spend a whole day there. The highest point we will reach today is around 4,200m. During the golden morning hours, we will track pheasants preferentially. Besides the endemic Buff-throated



Buff-throated Partridge

Partridge (Szechenyi's Partridge), the White Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Tibetan Snowcock and Tibetan Partridge also inhabit in this area. Other species we can expect in this area are Tibetan Babax, Hill Pigeon, Salim Ali's Swift, Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Red-fronted Rosefinch, Rufous-vented Tit, Sichuan Tit, Crested Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Chinese Rubythroat, Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Golden Eagle, Daurian Jackdaw, Alpine Chough, White-throated Dipper, White-winged Grosbeak, Grosbeak.

Day 13: Nangqian to Yushu (Alt.: 3,680m).

We will spend most of the day birding in Nangqian in search of our targets. In the late afternoon, we drive back to Yushu for our overnight stay.



Scenery on the plateau

Day 14: Departure from Yushu or Start Lasa Extension.

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

4 Days Lhasa Culture & Birding Extension

Jul 3-6, 2021



The majestic Potala Palace



Highlights:

1. The combination of our experienced western guides and local guides ensure your needs are well met.
2. See some of the most extraordinary plateau specials in the most popular and classic birding sites of the plateau.
3. Visiting the world-renowned Potala Palace, Jokhang Monastery, etc.
4. We run the trip in the best season. Not only birds are in the breeding seasons, but all the destinations have the most beautiful sceneries in this season.
5. A small group size of no more than 8 birders.
6. Years of working as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and other wildlife.
7. 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	Tibetan Eared Pheasant, Tibetan Snowcock, Tibetan Partridge, Tibetan Blackbird, Giant Babax, Lord Derby's Parakeet, White-browed Tit Warbler, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, Common Rosefinch, Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush, Plain Laughingthrush, Black-necked Crane, Bar-headed Goose, Common Merganser, Pallas's Gull, etc.
Numbers of Species to Expect	30-60
Ease of Birding	mostly easy
Other Attractions	Tibetan culture, Potala Palace, Jokhang Monastery, Norbulingka Palace, Xiongse Nunnery (Temple)
Photography Opportunities	birding focused but with very good photography chances
Habitats Covered	alpine shrubs, wetlands, coniferous forests
Expected Climate	windy and cold in the morning, strong sunlight at daytime
Physical Requirements	moderate walk at high altitude
Accommodation	comfortable
Transportation	15 to 20-seat van



Itinerary

Day 1: Fly from Yushu to Lhasa (Alt.: 3,660m).

Followed the main tour in Qinghai, we will fly from Yushu to Lhasa. After checking in our hotel in Lhasa city, we will visit Jokhang Monastery. Founded in 650 AD by Sontzen Gampo, one of Tibet's greatest monarchs, Jokhang Monastery is known as the religious center of Tibet and a magnet for pilgrims from all over China. Throughout the day a colorful throng circumambulates the temple, the pilgrims chant and prostrate themselves. Inside the monastery, past rows of prayer wheels, are



The Potala Palace

dark chapels containing a bewildering richness of frescoes and statues. We will also walk on the Barkhor Street to explore local people's life.

Day 2 & 3: Birding and Culture Exploration in Lhasa.

In the following two days, we will spend one day for birding and one day for cultural exploration and sightseeing because both the endemic birds and rich cultural heritages are something you can not miss in Lhasa.

For cultural exploration, we will visit the famous Potala Palace and Drepung Monastery. Potala was built between 1645 and 1694, contains over 1,000 rooms, including numerous chapels, shrines, assembly halls, and mausoleums, and is undoubtedly one of the world's most extraordinary and moving buildings. The interlinked 'white' and 'red' palaces tower 13 stories' high and completely dominate the city below. The panoramic view from the roof across Lhasa to the mountains beyond is alone worth the visit. While the Drepung Monastery is one of the famous Gelug sect gompas and the largest monastery in Tibet.



Tibetan Eared Pheasant

The other day will be focused on birding. We will drive out of the city and visit Xiongse Temple at around 4,390m where we can enjoy the beautiful Tibetan Eared Pheasant, Tibetan Blackbird, Giant Babax, we may also see Tibetan Snowcock, Tibetan Partridge, White-browed Tit Warbler, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, Pink-browed Rosefinch, Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush, etc. Besides, we will also visit some birding sites around the city such as Lhalu Wetland, Norbulingka, Lhasa River, we will find some interesting species including the elusive

Lord Derby's Parakeet, Tibetan Blackbird, Streaked Rosefinch, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Merganser, Pallas's Gull, Plain Laughingthrush, Brown-cheeked Laughingthrush, White-browed Tit Warbler, Brown Accentor, etc.

Day 4: Departure from Lhasa.

In the morning, we can do some birding around the hotel to make our final efforts to add to our bird list if time permits, then we drive to the airport to catch your flight. AlpineBirding service ends.



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info@alpinebirding.com; www.alpinebirding.com