



*2021_Winter & Spring Qinghai-Tibet
Wildlife Safaris*



Winter & Spring Qinghai-Tibet Wildlife Safaris

Jan 1-8, 2021

Feb 28 - March 11, 2021

April 2-8, 2021



Eurasian Lynx



Summary

Known as the "roof of the world ", and "the third pole", the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the highest plateau in the world. It starts from the southern edge of the Himalayas in the south, north to the Kunlun Mountains, Altun Mountains, and the northern edge of the Qilian Mountains, with the Pamir Plateau and the Karakorum Mountains in the west, and the western part of the Qinling Mountains and the Loess Plateau in the east and northeast. Generally, the altitude spans from 3,000 to 5,000 meters, with an average altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level. The unique geographical environment has nurtured many animals featured on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. In late winter and early spring of 2021, we visited the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau three times, mainly in its northeastern territory in Qinghai Province, to look for some extraordinary species of the plateau. Winter is not an ideal time for conventional travel due to the heavy snow and low temperatures, but an ideal time for wildlife tours as they start to cluster and move to lower altitudes, and the low human activity in winter also makes it a good time to look for wildlife.



Details of the Trip

1. Hoh Xil

Hoh Xil, located in the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, sandwiched between the Tanggula and Kunlun Mountains, is the third-largest uninhabited area in the world and one of the four largest uninhabited areas in China (other uninhabited areas include Lop Nor, Qiangtang (northern Tibetan plateau), and Altun Mountains), thus retaining a completely pristine natural state and becoming a paradise for wildlife.



Wild Yak

On July 7, 2017, at the 41st session of the UNESCO World Heritage, the site passed the final review at the General Assembly of the UNESCO 41st World Heritage Committee and was inscribed on the World Heritage List, becoming the 51st World Heritage Site in China.

After arriving in Golmud by plane, we drove along National Highway 109 and entered the Hoh Xil hinterland, encountering winter clusters of Tibetan Antelope, Tibetan Gazelle, Kiang, and Wild Yak on both sides of the road, we also found Tibetan Fox and Red Fox in this area but in distance.



Tibetan Antelope

2. Xiangride

The high mountains and valleys around Xiangride are crisscrossed. The cliffs of the mountains are good habitats for Blue Sheep, and the grasslands of the valleys hold a big population of Plateau Pika and Woolly Hare. These three species are sufficient food supplies for the carnivores live in the valleys. On our three trips to Xiangride, we encountered Eurasian Lynx, Pallas's Cat, Grey Wolf, Tibetan Fox, Tibetan Gazelle. On the trip in early March, we recorded a Snow Leopard with our game cameras. And on the trip in early April, we encountered an adult Brown Bear with two cubs. In addition, we saw many interesting birds in this area including Mongolian Ground Jay (sometimes can be found by the road), Przevalski's Partridge, Golden Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Himalayan Vulture, Cinereous Vulture, Lammergeier, Upland Buzzard, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Horned Lark (collects large flocks in winter), White-rumped Snowfinch, Spotted Great Rosefinch, etc.



Eurasian Lynx



Pallas's Cat



Brown Bear



Steppe Eagle



Eurasian Eagle-Owl



Rusty-necklaced Partridge



Mongolian Ground Jay

3. Dulan County

The desert scrub near Dulan is ideal for Goitered Gazelle as we spotted them on three of our trips, we also saw Red Deer on the nearby slopes. The coniferous forest and understory scrub in the gullies provide nice habitats for some wintering birds. Przevalski's Partridge and Tibetan Partridge like singing on the slopes after sunrise and are relatively easy to find. Other common species we saw here including Red-throated Thrush, Black-throated Thrush, White-winged Grosbeak, White-browed Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit, etc.



