



JAPAN IN WINTER

Ryukyu extension 16th -21st Jan

Main tour 22nd Jan – 4th Feb

Pelagic extension 4th – 5th Feb, 2023

Tour leader & Report - Charley Hesse



Japan in Winter holds some of the most iconic birds in the world and is a 'bucket list' destination for any world birder. This epic tour was made even more so this year by running our first Ryukyu extension which was very successful. Japan has a huge climatic range from the icy wastes of Hokkaido to the subtropical forests of Okinawa, and there is an associated change in the wildlife. This tour is composed of distinct sections which comprise the separate islands. The Ryukyu extension visited the main island of Okinawa and the forests of Kunigami village in the north that held the Okinawa Rail, Woodpecker & Robin. On the island of Amami, we saw the Amami Woodcock, Thrush and beautiful Lidth's Jay. On the main tour, Honshu highlights included the Japanese Serow, Giant Flying Squirrel and Snow Monkeys of the Japanese alps and a huge diversity of waterfowl in the western Honshu wetlands. The northern island of Hokkaido holds the biggest drawcards of the tour, with the humungous Blackiston's Fish-Owl, **Steller's Sea-Eagle** and elegant Red-crowned Crane. Kyushu had over 10,000 cranes of 5 species including the very special Siberian Crane, plus the pint-sized Japanese Murrelet. Those that joined the post-tour extension saw the endemic Izu Thrush, Robin and Owston's Tits on the island of Miyakejima and huge numbers of albatrosses including Short-tailed on the return ferry. It was a truly amazing trip.

RYUKYU EXTENSION16th January – Naha to Kunigami

The endemic race of Japanese Scops-Owl is the most difficult of the 3 species here.

The car hire company only opened at 9am, so we didn't need to wake up too early, they picked us up in a van and took us to the office, where we did the paperwork for the vehicle. We had a while before the final participant for the extension showed up, so we nipped down to Triangle Pond very briefly to look at the 20 or so **Black-faced Spoonbills**. There were plenty of other birds including a few common ducks, **Black-winged Stilt** and **Common Snipe**. We parked at the airport and waited at arrivals. When he had arrived we set off for the north of the island and Kunigami which is the home of all Okinawa's forest endemics. Along the coast on the way, we saw **Osprey**, **Pacific Reef Heron** and several **Blue Rock-Thrushes**. After checking in at our well-located hotel, we set out to start our birding. We had only 2 days to find some tricky endemics. Driving along some forest roads was pretty quiet and all we managed to see were our first **Warbling White-eyes**, a few **Pale Thrushes** and a **Whistling Green Pigeon** that we flushed from the ground. We drove back for dinner at the lodge which was a nice hot veggie casserole, before going for a night drive. We heard a few interesting noises, then finally flushed a **Japanese Scops-Owl** perched low down next to the road. We relocated it and all got out to photograph this distinctive, localized subspecies *pryeri*, which stands a good chance of being split. This was actually the most difficult of the 3 species of owl here.

17th January – Kunigami



Okinawa Rail was voted bird of the extension.

We set out before breakfast in the dark to do some more owling and found our second owl of the trip, the **Ryukyu Scops-Owl**. We scanned the road edges at dawn hoping for the Okinawa Rail. We heard several birds but none came out. We did find a spot where **Okinawa Woodpecker** was calling and we managed good flight and brief perched views. Also present was the **Okinawa Robin** which popped out briefly, then hid skulking in the undergrowth. We also added the localized subspecies of **Large-billed Crow**, **Japanese Bush-Warbler** and **Japanese Tit** before heading back for breakfast. After breakfast, we set off for Fungawa Dam where we had our first **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** and **Brown-eared Bulbul**. A few more stops in the morning produced **Japanese Woodpigeon**, **Whistling Green-Pigeon**, **Varied Tit**, **Red-flanked Bluetail** and **Ryukyu Minivet** before we stopped for lunch in Kunigami village, where we had an **Osprey** fly over. There was a huge *Yambaru Kuina* (the local name for Okinawa Rail) themed gift shop which we checked out. In the afternoon tried for better looks at some of the targets we had seen, and after dark, we found a **Northern Boobook** perched on the roof of the hotel. After dinner, we explored a nearby trail into the forest, but no rails were evident through my heat scope. We did find several **Ryukyu Long-furred Rats** though. After our walk, everybody was a bit tired so decided to call it a night. I thought it might be worth trying one more time to track down the **Okinawa Rail** and so drove along the main road to a side road we had been down several times. I started walking along the road, scanning with my thermal device. I had only been going a few minutes when I saw 2 red blotches across from the side of the road. They were a little obscured but I kept trying to locate the source of the heat signature and eventually found a sleeping **Okinawa Rail** about 30 meters away. I had to climb down from the wall in order to get a clear shot, but after I had, I jumped back in the car to pick up the clients who were all very grateful I had woken them up. It was a huge relief to have seen the main target of the extension and we all went to bed late but happy.

18th January - Kunigami to Amami



Ryukyu Scops-Owl has distinctive yellow eyes.

We went out again pre-dawn to look for owls. Even though we had seen all 3 species, we still wanted better photos. We drove to the beginning of the forest road, right where we had seen the rail last night and found it was still there. We carried on along the road listening for **Ryukyu Scops** and heard a distant one before a **Northern Boobook** called a lot closer. It gave us a bit of a run around, but we ended up with good views and a couple of photos. The **Ryukyu Scops-Owl** also finally showed and gave us brief views. We drove further down the road and found **Okinawa Robins** again. We had a few **Japanese Woodpigeons** clattering about in the trees and **Pale Thrushes** on the road, before we went back to pack our bags and eat breakfast. We started driving south, stopping for a couple of **Gray-faced Buzzards** on the way. We had just enough time to stop in at the Kin Rice Paddies to pad our lists with the likes of **Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Pacific Golden & Little Ringed Plovers**, before driving back to Naha to drop off the vehicle and check in for our flights to Amami. The flight and logistics on the other end were all smooth as silk and we were soon driving to our hotel in Amami's main town, Naze. On the way we saw a medium sized bird fly across the road and perch on a wire. As I looked closer, I saw that it was the Amami endemic **Lidth's Jay**. Unbelievable! We pulled over and relocated it for great views. What a start! We also had **Grey-faced Buzzard** and **Blue Rock-Thrush**. After dropping our stuff, we headed straight out to a local site called Kinsakubaru. It was a narrow and winding road to get up there, and at the top, we parked the car and started walking along the gravel track through the beautiful forest. When it got darker, I started checking the track ahead with my thermal scope. I had a large bright red heat signature which was our first **Amami Rabbit**, our main mammal target of the extension. We also saw several **Ryukyu Long-furred Rats** up in the trees with their long white tails hanging down. We also had our best views of **Ryukyu Scops-Owl** and they posed very well for photos. Another big target was the endemic **Amami Woodcock**. We flushed a couple of individuals from the roadside that were hiding in cover.

