



2021_4 Days Ruergai Birding Tour



4 Days Ruergai Birding Tour

Sep 18-21, 2021

Trip report compiled by Bella Zhang



Sichuan Jay



Summary

We had a 4-day customized trip to Ruergai during this year's Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. Ruergai is a vast grassland located on the eastern edge of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau that is known as the 'lungs of Sichuan'. The habitat diversity that Ruergai provides is high, including grasslands, wetlands, alpine coniferous forests, and shrubs. To maximize the chances of finding our target species, we spent most of our time in the forest, with only a brief visit to Flower Lake on the grassland. We had great success as not only did we enjoy great views of a high number of distinctive plateau birds such as Blue Eared Pheasant, Sichuan Jay, Black-necked Crane, Przevalski's 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, Chinese Fulvetta, etc., but we also had fantastic views of some plateau mammals like Tibetan Fox, Sika Deer, Siberian Roe Deer, Siberian Weasel, etc.



Details of the Trip

Day 1 (Sep. 18th): Arrival in Huanglong, then drove to Diebu.

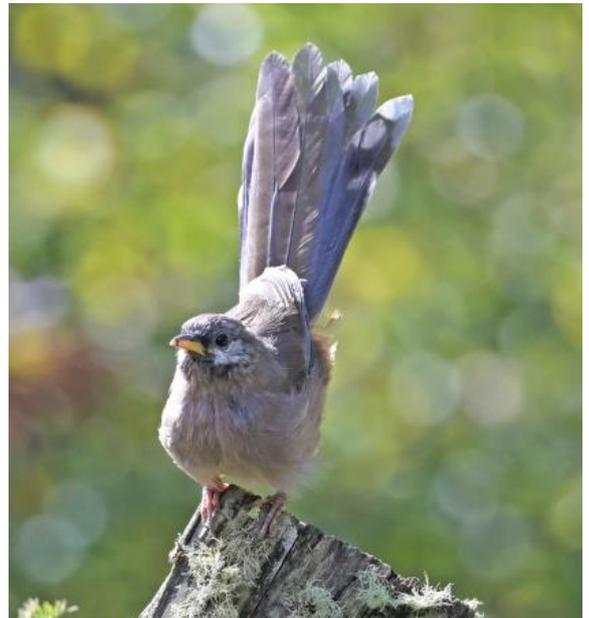
Our flight was delayed for 2 hours due to the heavy rain in the morning. After meeting at the airport, we drove to the plateau directly. After a 1-hour drive, we reached the edge of the plateau. We were welcomed by a pair of Black-necked Cranes foraging on the snowy grassland. Soon after, we found a Tibetan Fox by the roadside. It was peeking at us behind a small mound for a while before running away. We continued our exploration along the drive to Diebu. Despite the rain, we managed to see Ruddy Shelduck, Himalayan Griffon, Black Kite, Upland Buzzard, White-rumped Snowfinch, Ground Tit, Daurian Jackdaw, Common Raven, Azure-winged Magpie, Black-rumped Magpie, Red-billed Chough, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Buff-barred Warbler, etc.



Ground Tit

Day 2 (Sep. 19th): Diebu to Ruergai.

We started our morning in the nearby village where we found a small flock of Green-backed Tit and Yellow-bellied Tit. We also found Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, and Little Bunting in this area. We then drove further up to the shrubby area of the coniferous forest edge. We soon found a female Sika Deer and a fawn by the roadside, followed shortly by nice views of a Siberian Weasel. We were also rewarded with great looks at Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Plain Laughingthrush, Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Grey-crested Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, Sichuan Tit, Sooty Tit, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Japanese Tit, Hume's Leaf Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Long-tailed Minivet, Himalayan Bluetail, Hodgson's Redstart, White-throated Redstart, Blue-fronted Redstart, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Twite, Common Crossbill, Oriental Turtle Dove, Godlewski's Bunting, etc.



Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush

After a successful morning, we drove back to Ruergai along a gorge. Several stops for the gorgeous scenery also produced a Northern Goshawk, a small flock of Salim Ali's Swifts, and some nice additional views of the species we saw this morning. Since a storm was in the forecast, we did a quick search on a pasture where we found Horned Lark, Ground Tit, White-rumped Snowfinch, Upland Buzzard, Black Kite, etc. Besides, two fighting Siberian Roe Deers were spotted on the top of a slope. The drive back to our hotel didn't bring up new species, but nice and close views of more Upland Buzzard, Plateau Pika, White-rumped Snowfinch, etc.

Day 3 (Sep. 20th): Baxi Forest & Flower Lake.

Our morning in the Baxi Forest didn't start quite the way we had hoped it would, as our search brought up no Blue Eared Pheasant in those regular slopes. Road construction in this area in the past two years could be one of the main reasons. The good thing is that the well-paved road largely cuts the drive time. We then walked into the forest. For starters, we picked up Crested Tit-Warbler, Grey-crested Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, Common Pheasant, Chinese Fulvetta, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, White-bellied Redstart, Goldcrest, etc. Not long after, a strange call was heard from the woods. It was the Sichuan Jay! One of the most desirable birds of China. We luckily got a small flock of five jays. They stuck around for about ten minutes before disappeared into the woods. We then drove back to the grassland. A Chinese Grey Shrike was spotted on a wire during the drive.



