



# ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

## **Japan** **Dancing Cranes & Winter Birding**

*12<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (19 days)*

### **Trip Report**



Steller's Sea Eagles by Steve Joyner

**Tour Leaders: Dušan Brinkhuizen & Bryan Shirley**

**Trip report compiled by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

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### Top ten birds as voted for by participants:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Steller's Sea Eagle  | 6. Solitary Snipe         |
| 2. Blakiston's Fish Owl | 7. Copper Pheasant        |
| 3. Red-crowned Crane    | 8. White-naped Crane      |
| 4. Ural Owl             | 9. Japanese Waxwing       |
| 5. Japanese Murrelet    | 10. Greater Painted-snipe |
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### Tour Summary



**Naumann's Thrush by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

over the ground. Grey-capped Greenfinches were soon in view and a Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker was also briefly observed. Nearby photographers caught our attention as they were taking pictures of a Common Kingfisher. The walk along the lake was really nice with lots of ducks up-close including Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck and Eurasian Wigeon. It was Steve that picked out the drake American Wigeon, a nice bonus! Little and Great Crested Grebes were also present among the masses of waterfowl. Japan's most common "winter thrush", the Dusky Thrush, were all over the place and we got great views of them. It was Steve that spotted the first Brown-headed Thrush, one of our targets. The bird was seen foraging between reed beds and it took a while for us to reconnect with it. Eventually, we saw several of these handsome thrushes, somewhat reminiscent to American Robins. A Japanese Bush Warbler that skulked through the reeds was a welcome bonus here and eventually showed itself exceptionally well! Our first Japanese Wagtail was another great addition to our growing list of species. A large field was the location where a Naumann's Thrush was reported a few days ago, our principal target and the reason for picking this park. Scanning the field, we got many Dusky Thrushes but we also spotted our first Eurasian Skylarks and Buff-bellied Pipits. A few youngsters with cameras caught our attention and as we got closer to them, we soon realized they were watching the Naumann's Thrush! We

Our Japan winter adventure started with some pre-tour birding in the capital Tokyo. We met after breakfast in the lobby and soon we traveled by train to Mizumoto Park. It was an exciting experience, especially since Bryan was the only person to speak Japanese and we fully depended on him and his guidance through this gigantic metropolis. We had to take three different trains but everything went smooth and we even did some birding from the train platform from where we watched our first Bull-headed Shrike! Once we got to the park it was instantly birdy with Japanese Tits foraging in the reeds and an elusive Pale Thrush moving



**Brown-eared Bulbul by Dušan Brinkhuizen**





**Smew by Annette Hatten**

We then continued to Kawagoe Park in the northern outskirts of Tokyo. A Chinese Grosbeak had been reported from this site recently, so it was certainly worth to make a short birding stop here. At the pond we got our first drake Mallard among many Eastern Spot-billed Ducks and Eurasian Wigeons. A female Smew was also nicely up close. A Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker was cooperative and we had nice, prolonged views of this neat little stunner. White-cheeked Starling and Brown-eared Bulbul were both present in good numbers. At first, there was no sign of any grosbeaks but we did find a Hawfinch. At the river we flushed Green Sandpipers that gave their distinct call in flight. On the cobblestone bank there were a dozen of Grey Herons. Suddenly, Bryan pointed out some calling grosbeaks so we quickly went to the direction of the sound. Soon, we located the birds, a flock of four, but they were skittish and flew off almost instantly. We did scope our first Meadow Bunting which was a nice consolation. We birded our way into the direction to where the grosbeaks had flown and eventually, we run into the flock again when they flew overhead! We were unable to confirm the Chinese Grosbeak and decided to continue our journey to Karuizawa. At the edge of town, we made a stop to search for waxwings but they did not seem to be here this year. We did get our first Eurasian Nuthatch in the small park and a family group of three female-plumaged Green Pheasants was a great find! The afternoon was dedicated to search for the elusive Copper Pheasant. In the forest we run into a Japanese Green Woodpecker, a fabulous bird and a major target. However, the pheasant played hard to get and only Annette had a swift view of an elusive male. A fantastic discovery was a flock of 16 Japanese Waxwings perched up in the canopy. We got prolonged views of these gems, a huge bonus, as this erratic species does not get to Japan every year. A Ural Owl was flushed in the forest and seen well by some – an exciting closure for today's birding!

first secured brief scope views of this rarity but later on we got wonderful and prolonged views of the bird – “twitch” accomplished. During our walk back we enjoyed more new birds including Oriental Turtledove, Hawfinch and an immature male Smew, among others – what a great kickoff to the tour!

The following morning, we did a short walk to the nearby Tama river. Here, we added a few new birds to the list including Gadwall and Northern Pintail. An adult Vega Gull was scoped and a dark-mantled gull that flew by us was most probably a Slaty-backed Gull.



**Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker by Dušan Brinkhuizen**



**Green Pheasant by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

Today we made an early start to continue our search for the Copper Pheasant. It was cold and icy but that certainly did not stop us. We searched hard and went off trail and upslope but without much success. We did find a White-backed Woodpecker that showed itself well, a welcome surprise! We also had a flock of Japanese Waxwings, very likely the same flock as the previous day. Japanese Green Woodpecker was seen by some as well as the first Eurasian Jays. A Varied Tit foraging on the forest floor was certainly a cracker! Coal Tit and Long-tailed Tit were also new additions to the list. Back at the “Onsen” we enjoyed the feeders and surrounds with various stunners including Grey-capped Greenfinch, Brambling, Japanese, Coal and Varied Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, Japanese Green Woodpecker and a female-plumaged Red-flanked Bluetail passing through. After breakfast we went back into the forest to look for pheasants but the active bulldozers here weren’t a good sign at all. Deeper in the forest it was very quiet and very few birds were encountered. Our quest for the Japanese Accentor was also unsuccessful even though we tried for it at many spots with denser

undergrowth. After lunch we traveled to nearby Kumanotaira Station, a deserted train station surrounded by forest. It was good birding with some neat Long-tailed Rosefinches, Daurian Redstart and good looks at Eurasian Jays. A pair of White-backed Woodpeckers was also much enjoyed here. We scanned the forest floor extensively and looked hard but not a sniff of the much-wanted Copper Pheasant. At a picturesque bridge some of us got brief views of a Brown Dipper. It was an active day with lots of hiking but the pheasant eluded us again!

We made another early start to search for the Copper Pheasant in the forest, our final opportunity to connect with this challenging endemic. It was an exciting search, using “hot” info from a researcher that we had met the day before. We visited the “pheasant pond” but after a couple of hours of tactical forest patrolling, we had no luck at all. Near the river we searched for Japanese Accentor in denser vegetation but also this species was nowhere to be found. Perhaps the accentors had stayed at higher elevations because of the relatively mild winter? We did get perched Japanese Grosbeaks and a neat Brown Dipper. After a late breakfast we did a last attempt for the accentor on the hotel grounds (it had been seen here on previous years). We took some narrow trails around the complex but no sign of the target bird. Suddenly, Frank called out a pheasant that popped up right in front of us. We first



**Copper Pheasant by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

We took some narrow trails around the complex but no sign of the target bird. Suddenly, Frank called out a pheasant that popped up right in front of us. We first





**Varied Tit by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

the distance – an excellent find! We went closer to the plover to get better views and the adult bird perched nicely on the cobblestone beach. Our final stop for the day was at a small park where we scoped two Rustic Buntings, one of them being a nice male. Bohemian Waxwings were heard but we were unable to locate the birds.