Goitered Gazelle



White-browed Tit Warbler

4. Gangcha County

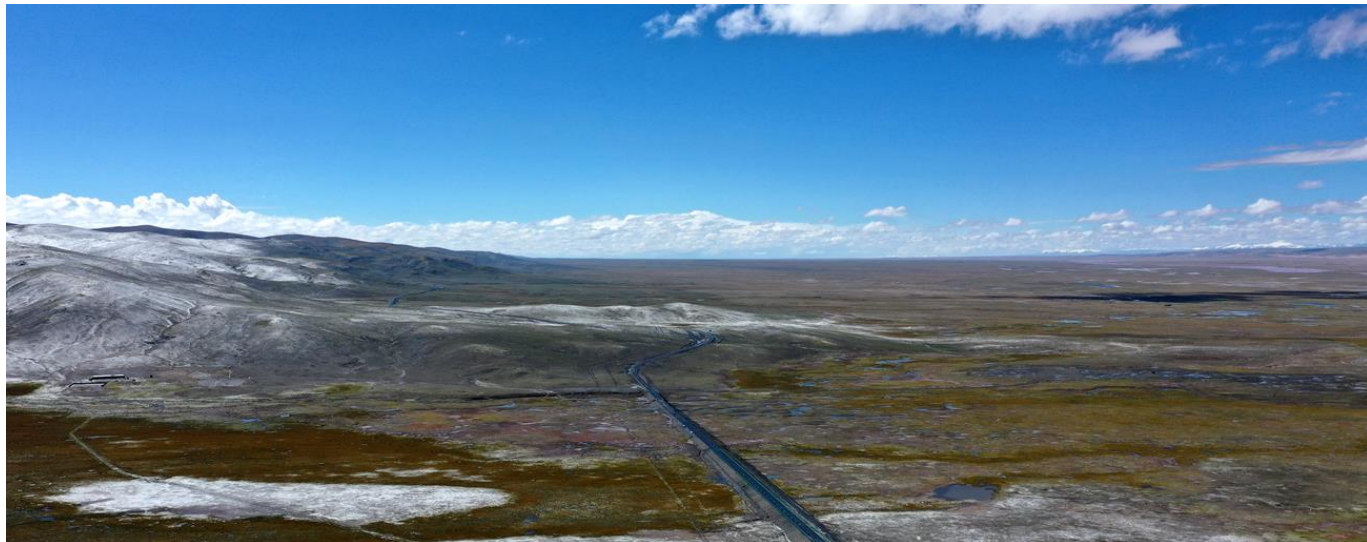
Located north of Qinghai Lake, the sandy grassland area in Gangcha is an ideal habitat for Przewalski's Gazelle, the probability of spotting them in this area is like 99%. Przewalski's Gazelle was once widely distributed in Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. Due to the impact of human activities and habitat deterioration, the population of this species has declined and the range of the species has been drastically reduced, and now it only inhabits a few counties around Qinghai Lake. During our trip in Jan, we encountered several clusters of Przewalski's Gazelle, with males fighting each other and chasing females.



Przewalski's Gazelle



Przewalski's Gazelle



Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Scenery

5. Dongxia Forest

Evergreen alpine coniferous is the main tree species in the woodland of Dongxia, and dense shrubs are also distributed in some open areas of the woodland, providing a good habitat for small forest birds. In winter, due to the pressure of fire prevention, the scenic area is closed to the public, but many small wintering birds can still be found in the woodlands of the surrounding villages, some highlight birds we saw here including Ala Shan Redstart, White-winged Redstart, White-throated Redstart, Red-throated Thrush, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Robin Accentor, Godlewski's Bunting, etc.



Ala Shan Redstart

6. Ning Hu Wetland

Ning Hu Wetland is located in the east of Xining City, with Huangshui river flows through it. Many water birds can be found here in winter, as we spotted Whooper Swan, Common Goldeneye, Tufted Duck, Ferruginous Pochard, Common Merganser, Smew, Mallard, Chinese Spot-billed Duck, etc. In addition, we also found some other urban birds in the woods and bushes of the wetland park, including Chinese Nuthatch, Silver-throated Bushtit, Plain Laughingthrush, Grey-headed Woodpecker, etc.



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