Crested Tit-Warbler

For the afternoon, we visited Flower Lake. The ticket office had moved to the other side of the road. It took us five minutes to walk from the ticket office to the shuttle bus, then a short shuttle ride followed by a walk of about 1.5 km that eventually brought us to the edge of the lake. We wasted no time in getting to birding and photography. Although it was not the best season, we managed to see some nice waterfowl like Black-necked Crane, Ruddy Shelduck, Greylag Goose, Red-crested Pochard, Northern Shoveler, Black-necked Grebe, Pallas's Gull, etc.

Day 4 (Sep. 21st): Baxi Forest & Departure.

We went back to Baxi and visited two valleys this morning. The first valley provided us excellent views of three Siberian Roe Deers and a bunch of sought-after species like Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Sichuan Tit, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Lammergeier, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, etc. We went to the second valley around noon time where we were surprised by a flock of five Blue Eared Pheasants near the forest edge. Other birds spotted here including White-throated Redstart, Siberian Stonechat, Great Spotted Woodpecker, etc., in addition to nice views of more White-browed Tit Warbler and Crested Tit Warbler.



Przevalski's Nuthatch

After lunch, we left the forest and drove back to Huanglong to catch our late afternoon flight. A few brief stops along the way for birds and photos helped to pass the time quite nicely until we said goodbye to each other at the airport.

Bird species recorded (94 seen in total)

No.	English Name	Scientific Name	Chinese Name
Phasianidae			GALLIFORMES
			雉科
1	Blue Eared Pheasant	<i>Crossoptilon auritum</i>	蓝马鸡
2	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	雉鸡
Anatidae			ANSERIFORMES
			鸭科
3	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	灰雁
4	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	琵嘴鸭
5	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	赤膀鸭
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	绿头鸭
7	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	赤嘴潜鸭
8	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	红头潜鸭
9	Ferruginous Duck/Ferruginous Pochard	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	白眼潜鸭
Podicipedidae			PODICIPEDIFORMES
			鸕鹚科
10	Slavonian /Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	角鸕鹚
11	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	黑颈鸕鹚
Ardeidae			PELECANIFORMES
			鹭科
12	Chinese Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>	池鹭
13	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	大白鹭
14	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	白鹭
Phalacrocoracidae			SULIFORMES
			鸬鹚科
15	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	普通鸬鹚
Accipitridae			ACCIPITRIFORMES
			鹰科
16	Bearded Vulture/Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	胡兀鹰
17	Himalayan Griffon/ Vulture	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	高山兀鹰
18	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	雀鹰
19	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	黑鸢
20	Crested Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	凤头蜂鹰
21	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	苍鹰
22	Upland Buzzard	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>	大鵟
23	Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>	普通鵟
Rallidae			GRUIFORMES
			秧鸡科
24	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	骨顶鸡
Gruidae			GRUIFORMES
			鹤科
25	Black-necked Crane	<i>Grus nigricollis</i>	黑颈鹤
Laridae			CHARADRIIFORMES
			鸥科
26	Brown-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus</i>	棕头鸥
27	Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaeus</i>	渔鸥
Columbidae			COLUMBIFORMES
			鸠鸽科
28	Rufous/Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	山斑鸠
Apodidae			APODIFORMES
			雨燕科
29	Salim Ali's Swift	<i>Apus salimalii</i>	青藏白腰雨燕
Picidae			PICIFORMES
			啄木鸟科
30	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	大斑啄木鸟
31	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>	灰头绿啄木鸟

