



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Japan

Ryukyu Islands Extension

8th to 14th February 2017 (7 days)

Trip Report



Ryukyu Robin by David Hoddinott

Tour Leaders: Glen Valentine & Bryan Shirley
Trip Report compiled by Glen Valentine

Top five Birds of the Ryukyu Islands Extension as voted by the tour participants:

- 1) Okinawa Rail
- 2) Amami Woodcock
- 3) Lidth's Jay
- 4) Ryukyu Robin
- 5) Ryukyu Scops Owl



Mount Fuji as seen during the flight between Tokyo and the Ryukyu Islands by Sue Walsh

Tour Summary

An eager group gathered in the lobby of our Tokyo hotel in anticipation of the start of their Japanese birding adventure. The weather was delightful, crisp and clear and after a short walk to the nearby Tama River, we were soon enjoying our first views of some of Japan's fairly common and widespread species,



Brown-eared Bulbul by Dennis Braddy

like Brown-eared Bulbul, Grey-capped Greenfinch, Bull-headed Shrike, Carrion and Large-billed Crows, Japanese Tit, White-cheeked Starling, White Wagtail and Dusky Thrush. The river harboured familiar waterfowl, such as Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Northern Pintail, Eurasian Teal, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck and Greater Scaup, as well as Great Crested Grebe, the cosmopolitan Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Cormorant in various stages of plumage, Grey Heron, Black-headed, Mew and Vega Gulls and Black-winged Stilt. Our first of many Western Osprey and Black Kite lingered nearby, while a fleeting Japanese Bush Warbler was seen in the adjacent reedbeds. We departed



the river after spending a couple of hours there and returned to our hotel from where we caught the shuttle bus to Haneda Airport.



Japanese Wood Pigeon by Glen Valentine

Our direct flight down to Amami Island had us arriving in the mid-afternoon, but as the morning progressed, so the weather began to drastically deteriorate. The final leg of our flight was rather bumpy indeed and the pilot did extremely well to make a smooth and safe landing in the treacherous flying conditions. The rain bucketed down while we waited for our rental vehicles, but it fortunately lifted somewhat by the time we arrived at our first scheduled birding stop for the afternoon, an area of rocky shoreline along the coast a short drive from the airport. The stop was essentially for Japanese Cormorant, which cooperated nicely by standing in the open on the rocks just offshore for excellent scope views. Here we also added Pacific Reef Heron, a flock of Pacific Golden Plover, several Ruddy Turnstones and a distant Brown Booby to the list.

We then climbed up into the forested hills and a short while later, pulled off the main road to bird an area that has proved extremely productive and worthwhile on previous trips. This site did not disappoint, and we were thrilled at the array of stellar Amami endemics and other noteworthy species that we managed to obtain good views of during the half an hour of birdable weather we were afforded. Highlights included our first of many Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers, Ryukyu Minivet and Japanese White-eye; while two Lidth's Jays and a fly-by and briefly perched Japanese Wood Pigeon was a major bonus, and was the perfect way to end a great first day in Japan. This evening, we tried our luck at Ryukyu Scops Owl and Amami Woodcock in the howling wind and persistent rain that battered the island. Unfortunately, our efforts proved fruitless and these two mega-endemics would just have to wait for later!

Our full day on Amami had us heading up to the beautiful Kinsakubaru Forest Reserve, while it was still dark, for our second attempt at the woodcock, but the weather had not improved at all and it was even colder and windier. Fortunately, the rain had at least abated and we were able to bird the forest in relative comfort, but with the pressing wind, this proved to be a difficult task. At dawn, we found an Amami Thrush feeding at the edge of the road that eventually showed well but briefly after a patient wait. Pale Thrushes were commonly seen hopping off the road-edge and feeding in the forest canopy; while the few mixed flocks that we encountered held target species like Japanese and Varied Tits, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Ryukyu Minivet, Arctic Warbler and a single Narcissus (Ryukyu) Flycatcher, a real bonus and a very rarely seen species! A few of the rather shy Whistling Green Pigeon called away in the dense forest canopy and



Ryukyu Minivet by Glen Valentine



were seen briefly on a few occasions; while we also encountered more Lidth's Jays.