The next morning, we went to Jigokudani to visit the famed “Snow Monkey” site. We arrived there early, ahead of the crowds, which allowed us to bird our way along the forest path. Loose mixed-species flocks with various tits, Eurasian Nuthatch and Goldcrest were encountered and a large flock of Eurasian Siskins was new for us. We also enjoyed watching a Japanese Serow standing in the forest. Once we reached the monkey hotspot it was Dusan that had tracked down a Japanese Accentor! The accentor stayed put for several minutes and everybody was able to get brief but great views of this major target. We then visited the Jigokudani baths where we enjoyed tons of Japanese Macaques for a while. After a longish drive we reached some rice fields where we searched for a vagrant Swan Goose. We found the flock of swans but the Swan Goose simply wasn't there with them. It was a large mixed-flocks of both Whooper and Tundra (Bewick's) Swans. We also picked out the *colombianus* subspecies of Tundra, known as “Whistling Swan”. In the late afternoon we reached Kahokugata Lagoon where we sheltered in a bird hide. It was rainy and foggy so viewing conditions were suboptimal but nevertheless it was great birding. We enjoyed our first Falcated Ducks and Baikal Teals among other waterfowl. We also got our first Western Osprey and Eastern Marsh Harrier. A small flock of Azure-winged Magpies spotted by Koichi was a great bonus!



**Japanese Macaque by Annette Hatten**

Today we went to search for Oriental Stork that had been reported not far from our hotel. When we arrived to the site there was no sign of the stork. However, Koichi was able to get some last-minute info



**Oriental Stork by Annette Hatten**

allowed close study and we were able to pick out a small number of short-billed Tundras among the more numerous long-billed Taigas. At Amagozen Cape we did our first coastal birding with both Pelagic and Japanese Cormorants plus many Black-tailed, Slaty-backed and Vega Gulls – it was cold and windy though! Scanning rice fields in the afternoon wasn't as productive as we hoped for but we did find a few Tundra Swans. At Lake Kiba it was Steve that found another drake American Wigeon!

The following morning it was snowing pretty nicely so we birded mainly from inside the vehicles. We searched for geese in the hope to find the rare Lesser White-Fronted but a single Greater White-Fronted Goose spotted by Bob was the only thing we got. Two Grey-headed Lapwings foraging in a wet field was an excellent find and we enjoyed them at close range. A quick check at a nearby harbor did not yield much except for our first Red-breasted Merganser. We then continued travelling south to lake Biwa, the largest freshwater lake in Japan. A couple of roadside photographers led us to a very special bird: a Steller's Sea Eagle! A single adult bird had been wintering at this site for many years and this was a nice bonus for us, especially for those keeping a Honshu list. It was perched in a snow-covered tree on a sloping hill and the scope views we got of this beast were just wonderful. Other goodies that we got here included Pacific Reef Heron and Blue Rock Thrush. Bob spotted another Greater White-fronted Goose, a scarce species for the region. The bird hide at Nishi was spectacular with close-up views of a large flock of Northern Pintails and many other species of waterfowl. Baikal Teals and Falcated Ducks were both swimming at a nice distance with drakes showing their elaborate plumages nicely in the scope. Suddenly, Steve spotted a skulking Brown-cheeked Rail

through his contacts so the search wasn't over yet! It took some effort but eventually we located a splendid pair of these endangered birds standing in a field and we watched them for a prolonged time. It was pretty chilly and rainy outside though. Suddenly, the birds flew right overhead giving us fantastic flight views – a major twitch! Next we went to the well-known Katano Kamoike Sanctuary where we enjoyed masses of waterfowl from a huge bird observation center. We enjoyed lots of great ducks including Baikal Teals but there was no sign of the sought-after Mandarin Duck. A large flock of Bean Geese nearby



**Grey-headed Lapwing by Dušan Brinkhuizen**





**Hooded Crane by Annette Hatten**

walking along the edge of the lake! The bird vanished quickly but luckily after a few minutes of much excitement it was relocated and everybody was able to connect with it in the scope – a major bird! Passerines foraging in a snowy field grabbed our attention and we got nice looks at a couple of Rustic Buntings and Bramblings. A small park that we birded in the late afternoon was productive, especially as we lucked into a flock of White-bellied Green Pigeons!

Our first stop for the day was at the southern end of Biwa lake. We were hoping to find the drake Red-crested Pochard that was reported

here. We were on a tight schedule so scanning had to be done fairly quickly. Large numbers of diving-ducks were scanned carefully but nothing that looked like our target among the hundreds of Common Pochards, Greater Scaups and Tufted Ducks. We did find another drake American Wigeon, an individual showing some characters of hybridization with Eurasian Wigeon. Next, we continued our drive to Osaka to explore a potential site for Mandarin Duck. A lagoon up in the hills was a new locality for the tour, and it was a good one. Mandarin Ducks were easily found along the edges of the lagoon and the more we scanned the more birds we counted. An estimated 30-40 individuals were seen, including stunning males posing in the trees – an incredibly attractive duck! Some forest birding yielded good views of Pale Thrush and Frank was able to catchup with Japanese Bush Warbler. Soon, we had to leave for Osaka airport to catch our flight to Kyushu. In the late afternoon we scanned the Sendai river at a traditional site for Scaly-sided Merganser. This rare species had not been reported for at least four years so it did not come as a surprise that our attempt was negative.

Today we birded the famed Arasaki area near the town of Izumi. Our early morning walk was exciting and productive. The fields, reeds and bushes were full of passerines, especially with buntings like Common Reed, Black-faced, Meadow and Chestnut-eared Bunting. A flock of obliging Chinese Penduline Tits was watched as they moved through the reed beds in front of us. A surprise was a Eurasian Wryneck that we flushed out of the reeds, a scarce species for the region this time of year. It posed in a bush for a prolonged time allowing nice scope views. Eurasian Skylarks were especially abundant in the fields. The race *japonica* had a distinctly different call compared to European skylarks supporting a potential future split. Hooded Cranes were seen all over the area but the highest densities were watched at the amazing Izumi Crane Centre. We enjoyed the thousands of cranes from atop the roof of the centre – a surreal experience! The smart Hooded Cranes were the most abundant but a good number of the stunning White-naped Cranes were also



**White-naped Crane by Annette Hatten**



**Black-faced and Eurasian Spoonbill by Annette Hatten**

though! Nearby fields with cranes yielded nice photo ops of White-naped Crane and after lots of scanning we eventually located Sandhill Crane – five species of crane in a day, an incredible feat! Another highlight was the sighting of three Northern Goshawks hunting over the fields in teamwork. A pond known for spoonbills was scanned carefully but we only found a large flock of Dunlins, Northern Lapwings and a few Common Shelducks. However, in the corner of our eyes we saw two probable spoonbills land somewhere opposite of the river, something that needed to be checked out for sure. Our search effort paid off as we found a hidden pond with ten Eurasian and five Black-faced Spoonbills showing nicely at close range! In the late afternoon, we searched for pre-roosting corvids and soon found a massive flock of mainly Rooks. Our tactic was a winner as we pulled out several Daurian Jackdaws, including one in full ornate plumage!