19th January - Amami

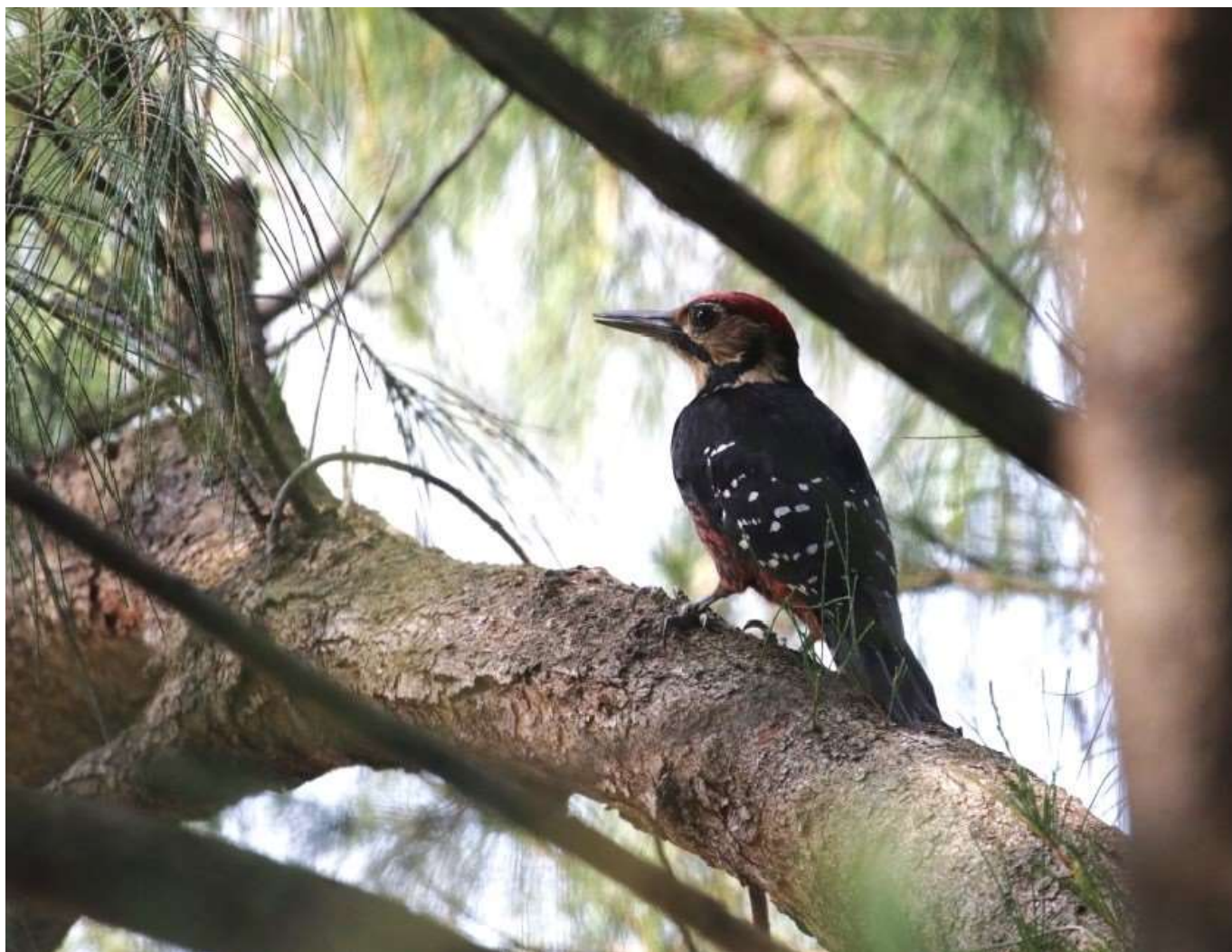
Amami Thrush is incredibly well camouflaged against the leaf litter.

This morning I decided to try a different site and we walked to the hotels second car par a block away. After a small mishap in the dark, we were on our way to the Amami Nature Observation Forest about 40 minutes away. This very well appointed facility had fantastic forest and wasn't quite so dense as Kinsakubaru, making it easier to see the birds. On the way up we flushed another **Amami Woodcock**. As soon as we arrived, we heard **Amami Thrushes** calling in the trees and very soon we found one perching next to us, although only the back end. We also had a great view of the very distinctive subspecies of **White-backed Woodpecker** here, often referred to as Owston's Woodpecker. We started exploring the trails and clearing in the reserve and had our best view of **Amami Thrush**. The drizzle turned to rain and we went under a shelter nearby. It eased off a bit and we soon found a pair of **Ryukyu Robins** with the heat scope which showed very well. From here we drove along the road a little and found **Olive-backed Pipits**, both **Whistling Green** and **Japanese Woodpigeons**, along with a beautiful view. The rain got heavier again, and we descended the mountains and explore an area of rice fields that produced many **Common Snipe**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **White-breasted Waterhen** and we heard a **Ruddy-breasted Crake**. The power lines had **Grey-faced Buzzard** and **Eurasian Kestrel**, and the nearby scrub also produced a couple of male **Siberian Rubythroats**, **Masked Bunting**, **Daurian Redstart** and many **Pale Thrushes** and **Japanese Bush-Warblers**. We went back to town for lunch and a rest before making our way back up to the Nature Observation Forest in the late afternoon. We had a few of the same forest birds and waited for dusk before walking along the road looking for **Amami Woodcock**. We didn't find any, but did get good views of **Northern Boobook** and **Ryukyu-Scops Owl**. After rather a slow meal in a local izakaya, we hit the hay ahead of another early start.

20th January - Amami

Lidth's Jay is the easiest of Amami's 3 endemic birds.

We started the day at Tatsugo at a nearby lighthouse looking for **Amami Woodcocks** again. We wound our way around a narrow mountain road and flushed a likely looking bird which quickly disappeared. The view of the sea was lovely, and we took a walk along the road seeing **Japanese Woodpigeon** and **Lidth's Jay**. Next, we drove up to the Nature Observation Forest again. The weather was much nicer today and the light was better for photography. We got nice photos of **Lidth's Jay**, the Amami endemic subspecies of **Japanese Tit** plus great views of **Amami Thrush**. Afterwards, we drove back down and stopped a couple of places along the water for **Japanese & Great Cormorants**. We made our way to Ose Beach which was wonderful. It was low tide and there were lots of birds around the extensive rock pool with several ducks, with **Gadwall**, **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Northern Shoveler** and **Common Shelduck** and a few shorebirds, including **Black-bellied**, **Kentish**, and **Little Ringed Plovers**, **Lesser Sand-Plover**, and **Dunlin**, plus a few other things like **Osprey**, **Pacific Reef Heron** and **Grey-faced Buzzards** flying overhead. The biggest surprise though was the rare **Japanese Waxwing** that flew over and landed in a distant tree. We got it in the scope and saw the bright red tip to the tail. We met a local birder who put us onto some spoonbills nearby.



The distinctive *owstoni* race of White-backed Woodpecker is a potential split.

We drove over and found 2 **Black-faced**, plus 1 **Eurasian Spoonbill** and also our best views of **Owston's Woodpecker** and even a **Common Kingfisher**. We drove to the local village to try and find some lunch and after a bit of searching found a nice *bento* takeaway, which we took to a spot with a view of the bay. A car pulled up and it was an old friend of mine that lived on the island. He gave me some good gen on places to go, and we spotted a **Caspian Tern** together before he left to go and try to twitch the waxwing we had found yesterday. We drove back to Naze to charge our batteries and rest for a couple of hours before heading out again in the late afternoon. Our mission was to find the **Amami Woodcock**. We had been told that a good place was a big recreational park in the mountains called Forestpolis. We arrived with an hour or so before dusk so we could case out the joint. We positioned ourselves in a spot for the woodcocks and right at dusk we started walking around some grassy areas close to the forest. We first spotted an **Amami Rabbit**, then a **Ryukyu Scops-Owl**, hunting from some low branches, then finally heard a woodcock calling. We saw its shape in the dark, but it quickly flew off before I could get the light on it. A while later, I found another one with the thermal scope and we finally had good views in the spotlight. What relief! We drove back, very happy to have cleaned up, and had a very fun dinner of *okonomiyaki* (A large vegetable pancake cooked on a hotplate at your table), back in Naze.

21st January – Amami



We saw both Black-faced & Eurasian Spoonbills on Amami.

Having cleaned up in the forest, we didn't have to drag ourselves out of bed in the dark again and enjoyed our first Japanese breakfast in the hotel. We checked out and spent the morning driving around some of the coastal and agricultural birding sites. Our first stop was back at the Akina rice paddies. It was fairly cold and overcast today and bird activity was low, but we did add our first **Zitting Cisticola** and **Ruddy-breasted Crake** of the trip. The latter was responsive but in dense grass. Luckily it flew up and across a gap giving us brief flight views. Some of the other interesting species included **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Common Snipe**, **Eurasian Kestrel** and **Gray-faced Buzzard**. We set off to bird the airport area and had a couple of brief stops to photograph **Japanese Cormorant** and **Pacific Reef Heron**. We checked out the agricultural areas near the airport, but most were sugar cane fields which didn't hold much other than a few **Dusky Thrushes**. We dropped in at the Suno Dam though, where we added **Common Pochard** and **Tufted Duck**, and **Gray-faced Buzzards** were numerous here. We had time for one last site which was the Ose coast which we had visited previously. The tide was a bit higher but there was still plenty of activity and we added some new birds, including **Ruddy Turnstone** and **Little Grebe**. There were lots of other birds there too, like **Common Shelduck**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Common Greenshank**, **Dunlin**, **Black-bellied**, **Pacific Golden**, **Kentish**, **Lesser Sand-** and **Little Ringed Plovers**. Plenty of other common stuff too. Our time was up, and we drove back to the airport, dropped the car, checked in for our flight, had a spot of lunch and flew back to Tokyo after a very enjoyable and productive extension.

