



14 Days Ultimate China Pheasant Tour

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Apr 8-21, 2024



Outline

- Day 1: Chengdu, Sichuan, China
- Day 2: Chengdu / Erlang Mountain
- Day 3: Erlang Mountain / Wolong
- Day 4-5: Balang Mountain
- Day 6: Balang Mountain / Mengbi Mountain
- Day 7: Mengbi Mountain
- Day 8: Maerkang / Hongyuan / Ruoergai
- Day 9: Baxi Forest / Chuanzhusi
- Day 10: Chuanzhusi / Tangjiahe
- Day 11-12: Tangjiahe
- Day 13: Tangjiahe / Chengdu
- Day 14: Chengdu / Depart



Chinese Monal



Overview

With a great diversity of habitats, China holds a great richness of bird species. Particularly, China is renowned for being the world distribution center of pheasants with 62 species out of the global total of around 200. Within China, lots of these pheasants including some endemic ones inhabit the southwestern part, especially in Sichuan Province, which makes Sichuan one of the must-visit destinations for pheasant watching.

This incredible pheasant itinerary covers the most important pheasant habitats in Sichuan including the world-famous Balang Mountain, Tangjiahe Nature Reserve, and other productive sites like Erlang Mountain, Mengbi Mountain, as well as Flower Lake and Baxi Forest on Ruoergai Grassland, etc.

In those places, we will not only be impressed by the extraordinary pheasants but also other exciting birds indeed. For insurance, we will look for Streaked Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Crimson-browed Finch on Balang Mountain and look for Black-necked Crane, Sichuan Wood Owl, Black Woodpecker, Przevalski's Pinktail, Durian Jackdaw, White-browed Tit, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Snowy-browed Nuthatch, Plain Laughingthrush, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush on and around the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.



Golden Pheasant



Highlights

1. This trip focuses on pheasants in the Sichuan Province of southwestern China where is renowned for being the "pheasant kingdom", we have the best chance of seeing some endemic and special pheasants inhabit this area. Besides, we run the trip in the best season when our targeted pheasants are during the mating season.
2. Our experienced guides have guided birding tours in these areas for many decades, they know local birds and the latest bird info well. At the same time, they have rich experiences of guiding birders from different counties that ensure they understand your needs well.
3. This trip is beyond pheasants, in which we can expect some endemic and special birds of China as Sichuan is one of the classic birding destinations in China.
4. 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 van compared with big groups.
5. We have worked as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and wildlife for more than 15 years.
6. Supported by a strong logistic team in the office to ensure the smooth operation and full enjoyment of the trip by every participant.

Tour Info Sheet

Highlight Birds	Snow Partridge, Temminck's Tragopan, Golden Pheasant, Chestnut-throated Partridge (Verreaux's Partridge), Tibetan Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, Chinese Monal, Blood Pheasant, White Eared Pheasant, Blue Eared Pheasant, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, Grandala, Chinese Grouse, Sichuan Wood Owl (Pere David's Owl), Przevalski's Pinktail, Durian Jackdaw, White-browed Tit, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Goldcrest, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Slaty Bunting, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Buff-barred Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Chinese Fulvetta, Sichuan 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.
Numbers of Species to Expect	150-200
Ease of Birding	mostly easy with a few tricky species
Highlight Mammals	Tibetan Fox, Wolf, Leopard Cat, Hog Badger, Takin, Tibetan Macaque, Reeves's Muntjac, Chinese Goral, Tufted Deer, Masked Palm Civet, etc.
Other Attractions	Tibetan culture, wild panda habitat, delicate food
Photography Opportunities	birding focused but with good photography chances
Habitats Covered	subtropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, snow mountains, wetlands
Expected Climate	mostly comfortable, windy and cold on the plateau, humid in the basin, rain is possible
Physical Requirements	mostly easy, demanding but optional in certain parts
Accommodation	very comfortable
Transportation	19-seat van

Map



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Chengdu, China.

Upon arrival at Chengdu, the "Land of Abundance", you will be met by your bird guide or driver at the airport before being driven for about 30 minutes 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 Erlang Mountain via Qinglong Lake.

We will have a short visit to Qinglong Lake in search of Chinese Bamboo Partridge before driving to the Erlang Mountain. Besides the partridge, we can find some urban and special resident birds here, such as Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Chinese Bulbul, White-browed Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leiothrix, Japanese White-eye, Chinese Blackbird, Chinese Grosbeak, Collared Finchbill, Long-tailed Shrike, Fork-tailed Sunbird, Hoopoe, etc. Followed the exploration, we will complete a 4-hour journey to Erlang Mountain.

Day 3: Erlang Mountain to Wolong.