The following morning, we targeted Russet Sparrow, which was about the only target species left in the area. Our first stake-out was an immediate success, a large flock of them on the electric wire and in the field – that was easy! We then travelled up into the hills to Kogawa Dam. In the forest we heard a very likely Grey Bunting but we were unable to confirm the identification by sight. A few passerines were seen, including Red-billed Leiothrix, a fancy introduced species. A Crested Kingfisher that flew by along the lakeside was surely a highlight. Our main target for the late morning was Mountain Hawk-Eagle, with subspecies *orientalis* being a possible split “Japanese Hawk-Eagle”. It was getting warmer, the weather looked promising and we did a “big sit” at a tactical viewpoint. Unbelievably, fairly soon we got a raptor in view, and as it came closer it was easily identified as Mountain Hawk-Eagle. We watched two adults of which one flew by really close, almost overhead – simply spectacular! In the afternoon, we went to the coastal area of Yatsushiro. We did a lot of walking along the dike, trying to get to the tidal area of

present. Amazingly, Steve found the Demoiselle Crane in a record time, and spotted it through a tree! This very rare vagrant was a long-staying individual and a huge bonus for the trip. Frank picked out a Common Crane, our fourth species of crane for the day. Apart from cranes there were tons of Black Kites, Carrion and Large-billed Crows and Rooks, present in the fields. We scanned extensively for the scarce Daurian Jackdaw but without success. After enjoying a delicious noodle soup, we went to search for Russet Sparrows at a few nearby stake-outs but without success. A Ruddy-breasted Crake walking in a ditch was a real bonus



**Japanese Hawk-Eagle by Dušan Brinkhuizen**



the mudflats. Distant gulls were scoped and a few Black-faced Spoonbills were seen, among many other water birds. Inland we got several buntings, a flock of Russet Sparrows and also a party of Chinese



**Japanese Murrelet by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

Penduline Tits. After some trial and error, we went back to a viewing spot from where we got excellent scope views of a small number of Saunders's Gulls. These small and graceful gulls were foraging above the mudflats that were richly filled with shorebirds such as Dunlins, Grey and Kentish Plovers and a few Common Greenshanks. A slightly different looking gull with yellowish legs was picked out of a flock of Vega Gulls, very likely involving "Taimyr Gull".

check a spot along the Taira river where a couple of Greater Painted-snipe had been reported. We quickly found several Common Snipe but no sign of the target species. Annette and Frank had flushed a juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron from the riverbank and since it was a new bird for the trip, we went to look for it. After flushing the heron for a second time we suddenly run into a flock of Greater Painted-snipe foraging out in the open – amazing scenes! Soon, we all connected with the birds and watched them for a prolonged time in the scope. Eventually, we counted up to six of these smart birds before we started the journey to Lake Miike. Once we arrived at Mikke it stopped raining which was very promising. Activity in the forest had a bloom and Bryan pointed out the distinct song of Asian Stubtail. This super-skulker kept us busy for a while but in the end we all managed to get decent views of this "little brown" job! At the camp grounds we enjoyed a nice lunch and soon we were back birding again. Japanese Grosbeaks showed themselves briefly and Pale Thrushes were quite common here. Olive-backed Pipits foraging on the ground were a new addition to the list. Our targets Grey and Yellow-throated Bunting were nowhere to be found. We did get a Ryukyu Minivet in the canopy which was really nice! Traditional Japanese dinner that evening was extraordinary and we quickly lost count of the number of platters.

We made an early start to Lake Miike in the hope to find the buntings. Asian Stubtail was still singing even though it was really chilly outside! Red-flanked Bluetail and Pale Thrushes were seen but no sign of buntings. Suddenly, at the "magic corner" up to six Yellow-throated Buntings showed up – what a feast! We put in a lot of effort to find Grey Bunting but not a sign of this target. Perhaps it was too mild a winter for them to come this far down? Next we traveled to Kadogawa harbor for our scheduled pelagic outside the bay area. It was pleasant weather and the conditions were just optimal. Suddenly, Doug called out a murrelet ahead of us. As we approached the "floating object" it was indeed a superb Japanese Murrelet! Eventually, we saw up to



**Red-crowned Crane by Annette Hatten**



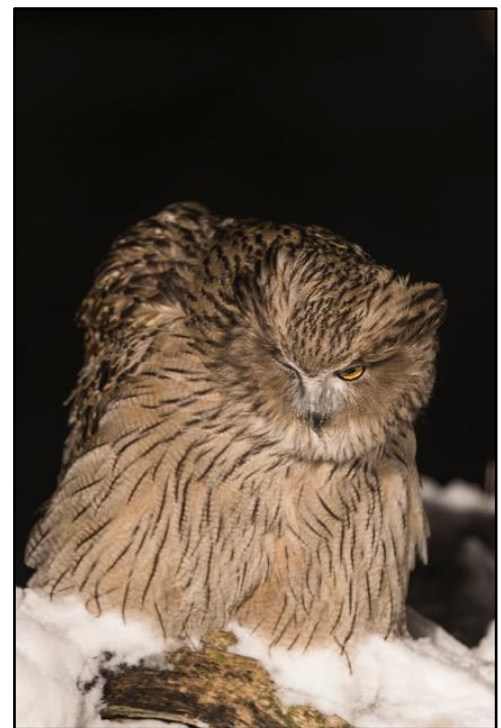
**Ural Owl by Annette Hatten**

seven murrelets, exceptional views of them with some calling and raising their crest feathers. Other species that we enjoyed included Pacific Reef Heron, Vega, Slaty-backed, and Black-tailed Gull. A single Glaucous-winged Gull was somewhat out of its normal range. A few Japanese Cormorants were picked out of the crowds, showing their differently shaped malar area at the base of the bill. The Umagase Peninsula in the afternoon was a nice and scenic walk. We searched hard for the Japanese Wood Pigeon but this localized target was nowhere to be found. Suddenly, Steve and Annette saw one flyby but unfortunately the rest of us just missed it. After a lot of searching and patient waiting it was time to get back to the hotel. Tomorrow off to Hokkaido!

In the early afternoon we arrived in Kushiro. Amazingly, while driving north we were greeted by a Red-crowned Crane literally crossing the highway right in front of our bus – what a kickoff to Hokkaido! Later on, we arrived to the first crane viewing spot where we enjoyed watching a small group of cranes for a while. A mixed-species flock of Long-tailed, Japanese and Marsh Tits foraging in a nearby tree was really nice. Red-crowned Cranes were more numerous at the Tsurui Ito sanctuary where the views were even better. For a prolonged

time, we watched these incredible creatures dancing in the afternoon sun – a truly unique birding experience! Some got lucky with a flyover Grey-headed Woodpecker here.