MAIN TOUR

22nd January – Narita to Karuizawa



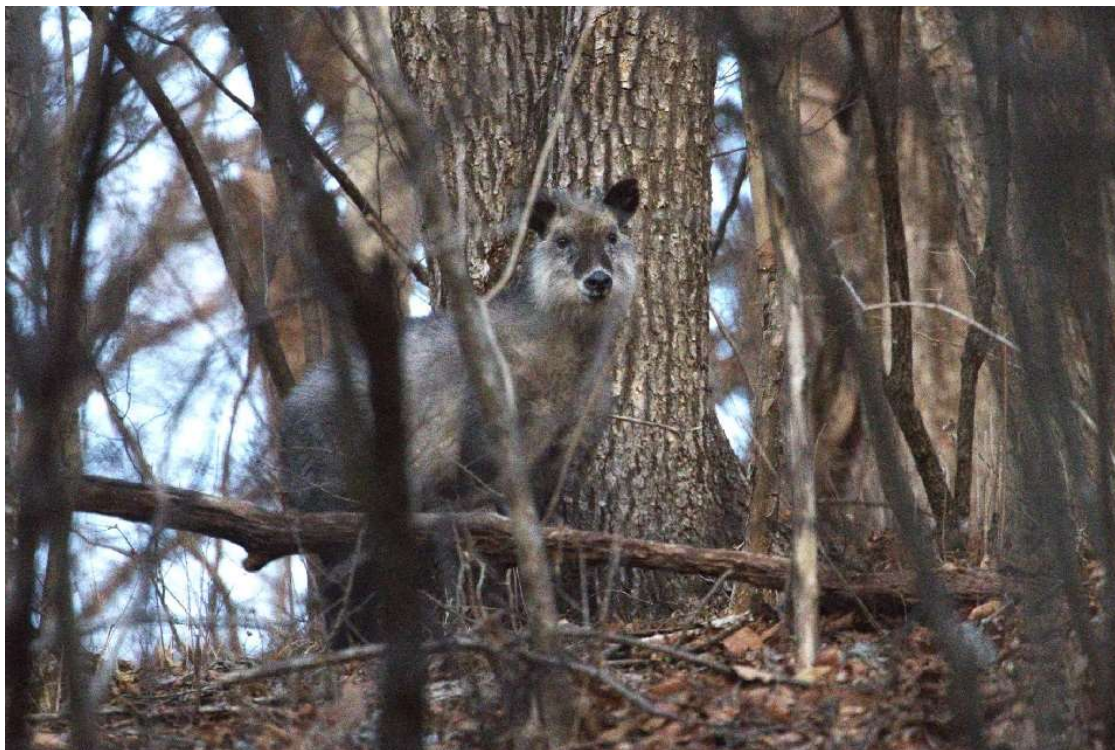
Long-tailed Rosefinch. A study in pink.

On every Japan tour, we have a bit of flexibility on the first morning over where we bird. I usually check sightings and chase a rarity in the Tokyo area. This year I had noticed sightings of the endangered **Oriental Stork** halfway to Karuizawa at a place called Watarase Reservoir on the borders of Tochigi, Gunma & Saitama prefectures. On the way, we glimpsed a few species like **Eurasian Jay** and **White-cheeked Starling**. It was a large, heart-shaped reservoir used for recreational purposes by the locals. We were actually surprised how many birders and bird photographers we saw when we arrived. We started seeing birds as soon as we were out of the vehicle and picked up **Rustic Bunting** and **Brown-eared Bulbul**. There was some sort of bird club outing and I quizzed the locals in Japanese about the best place to see the storks and the rather vague answers seemed to indicate over the other side of the lake. There were 3 long causeways that met in the middle of the reservoir and we birded our way along one, seeing many waterbirds, including **Common Merganser**, **Smew**, **Osprey** and **Common Kingfisher** plus large numbers of commoner ducks. Passerines were plentiful too and we saw **Meadow** and **Masked Buntings**, **Daurian Redstart** and the lovely **Long-tailed Rosefinch**.



Oriental Stork is making a comeback in Japan after it was almost extirpated.

When we reached the other side, we saw **Bull-headed Shrike** being ignored by a crowd of bird photographers and several **Hawfinches** feeding on a lawn. After using the restrooms, we turned along a long path through the reeds towards where I had been indicated by the birder. After a short while, Stavros spotted the **Oriental Stork** flying overhead. What a piece of luck! This place was huge and we could have easily missed it. On the long walk back, we spotted some more **Long-tailed Rosefinches** and our first **Brown-headed Thrush** of the trip before getting back to the car and driving to lunch. En route to Karuizawa, we picked up **Eastern Buzzard** and **Eurasian Sparrowhawk**. To maximize birding time, we went straight to the birding site, a place that I had seen the rare endemic Copper Pheasant in the past. We stopped at a few laybys to scan the forest floor for the pheasants before climbing up the steps to disused train station. It was pretty quiet, but we did manage to find a few birds, including **Japanese Accentor**, **Eurasian Wren**, **Japanese & Varied Tits**, **Japanese Pygmy** and the endemic **Japanese Woodpecker**. It was just starting to get dark when we got into our charming wooden lodge. After settling in we went to a local tradition Japanese restaurant and afterwards went on a short night drive. It was quieter than usual and all we managed to find were 3 **Sika Deer** before calling it a day.

23rd January – Karuizawa

Japanese Serow is an endemic type of mountain goat.

We started the day with a pre-breakfast drive along the edge of the wild bird forest. There had been no snow recently and the road was easy driving. We stopped where we could and got out to scan the slopes, covered in copper-colored leaves, the same color as the Copper Pheasants. Again, no pheasant, but we did get a nice pair of **Brown Dippers** on the stream and a tiny **Eurasian Wren**. We also checked a few nest boxes to check for any Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel heads poking out. After a nice western-style breakfast back at the lodge, we drove to a nearby hotel with feeders, although when we got there, they informed us that they were not putting food out at the moment as it had attracted monkeys. There were still plenty of birds around and we added **Coal & Willow Tits**, plus the endemic, buff-bellied race of **Eurasian Nuthatch**. We drove back up the old road to the abandoned railway station, getting out to scan more of the slopes. It was a little tedious, but we did see **Rustic Bunting**, **Daurian Redstart** and nice views of **Japanese Accentor**. From here we drove to the town of Saku, first along a very winding mountain road, then along the highway. After a quick lunch of *sushi*, we went down to Saku reservoir which was full of ducks. The majority were **Mallards** and **Eastern Spot-billed Ducks** but also a few **Common Pochard**, **Northern Pintail**, a few stunning male **Falcated Duck**, many male **Smew** and a single **Common Merganser**. I heard a bird singing in the trees above our heads which I recognized as a **Japanese Grosbeak**. It flew before everybody got on it but perched on top of a distant tree long enough for all to see. We walked along the edge of the river to a spot with a few bird photographers. Scanning from here we found our target **Long-billed Plover**, along with **Green Sandpiper**, **Japanese Wagtail** and **Buff-bellied Pipit**. In the trees nearby we had a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and many **Long-tailed Tits**. We drove back to Karuizawa for a walk in the woods in the enduring hope of a Copper Pheasant. None appeared, but we lucked upon about 15 **Japanese Waxwings** and a wonderful **Japanese Serow**. After dinner at a fancy French restaurant, we went to spotlight for flying squirrels, but they were conspicuous in their absence.

24th January – Snow Monkey Park to Komatsu



Japanese Macaque contemplating a dip in the hot spring.