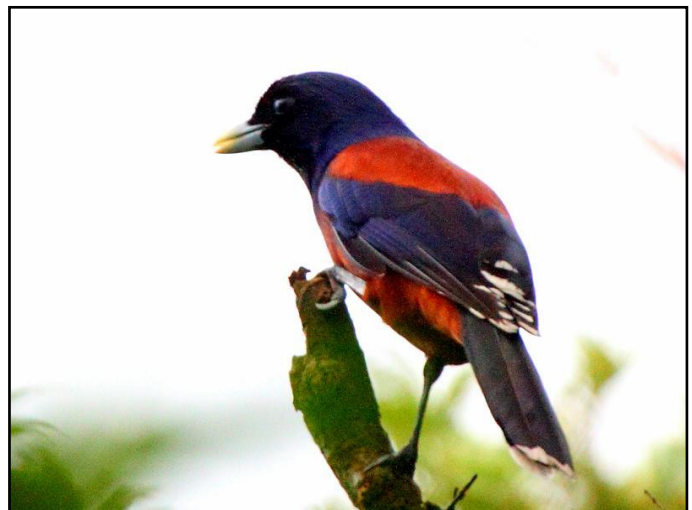


Blue Rock Thrush by Dennis Braddy

In the late morning, we departed Kinsakubaru and made our way into town for a hot, sit-down lunch that was very well received and most welcome. The remainder of the afternoon had us birding the coastal mudflats and tidal pools at Ose Beach and Ushuku Port. The number of migrant waders here was impressive and we enjoyed sifting through the flocks and sorting out Pacific Golden, Grey, Kentish and Lesser Sand Plovers, Red-necked Stint and Dunlin, and we also managed to find our only Grey-tailed Tattlers of the trip. Brown Boobies were seen soaring and flapping buoyantly over the breakers just offshore, while several distinctive, resident, rufous-bellied *philippensis* Blue Rock Thrushes also popped up nearby and afforded us good views of these attractive birds that may very well be split as a separate species in the near future. This evening, we returned to Kinsakubaru for the woodcock and scops owl but were received with the same horrific weather as the previous evening and we would, unfortunately, have to wait until Okinawa to see these two sought-after target species.

Our flight from Amami to Okinawa was only scheduled for the early afternoon, and so we had some time to return to Kinsakubaru in the hope of obtaining better and longer views of the rare and secretive Amami Thrush, but unfortunately this was not to be. We did, however, manage to coax in a gorgeous male Ryukyu Robin. Just before returning to Naze, our excellent driver, Koichi, spotted a Grey-faced Buzzard perched up next to the road. We jumped out and managed to relocate it after it flew from its original perch and while savouring the superb views of this sought-after raptor, we also enjoyed our best views yet of the striking, endemic Lidth's Jay. *Wonderful!* What a great way to end our time on Amami and with some time to spare, we ducked into a lovely restaurant near the airport for a delicious lunch before catching our flight to Naha, the largest city on Okinawa, situated in the south of the island.

Arriving at Naha Airport in the late afternoon, we boarded the shuttle bus to the car rental depot nearby and after picking up our rental vehicles, we drove a short distance to the adjacent river, where a flock of fourteen of the rare and endangered Black-faced Spoonbill awaited us. *Fantastic!* A three-hour drive then took us up to the northern part of the island and after a quick stop at a convenience store for 'adult beverages', we arrived at our delightful accommodation right in Yambaru National Park in the early evening. This would be our base for the next two nights and poised us perfectly to pursue the various target endemics on offer in this seldom-birded and beautiful part of Japan. After a delicious traditional Japanese feast, we settled in for a



Lidth's Jay by Glen Valentine



well-deserved night's rest in preparation for the long day that awaited us.