The next morning, we started at the well-known “crane bridge” where many photographers were lined up to get the crane scenery shots in the morning sun. It was a picturesque setting indeed. Some of us went to search for potential Solitary Snipe at nearby creek beds but without success. Another visit to Tsurui Ito sanctuary was wonderful and we also got a few bonus Common Redpolls here. Next on the program was a stake-out for Ural Owl. Once we got there some of us went ahead with their crampons on, while others in the back took the wrong turn-off. In the end, we all got together and had prolonged views of a fantastic adult Ural Owl posing in the opening of its roost cavity. With the sun in the back the viewing conditions could not have been any better – a superb bird! We then continued to the Notsuke Peninsula where we did some sea-watching. Here we got our first Black Scoters and also the first Harlequin Ducks – what an ornate duck that is! Stejneger's Scoter was also scoped but distantly. Some distant alcids were identified as Common Murre and Spectacled Guillemot but it was pretty challenging to see the features well. Adult Glaucous Gulls flew by and a distant Steller's Sea Eagle was seen on the ice. A White-tailed Eagle was perched nicely atop a light post next to the road. A flock of chunky passerines flew past us and they were most probably



**Blakiston's Fish Owl by Annette**



Asian Rosy Finches but we were unable to fully confirm the identification. When we arrived at Yoroushi we ended the late afternoon with a bang: a friendly birder pointed out a Solitary Snipe and after a couple



**Least Auklet by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

of hectic minutes we were all able to see it from the lounge. It was foraging in the creek and the views we got of this big bonus were just excellent! Elaborate dinner was enjoyed with walky-talkies standby as the rare Blakiston's Fish Owl could show up any moment. Eventually, we had to wait until 23:36 but it was worth it. The largest owl in the world landed right in front of us and took a fish out of the puddle – magnificent and incredible at the same time!

The following morning at 5:25 the Blakiston's Fish Owl came in again, a great start of the day! The lodge feeders were productive and we got great close-up views

of Great Spotted and Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Nuthatch and Long-tailed Tits, among others. A Brown Dipper that we watched from the breakfast table was certainly a highlight! Back at Notsuke Peninsula we had a few Sika Deer next to the bus and we did a brief photoshoot of them. The rest of the morning was dedicated to find Asian Rosy Finches. At the lighthouse we run into other birders that just had seen a couple rosy finches foraging in the flotsam but the birds had flown off. After a long walk and tactically splitting up the group we still couldn't find the finches. The scenery here was spectacular though. More coastal birding yielded much better views of Spectacled Guillemot and various ducks, including Stejneger's Scoter, were seen in the harbors towards Rausu.

The harbor of Rausu was excellent birding. We scoped lots of gulls and waterfowl, plus Steller's Sea Eagles were well-represented. We counted over 400 eagles on the pack ice, just incredible! Some of us went to the edge of town where a few eagles were roosting in the trees. Watching these incredible beasts at close range was simply spectacular. Next was our pelagic off Ochiishi. It was very cold but we were well-prepared and dressed in countless layers. Alcids were our main goal and fairly soon we flushed our first Least Auklets – they were tiny! Spectacled Guillemot was surely the most common of the alcids but we also got several Pigeon Guillemot including the *snowi* subspecies known as “Kuril Guillemot”. A nice surprise was a Sea Otter, a very large one! In the afternoon we walked the scenic Shunkunitai Peninsula in the hope for rosy finches but no luck. A pair of Red-crowned Cranes on the ice with the sunset light was a pretty magical moment.



**White-tailed Eagle by Annette Hatten**

The hide at Citizen Forest was our first stop for the morning. We were hoping to find rosy finches that were seen here in previous years but we had no luck. We did get nice photo ops for Eurasian Nuthatch, Marsh and Japanese Tit, and Great Spotted Woodpecker. Our next stop was the eagle feeding site at Lake Furen. It was an incredible experience to watch the eagles come in to the fish. First came the Black Kites, soon followed by the much larger White-tailed Eagles. The enormous Steller's Sea Eagles, the kings of the feeding frenzy came in last but eventually they had taken over the arena. A mind-blowing spectacle on the ice right in front of us, that we watched for over an hour long. A cherry on the cake was a pair of Red-crowned Cranes dancing on the ice in front of the eagles – surreal! The rest of the day we birded several other sites on the Nemuro Peninsula. The Hanasaki Lighthouse at Kurumaishi was productive with various ducks, grebes and loons, mainly Black Scoter, Harlequin Duck, Red-necked Grebe and Red-throated Loon. Some got lucky with a brief view of a Pacific Loon. A major find by Doug was Ancient Murrelet in the harbor. The bird was diving constantly and it was very challenging to connect with. After a significant while it was Bob that relocated the bird and, in the end, we all were able to enjoy it. A small flock of Bohemian Waxwings that flew right by us was a real surprise! Cape Nosappu was another memorable spot with close-up views of Red-faced Cormorant.

Our last day of the tour was yet an exciting one. We started at the Hanasaki harbor in the hope for closer Ancient Murrelets and it was Steve that suddenly spotted a murrelet that popped up right next to us! We also did another scan at Kurumaishi but did not get anything new. We then continued to the Kiritappu Peninsula, our main site for the day. This was our last (and best) shot at Asian Rosy Finch. At “the house” we scanned for finches but at first no luck. A Rough-legged Buzzard here was a great catch though. Suddenly, out of nowhere a large flock of rosy finches flew in and perched on the electric wire. We counted 95 of these beauties – mission accomplished! Sea watching at the cape was excellent with many Red-throated Loons, Pigeon and Spectacled Guillemots, and even Least Auklets. Two showy Sea Otters were a nice bonus here! In the harbor Bryan discovered a drake Green-winged Teal, a rare bird in Japan. Here we also enjoyed a Falcated Duck and a Black-tailed Gull but no sigh of Brant Geese. While driving away we discovered a flock of swans and geese swimming on the other site of the peninsula. It was a true last-minute score with “Black” Brant Geese being our final new bird – a great ending of a magical trip!

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## Acknowledgements

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## Annotated List of species recorded

**Note:** Number in brackets ( ) indicate number of days on the tour the species was recorded.

### Birds (180 in total: 179 seen, 1 heard)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2019. IOC World Bird List (v 9.2).

**Status codes:** **E** = Endemic, **NE** = Near-endemic, **I** = Introduced

**IUCN codes:** **CR** = Critically endangered, **EN** = Endangered, **VU** = Vulnerable, **EW** = Extinct in the Wild, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient

#### Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies Phasianidae

##### **Copper Pheasant (NT)**

*Syrnaticus soemmerringii scintillans*

(2) Karuizawa 13.2 and Karuizawa 15.2.

Endemic. We had brief but great views of a female skulking near the hotel!

##### **Green Pheasant**

*Phasianus versicolor tohkaidi*

(1) 3 Karuizawa 13.2.

Endemic. A flock of 3 female-type birds was observed from close range.

#### Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

##### **Brant Goose**

*Branta bernicla nigricans*

(1) Kiritappu 29.2.

We connected with a flock just outside the bay; a last-minute operation.

##### **Taiga Bean Goose**

*Anser fabalis middendorffii*

(3) Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2 and Tsurui 24.2.

The majority of the birds were large, long-beaked Taiga's.

##### **Tundra Bean Goose**

*Anser serrirostris serrirostris*

(1) Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2.

A few small flocks of short-beaked Tundra's mixed in with the Taiga's.

