



*12 Days Classic China Crane Watching Tour*

# 12 Days Classic China Crane Watching Tour

Dec 19-30, 2023



## Outline

- Day 1: Shanghai, China
- Day 2: Nanhui Dongtan / Yancheng
- Day 3: Yancheng
- Day 4: Yancheng / Shanghai / Wuyuan
- Day 5: Wuyuan
- Day 6: Wuyuan / Poyang Lake
- Day 7-8: Poyang Lake
- Day 9: Nanchang / Shangri-La
- Day 10-11: Shangri-La
- Day 12: Shangri-La / Depart



**Siberian Crane**



## Overview

China is very rich in cranes with the world's 9 crane species live in China. They live in the north and migrate to the south in winter. This trip is specially planned for birders who long to see cranes or want to get good photos of cranes in China. We carefully selected three most important wintering grounds highlighting cranes and a great number of other migratory birds, namely Yancheng Wetland Nature Reserve, Poyang Lake Nature Reserve, Napahai Nature Reserve that are home to 7 incredible crane species including Red-crowned Crane, Hooded Crane, Common Crane, Sandhill Crane, Siberian Crane, White-naped Crane, Black-necked Crane.

Additionally, this trip also covers some important birding sites on the east coast and in the southeastern forests such as Nanhui Dongtan and Wuyuan, we can expect some other sought-after species besides cranes including Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-faced Spoonbill, Baikal Teal, Northern Shoveler, Falcated Duck, Northern Pintail, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Greater Scaup, Mandarin Duck, Crested Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Pied Falconet, Great Barbet, Grey Treepie, Collared Finchbill, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Yellow-bellied Tit, Rufous-capped Babbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler, etc.

We will fly to Shangri-La at the end of the trip for Black-necked Crane, where we can also expect some southwestern specials like White-browed Tit Warbler, Rufous-tailed Babbler, Yunnan Nuthatch, Chinese Fulvetta, White-browed Fulvetta, Black-browed Tit, etc.



**Black-necked Crane**



## Highlights

1. The combination of our experienced western guides and local guides ensure 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 over a decade.
7. We have a strong logistic team to ensure your trip goes smoothly and ensures you a comfortable and enjoyable journey.