Okinawa Rail by David Hoddinott

Up at dawn the next morning, we headed out to the core area for Okinawa Rail, a large, strikingly patterned and endemic rail that was only discovered in the mid 80's and is listed as endangered due to its limited range and very specific habitat requirements. Excitement mounted almost immediately as we flushed a woodcock from the edge of the hotel grounds. Unfortunately, due to the brief view obtained and the fact that both Amami and Eurasian Woodcocks occur in this area, we were unable to place it to species. Continuing along the road, we quite incredibly encountered a further two woodcocks but both individuals were nervous and very flighty. However, one of them was seen well enough by Bryan and his vehicle to identify as an Amami Woodcock. A little further on, we found a pair of beautiful Ryukyu Robins sitting out on top of the roadside railing, providing superb views. The morning was progressing rather quickly, though, and we needed to regain our focus on the main target species for the morning, the Okinawa Rail. We arrived at the rail area while it was still early and almost immediately upon arriving, we managed to spot one feeding on a grassy bank at the edge of the forest. The individual was rather relaxed indeed and fed in the open for several minutes, even allowing us to scope it from within the vehicle that acted as the perfect hide. *Brilliant! What a start to our first morning on Okinawa!*

We returned to our accommodation for a tasty and varied Japanese-style breakfast and thereafter departed on a mission to find the very rare and shy Okinawa (Pryer's) Woodpecker, the island's toughest endemic and now considered the rarest extant woodpecker on earth, with a population of around 400 birds and currently listed as critically endangered. We put in some serious effort and finally managed to obtain brief perched and flight views of a single bird in the mid-afternoon. The views were, unfortunately, unsatisfactory for most folks, and so we continued our quest for this elusive species. The remainder of the afternoon did not produce much, other than several Grey-faced Buzzards and an obliging Japanese Bush Warbler. This evening, we set out in search of Ryukyu Scops Owl and Amami Woodcock for those that did not achieve tickable views earlier in the morning. The Scops Owl cooperated very nicely indeed and we ended up seeing three separate birds that all showed extremely well at close range.

With still no Amami Woodcock for around half of the group, we ventured out pre-dawn for one final attempt at this elusive endemic. This time we were in business, as we managed to find and spotlight one right next to the road. Everyone managed to get crippling views of this mega that not surprisingly made the 'top five' list for the extension! *What a build-up and superb sighting!* On an all-time high, and while it was still dark, we drove directly to an area where we'd seen Northern Boobook on

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Japanese White-eye by Dennis Braddy



previous tours and quite amazingly, we were met immediately after arriving at the site by one that was perched up in a bare tree. Unfortunately, the bird flew almost straight away and thereby only afforded some of the group with a sighting of this species. We returned for breakfast and the remainder of the morning saw us searching again for Okinawa Woodpecker, which finally obliged to some extent by uttering a soft call and then flying across the road right in front of us. *Awesome!* We also managed to obtain better views of Whistling Green Pigeons, and a pair of Grey Bunting was a major bonus!



Ryukyu Scops Owl by David Hoddinott

With all the Yambaru birds in the bag, we departed the area and began making our way back to Naha for our final night on the island. After popping into a convenience store to pick up an on-the-go lunch, we stopped in at the Kijoka Wetland, which was fairly quiet bird-wise, and so we pushed on to the larger Kin Wetlands further south, where we spent the remainder of the afternoon. Here we were treated to a number of noteworthy species, all of which showed very well and at close range. Meandering through the paddy fields and flooded drainage lines, using the vehicles as hides, we were able to admire Intermediate Egrets, Little Ringed Plovers, Common Snipe, Green and Wood Sandpipers, Long-toed and Temminck's Stints, Light-vented Bulbul and Scaly-breasted Munia. A small, mixed group of Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese and Greater White-fronted Goose was a major surprise and the afternoon ended off with a fine pair of Peregrine Falcons.

Our final morning on Okinawa was spent at several different wetlands around Naha, where we encountered many of the same waterfowl and waders seen earlier in the trip, as well as Northern Shoveler. A Ruddy-breasted Crake appeared at the edge of a dense reedbed on two occasions and an Oriental Reed Warbler also flitted about in the open for several minutes. The same fourteen Black-faced Spoonbills that were seen on our first afternoon on the island were found again, affording us even better views in beautiful morning light, and we also encountered large numbers of Pacific Golden Plovers in the surrounding grasslands. Alas, it was time to depart Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands and begin our main tour of the country by journeying across the three largest Japanese islands of Hokkaido, Honshu and Kyushu. Our late morning flight took us back up to Haneda, Tokyo, and then on to the beautiful, snowy wonderland of Hokkaido. We sadly said our goodbyes to Koichi, who'd been a great addition to our team on the extension, and in the early evening, we landed in Kushiro, where we met up with our excellent and friendly driver for the Hokkaido leg of our adventure, Sesake San, and so our main Japan – Dancing Cranes and Winter Birding tour began...