Erlang Mountain is the first high mountain on the national road running from Chengdu to Lhasa. The completion of the Erlang Mountain tunnel has transformed the busy old road to the mountain pass an ideal birding route. In the dense forest, we will firstly look for the elegant Lady Amherst's Pheasant. Besides, we will also look for the endemic Rufous-tailed Babbler and other species including 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. After our exploration in the mountain, we will drive on and finish a 6-hour journey to Wolong.



Lady Amherst's Pheasant

Day 4-5: Balang Mountain & surrounds.

We will spend two days birding in the fascinating Balang Mountain. 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 will reach on this entire tour. Around the snow line of the alpine flowstone slope, we will search for the scurrying Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock. Other high altitude specials we could see including Grandala, Lammergeier, Golden Eagle, Yellow-billed Chough, Alpine Accentor, Brandt's Mountain Finch, Red-fronted Rosefinch, Snow Pigeon, Rosy Pipit, etc.

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



White Eared Pheasant

birds including the endemic Chinese Monal, White Eared Pheasant, Chestnut-throated Partridge, Blood Pheasant, Koklass Pheasant, as well as other birds like 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 the broad-leaved forest and bamboo undergrowth lower down for Golden Pheasant, however, we won't persist in it for too long as we will get better chances in Tangjiahe. Accordingly, We can spend our time in search of other sought after species like 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.



Slaty Bunting

Day 6: Balang Mountain to Mengbi Mountain.

This morning we will have another chance to search for our targets again before driving to Mengbi Mountain. We will drive along magnificent gorges that bring us into the core area of the Jiarong Tibetan region.

Day 7: Mengbi Mountain & surrounds.

Standing between Xiaojin County and Maerkang City, 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 the endemic Chestnut-throated Partridge. Besides, the mountain is also the most reliable place to try the rare Sichuan Jay although it requires a big amount of work and some luck.



Chestnut-throated Monal Partridge

We will drive to the top of the mountain standing at 3,900 meters in the early morning, and either walk or slowly drive down 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 including Blood Pheasant, Crested Tit Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, the range-limited Crimson-browed Finch, Three-banded Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, White-throated Needle-tail, 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.

Day 8: Maerkang to Ruorgai via Hongyuan.

Today we will enjoy ever-changing views. Once we leave our hotel and drive towards Ruorgai, the high mountains on both sides of the road will get lower and lower, and eventually become small hills. We'll stop in the forest area that borders the Tibetan Plateau and search for a plateau special, the dexterous Tibetan Partridge. Beyond that, we should also encounter some other exciting species including Przevalski's Pinktail, Durian Jackdaw, White-browed Tit, Plain Laughingthrush, etc.



Tibetan Partridge

Once we get into the eastern edge of the plateau, we will have a good chance to see Black-necked Crane, the only crane species breeds on the high elevation, and also a variety of residents and summer breeders like White-browed Tit Warbler, Horned Lark, Azure-winged Magpie, Oriental Skylark, Carrion Crow, Eurasian Hoopoe, Grey-backed Shrike, Twite, Siberian Stonechat, Citrine Wagtail, etc.

We should also keep an eye on the plateau mammals, the adorable pikas always bump out from their nest and feed on the grassland, while another easy-spotted one is the Himalayan Marmot that always lay flat on the land when it is feeding. Besides, we can also expect Tibetan Fox, Wolf on the plateau. After a productive afternoon, we will drive on to Ruorgai to stay the night.



Blue Eared Pheasant

Day 9: Ruorgai to Chuanzhusi via Baxi Forest.

Our morning time will be spent in the mountain with virgin forests at the edge of the plateau that provides good habitats for the endemic Blue Eared Pheasant, as well as the rare Chinese Grouse. Our rest time will be spent on other forest species, we will have a second chance to try the rare Sichuan Jay, besides, we should encounter some other interesting species including the elusive Black Woodpecker, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Snowy-browed Nuthatch, Plain Laughingthrush, Snowy-cheeked 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. After searching the forest, we will drive on to Chuanzhusi.

Day 10: Chuanzhusi to Tangjiahe via Gonggangling.

Gonggangling has lush alpine coniferous forests that are home to many special alpine forest birds. It is a good place to try the endemic and rare Sichuan Wood Owl (Pere David's Owl) 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. Following the exploration, we will drive on to Tangjiahe.



Blood Pheasant



Golden Pheasant

Day 11-12: 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 forests, 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, with some planning, we

should have a good chance of spotting some. While along the streams, we can easily encounter Brown Dipper, Plumbeous Water Redstart, White-capped Redstart. With some patience, 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.

In 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 some other interesting forest species including Rufous-capped Babbler, Barred 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.



Temminck's Tragopan

Our mammal safari is sure to be one of the highlights of this trip. 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.



Tufted Deer

Day 13: Tangjiahe to Chengdu.

Continue our exploration in Tangjiahe in the morning, then we will drive back to Chengdu to have a nice stay in the city.

Day 14: 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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info@alpinebirding.com; www.alpinebirding.com