This morning was our last chance to look for Copper Pheasant in the Wild Bird Forest. We opted for walking a trail instead of scanning from the road. It was quiet but we did have a pair of **Brown Dippers** come flying down the stream that we were walking along. I used the thermal scope constantly scanning the forest floor for a heat signature, but all was cold and still. In a big clearing in the forest, we did get a nice view of **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, plus a few other common birds like **Japanese Tit**, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** and **Dusky Thrush**. Despite our efforts, we didn't find the pheasant, but we did find another target, the **Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel** which poked its head out of a nest box. After a quick breakfast back at the lodge, we packed up the vehicle and set off for the Snow Monkey Park in Nagano. It was quite a walk up from the parking lot and quite icy, but we got up there safely and spent a while taking picture of **Japanese Macaques** in the snow and in and around the hot spring pool. It started snowing more heavily and we set off carefully back down the trail. After a nice lunch we hit the road for what should have been a 3 and a half hour ride, but the snow got heavier and visibility worse. Progress was slow, but we made it over the highest point on the road and down towards the coast. It was going to be a long drive. After hitting the coast, conditions normally improve, but unfortunately they closed the highway at a point and we were stuck in a traffic jam for a long time. There also seemed to be an obstruction at the off ramp. After finally getting off we started driving on the regular roads, but at a point these also closed and we were not even sure we would make it to our hotel. We sheltered in a convenience store for a while and had a spot of dinner. I had heard from one road worker that the highway might be opening up again, and so it finally did. It was about 9.30pm before we finally arrived. The 3.5 hour drive had turned into 8 hours and we only just made it.

25th January – Western Honshu Wetlands

Hooded Crane with Bewick Swans.

Looking out of the hotel window during breakfast, the weather changed from clear and still to blustery snowstorms. I wasn't looking forward to today's birding. It hadn't snowed that much overnight, but the problem was the wind and icy conditions. We set off optimistically, heading for Katano Kamoike; a birding center looking over a duck-filled lake with the largest wintering population of **Baikal Teal** in Japan. We drove slowly and arrived without incident. The 2 employees were shovelling snow when we arrived and welcomed us warmly. Unfortunately, all the **Baikal Teal** were at the back of the lake and most had their bills tucked away, but we worked our way through the other wildfowl to find **Smew**, **Northern Shovelers** and **Common Pochard**. There were both **Taiga & Tundra Bean Geese** which we had a small ID workshop on. Some other birds around were **Masked Buntings**, **Japanese Wagtail** and a surprise **Eurasian Wryneck**. An even bigger surprise was a **Japanese Weasel** which ran quickly by with a fish in its mouth. We set off south to Awara in Fukui Prefecture, and arrived at a small lake with **Falcated Teal**, another **Baikal Teal** and one participant photographed some **Asian Rosy-Finches** flying over. We went on to the coast, where we had some **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, **Red-breasted Merganser** and a loon in flight. We drove along the coast and into the river mouth where there was a large collection of **Black-tailed Gulls** with a few **Vega Herring Gulls** and **Kamchatka Common Gulls**. After lunch we started making our way north, trying unsuccessfully for Gray-headed Lapwing, but did find some **Eared Grebes**. We finished at the large Shibayama Lake, where we saw more **Falcated Duck** and **Common Goldeneye**. From the dam wall we started seeing some distant **Bewick Swans** and also a few distant **White-fronted Geese**. We drove closer and found a track going towards them. Our last birding was photographing geese, swans and a single **Hooded Crane** that was with them. Some of the swans were flying with the backdrop of the Japanese alps, which was a wonderful scene to finish out the day.

26th January – Komatsu to Nemuro



Ural Owl in its usual spot.

I had to return the rental last night so after breakfast, we bundled into taxis and headed for the airport. It was still a bit blustery outside, but the flight was still on time, and after a short flight we arrived back in a very sunny Tokyo. We had a nice early lunch before getting on our 1 hour and 40 minute flight to Kushiro. Yesterday, the weather forecast had predicted snow, but it was blue skies and the roads were completely clear. Not something you normally expect in the Hokkaido winter. Since I wasn't worried about getting to Nemuro, we decided to try and get the **Ural Owl** under our belt, we headed inland to my secret stakeout passing several **Red-crowned Cranes** on the way. It had been 3 years since I had been here, and I hoped that the owls were still in the same place. We parked and walked the short distance along a trail which looked like it had been used recently, giving me hope. We got to the designated spot, and I looked across the gulch to see a beautiful, pale **Ural Owl** basking in the cool afternoon sun. What a relief, and what a bird! It was about 2 and a half hour drive to our *minshuku* (tradition Japanese lodge) where we were met by our hosts and treated to a wonderful home-cooked meal.

27th January – Nemuro Peninsular



Spectacled Guillemot is the commonest alcid in the area.

We started the day with a cold pre-breakfast walk around a nearby woodland where we picked up **Japanese** and **Coal Tit**. There were a few **Steller's Sea Eagles** flying around along with the odd loon and merganser passing by. We had a nice warm breakfast, looking out of the window at the feeders where we added **Marsh Tit** and **Greater Spotted Woodpecker**. Our boat ride today was at 11am, which was a rather inconvenient time. Nevertheless, I figured we would rush along to the end of the peninsular before coming all the way back. On the way out, Someone spotted a **Short-eared Owl** hunting over an open area and we stopped to put it in the scope. While we were looking at that, we also spotted our first **Rough-legged Buzzard**. We stopped briefly at the Onnemoto bird hide and scanned the sea although alcids were conspicuous in their absence. We did see plenty of common sea ducks including **Harlequin Ducks**, **Common Goldeneye** and **Black Scoter**, plus a rather lonely-looking **Black-headed Gull**. We carried on to the end of the peninsular and another viewing blind overlooking the sea. This time we got our first **Spectacled Murrelets**, **Common Murres**, **Red-necked & Horned Grebes** and tons of **Pelagic Cormorants**. We had to rush back to Ochiishi port in time for our boat ride which was absolutely fantastic. We had great views and photo opportunities of 4 species of alcids, the 2 we had seen already, plus **Pigeon Guillemot** and lots of **Ancient Murrelets**. Some other highlights were distant views of **Asian Rosy Finch** on a tiny island and a couple of **Stejneger's Scoters** mixed in with the numerous sea ducks. After lunch at a convenient store, we started making our way back along to Cape Nosappu, stopping in at Hanamisaki port where we had some nice photo opportunities of various sea ducks and gulls. We finished the birding day at the cape, seeing plenty of ducks, gulls and a few alcids, but the main target was **Red-faced Cormorant**, a bit of a local rarity. We scanned carefully through the numerous **Pelagic Cormorants** coming into roost on the icy cliffs, but as the light of the day began to fade, so did our hopes. We had practically given up when I decided to look at one last bird which turned out to be our target.

28th January – Nemuro to Rausu



Asian Rosy-Finches are one of the few passerines that brave the winter in eastern Hokkaido.

We went a few minutes away to a rest area for pre-breakfast birding. Some photographers were setting up to photograph some eagles down on the lake. We had a few flying over, but we were rather concentrating on songbirds. We didn't get any new species for the trip, but we did add a couple of distinctive subspecies from Hokkaido, like the white-headed **Long-tailed Tit** and very pale **Eurasian Nuthatch**, as well as nice views of **Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh & Coal Tits**. After another delicious breakfast with their homemade preserves, we said goodbye to our lovely hosts and hit the road. We tried searching the northern peninsular of Lake Furen for buntings and rosefinches, but only saw eagles, kites and all the sea ducks, including **Stejneger's Scoter**. We moved on to the Notsuke Peninsular hoping for grebes and loons, but again only ducks. We did get some lovely **Asian Rosy-Finches**, an impressive stag **Sika Deer** and on the way back along, a nice **Short-eared Owl**. After a little more seawatching after lunch, we made it to the **Blakiston's Fish-Owl** lodge and got the good news that we could use the rooms overlooking the pool. We started off watching from the restaurant. I had been told that they might only come in in the morning, but at 7pm on the dot, our first bird came in. It perched in the tree for a bit, then flew down to the pool, peering intensely for a fish. When it spotted one, it dived in feet first and started flapping about. A few seconds later it jumped out, still flapping its wings, the swallowed the fish straight away and returned to its perch. From then on, we had several more wonderful views of 2 owls fishing, both from the restaurant and then from our rooms, and a lot of great photos to remember them by.