Amami Woodcock by David Hoddinott



ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS (96 species seen and 1 heard only)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC List 6.4. Please cite: Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2016. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press. Names in round brackets represent alternative names for the species. A notes section is included where recent taxonomical changes have taken place.

Key to abbreviations:

(E): an endemic species

(NE): a near-endemic species

(BE): a breeding endemic species

(I): an introduced species

CR: Critically endangered

EN: endangered

VU: vulnerable

NT: Near threatened

Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl Anatidae

Taiga Bean Goose

Anser fabalis

Three of these migrants were a surprising find at the Kin Wetlands on Okinawa.

NOTE: Formerly lumped with the next species as Bean Goose.

Tundra Bean Goose

Anser serrirostris

Also a surprise along with the latter species and seen together at the same site.

NOTE: Formerly lumped with the latter species as Bean Goose.

Greater White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Five seen with the previous two species at the Kin Wetlands, Okinawa.

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Two seen at a river near our hotel in Tokyo.

Eurasian Wigeon

Anas penelope

Around 20 seen at a river near our hotel in Tokyo.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck

Anas zonorhyncha

A few seen in Tokyo with several more at wetlands on Okinawa.

NOTE: Fairly recently split from Spot-billed Duck, along with Indian Spot-billed Duck.

Northern Shoveler

Anas clypeata

Around 10 seen at Sankaku wetland, Okinawa.

Northern Pintail

Anas acuta

A dozen in Tokyo and another two at Sankaku on Okinawa.

Eurasian (Common/Green-winged) Teal

Anas crecca

A few in Tokyo and at Sankaku, Okinawa.

NOTE: IOC splits the above species into Eurasian Teal *A. crecca* and Green-winged Teal *A. carolinensis* whereas Clements only recognises one species, Green-winged Teal *A. crecca*.

Common Pochard

Aythya farina

Around six birds at a river in Tokyo.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

At least forty seen in Tokyo.

Greater Scaup

Aythya marila

Around thirty seen with the latter species in Tokyo.



Grebes Podicipedidae

Great Crested Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

Four seen in Tokyo.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

Black-faced Spoonbill - EN

Platalea minor

We were thrilled to find fourteen of these endangered spoonbills on both visits to a river in Naha, Okinawa.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

A single was seen in flight overhead during our early morning around Tokyo.

Eastern Cattle Egret

Bubulcus coromandus

Around 30 birds were found in the Kin area, Okinawa.

NOTE: Clements lumps this species with Western Cattle Egret B. ibis as Cattle Egret B. ibis.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Small numbers were seen at scattered wetlands throughout the tour.

(Eastern) Great Egret

Ardea alba

Singletons were seen on Okinawa.

NOTE: Sometimes split as Eastern and Western Great Egrets but neither IOC nor Clements accepts this split.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret

Egretta intermedia

Around 8 seen on Okinawa.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Singletons seen on Okinawa.

Pacific Reef Heron

Egretta sacra

Small numbers were seen on rocky shorelines on both Amami and Okinawa Islands.

Boobies & Gannets Sulidae

Brown Booby

Sula leucogaster

Our first sighting was of a singleton that flew past us while scoping Japanese Cormorants on the Amami coast. We later saw around 10 in flight just offshore at Ose Beach, Amami.

Cormorants, Shags Phalacrocoracidae

Great Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Small numbers were seen in Tokyo and at Ose Beach.

NOTE: IOC splits this species into Great Cormorant P. carbo and White-breasted Cormorant P. lucidus, whereas Clements only recognises one species: Great Cormorant P. carbo.

Japanese (Temminck's) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax capillatus

We enjoyed excellent scope views of several birds on coastal rocks during the drive to Naze, Amami.

NOTE: Originally lumped with Great Cormorant.

Ospreys Pandionidae

Western Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Seen every day of the extension.

NOTE: IOC recognises two species: P. haliaetus Western Osprey and P. cristatus Eastern Osprey, whereas Clements only recognises one species, P. haliaetus Osprey.



Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

Black (Black-eared) Kite

Milvus migrans

A single bird was seen in Tokyo.

NOTE: Often split into three species: Black Kite, Yellow-billed Kite and Black-eared Kite. IOC accepts the Black and Yellow-billed Kite splits but neither Clements nor IOC accept the Black-eared Kite *M. lineatus* split.

Grey-faced Buzzard

Butastur indicus

First seen on our final morning on Amami and later seen regularly in small numbers on Okinawa.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots Rallidae

Okinawa Rail - EN (E)

Gallirallus okinawae

Superb views were had of a singleton feeding in the open at the edge of the forest in the Yambaru area of northern Okinawa. An absolute stunner and no doubt one of the top birds of the trip!

Ruddy-breasted Crake

Porzana fusca

At least one, maybe two birds were seen by most of the group at Sankaku pond in Naha, Okinawa.

Common Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Small numbers were encountered at wetlands on Okinawa.

NOTE: Common Moorhen's been recently split into two species: Common Moorhen (old world) and Common Gallinule (new world).

Eurasian (Common) Coot

Fulica atra

First seen in Tokyo and then on Okinawa.

Stilts and Avocets Recurvirostridae

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Forty birds were found at the Sankaku ponds.

Plovers & Lapwings Charadriidae

Pacific Golden Plover

Pluvialis fulva

Fair numbers were encountered on both Amami and Okinawa.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Around twenty seen on Amami.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Small numbers seen at Kin and Sankaku wetlands, Okinawa.

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Around 50 at Ose Beach, Amami.

Lesser Sand Plover

Charadrius mongolus

We had wonderful views of around 40 at Ose Beach, Amami.

NOTE: Several distinctive subspecies exist that are sometimes split into separate species. At least the eastern subspecies *mongolus* and *stegmanni* and the western subspecies of *atrifrons* are often split as separate species: Mongolian and Lesser Sand Plovers respectively. Neither IOC nor Clements accepts these splits and the two subspecies, although very distinctive in breeding plumage, are indistinguishable in non-breeding plumage. All three subspecies are recorded in Japan.

Snipes & Sandpipers Scolopacidae

Amami Woodcock – VU (E)

Scolopax mira

After driving the roads through Kinsakubaru Forest pre-dawn and post-dusk every day while we were there and failing to find this rare forest woodcock, we finally managed to find and obtain incredible views of this mega endemic in the Yambaru area of northern Okinawa. Fantastic!

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago



Small numbers were seen at Kin Wetland and Sankaku Pond, Okinawa.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Several at Kin and Sankaku, Okinawa.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Four at Kin wetland, Okinawa.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Singletons at Kin and Sankaku, Okinawa.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

Small numbers were seen on both Amami and Okinawa islands.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Small numbers seen on consecutive days on Amami.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

Large numbers were seen at Ose Beach, Amami.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

At least 8 birds seen at Kin Wetland, Okinawa.

Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

Around 35 of these usually scarce waders were seen very well at Kin, Okinawa.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Twenty at Ose Wetland, Amami.

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Around 20 seen at a river near our hotel in Tokyo.

Mew (Common) Gull *Larus canus*

Around six seen in Tokyo.

NOTE: Mew Gull is sometimes split into two species: Mew and Common Gulls respectively. Neither IOC nor Clements accepts these splits as yet.

Vega (Herring) Gull *Larus vegae*

At least 2 were seen in Tokyo before catching our flight to Amami.

NOTE: Previously lumped with Herring Gull which has now been split into several species.

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Rock Dove (Common/Feral Pigeon) (I) *Columba livia*

Widespread in urban areas throughout.

Japanese (Black) Wood Pigeon – NT (NE) *Columba janthina*

We enjoyed good views of a single bird at Tsumugi Village, Amami.

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*

Common and seen daily in all habitats.

Whistling (Ryukyu) Green Pigeon *Treron formosae*

A total of around 10 were seen during our time in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami with another six around Yambaru on Okinawa. All sightings were, unfortunately, brief.

NOTE: Whistling Green Pigeon is often split as two species: Ryukyu Green Pigeon, which we saw and Taiwan Green Pigeon on Lanyu Island and on mainland Taiwan. Neither IOC nor Clements accepts this split as yet.