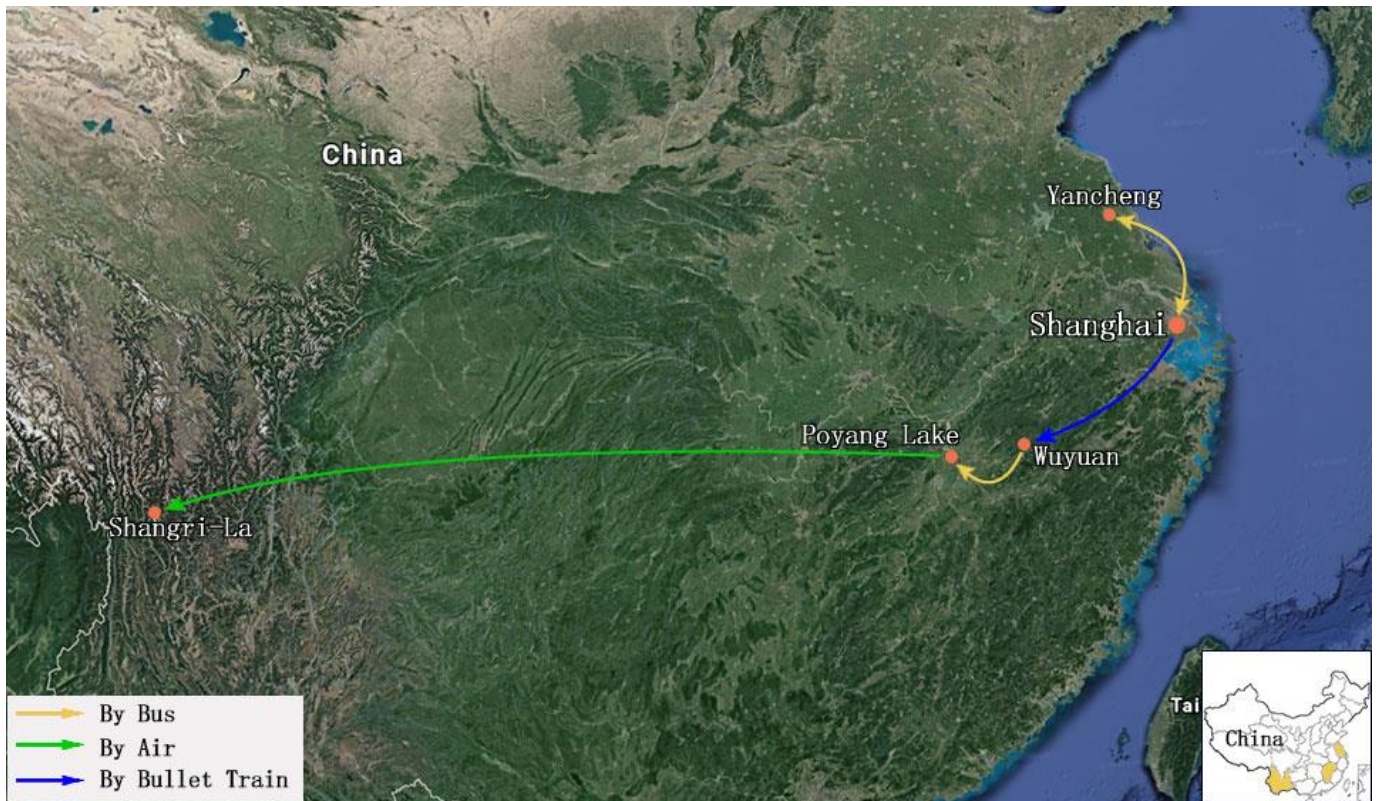


## Tour Info Sheet

<b>Highlight Birds</b>	Red-crowned Crane, Hooded Crane, Common Crane, Sandhill Crane, Siberian Crane, White-naped Crane, Black-necked Crane, Black Stork, Bar-headed Goose, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-faced Spoonbill, Baikal Teal, Falcated Duck, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Greater Scaup, Velvet Scoter, Black Scoter, Mandarin Duck, Scaly-sided Merganser, White-tailed Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Crested Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Pied Falconet, Great Barbet, Reed Parrotbill, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Short-tailed Parrotbill, White-crowned Forktail, Brown Dipper, Yellow-bellied Tit, Rufous-capped Babbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Rufous-tailed Babbler, Yunnan Nuthatch, Chinese Fulvetta, White-browed Fulvetta, Black-browed Tit, Rufous-breasted Accentor, White-winged Grosbeak, Streaked Rosefinch, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, etc.
<b>Numbers of Species to Expect</b>	150-200
<b>Ease of Birding</b>	mostly easy with a few tricky species
<b>Other Attractions</b>	Hui style architecture, Fujian cuisine, Tibetan culture
<b>Photography Opportunities</b>	birding focused but with good photography chances
<b>Habitats Covered</b>	subtropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, coasts
<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 on certain part
<b>Accommodation</b>	very comfortable
<b>Transportation</b>	19-seat van



## Map




## Itinerary

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

To begin our crane watching tour, we will depart from Shanghai, a city renowned for being the commercial and financial center of China. This city offers a combination of history and modernity that is sure to captivate any visitor.

Upon arrival at the airport of Shanghai, you will be met by your AlpineBirding guide or driver and get transferred to the hotel. For early arrivals, we will visit a birding site nearby to see some urban birds including Long-tailed Shrike, Azure-winged Magpie, Oriental Magpie, Coal Tit, Yellow-bellied Tit, Light-vented Bulbul, Yellow-browed Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler, Red-billed Starling, White-cheeked Starling, White's Thrush, Chinese Blackbird, Grey-backed Thrush, Eyebrowed Thrush, Pale Thrush, Red-flanked Bluetail, Yellow-billed Grosbeak, plus a variety of waterfowls.