##### **Greater White-fronted Goose**

*Anser albifrons albifrons*

(2) Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2 and en route 18.2.

We encountered a large flock and some loose individuals.

##### **Tundra Swan**

*Cygnus columbianus  
columbianus*

(1) Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2.

*bewickii:*

(2) Komatsu Airport Area 17.2 and en route 18.2.

The majority of our birds were "Bewick's Swan" but we also had a "Whistling Swan" in the flock.

##### **Whooper Swan**

*Cygnus cygnus*

(7) Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Lake Furen 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Good numbers were observed.

##### **Common Shelduck**

*Tadorna tadorna*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

A few, scattered flocks.

**Mandarin Duck***Aix galericulata*

(1) 35 Shirihata Lagoon 19.2.

Nice views of this attractive duck at this forested site.

**Baikal Teal***Sibirionetta formosa*

(4) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2 and Shirihata Lagoon 19.2.

Good numbers were seen at various sites, with our closest views being at Nishi.

**Northern Shoveler***Spatula clypeata*

(5) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Small numbers were seen during the tour.

**Gadwall***Mareca strepera strepera*

(6) Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, en route 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Fairly common in small numbers.

**Falcated Duck (NT)***Mareca falcata*

(5) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

This speciality was observed nicely at various sites.

**Eurasian Wigeon***Mareca penelope*

(15) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common and widespread.

**American Wigeon***Mareca americana*

(4) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2 and Lake Biwa 19.2. Several drakes were observed and photographed. Some probably involved hybrids with Eurasian Wigeon.

**Eastern Spot-billed Duck***Anas zonorhyncha*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Izumi 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Common and widespread.



**Mallard***Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*

(13) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Tsurui 25.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common and widespread.

**Northern Pintail***Anas acuta*

(10) Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Good numbers were seen, especially at Nishi.

**Eurasian Teal***Anas crecca*

(11) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Awara Duck Pond 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2, Tsurui 25.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common and widespread.

**Green-winged Teal***Anas carolinensis*

(1) Kiritappu 29.2.

A single drake was discovered on a mudflat.

**Common Pochard***Aythya ferina*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

Largest numbers were seen at Biwa.

**Tufted Duck***Aythya fuligula*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Tsurui 25.2, Rausu harbour 26.2 and Rausu harbour 27.2.

Common and widespread with large flocks at Biwa.

**Greater Scaup***Aythya marila nearctica*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common and widespread, especially in the north.

**Harlequin Duck***Histrionicus histrionicus*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Only observed in Hokkaido, where common along the rocky coastline.

**Stejneger's Scoter***Melanitta stejnegeri*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Small numbers were scoped from land.

**Black Scoter (NT)***Melanitta americana*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common along the coast in Hokkaido, also in harbours.

**Long-tailed Duck (VU)***Clangula hyemalis*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common along the coast in Hokkaido.

**Common Goldeneye***Bucephala clangula clangula*

(7) Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common along the coast in Hokkaido.

**Smew***Mergellus albellus*

(7) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2 and Lake Biwa 19.2.

Small numbers were recorded at various waterbodies.

**Common Merganser***Mergus merganser orientalis*

(9) Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Red-breasted Merganser***Mergus serrator*

(7) Awara Harbour 18.2, 2 Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common and widespread, especially along the coast.

**Pigeons and Doves *Columbidae*****Rock Dove***Columba livia var. domestica*

(14) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, en route 15.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, en route 18.2, en route 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Tsurui 24.2, en route 25.2, en route 26.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Introduced feral species, seen mostly in towns.

**Japanese Wood Pigeon (NT)***Columba janthina janthina*

(1) Umagase 23.2.

A single bird was briefly seen in flight by a few lucky observers.



**Oriental Turtle Dove***Streptopelia orientalis orientalis*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Izumi 22.2. Fairly common and widespread.

**White-bellied Green Pigeon***Treron sieboldii sieboldii*

(1) 5 Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2.

A small flock was observed nicely at this site.

**Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae****Brown-cheeked Rail***Rallus indicus*

(2) Nishi Lagoon 18.2 and 1 heard Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2.

Prolonged views of an adult foraging at the edge of the lagoon.

**Ruddy-breasted Crake***Porzana fusca erythrothorax*

(1) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Nice views of a quick adult skulking through a ditch.

**Common Moorhen***Gallinula chloropus chloropus*

(3) Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Small numbers were recorded.

**Eurasian Coot***Fulica atra atra*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Cranes Gruidae****Sandhill Crane***Antigone canadensis canadensis*

(1) 7 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

At least 7 individuals were counted among the other cranes.

**White-naped Crane (VU)***Antigone vipio*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2.

Not as common as Hooded but still well-represented.

**Demoiselle Crane***Grus virgo*

(1) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

A single long-staying vagrant was relocated.

**Red-crowned Crane (EN)***Grus japonensis*

(5) 115 Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2, en route 26.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2 and Lake Furen 28.2.

Fantastic encounters with this species in Hokkaido.

**Common Crane***Grus grus*

(1) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

A few birds were picked out of the crane flocks.

**Hooded Crane (VU)***Grus monacha*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2.

The most common and numerous crane at Arasaki.

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**Grebes *Podicipedidae*****Little Grebe***Tachybaptus ruficollis poggei*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Red-necked Grebe***Podiceps grisegena holbollii*

(2) Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Small numbers in coastal Hokkaido.

**Great Crested Grebe***Podiceps cristatus cristatus*

(10) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2 and Notsuke Peninsula 25.2.

Common and widespread.

**Horned Grebe***Podiceps auritus auritus*

(2) Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2 and Cape Nosappu 28.2.

A few birds in winter-plumage.

**Black-necked Grebe***Podiceps nigricollis nigricollis*

(5) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Small numbers were observed.

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**Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae*****Northern Lapwing***Vanellus vanellus*

(4) Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2.

A number of flocks were encountered.

**Grey-headed Lapwing***Vanellus cinereus*

(1) Nagahama area 18.2.

Two birds foraging in a wet pasture.

**Grey Plover***Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*

(1) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Non-breeding plumage birds on a mudflat.

**Long-billed Plover***Charadrius placidus*

(1) Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2.

An adult showed nicely along the Chikuma river.

**Kentish Plover***Charadrius alexandrinus nihonensis*

(1) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Small numbers on a mudflat mixed with Dunlins.

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**Painted-Snipes *Rostratulidae*****Greater Painted-snipe***Rostratula benghalensis*

(1) 6 Izumi 22.2.

A small flock showing exceptionally well at the river in town.



**Sandpipers and Allies Scolopacidae****Dunlin***Calidris alpina sakhalina*

(3) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

The most common "peep" of the tour.

**Solitary Snipe***Gallinago solitaria japonica*

(1) Yoroushi Onsen 25.2.

Fantastic views of a bird foraging at dusk.

**Common Snipe***Gallinago gallinago gallinago*

(4) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Small numbers were observed at various sites.

**Common Sandpiper***Actitis hypoleucos*

(4) Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Green Sandpiper***Tringa ochropus*

(4) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and 1 heard Tsurui 25.2.

Small numbers.

**Wood Sandpiper***Tringa glareola*

(1) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

A single bird flying off.

**Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia*

(1) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Small numbers at the mudflats.

**Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae****Black-headed Gull***Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

(7) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2 and Rausu harbour 26.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Saunders's Gull***Chroicocephalus saundersi*

(1) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

About a dozen birds were scoped nicely at the mudflats.

**Black-tailed Gull***Larus crassirostris*

(6) Amagozen Cape 17.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

This elegant gull was observed at various sites during the tour.

**Mew Gull***Larus canus kamtschatschensis*

(7) Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Most sightings were from Hokkaido.

**Glaucous-winged Gull***Larus glaucescens*

(4) Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Small numbers along the coast of Hokkaido.

**Glaucous Gull***Larus hyperboreus pallidissimus*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common along the coast of Hokkaido.

**Vega Gull***Larus vegae vegae*

(6) Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

The most common "large" gull in Honshu and Kyushu.

**Slaty-backed Gull***Larus schistisagus*

(10) Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Awara Harbour 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common and widespread in Japan.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull***Larus fuscus heuglini*

(1) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Adult bird with yellowish legs and slightly darker mantle, very likely this species, "Taimyr Gull".

**Auks, Murres, and Puffins Alcidae****Common Murre***Uria aalge inornata*

(2) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2 and Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2.

A few singletons on the water.

**Pigeon Guillemot***Cephus columba snowi*

(1) Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2.

*columba:*

(2) Cape Nosappu 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Both subspecies were observed including "Kuril Guillemot".

**Spectacled Guillemot***Cephus carbo*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

The most common guillemot that we observed at various sites in Hokkaido.

**Ancient Murrelet***Synthliboramphus antiquus antiquus*

(2) Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2 and Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2.

Small numbers of this species showed well at two sites.

**Japanese Murrelet (VU)***Synthliboramphus wumizusume*

(1) 7 Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Endemic. Fantastic encounters with this species just outside the harbor.



**Least Auklet***Aethia pusilla*

(2) Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Couple encounters with this tiny alcid.

**Loons Gaviidae****Red-throated Loon***Gavia stellata*

(3) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Largest numbers were seen at Kiritappu.

**Black-throated Loon***Gavia arctica viridigularis*

(1) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2.

A single bird was picked out.

**Pacific Loon***Gavia pacifica*

(1) Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2.

Seen briefly by a few observers.

**Storks Ciconiidae****Oriental Stork (EN)***Ciconia boyciana*

(1) 2 Awara--Hachiman Shrine 17.2.

A splendid pair was successfully "twitched".

**Cormorants and Shags Phalacrocoracidae****Pelagic Cormorant***Phalacrocorax pelagicus pelagicus*

(6) Amagozen Cape 17.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common along the coast.

**Red-faced Cormorant***Phalacrocorax urile*

(1) 5 Cape Nosappu 28.2.

Roosting in a flock of Pelagic Cormorants.

**Great Cormorant***Phalacrocorax carbo hanedae*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Common and widespread.

**Japanese Cormorant***Phalacrocorax capillatus*

(2) Amagozen Cape 17.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Birds very positively identified at two sites.

**Ibises, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae****Eurasian Spoonbill***Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*

(1) 10 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Small numbers.

**Black-faced Spoonbill (EN)***Platalea minor*

(2) 5 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Birds were nicely observed at two sites.

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**Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns *Ardeidae*****Black-crowned Night Heron***Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*

(1) Izumi 22.2.

A single immature bird was flushed.

**Grey Heron***Ardea cinerea jouyi*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Common and widespread.

**Great Egret***Ardea alba alba*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Common and widespread.

**Little Egret***Egretta garzetta garzetta*

(7) Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, 5 Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**Pacific Reef Heron***Egretta sacra sacra*

(2) Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2 and Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Dark morphs were seen at two sites.

**Osprey *Pandionidae*****Western Osprey***Pandion haliaetus haliaetus*

(6) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Fairly common and widespread in Honshu and Kyushu.

**Kites, Hawks & Eagles *Accipitridae*****Mountain Hawk-Eagle***Nisaetus nipalensis orientalis*

(1) 2 Kogawa Dam 21.2.

Endemic race. A pair of "Japanese Hawk-eagles" was beautifully seen flying overhead.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk***Accipiter nisus nisosimilis*

(3) Karuizawa 14.2, Kumanotaira Station 15.2 and Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2.

A few singletons.

**Northern Goshawk***Accipiter gentilis fujiiyamae*

(1) 3 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Three birds hunting together in the crane fields.

**Eastern Marsh Harrier***Circus spilonotus*

(2) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2 and Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2.

Small numbers.



**Black Kite***Milvus migrans lineatus*

(15) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Izumi 22.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, en route 25.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Lake Furen 28.2 and Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2.

Very common and widespread. "Black-eared Kite".

**White-tailed Eagle***Haliaeetus albicilla albicilla*

(5) Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Lake Furen 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Great encounters with this species in Hokkaido.

**Steller's Sea Eagle (VU)***Haliaeetus pelagicus*

(7) Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Tsurui 24.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Rausu harbour 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Cape Nosappu 28.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Lake Furen 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Our first encounter with this majestic species was at Lake Biwa. In Hokkaido we saw large numbers of this beast!

**Rough-legged Buzzard***Buteo lagopus menzbieri*

(1) Kiritappu 29.2.

A single adult was present.

**Eastern Buzzard***Buteo japonicus japonicus*

(12) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Karuizawa 13.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, en route 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2. Fairly common and widespread in small numbers.

**Owls Strigidae****Blakiston's Fish Owl (EN)***Bubo blakistoni blakistoni*

(2) Yoroushi Onsen 25.2 and Yoroushi Onsen 26.2.

Near-endemic. We got incredible views of the largest owl in the world!

**Ural Owl***Strix uralensis japonica*

(3) Karuizawa 13.2, Tsurui 25.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 27.2.

Three day-time encounters with this fantastic species.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae****Common Kingfisher***Alcedo atthis bengalensis*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, 1 heard Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Izumi 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and 2 Tsurui 25.2. Very common and widespread.

**Crested Kingfisher***Megaceryle lugubris lugubris*

(1) Kogawa Dam 21.2.

A single adult was seen flying over the lake.

**Woodpeckers Picidae****Eurasian Wryneck***Jynx torquilla torquilla*

(1) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Great views of a single adult.

**Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker***Yungipicus kizuki**seebohmi*

(3) Umagase 23.2, Yoroushi Onsen 26.2 and 1 heard Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

*nippon:*

(5) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, observed Karuizawa 13-15.2 and Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

*kizuki:*

(3) Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Endemic. Fairly common and widespread in small numbers.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker***Dendrocopos major japonicus*

(5) Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Tsurui 25.2, Yoroushi Onsen 26.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

Fairly common and widespread.

**White-backed Woodpecker***Dendrocopos leucotos stejnegeri*

(2) Karuizawa 14.2 and 2 Kumanotaira Station 15.2.

Seen nicely at two sites.

**Japanese Green Woodpecker***Picus awokera**awokera*

(4) Karuizawa 13.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Kumanotaira Station 15.2 and 1 heard Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

*horii:*

(2) 1 heard Lake Miike 22.2 and 1 heard Lake Miike 23.2.

Endemic. We had a few encounters with this attractive endemic.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker***Picus canus jessoensis*

(1) Tsurui 24.2.

A single adult flew by at the crane center.