Owls Strigidae

Ryukyu (Elegant) Scops Owl *Otus elegans*

Sensational views were had of this species on three occasions during a night drive in Yambaru NP, Okinawa. One of them was seen right in the grounds of our accommodation there!



NOTE: Ryukyu (Elegant) Scops Owl is sometimes split into two species: Ryukyu Scops Owl which we saw and Lanyu Scops Owl (*O. botelensis*) on Lanyu Island off Taiwan. Neither IOC nor Clements accepts this split.

Northern Boobook (Hawk-Owl)*Ninox japonica*

A major surprise when this species was seen perched up on top of a bare tree at the edge of the forest in Yambaru, Okinawa. Unfortunately, the bird flew almost immediately after it was spotted.

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

One seen at Kin, Okinawa.

Woodpeckers Picidae**Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker***Dendrocopos kizuki*

Small numbers were seen daily on Amami and Okinawa.

Okinawa (Pryer's) Woodpecker – CR (E)*Sapheopipo noguchii*

Two separate birds were seen during our time in Yambaru NP, Okinawa. Each encounter was unfortunately rather brief although our final fly-by view was a decent one for those who managed to get onto the bird. This shy and scarce endemic is considered the rarest extant woodpecker in the world with a population of around 400.

White-backed (Owston's) Woodpecker (H)*Dendrocopos leucotos*

A singleton was heard drumming in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami but could not be seen.

NOTE: The Owstoni subspecies on Amami is sometimes split as Owston's Woodpecker but neither IOC nor Clements accepts this split as yet.

Falcons Falconidae**Common (Eurasian) Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

Two seen on Amami and another two seen on Okinawa.

NOTE: Common Kestrel is usually split into two species: Common Kestrel (widespread) and Rock Kestrel of sub-equatorial Africa.

Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

Two birds were seen in flight over the Kin Wetlands, Okinawa.

NOTE: Many distinctive subspecies of Peregrine Falcon exist, some of which have been split into separate species like Barbary Falcon. We encountered the very pale and large japonensis race on each occasion.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae**Ryukyu Minivet (E)***Pericrocotus tegimae*

Small flocks were seen daily on Amami and Okinawa.

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

We enjoyed great views of two during our early morning around Tokyo before our flight to Amami.

Crows & Jays Corvidae**Lidth's Jay - VU (E)***Garrulus lidthi*

Heard regularly and seen briefly on a few occasions in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami. Also seen well at Tsumugi Village and near the edge of Naze.

Carrion Crow*Corvus corone*

Small numbers seen in Tokyo and heard over Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami.

Large-billed Crow*Corvus macrorhynchos*

Seen on most days on both islands and in Tokyo.

NOTE: Clements lumps this species with Indian Jungle Crow *C. culminatus* and Eastern Jungle Crow *C. levaillantii* as Large-billed Crow *C. macrorhynchos*, whereas IOC splits all three of these species into distinct species.

Tits, Chickadees Paridae

Varied Tit

Poecile varius

Small numbers were seen in forest habitat on both Amami and Okinawa islands.

NOTE: Several distinctive subspecies exist, some of which have been split into separate species like Taiwan Varied Tit on Taiwan. We encountered the race *amamii* on Amami and Okinawa.

Japanese (Eastern Grey) Tit

Parus minor

Seen daily in small numbers.

NOTE: Great Tit was recently split into three species by both Clements and IOC: Great Tit, Cinereous Tit and Japanese Tit respectively.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae

Light-vented (Chinese) Bulbul

Pycnonotus sinensis

Good views were had at Kin and Sankaku, Okinawa.

Brown-eared Bulbul

Hypsipetes amaurotis

Good numbers were seen daily.

NOTE: Several distinctive subspecies occur that may be split in future and we encountered *amaurotis* in Tokyo and *pryeri* on Amami and Okinawa.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae

Barn (European) Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Two were seen at Kin, Okinawa.

Pacific Swallow

Hirundo tahitica

Small numbers were seen daily.

Asian House Martin

Delichon dasypus

Four birds were seen in flight over Yambaru Forest, Okinawa.

Bush Warblers & Allies Cettiidae

Japanese Bush Warbler

Horornis diphone

Singletons were seen on several occasions on both Amami and Okinawa islands.

Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae

Arctic Warbler

Phylloscopus borealis

Singletons were seen a few times in forest habitat.

Reed Warblers & Allies Acrocephalidae

Oriental Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus orientalis

A singleton showed well in reedbeds at Sankaku pond, Okinawa.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Zitting Cisticola

Cisticola juncidis

A few birds were seen at the edge of wetlands on Okinawa.

Yuhinas, White-eyes & Allies Zosteropidae



Japanese White-eye*Zosterops japonicus*

Small flocks were seen every day.

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

Around twenty were seen in the Tokyo area.

Thrushes Turdidae**Amami (Scaly) Thrush (E)***Zoothera major*

One of these rare and elusive endemics was found at dawn on our first morning in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami but was not seen again despite intensive searching.

NOTE: IOC splits Scaly Thrush Zoothera dauma into five species: Scaly Thrush Zoothera dauma, White's Thrush Zoothera aurea, Amami Thrush Zoothera major, Nilgiri Thrush Zoothera neilgherriensis and Sri Lanka Thrush Zoothera imbricata, whereas Clements only recognises one species, Scaly Thrush Zoothera dauma.

Pale Thrush*Turdus pallidus*

Good numbers were seen daily on both Amami and Okinawa islands.

Dusky Thrush*Turdus eunomus*

Small numbers were seen around Tokyo with another two on Okinawa.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**Ryukyu Robin (E)***Erithacus komadori*

After intensive searching, we finally managed to obtain excellent but quick views of this stunner in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami. A gorgeous pair was then seen in the Yambaru area, Okinawa.

NOTE: An article in a recent Oriental Bird Club Bulletin suggests that both subspecies of Ryukyu Robin (Komadori on Amami Island and namiyei on Okinawa Island) should be classified as distinct species. However, neither Clements nor IOC recognise this split as yet.

Narcissus (Ryukyu) Flycatcher*Ficedula narcissina*

This species is rare on the Ryukyu Islands and we were very fortunate to have found one in Kinsakubaru Forest, Amami.

NOTE: Birds of East Asia by Mark Brazil splits Narcissus Flycatcher into two species: Narcissus and Ryukyu Flycatchers respectively. Neither Clements nor IOC recognises this split as yet. If split, we saw the resident and endemic Ryukyu Flycatcher on Amami.

Daurian Redstart*Phoenicurus aureus*

A female was seen in Tokyo on our first morning.

Blue (Red-bellied) Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

Small numbers were seen daily on both Amami and Okinawa islands.

NOTE: Sometimes split as Blue and Red-bellied Rock Thrushes respectively. We saw the resident philippensis subspecies during the tour which is sometimes recognised as Red-bellied Rock Thrush.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae**Eurasian Tree Sparrow***Passer montanus*

Seen around Tokyo and again on the islands.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae**Scaly-breasted Munia (I)***Lonchura punctulata*

Ten were encountered at the Kin wetlands on Okinawa.



Wagtails Motacillidae

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Small numbers were seen daily on both Amami and Okinawa Islands.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Commonly seen on every day of the trip.

NOTE: Both lugens and ocularis subspecies were seen during the trip. The entire White Wagtail complex may be split up in future but at the moment neither IOC nor Clements recognise any White Wagtail splits.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

One of these migrant pipits was flushed (and fortunately called as it did so) at the Kin wetlands.

Finches Fringillidae

Grey-capped (Oriental) Greenfinch *Chloris sinica*

Around 12 were seen in Tokyo.

Buntings & Allies Emberizidae

Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata*

One bird was seen by some of the group at Sankaku Pond, Okinawa.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

A female was seen rather briefly in reedbeds in Tokyo.

Grey Bunting *Emberiza variabilis*

A major surprise when a pair was seen on consecutive days in Yambaru Forest, Okinawa.

ANNOTATED LIST OF MAMMALS (2 Species seen)

Names and taxonomical order of the mammal species list follows that of IgoTerra (2016).

Squirrels Sciuridae

Japanese Squirrel *Sciurus lis*

One seen on Okinawa.

Mongoose Herpestidae

Small Indian Mongoose (I) *Herpestes auropunctatus*

One seen at the Kin Wetlands, Okinawa.

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