Blakiston's Fish-Owl gave a great show.

29th January – Rausu



Ezo Fox is much brighter than the foxes in the rest of Japan.

We had an early wake up call around 5am when the **Blakiston's Fish Owls** had come in one more time, with 2 owls at the pond at the same time. We also had a beautiful **Ezo Fox** come in several times. We had breakfast around 7am, but the weather had turned and was now snowing with strong gusts. It didn't look good for the boat ride. After breakfast, we drove down to the nature cruise office in town, and after waiting a little to see if things got better, the boat captain called to cancel the trip. It seemed that even around midday, the weather was the same, so we I decided that we would try again for the boat ride tomorrow when it was supposed to be better. It was clear that there was going to be no birding this morning, so we went back to the lodge to pack up our bags and moved to the annex 5 minutes from the lodge, to allow other guests the rooms with the view over the feeding pond. There was a lot more space in the annex, which was a traditional style Japanese house. We settled in and relaxed for the rest of the morning before heading out for some lunch in town. After this the wind had died down some but still not great weather for birding. We drove along the coast for a bit and checked out a couple of small harbours and got a few photos of gulls and ducks. We visited a few different places and got some nice shots of Harlequin Ducks before heading back to the lodge. We had another early dinner after which we settled in with the other guests for another fish owl vigil. It was still gusty, which the owls don't like, and sure enough, by 9pm they still hadn't showed. Having seen them so many times and so well the day before, it didn't make any sense to stay any longer, so we went back to the house and called it a day.

30th January – Rausu to Tsurui



Steller's Sea-Eagle posing on the harbour wall.

We turned up for our last breakfast here, but we had packed the vehicle beforehand so we could get away straight after the boat ride. This morning was clear and still, and the conditions seemed perfect. We checked in at the office and went down to the harbor to get on the boat which left around 8.30am. The ice flow seems to get later and later every year, and there was no sign of it yet, but under these conditions, they throw frozen fish onto the water to allow photographers to photograph the **Steller's Sea-Eagles** and **White-tailed Eagles** swooping in to grab them off the water. It lasted for an hour and a half, and they positioned the boat in several ways to give a variety of shots. Finally, they pulled the boat next to the harbor wall and threw fish on top so we could get close ups of perched birds. We left Rausu happy campers and started our drive across Hokkaido to Tsurui village, north of Kushiro. We stopped on the way at Yoroushi to have a quick look for Solitary Snipe there without luck. After a quick lunch stop at another convenience store, we continued on to Tsurui arriving by early afternoon. There are several feeding stations of **Red-crowned Cranes** in the area, but we chose to visit Ito Sanctuary. The light was great when we arrived and there were about 150 Red-crowned Cranes gathered there. Somebody was just going out to put some grain out for them as we arrived, and they all flew up with a cacophony of bugling. They soon came back and started eating, with some birds also strutting up and down, or jumping up and down in their amazing display. We had arrived at 2pm, and even as early as 2:30pm, some of the gathered birds started taking off to their roosting site. A few at a time, they continued departing, and by around 3:30pm, they were also all gone. It had been a wonderful visit. There was little else other than **Brown-eared Bulbuls** and **Marsh Tit**, so we set off for our nearby lodge. It was a lovely early evening, with soft light reflecting off the snow and creating silhouettes of the trees behind the lodge. We enjoyed their large baths to warm up and a rather splendid 6-course meal to finish off the day.



Red-crowned Cranes dancing on the snow.

31st January & 1st February – Hokkaido to Izumi & Yatsushiro



The rare Siberian Crane is a vagrant to Japan.

The 31st was a pretty non-eventful travel day, made more tedious by a delayed flight which got us into Izumi a couple of hours late. The next day we started at the East Reclamation Area where thousands of cranes were leaving their roost of a flooded rice field to the road where they are fed nearby. The soundscape was as impressive as the sight and many people were recording it on their phones. We had thousands of **Hooded Cranes**, hundreds of the larger **White-naped Cranes**, plus singles of **Sandhill & Common Crane**, which took a little more time to pick out. This year an extra special bird had over-wintered; the **Siberian Crane**. This incredibly rare bird turns up every few years and this year was one of them. Following a tip off, we turned up at its favorite spot at 7.30am, and sure enough, there it was, foraging with some other cranes. We managed to position ourselves for photos without disturbing it, and then left it alone. What a bird! Next on the agenda were its fellow rallids. My favorite little creek came up trumps again with not only **Brown-cheeked Rail** and **Ruddy-breasted Crake** but also **Eurasian & Black-faced Spoonbills**, **Japanese Bush Warbler** and plenty of **Reed Buntings**. A couple of people missed the **Brown-cheeked Rail**, so we checked another site where one called and Graham made one of the spots of the trips and pointed out one feeding in the open. We also had our first **Daurian Jackdaws** flying over. We checked the Euchi River reedbeds for Chinese Penduline Tit, but came up empty-handed, although we did see **Daurian Redstart** and plenty of **Russet Sparrows**.



Brown-cheeked Rail & White-naped Cranes.



Saunders's Gull feeds on exposed mudflats.

Next on to the Crane Observation Center where we saw **Sandhill, Common, Hooded & White-naped Cranes** plus some more **Daurian Jackdaws** mixed in with the numerous **Rooks**. It was time to move on and we drove over an hour to the town of Yatsushiro where after a quick diner lunch, we drove down to the mudflats. In the river mouth we had **Gadwall**, tons of **Northern Pintail** and our first **Common Sandpiper**. At the mudflats, our main target was the rare **Saunders's Gull** of which we saw over 50, but also picked up **Common Shelduck**, a single **Baikal Teal**, **Great Crested Grebe**, tons of **Kentish Plovers** and **Dunlin** with a singles of **Eurasian Curlew**, **Common Greenshank**, hundreds of **Great Cormorants**, several close **Black-faced Spoonbills** and a couple of **Ospreys**. On the way out we checked some agricultural fields with another dozen **Saunders's Gulls** feeding, plus **Eastern Buzzards**, lots of **Eurasian Skylarks** and **Buff-bellied (American) Pipits**. It had been a great diversion but it was time to get back to Izumi and on the way back into town we picked up a **Eurasian Kestrel** perched on a post. We still had a few birds to chase and went back to the Euchi River reedbeds where we found our target **Chinese Penduline-Tit**, and nearby our first **European Starlings** (a rarity in Japan) and a splendid **Peregrine Falcon**. Finally, we explored some more paddies to find **Northern Lapwing**, **Eastern Buzzard**, **Bull-headed Shrike** and lots of **Oriental Greenfinches**. We stumbled upon an amazing creek which had **Brambling**, plenty of **Reed** plus **Chestnut-eared** and the rare **Little Bunting**. On our way back to our hotel we also saw our old friend, the **Siberian Crane**, before calling it a (very productive) day.

2nd February – Izumi to Kirishima

Mandarin Ducks were particularly numerous this year.

A short distance from Izumi was reservoir surrounded by lush forest. We stopped by a bridge on the way up and breathed in the cool mountain air. We scanned for Crested Kingfisher, but these birds' territories are long stretches of river and we didn't see it but we did get our first **White-bellied Green Pigeons**. We drove on up to the dam wall where we scanned across the reservoir to see dozens of **Mandarin Ducks** out on the water. We spent the next couple of hours driving around seeing what we could pick up. We got plenty of nice forest birds like **Varied, Japanese and Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Jay, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** and **Daurian Redstart**. At the far end of the lake, we walked around for a while, picking up **Common Kingfisher, Red-flanked Bluetail, Red-billed Leiothrix, Ryukyu Minivet** and a brief flyover of **Northern Goshawk**. We left there and carried on driving along the river when Graham spotted **Crested Kingfisher** on a low perch. We parked and walked back along to get great views of the kingfisher in the scope. We drove down into the town of Isa, where we found a nice flock of **Japanese Grosbeaks** feeding in a field. We tried a couple of bridges and finally found my target **Asian House Martins**. Further on we had a big flock of **Rooks** in a field by the roadside and stopped to scan through them to find quite a few **Daurian Jackdaws**, including a pale gray and black adult. We had a brief cultural stop at the Kirishima Shrine, but we saw a few birds in including some very close **Bramblings**. Our last birding site of the day was Miike, a volcanic lake surrounded by lush forest. We first went to the shrine that overlooked it, hoping for Yellow-throated Buntings. Before driving down to the campground, we chased a **White-bellied Woodpecker** around getting some nice views. Around the camp site, we picked up **Japanese, Varied & Long-tailed Tits, Eurasian Nuthatch, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** and the beautiful endemic **Japanese Green Woodpecker**. My usual spot for **Olive-backed Pipit** had a toddler running around on it, but after they cleared off, the birds quickly came down to feed. The temperature and light began to drop so we drove to our lovely lodge in the mountains where we enjoyed the hot springs and an incredible 7 course meal.