**Falcons and Caracaras Falconidae****Common Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus perpallidus*

(4) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, en route 18.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2.

Small numbers.

**Peregrine Falcon***Falco peregrinus japonensis*

(4) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

A few encounters with this species.

**Cuckoo-shrikes Campephagidae****Ryukyu Minivet***Pericrocotus tegimae*

(2) Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Endemic. A few were nicely observed in the forest canopy.

**Shrikes *Laniidae*****Bull-headed Shrike***Lanius bucephalus bucephalus*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Tokyo 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, en route 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Fairly common and widespread (except Hokkaido).

**Crows, Jays, and Magpies *Corvidae*****Eurasian Jay**

*Garrulus glandarius*  
*brandtii*

(1) Yorouchi Onsen 26.2.

*japonicus:*

(5) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Kumanotaira Station 15.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2 and Lake Miike 22.2.

Two distinct races were nicely observed.

**Azure-winged Magpie***Cyanopica cyanus japonica*

(1) Kanazawa--Kahokugata Lagoon 16.2.

A small flock was observed at the water's edge.

**Daurian Jackdaw***Coloeus dauuricus*

(1) 4 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

A couple of birds in a large flock of Rook, including one adult in breeding plumage.

**Rook***Corvus frugilegus pastinator*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Large flocks in the Arasaki area.

**Carion Crow***Corvus corone orientalis*

(16) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, 1 heard Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Izumi 22.2, Tsurui 24.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 29.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Not as common as Large-billed, but still common and widespread.

**Large-billed Crow***Corvus macrorhynchos japonensis*

(17) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Kumanotaira Station 15.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Umagase 23.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Tsurui 24.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Yorouchi Onsen 26.2, Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Rausu harbour 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2, Lake Furen 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Abundant.

**Waxwings *Bombycillidae*****Bohemian Waxwing***Bombycilla garrulus garrulus*

(2) 1 heard Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2 and Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2.

A small flock flying by at the lighthouse.

**Japanese Waxwing (NT)***Bombycilla japonica*

(2) Karuizawa 13.2 and Karuizawa 14.2.

Great scope views of a flock in the forest.



**Tits, Chickadees *Paridae*****Coal Tit***Periparus ater insularis*

(2) Karuizawa 14.2 and Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

Small numbers were seen.

**Varied Tit***Sittiparus varius varius*

(7) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Shiriata Lagoon 19.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Fairly common and widespread in the forests.

**Marsh Tit***Poecile palustris*

(1) Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

**Marsh Tit***Poecile palustris hensoni*

(3) Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2 and Yorouchi Onsen 26.2.

Fairly common in Hokkaido.

**Willow Tit***Poecile montanus restrictus*

(4) Observed Karuizawa 13-15.2 and Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

A few encounters with this species in Honshu.

**Japanese Tit***Parus minor minor*

(14) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, observed Karuizawa 13-15.2, Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Kumanotaira Station 15.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Shiriata Lagoon 19.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2, Yorouchi Onsen 26.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common and widespread.

**Penduline-Tits *Remizidae*****Chinese Penduline Tit***Remiz consobrinus*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Neat flocks were observed in reed beds at two sites.

**Larks *Alaudidae*****Eurasian Skylark***Alauda arvensis japonica*

(6) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Distinct race "Japanese Skylark". Especially common in the Arasaki area.

**Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae*****Brown-eared Bulbul***Hypsipetes amaurotis amaurotis*

(15) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, en route 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Shiriata Lagoon 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Izumi 22.2, Umagase 23.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Tsurui 25.2, Yorouchi Onsen 26.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

Common and widespread.

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**Swallows *Hirundinidae*****Barn Swallow***Hirundo rustica gutturalis*

(1) Kadogawa Bay 23.2.

Small numbers.

**Asian House Martin***Delichon dasypus dasypus*

(2) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

A few encounters.

**Cettia Bush Warblers and allies *Cettiidae*****Japanese Bush Warbler***Horornis diphone cantans*

(6) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Typically skulky but seen well at various sites.

**Asian Stubtail***Urosphena squameiceps*

(2) Lake Miike 23.2 and Lake Miike 24.2.

Great encounters with this small and skulking forest-dweller.

**Long-tailed Tits *Aegithalidae*****Long-tailed Tit***Aegithalos caudatus*  
*caudatus*

(4) Tsurui 24.2, Tsurui 25.2, Yorouchi Onsen 26.2 and Rausu harbour 27.2.

*trivirgatus:*

(3) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2 and Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2.

*kiusiuensis:*

(3) Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Several encounters with small flocks of various subspecies.

**Cisticolas and allies *Cisticolidae*****Zitting Cisticola***Cisticola juncidis brunniceps*

(1) Lake Miike 23.2.

Seen by a single observer.

**Laughingthrushes *Leiothrichidae*****Red-billed Leiothrix***Leiothrix lutea*

(1) Kogawa Dam 21.2.

Introduced. A small flock moved by quickly.

**White-eyes *Zosteropidae*****Warbling White-eye***Zosterops japonicus japonicus*

(7) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, 1 heard Kawagoe Park 13.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Common and widespread (except Hokkaido).

**Kinglets *Regulidae*****Goldcrest***Regulus regulus japonensis*

(6) Karuizawa 14.2, 1 heard Karuizawa 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, 1 heard Amagozen Cape 17.2, 1 heard Kogawa Dam 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Observed in mixed-species flocks.

**Wrens *Troglodytidae*****Eurasian Wren***Troglodytes troglodytes fumigatus*

(7) Up to 1 Karuizawa 13-15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Izumi 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Yoroushi Onsen 26.2.

A few encounters with this species.

**Nuthatches *Sittidae*****Eurasian Nuthatch***Sitta europaea  
clara*

(3) Tsurui 25.2, Yoroushi Onsen 26.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

*hondoensis:*

(6) Observed Karuizawa 13-15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Izumi 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2. Showing well at various sites.

**Treecreepers *Certhiidae*****Eurasian Treecreeper***Certhia familiaris daurica*

(3) Karuizawa 13.2, 1 heard Karuizawa 15.2 and Nemuro Peninsula 28.2.

Observed at two sites in the forest.

**Starlings *Sturnidae*****White-cheeked Starling***Spodiopsar cineraceus*

(9) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Tokyo--Tama River, Haneda 13.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, en route 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Common and widespread (except Hokkaido).

**Common Starling***Sturnus vulgaris poltaratskyi*

(3) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Fairly large flocks in the Arasaki area.

**Thrushes and Allies *Turdidae*****Pale Thrush***Turdus pallidus*

(6) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Most observations of this thrush were in Kyushu.

**Brown-headed Thrush***Turdus chrysolaus chrysolaus*

(1) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2.

Several showing well at the edge of a reed bed.

**Naumann's Thrush***Turdus naumanni*

(1) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2.

A single bird was successfully "twitched" and photographed.



**Dusky Thrush***Turdus eunomus*

(14) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Izumi 22.2, Kadogawa Bay 23.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

The most common thrush in Japan in winter.

**Chats, Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*****Red-flanked Bluetail***Tarsiger cyanurus*

(5) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Shirihata Lagoon 19.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Several encounters with female-type birds.

**Daurian Redstart***Phoenicurus auroreus auroreus*

(9) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Okubiwa Sports Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2 and Umagase 23.2.