We will get to know the whole crew at dinner and learn more about our upcoming trip.

## Day 2: Shanghai to Yancheng via Nanhui Dongtan.

After a 6,300km journey from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the Yangtze River runs into the estuary of the East China Sea near Shanghai. The abundant water resources from this river have nurtured vast wetlands and lush forest ecosystems while transforming the seacoast area into a breadbasket for many creatures. As a result of this, Shanghai is a vital stopover site for many migratory bird species on the long journey between East Asia and Australia. However, the mudflat is gradually receding under the pressure of urban expansion. Among the mudflat habitats left, Nanhui Dongtan is an ideal place for us to look for some residents and migratory shorebirds.

We will spend the whole morning in Nanhui Dongtan and mainly focus on the mudflats and wetlands for winter visitors such as Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-faced Spoonbill, Baikal Teal, Northern Shoveler, Falcated Duck, Northern Pintail, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Greater Scaup, Black-necked Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Northern Lapwing, Dunlin, Herring Gull, etc. Occasionally, Velvet Scoter, Black Scoter can also be targeted here during its migration.



**Eurasian Spoonbill**

In addition, we can spend some time in the nearby forests and bushes where we will have a good chance of encountering Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Chinese Penduline Tit, Plain Prinia, Zitting Cisticola, Light-vented Bulbul, Brown-eared Bulbul, Dusky Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, Reed Parrotbill, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Pale Thrush, Dusky Thrush, Chestnut-eared Bunting, Pallas's Reed Bunting, Black-faced Bunting, etc. In the afternoon, we will complete a 5-hour drive to Yancheng where we start our crane explorations.



**Reed Parrotbill**

## Day 3: Yancheng Wetland National Nature Reserve.

Not long ago in July 2019, "Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I)" was rated as a world nature heritage which marked China's first Coastal Wetland World Heritage Site, the primary mission is to protect the rare wildlife including the elegant Red-crowned Crane and the tidal flat-wetland system that all the wildlife rely on.

Yancheng is an irreplaceable part of the vast coastal wetland, it is known as one of the best places for crane watching. Here we will mainly focus on four kinds of crane species while Red-crowned Crane enjoys a top priority. We will also look for Hooded Crane, Common Crane, Sandhill Crane. We also have enough time to search for other specials that stage in the area such as Oriental Stork, Bewick's Swan, Whooper Swan, Swan Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Taiga Bean Goose, Tundra Bean Goose, Common Shelduck, Gadwall, Smew, Goosander, Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Spoonbill, Black-winged Kite, Hen Harrier, Eastern Buzzard, Chinese Grey Shrike, Azure-winged Magpie, Reed Parrotbill, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, White-cheeked Starling, Buff-bellied Pipit, Yellow-billed Grosbeak, Yellow-throated Bunting, Rustic Bunting, etc.



**Oriental Stork**

**Day 4: Yancheng to Shanghai, then transfer to Wuyuan.**

We will have another chance to try our targets in Yancheng before we drive back to Shanghai. In the late afternoon, we will take a 3.5-hour comfortable bullet train ride to our next destination, Wuyuan.

**Day 5: Wuyuan & surrounds.**

Located in Eastern China, Wuyuan is well-forested and surrounded by rolling hills. So far, about 300 bird species have been recorded here. Although Wuyuan may not host typical crane species, it is an incredible birding site in transit as we can find some endemic and extraordinary species of



**Pied Falconet**

East China. We will go to some stream areas looking for our top targets, the endangered Scaly-sided Merganser, and the stunning Mandarin Duck. Beyond that, we will look for other thought-after species including Long-billed Plover, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Chinese Pond Heron, Crested Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, White-crowned Forktail, Plumbeous Redstart, Brown Dipper, etc.