3rd February – Miike to Sadowara



Fifty percent of the world's Japanese Murrelets breed on Biro Island, off the village of Kadogawa.

After a delicious breakfast, we left the lodge and drove back towards Miike, spotting some more deer in the forest on the way. A big target was the very tough Gray Bunting. We turned down a side road and stopped a few times to investigate chipping notes. Finally, I glimpsed a male **Gray Bunting** hopping around a tangle above a ditch, but it quickly disappeared. We drove up to Miike scanning the roadsides for Copper Pheasant, then up the steep road to Kirishima Higashi shrine. We scanned a clearing there and found a **Daurian Redstart** and several **Masked Buntings** but no Gray or Yellow-throateds. On down to the campground, we walked around the same area as yesterday, and found **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Common Pochard** out on the water, **Eurasian Jays** calling noisily in the trees, **Red-billed Leiothrixes** chatting noisily in a wood pile, **Pale & Dusky Thrushes** hopping on the ground, and **Olive-backed Pipits** stalking the lawn. Our main target here was the beautiful **Yellow-throated Bunting** and we finally found a couple of pairs feeding down towards the lake. We had a look in the scope and got some pics before they flew off. Target in the bag, we set off towards the coast. After a quick lunch we drove down to the Kadogawa Fishing port where we met up with a local boat captain who was going to take us out looking for the rare **Japanese Murrelet**. Around the harbour, we found **Vega Gull**, **Osprey** and a pair of **Blue Rock-Thrushes**. We boarded the small fishing boat and chugged out of the harbour seeing **Great Crested Grebe** and several **Black-tailed Gulls**. It took us a long time to find the **Japanese Murrelet**, but I finally spotted one and we got nice and close for photos. What a relief! On the way back into port, we photographed a few other birds, like **Black-headed Gull**, **Japanese Cormorant** and **Pacific Reef-Heron**. Next, we drove to the very scenic Cape Hyuga where we took a nice walk, and the end of the day we spent down at a duck pond next to the Hitotsuse River. My hoped for Raccoon Dog never showed but we did see a few nice birds, including a perched **Northern Goshawk**, **Eastern Buzzard** and **Northern Lapwing** to finish out the day.

4th February – Sadowara to Miyazaki

As with many sightings of Baer's Pochard, the genetic purity of this individual has been questioned.

It was our last morning of birding on the main tour. We started exploring some rice field near the Hitotsuse River that had been productive in the past. Driving around the small roads we saw **Northern Lapwing**, lots of **Eurasian Skylarks**, **Buff-bellied Pipits**, **Oriental Greenfinches** & **Meadow Buntings**. We moved down to the north side of the river mouth, we picked up **Common Pochard**, **Great Crested Grebe**, a close **Osprey**, **Eastern Buzzard**, **Eurasian Kestrel** and **Blue Rock-Thrush**. On the way round to the southern side, we stopped to photograph a nice close **Bull-headed Shrike** and our first **Barn Swallows** of the trip. There is a large island in the Hitotsuse River called Shimotajima which always seems to attract interesting birds. It has a rather narrow bridge to get there, but to err on the side of caution, we parked our vehicle and walked across. We spend an interesting hour or so wandering around on the other side and saw a bunch of birds including **Ruddy-breasted Crake**, **Intermediate Egret**, **Zitting Cisticola**, lots of **Dusky Thrushes**, **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** and **Richard's Pipit**, the latter 2 which are quite rare birds in winter. Walking back across, we could see that the tide had gone out a lot and we drove back down to the estuary to find the mud bank with shorebirds on it. We set up the scope to find **Black-bellied Plover**, **Kentish Plover**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Dunlin** and **Saunders's Gull**. One last look at the large pond from yesterday produced a surprise **Greater Scaup**, **Black-winged Stilt**, several **Northern Lapwings**, **Common Snipe**, and **Green Sandpiper**. We drove upstream along the same river to a small lake next to a temple where interesting stuff often turns up. Scanning the ducks, we saw **Little & Great Crested Grebes**, a few **Mandarin Ducks**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Tufted Duck**, an interesting apparent **Ferruginous Duck** hybrid. Just before leaving, I saw something which looked interesting. We put it in the scope and were shocked to see something that looked very much like the MEGA rare **Baer's Pochard**. What a find! That was the last bird of the main tour and we drove down to Miyazaki, where we had a nice sushi lunch before flying back to Tokyo where we said goodbye to a couple of people not joining the extension.

PELAGIC EXTENSION



Izu Robin is a newly-split endemic to Japan.

After saying goodbye to the participants not joining the extension, we had a transfer to the Takeshiba Ferry Terminal where we picked up our tickets and grabbed some dinner. As we would have to carry our stuff around on Miyakejima, we left our luggage in a locker to pick up when we got back in. The ferry left at 10:30pm and we lay straight down on our bunks to get a few hours of sleep. We were woken by the tannoy at 4:30am and at 5am got off the ferry at Miyakejima. We had a taxi waiting for us and they took us a short distance to the Miyakejima Nature Centre at Taro-ike, also known as Akakokko-kan, named after the **Izu Thrush**, *Akakokko*. We tried a bit of owling and heard **Japanese Scops-Owl** and **Northern Boobook** although neither would come in close. We did pick up a sleeping **Owston's Tit** with the thermal scope. Before dawn, we positioned ourselves by the side of a road where we picked out the endemic **Izu Thrush** coming out on the edge. I also saw a very brief **Izu Robin** although it quickly disappeared before everyone could get on it. At dawn, we heard **Chinese Bamboo-Partridge** and **Japanese Wood-Pigeon** calling. We walked down the track towards the lake and picked up a few birds on the way, including localized races of **Eastern Buzzard**, **Eurasian Wren**, and **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, plus **Gray Bunting** which had eluded most on the main tour. On the small lake, we saw **Eurasian Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck**, **Common Merganser**, **Little Grebe**, **Eurasian Coot** and **Great Cormorant**. We walked half-way round, continuing our birding, adding the localized race of **Japanese Bush Warbler** and a female **Red-flanked Bluetail**. We were still keen to find another **Izu Robin** (only split a few months ago) and finally I had a reply to my call. This one came right in and posed beautifully for photos. It had been a productive morning, and we killed some time down a trail where we photographed **Brown-eared Bulbul** and another race of **Warbling White-eye**. We spent some time looking at the interesting information in the center, before our taxi driver came to pick us up and drop us off at Igaya Port where the ferry would be picking us up. Graham took a walk around the port to find **Blue Rock-Thrush**, **Japanese Wagtail** and a flock of **Asian Rosy-Finches** foraging on grass seed heads along the cliff face. I was a little skeptic until he showed me the photos.



Laysan Albatross flushed from very close to the ferry.

At 1:30pm, we boarded the boat, and had a quick lunch before going out on deck to start our sea watch. The main goal were the 3 species of albatrosses. **Laysan, Black-footed** and **Short-tailed Albatross**. There were large numbers but most were distant. **Laysan Albatross** was the most numerous and we had a fair few **Short-tailed**, but only 1 or 2 **Black-footed**. Another interesting addition were two pairs of **Japanese Murrelets**. We had **Black-tailed, Vega** and **Slaty-backed Gulls**, and finally a **Pomarine Jaeger**, before we approached Honshu, and started to lose light. We had a bit of dinner before having a couple of hours rest before getting back in to Takeshiba terminal where all said our goodbyes after a wonderful extension.