	Falconidae	FALCONIFORMES	隼科
32	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	红隼
	Campephagidae	PASSERIFORMES	鹟鵂科
33	Long-tailed Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>	长尾山椒鸟
	Laniidae	PASSERIFORMES	伯劳科
34	Grey-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius tephronotus</i>	灰背伯劳
35	Chinese Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius sphenocercus</i>	楔尾伯劳
	Corvidae	PASSERIFORMES	鸦科
36	Sichuan Jay	<i>Perisoreus internigrans</i>	黑头噪鸦
37	Azure-winged Magpie	<i>Cyanopica cyanus</i>	灰喜鹊
38	Black-rumped Magpie	<i>Pica bottanensis</i>	青藏喜鹊
39	Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i>	红嘴山鸦
40	Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus dauuricus</i>	达乌里寒鸦
41	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	大嘴乌鸦
42	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	渡鸦
	Paridae	PASSERIFORMES	山雀科
43	Rufous-vented Tit	<i>Periparus rubidiventris</i>	黑冠山雀
44	Yellow-bellied Tit	<i>Pardaliparus venustulus</i>	黄腹山雀
45	Grey-crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes dichrous</i>	褐冠山雀
46	Sichuan Tit	<i>Poecile weigoldicus</i>	川褐头山雀
47	Ground Tit	<i>Pseudopodoces humilis</i>	地山雀
48	Japanese Tit	<i>Parus minor</i>	远东山雀
49	Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>	绿背山雀
	Alaudidae	PASSERIFORMES	百灵科
50	Shore Lark/Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	角百灵
	Hirundinidae	PASSERIFORMES	燕科
51	Asian /Common House Martin	<i>Delichon dasypus</i>	烟腹毛脚燕
	Aegithalidae	PASSERIFORMES	长尾山雀科
52	Sooty Bushtit	<i>Aegithalos fuliginosus</i>	银脸长尾山雀
53	White-browed Tit Warbler	<i>Leptopoeile sophiae</i>	花彩雀莺
54	Crested Tit Warbler	<i>Leptopoeile elegans</i>	凤头雀莺
	Phylloscopidae	PASSERIFORMES	柳莺科
55	Alpine Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus occisinensis</i>	华西柳莺
56	Yellow-streaked Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus armandii</i>	棕眉柳莺
57	Buff-barred Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>	橙斑翅柳莺
58	Chinese Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus yunnanensis</i>	云南柳莺
59	Sichuan Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus forresti</i>	四川柳莺
60	Hume's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	淡眉柳莺
	Leiothrichidae	PASSERIFORMES	噪鹛科
61	Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax sukatschewi</i>	黑额山噪鹛
62	Giant Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax maximus</i>	大噪鹛
63	Pere David's /Plain Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax davidi</i>	山噪鹛
64	Elliot's Laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron elliotii</i>	橙翅噪鹛
	Sylviidae	PASSERIFORMES	莺鹟科
65	Chinese Fulvetta	<i>Fulvetta striaticollis</i>	高山雀鹟
	Regulidae	PASSERIFORMES	戴菊科
66	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	戴菊

	Sittidae	PASSERIFORMES	鸚科
67	Przevalski's Nuthatch	<i>Sitta przewalskii</i>	白脸鸚
	Certhiidae	PASSERIFORMES	旋木雀科
68	Bar-tailed Treecreeper	<i>Certhia himalayana</i>	高山旋木雀
	Turdidae	PASSERIFORMES	鶇科
69	White-backed /Kessler's Thrush	<i>Turdus kessleri</i>	棕背黑头鶇
	Muscicapidae	PASSERIFORMES	鶇科
70	White-bellied Redstart	<i>Hodgsonius phaenicuroides</i>	白腹短翅鶇
71	Himalayan Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>	蓝眉林鶇
72	Hodgson's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i>	黑喉红尾鶇
73	White-throated Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i>	白喉红尾鶇
74	Blue-fronted Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>	蓝额红尾鶇
75	Plumbeous Water Redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosa</i>	红尾水鶇
76	White-capped Water Redstart	<i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>	白顶溪鶇
77	Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>	黑喉石鶇
78	Dark-sided Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>	乌鶇
79	Slaty-backed Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula hodgsonii</i>	锈胸蓝姬鶇
80	Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	红喉姬鶇
	Passeridae	PASSERIFORMES	雀科
81	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	麻雀
82	White-rumped Snowfinch	<i>Onychostruthus taczanowskii</i>	白腰雪雀
83	Rufous-necked Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda ruficollis</i>	棕颈雪雀
	Prunellidae	PASSERIFORMES	岩鶇科
84	Rufous-breasted Accentor	<i>Prunella strophiatea</i>	棕胸岩鶇
	Motacillidae	PASSERIFORMES	鹡鸰科
85	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	灰鹡鸰
86	Pied Wagtail/White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	白鹡鸰
87	Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	树鹡鸰
	Fringillidae	PASSERIFORMES	燕雀科
88	Grey-headed Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula erythaca</i>	灰头灰雀
89	Plain Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	林岭雀
90	Chinese White-browed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus dubius</i>	白眉朱雀
91	Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>	黄嘴朱顶雀
92	Common /Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	红交嘴雀
	Emberizidae	PASSERIFORMES	鶇科
93	Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	小鶇
94	Godlewski's Bunting	<i>Emberiza godlewskii</i>	戈氏岩鶇
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	Note: (*) = New species		

Mammal Species recorded (6 seen in total)

No.	English name	Scientific name	Chinese name
	Canidae	CARNIVORA	犬科
1	Tibetan Fox	<i>Vulpes ferrilata</i>	藏狐
	Mustelidae	CARNIVORA	鼬科
2	Siberian Weasel	<i>Mustela sibirica</i>	黄鼬
	Cervidae	ARTIODACTYLA	鹿科
3	Sika Deer	<i>Cervus hortulorum</i>	梅花鹿
4	Siberian Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus pygargus</i>	狍
	Sciuridae	RODENTIA	松鼠科
5	Himalayan Marmot	<i>Marmota himalayana</i>	喜马拉雅旱獭
	Ochotonidae	LAGOMORPHA	鼠兔科
6	Plateau Pika	<i>Ochotona curzoniae</i>	高原鼠兔
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	Note: (*) = New species		



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