We will also spend some time around the village and in the forest, we should also encounter some exotic species such as Pied Falconet, Great Barbet, Grey Treepie, Collared Finchbill, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Yellow-bellied Tit, Rufous-capped Babbler, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Grey-sided Scimitar Babbler, Huet's

Fulvetta, Masked Laughingthrush, Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Red-billed Starling, Red-flanked Bluetail, White-rumped Munia, Yellow-browed Bunting, etc.

### **Day 6: Wuyuan to Poyang Lake area.**

We can spend more time in Wuyuan to try our targets before we complete a 4-hour journey to Poyang Lake, the largest freshwater lake in China. We will stop to look for Yangtze Finless Porpoise and some waterfowls before we check in our well-suited and lovely guesthouse in the Poyang Lake area.

### **Day 7 & 8: Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.**

Poyang Lake is a vast area that consists of numerous permanent and seasonal lakes, rivers, inland wetlands, marshes, which makes it one of the most important wintering grounds for crane species as well as some other rare and endangered birds. We will have two full days here to make sure we see all of the four crane species, namely Siberian Crane, White-naped Crane, Common Crane, Hooded Crane. As they sometimes may spread over different areas, we will explore the whole region to seek them out. In the meantime, we can expect a variety of other exotic species including the elusive Baer's Pochard, Oriental Stork, Black Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Swan Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Taiga Bean Goose, Tundra Bean Goose, Bewick's Swan, Ruddy Shelduck, Northern Shoveler, Falcated Duck, Great Crested Grebe, Brown Crake, Spotted Redshank, Common Snipe, Herring Gull, etc.



**White-naped Crane**

We will also spend some time searching the reed marshes and exploring nearby forests. The pleasant environment not only brings visitors to relax here in their spare time but also attracts many unusual species inhabit in this area. Usually, it does not take too long to spot species like Rufous Turtle Dove, Eastern Marsh Harrier, White-throated Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Yellow-



bellied Tit, Chinese Penduline Tit, Yellow-bellied Prinia, Plain Prinia, Black-collared Starling, White-cheeked Starling, Grey-backed Thrush, Yellow-billed Grosbeak, Water Pipit, Black-faced Bunting, Little Bunting, etc.

**Day 9: Nanchang to Shangri-La by air (Alt.: 3,280m).**

Today is another traveling day on our trip. After breakfast, we will take a flight to Shangri-La, another vital wintering ground for cranes. Upon arrival, we can either adapt to the altitude at the hotel, or we can go for birding around the hotel.



**Black-necked Crane**

**Day 10-11: Napahai Nature Reserve & Shangri-La Botanical Garden.**

In our two days of exploration in Shangri-La, the Black-necked Crane is our most important target. Discovered in 1876, the crane is not only known as the world's latest crane species but is also renowned for being the only crane species that breeds on the high-elevation plateau. It stays at the breeding ground on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau until migrating to the south in wintertime. Napahai is one of its most important destinations of

migration. We will have two days here not just enjoying the elegant crane, we will also see some other brilliant species including Black Stork, Bar-headed Goose, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Brown-headed Gull, Pallas's Gull, Black Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Grey-backed Shrike, Red-billed Chough, Daurian Jackdaw, etc.

Not far from the Napa Lake, located the Shangri-La Botanical Garden where we can find some unique forest species on the plateau that include White-browed Tit Warbler, Rufous-tailed Babbler, Yunnan Nuthatch, Chinese Fulvetta, White-browed Fulvetta, Black-browed Tit, Coal Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey-crested Tit, Sichuan Tit, Grey-backed Shrike, Elliot's Laughingthrush, White-throated Redstart, Rufous-breasted Accentor, White-winged Grosbeak, Streaked Rosefinch, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Black-headed Greenfinch, Godlewski's Bunting, etc.



**White-browed Tit-Warbler**



## Day 12: Departure from Shangri-La.

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



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