BIRDS OF THE MAIN TOUR

- 1st BLAKISTON'S FISH-OWL
- 2nd BAER'S POCHARD
- 3rd STELLER'S SEA-EAGLE
- 4th JAPANESE MURRELET
- 5th URAL OWL

BIRDS OF THE EXTENSIONS

OKINAWA RAIL (RYUKYU EXTENSION)

IZU ROBIN (MIYAKEJIMA EXTENSION)

BIRD LIST

View the eBird trip report here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/101917>

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Greater White-fronted Goose | <i>Anser albifrons</i> | |
| Taiga Bean-Goose | <i>Anser fabalis</i> | |
| Tundra Bean-Goose | <i>Anser serrirostris</i> | |
| Brant | <i>Branta bernicla</i> | |
| Tundra (Bewick) Swan | <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> | |
| Whooper Swan | <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> | |
| Common Shelduck | <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> | |
| Mandarin Duck | <i>Aix galericulata</i> | East Asian Endemic |
| Baikal Teal | <i>Sibirionetta formosa</i> | |
| Northern Shoveler | <i>Spatula clypeata</i> | |
| Gadwall | <i>Mareca strepera</i> | |
| Falcated Duck | <i>Mareca falcata</i> | Near-threatened |
| Eurasian Wigeon | <i>Mareca penelope</i> | |
| American Wigeon | <i>Mareca americana</i> | |
| Eastern Spot-billed Duck | <i>Anas zonorhyncha</i> | |
| Mallard | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> | |
| Northern Pintail | <i>Anas acuta</i> | |
| Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal | <i>Anas c. crecca</i> | |
| Common Pochard | <i>Aythya ferina</i> | |
| Baer's Pochard | <i>Aythya baeri</i> | |
| Tufted Duck | <i>Aythya fuligula</i> | |
| Greater Scaup | <i>Aythya marila</i> | |
| Harlequin Duck | <i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i> | |
| Stejneger's Scoter | <i>Melanitta stejnegeri</i> | |
| Black Scoter | <i>Melanitta americana</i> | |
| Long-tailed Duck | <i>Clangula hyemalis</i> | |
| Common Goldeneye | <i>Bucephala clangula</i> | |
| Smew | <i>Mergellus albellus</i> | |
| Common Merganser | <i>Mergus m. merganser</i> | |
| Red-breasted Merganser | <i>Mergus serrator</i> | |

GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Green Pheasant | <i>Phasianus tanensis</i> | Endemic |
| Chinese Bamboo-Partridge | <i>Bambusicola thoracicus</i> | Introduced. Heard |

PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Little Grebe | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> | |
| Horned Grebe | <i>Podiceps auritus</i> | |
| Red-necked Grebe | <i>Podiceps grisegena</i> | |
| Great Crested Grebe | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | |
| Eared Grebe | <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> | |

COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Rock Pigeon | <i>Columba livia</i> | Introduced |
| Japanese Wood-Pigeon | <i>Columba j. janthina</i> | NE Asian Endemic |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Oriental Turtle-Dove | <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i> | |
| <i>S.o.stimpsoni</i> on Rykyu Islands. <i>S.o.orientalis</i> in rest of Japan. | | |
| White-bellied Green Pigeon | <i>Treron sieboldii</i> | |
| Whistling Green Pigeon | <i>Treron formosae permagnus</i> | Endemic subspecies |

GRUIFORMES: Rallidae

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Brown-cheeked Rail | <i>Rallus indicus</i> | |
| Okinawa Rail | <i>Gallirallus okinawae</i> | Endemic |
| Eurasian Moorhen | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | |
| Eurasian Coot | <i>Fulica atra</i> | |
| White-breasted Waterhen | <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> | |
| Ruddy-breasted Crake | <i>Zapornia fusca</i> | |
| <i>Z.f.erythrothorax</i> seen on Kyushu. Endemic <i>Z.f.phaeopyga</i> seen on Amami. | | |
| | | Endemic subspecies |

GRUIFORMES: Gruidae

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Siberian Crane | <i>Leucogeranus leucogeranus</i> | |
| Sandhill Crane | <i>Antigone canadensis</i> | |
| White-naped Crane | <i>Antigone vipio</i> | |
| Common Crane | <i>Grus grus</i> | |
| Hooded Crane | <i>Grus monacha</i> | |
| Red-crowned Crane | <i>Grus japonensis</i> | East Asian Endemic |

CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Black-winged Stilt | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|

CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Black-bellied Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | |
| Pacific Golden-Plover | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i> | |
| Northern Lapwing | <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> | |
| Lesser Sand-Plover | <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> | |
| Kentish Plover | <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> | |
| Long-billed Plover | <i>Charadrius placidus</i> | |
| Little Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius dubius</i> | |

CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Eurasian Curlew | <i>Numenius arquata</i> | |
| Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | |
| Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> | |
| Amami Woodcock | <i>Scolopax mira</i> | |
| Common Snipe | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> | |
| Common Sandpiper | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | |
| Green Sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | |
| Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | |
| Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | |

CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Pomarine Jaeger (Skua) | <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i> | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|

CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--|
| Common Murre | <i>Uria aalge</i> | |
|--------------|-------------------|--|

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Pigeon Guillemot | <i>Cepphus columba</i> | |
| Spectacled Guillemot | <i>Cepphus carbo</i> | |
| Ancient Murrelet | <i>Synthliboramphus antiquus</i> | |
| Japanese Murrelet | <i>Synthliboramphus wumizusume</i> | |

CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Black-legged Kittiwake | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> | |
| Saunders's Gull | <i>Saundersilarus saundersi</i> | |
| Black-headed Gull | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | |
| Black-tailed Gull | <i>Larus crassirostris</i> | |
| Common (Kamchatka) Gull | <i>Larus canus kamtschatschensis</i> | |
| Herring (Vega) Gull | <i>Larus argentatus vegae</i> | |
| Slaty-backed Gull | <i>Larus schistisagus</i> | East Asian Endemic |
| Glaucous-winged Gull | <i>Larus glaucescens</i> | |
| Glaucous Gull | <i>Larus hyperboreus</i> | |
| Caspian Tern | <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> | |

GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Red-throated Loon | <i>Gavia stellata</i> | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|

PROCELLARIIFORMES: Diomedidae

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Laysan Albatross | <i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i> | |
| Black-footed Albatross | <i>Phoebastria nigripes</i> | |
| Short-tailed Albatross | <i>Phoebastria albatrus</i> | |

CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|
| Oriental Stork | <i>Ciconia boyciana</i> | |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|

SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Red-faced Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax urile</i> | |
| Pelagic Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i> | |
| Great Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo hanedae</i> | Endemic subspecies |
| Japanese Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax capillatus</i> | |

PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Gray Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | |
| Great Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> | |
| Intermediate Egret | <i>Ardea intermedia</i> | |
| Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | |
| Pacific Reef-Heron | <i>Egretta sacra</i> | |
| Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | |

PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Eurasian Spoonbill | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> | |
| Black-faced Spoonbill | <i>Platalea minor</i> | East Asian Breeding Endemic |

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Pandionidae

| | | |
|--------|--------------------------|--|
| Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> | |
|--------|--------------------------|--|

ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gray-faced Buzzard | <i>Butastur indicus</i> |
| Eastern Marsh-Harrier | <i>Circus spilonotus</i> |
| Hen Harrier | <i>Circus cyaneus</i> |
| Japanese Sparrowhawk | <i>Accipiter gularis</i> |
| Eurasian Sparrowhawk | <i>Accipiter nisus</i> |
| Northern Goshawk | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> |
| Black(-eared) Kite | <i>Milvus migrans lineatus</i> |
| White-tailed Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> |
| Steller's Sea-Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i> |
| Rough-legged Hawk | <i>Buteo lagopus</i> |
| Eastern Buzzard | <i>Buteo japonicus</i> |

East Asian Endemic

Endemic subspecies

The endemic *B.j.toyoshimai* on Miyakejima. *B.j.japonicus* in the rest of Japan.

STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Japanese (Pryer's) Scops-Owl | <i>Otus semitorques pryeri</i> |
| Ryukyu Scops-Owl | <i>Otus e. elegans</i> |
| Blakiston's Fish-Owl | <i>Ketupa b. blakistoni</i> |
| Ural Owl | <i>Strix uralensis</i> |
| <i>S.u.japonica</i> on Hokkaido. | |
| Short-eared Owl | <i>Asio flammeus</i> |
| Northern Boobook | <i>Otus japonica</i> |

Endemic subspecies

Endemic subspecies

Endemic subspecies

Endemic subspecies

CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Common Kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> |
| Crested Kingfisher | <i>Megaceryle l. lugubris</i> |

Endemic subspecies

PICIFORMES: Picidae

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Eurasian Wryneck | <i>Jynx torquilla</i> |
| Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker | <i>Yungipicus kizuki</i> |
| <i>Y.k.seebohmi</i> on Hokkaido. <i>Y.k.nippon</i> on Honshu. <i>Y.k.kizuki</i> on Kyushu. <i>Y.k.matsudairai</i> on Miyakejima. <i>Y.k.amamii</i> on Amami, <i>Y.k.nigrescens</i> on Okinawa. | |
| White-backed Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos leucotos</i> |
| <i>D.l.namiyei</i> on Kyushu. <i>D.l.lowstoni</i> on Amami. | |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | <i>Dendrocopos major japonicus</i> |
| Japanese Woodpecker | <i>Picus awokera</i> |

Endemic subspecies

Endemic subspecies

Endemic

FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Eurasian Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> |
| Merlin | <i>Falco columbarius</i> |
| Peregrine Falcon | <i>Falco peregrinus</i> |

PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Ryukyu Minivet | <i>Pericrocotus tegimae</i> |
|----------------|-----------------------------|

Endemic

PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Bull-headed Shrike | <i>Lanius bucephalus</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|

PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Eurasian Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|

The endemic *G.g.japonicus* on Honshu. The endemic *G.g.hiugaensis* on Kyushu.

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lidth's Jay | <i>Garrulus lidthi</i> | Endemic |
| Azure-winged Magpie | <i>Cyanopica cyanus japonica</i> | Endemic subspecies |
| Daurian Jackdaw | <i>Corvus dauuricus</i> | |
| (Oriental) Rook | <i>Corvus frugilegus pastinator</i> | |
| Carrion (Oriental) Crow | <i>Corvus corone orientalis</i> | |
| Large-billed Crow | <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i> | |

C.m.connectans on Ryukyus. *C.m.japonensis* in rest of Japan.

PASSERIFORMES: Paridae

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Coal Tit | <i>Periparus ater insularis</i> | |
| Varied Tit | <i>Sittiparus varius</i> | |

S.v.amamii on Ryukyus. *S.v.varius* in rest of Japan.

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Owston's Tit | <i>Sittiparus owstoni</i> | Endemic |
| Marsh Tit | <i>Poecile palustris hensoni</i> | Endemic subspecies |
| Willow Tit | <i>Poecile montanus restrictus</i> | Endemic subspecies |
| Japanese Tit | <i>Parus minor</i> | |

P.m.okinawae on Okinawa. *P.m.amamiensis* on Amami. *P.m.minor* on rest of Japan.

PASSERIFORMES: Remizidae

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chinese Penduline-Tit | <i>Remiz consobrinus</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|

PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (Japanese) Eurasian Skylark | <i>Alauda arvensis japonica</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|

PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Zitting Cisticola | <i>Cisticola juncidis</i> | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|

PASSERIFORMES: Hirundidae

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | |
| Pacific Swallow | <i>Hirundo pacifica</i> | |
| Asian House Martin | <i>Delichon dasypus</i> | |

PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brown-eared Bulbul | <i>Hypsipetes amaurotis</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|

H.a.pryeri on Okinawa. *H.a.ogawae* on Amami. *H.a.hensoni* on Hokkaido. *H.a.amaurotis* on Honshu & Kyushu.

PASSERIFORMES: Cettiidae

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Japanese Bush-Warbler | <i>Horornis diphone</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|

H.d.cantans seen Honshu & Kyushu. *H.c.diphone* seen on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Long-tailed Tit | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|

A.c.trivirgatus on Honshu. *A.c.caudatus* on Hokkaido. The endemic *A.c.kiusiuensis* on Kyushu.

PASSERIFORMES: Zosteropidae

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Warbling (Japanese) White-eye | <i>Zosterops j. japonicus</i> | Endemic subspecies |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|

Z.j.japonicus on Honshu & Kyushu. *Z.j.stejegeri* on Miyakejima. *Z.j.insularis* on Ryukyus.

PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae

Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea* Introduced

PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* **Endemic subspecies**
S.e.amurensis on Honshu, *S.e.clara* on Hokkaido, The endemic *S.e.roseillia* on Kyushu.

PASSERIFORMES: Certhidae

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris japonica* **Endemic subspecies**

PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* **Endemic subspecies**
T.t.fumigatus on Honshu. *T.t.mosukei* on Miyakejima.

PASSERIFORMES: Cinclidae

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii*

PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
White-cheeked Starling *Spodiopsar cineraceus*

PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae

Amami Thrush *Zoothera major* **Endemic**
Brown-headed Thrush *Turdus chrysolaus*
Izu Thrush *Turdus celanops* **Endemic**
Pale Thrush *Turdus pallidus*
Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus*
Naumann's Thrush *Turdus naumanni* Seen before tour in Okinawa.

PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae

Izu Robin *Larvivora tanensis* **Endemic**
Ryukyu Robin *Larvivora komadori* **Endemic**
Okinawa Robin *Larvivora namiyei* **Endemic**
Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope*
Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*
Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureoreus*
Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius philippensis*

PASSERIFORMES: Bombycillidae

Japanese Waxwing *Bombycilla japonica*

PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae

Japanese Accentor *Prunella rubida fervida* **Endemic subspecies**

PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Eastern Yellow Wagtail
Japanese Wagtail
White Wagtail
Richard's Pipit
Olive-backed Pipit
American (Buff-bellied) Pipit

Motacilla t. tschutschensis
Motacilla grandis
Motacilla alba lugens
Anthus richardi
Anthus hodgsoni
Anthus rubescens japonicus

Breeding Endemic

PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae

Brambling
Hawfinch
Japanese Grosbeak
Long-tailed Rosefinch
Asian Rosy-Finch
Oriental Greenfinch

Fringilla montifringilla
Coccothraustes coccothraustes
Eophona personata
Carpodacus sibiricus
Leucosticte arctoa
Chloris sinica

PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae

Chestnut-eared Bunting
Meadow Bunting
Yellow-throated Bunting
Reed Bunting
Little Bunting
Rustic Bunting
Masked Bunting
Grey Bunting

Emberiza fucata
Emberiza cioides ciopsis
Emberiza elegans
Emberiza schoeniclus
Emberiza pusilla
Emberiza rustica
Emberiza spodocephala
Emberiza variabilis

Endemic subspecies

MAMMAL LIST

Taxonomy follows iNaturalist

CERCOPITHECIDAE: Old World MonkeysJapanese Macaque *Macaca fuscata* **Endemic****SCIURIDAE: Squirrels**Japanese Squirrel *Sciurus lis* **Endemic**Japanese Flying Squirrel *Petaurista leucogenys* **Endemic****LEPORIDAE: Rabbits**Amami Rabbit *Pentelagus furnessi* **Endemic****MURIDAE: Rats & mice**Ryukyu Long-furred Rat *Diplothrix legata* **Endemic****CANIDAE: Canids**Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* **Endemic subspecies**The endemic *V.v.schrenki* on Hokkaido.**MUSTELIDAE: Mustelids**Japanese Weasel *Mustela itatsi* **Endemic**Sea Otter *Enhydra lutris***PHOCIDAE: Seals**Harbour Seal *Phoca vitulina***CERVIDAE: Deer**Sika Deer *Cervus nippon* **Endemic subspecies**The endemic *C.n.nippon* on Honshu. *C.n.yesoensis* on Hokkaido. *C.n.nippon* on Kyushu.**BOVIDAE: Bovids**Japanese Serow *Capricornis crispus* **Endemic****SUIDAE: Pigs**Ryukyu Wild Boar *Sus scrofa riukiuanus* **Endemic subspecies**