Fairly common during the tour (except Hokkaido).

**Blue Rock Thrush***Monticola solitarius philippensis*

(3) Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, 3 Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Kogawa Dam 21.2.

Various encounters, including some stunning males.

**Dippers *Cinclidae*****Brown Dipper***Cinclus pallasii pallasii*

(3) Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2 and Yorouchi Onsen 26.2.

Seen well at two sites.

**Old World Sparrows *Passeridae*****Russet Sparrow***Passer cinnamomeus rutilans*

(2) Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Flocks were observed at 3 sites.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow***Passer montanus saturatus*

(16) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Nagahama area 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Izumi 22.2, Lake Miike 23.2, Tsurui 24.2, Notsuke Peninsula 25.2, Notsuke Peninsula 26.2, Rausu harbour 27.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Abundant and widespread.

**Accentors *Prunellidae*****Japanese Accentor***Prunella rubida*

(1) Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

Near-endemic. Adult bird showing really well.

**Wagtails, Pipits *Motacillidae*****Grey Wagtail***Motacilla cinerea cinerea*

(6) Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Satsuma--Sendai River 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Izumi 22.2.

Fairly common near water.

**White Wagtail***Motacilla alba lugens*

(11) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2.

Common and widespread.

**Japanese Wagtail***Motacilla grandis*

(9) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Toyama--Yamadagawa Rice Fields 16.2, Komatsu Airport Area 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa--Kohoku Waterfowl Park 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Izumi 22.2, Yoroushi Onsen 26.2, Rausu harbour 26.2 and Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2.

Near-endemic. Fairly common and widespread.

**Olive-backed Pipit***Anthus hodgsoni hodgsoni*

(1) 3 Lake Miike 22.2.

A few were observed at the camping.

**Red-throated Pipit***Anthus cervinus*

(1) 1 heard Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

A single bird flying overhead (distinct call).

**Buff-bellied Pipit***Anthus rubescens japonicus*

(3) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Fairly common and widespread in small numbers.

**Finches *Fringillidae*****Brambling***Fringilla montifringilla*

(4) Karuizawa 14.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Seen nicely at various sites.

**Hawfinch***Coccothraustes coccothraustes japonicus*

(8) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, en route 17.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2 and Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2.

Small numbers were observed at various sites.

**Japanese Grosbeak***Eophona personata personata*

(4) 4 Kawagoe Park 13.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2 and Lake Miike 22.2.

Small flocks seen at 4 different sites.

**Eurasian Bullfinch***Pyrrhula pyrrhula cassinii*

(2) Karuizawa 13.2 and Kumanotaira Station 14.2.

Small numbers showing well.

**Asian Rosy Finch***Leucosticte arctoa brunneonucha*

(1) 95 Kiritappu 29.2.

A large flock was encountered on the last day of the trip!

**Long-tailed Rosefinch***Carpodacus sibiricus sanguinolentus*

(3) 3 Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2 and Tsurui 25.2.

Small numbers showing well.

**Grey-capped Greenfinch***Chloris sinica minor*

(10) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2, Nishi Lagoon 18.2, Lake Biwa 19.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Kogawa Dam 21.2, Lake Miike 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Common and widespread with large flocks at Arasaki.

**Common Redpoll***Acanthis flammea flammea*

(3) Tsurui 25.2, Rausu harbour 27.2 and en route 29.2.

Small numbers were encountered in Hokkaido.

**Eurasian Siskin***Spinus spinus*

(2) Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2 and Tsurui 25.2.

A large flock in the forest at Jigokudani.

**Old World Buntings *Emberizidae*****Meadow Bunting***Emberiza cioides ciopsis*

(7) Kawagoe Park 13.2, Kumanotaira Station 14.2, Karuizawa 14.2, Karuizawa 15.2, Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Saku--Nonotorinooka Park, Chikuma River 15.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2, Izumi 22.2 and Lake Miike 23.2.

Fairly common and widespread (except Hokkaido).

**Chestnut-eared Bunting***Emberiza fucata fucata*

(2) Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2.

Small numbers were observed nicely in Kyushu.

**Rustic Bunting***Emberiza rustica*

(3) 2 Nakano--Hamazugaike Park 15.2, Amagozen Cape 17.2 and Nishi Lagoon 18.2.

Small numbers were seen at 3 different sites.

**Yellow-throated Bunting***Emberiza elegans elegans*

(1) 6 Lake Miike 23.2.

A flock showed well at the edge of the camping.

**Black-faced Bunting***Emberiza spodocephala personata*

(4) Tokyo--Mizumoto Park 12.2, Kawagoe Park 13.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2, Yatsushiro Mudflats 21.2 and Kogawa Dam 21.2.

Fairly common and widespread (except Hokkaido).

**Common Reed Bunting***Emberiza schoeniclus pyrrhulina*

(3) Komatsu--Kiba Lake 17.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 20.2, Arasaki--Izumi Crane Center 21.2 and Kogawa Dam 21.2.

Larger numbers were observed in the Arasaki areas.



## Mammals (11 in total: 11 seen)

**Status codes:** E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced

**IUCN codes:** CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

### Old World monkeys *Cercopithecidae*

#### **Japanese Macaque**

*Macaca fuscata fuscata*

(1) Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

Many "Snow Monkeys" were enjoyed inside the park.

### Squirrels *Sciuridae*

#### **Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel**

*Petaurista leucogenys*

(1) Karuizawa 14.2.

In a nest-box.

#### **Japanese Squirrel**

*Sciurus lis*

(2) Karuizawa 14.2 and Karuizawa 15.2.

A few were seen in the forest.

### Wolves, Coyote, Foxes, Jackals *Canidae*

#### **Raccoon Dog**

*Nyctereutes procyonoides*

(1) Yoroushi Onsen 25.2.

Showing well while waiting for the fish owl.

#### **Red Fox**

*Vulpes vulpes*

(3) Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Lake Furen 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common in Hokkaido.

### Weasels, Skunks, Otters *Mustelidae*

#### **Sea Otter**

*Enhydra lutris*

(3) 2 Ochiishi Pelagic 27.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2 and 2 Kiritappu 29.2.

This large species was seen at 3 different sites.

#### **Japanese Marten**

*Martes melampus*

(1) Yoroushi Onsen 25.2.

Several showed up while waiting for the fish owl.

### Seals *Phocidae*

#### **Spotted Seal**

*Phoca largha*

(2) Cape Nosappu 28.2, Hanasaki Lighthouse, Kurumaishi 28.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Fairly common along the coast of the Nemuro Peninsula.

### Pigs *Suidae*

#### **Wild Boar**

*Sus scrofa*

(1) Katano Kamoike Sanctuary 17.2.

A baby was watched foraging next to the vehicle.

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**Deer Cervidae**

**Sika Deer**

*Cervus nippon*

(3) Shunkunitai Boardwalk 27.2, Nemuro Peninsula 28.2 and Kiritappu 29.2.

Common in Hokkaido.

**Cattle, Antelopes, Sheep, Goats Bovidae**

**Japanese Serow**

*Capricornis crispus*

(2) Karuizawa 13.2 and Jigokudani Monkey Park 16.2.

A few encounters with this cute goat-like creature.

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