



Sichuan's Wildlife, Flower, and Culture

20 Days Sichuan's Wildlife, Flower, and Culture

Jun 20 - Jul 9, 2023



Outline

- Day 1: Chengdu, China
- Day 2: Chengdu / Tangjiahe
- Day 3-4: Tangjiahe
- Day 5: Tangjiahe / Chuanzhusi
- Day 6: Chuanzhusi / Ruoergai
- Day 7-8: Ruoergai
- Day 9: Ruoergai / Maerkang
- Day 10: Mengbi Mountain
- Day 11: Maerkang / Rilong
- Day 12-13: Balang Mountain
- Day 14: Rilong / Labahe
- Day 15: Labahe
- Day 16: Labahe / Longcanggou
- Day 17-18: Longcanggou
- Day 19: Longcanggou / Chengdu
- Day 20: Chengdu / Depart



Giant Panda



Overview

Located in southwestern China and the eastern edge of the Himalayas, Sichuan is renowned for its delicate cuisine and for being the hometown of Giant Panda. For nature travelers, the charm goes far above that because Sichuan holds a great diversity of natural resources. From the majestic Gongga Mountain at 7,556 meters in the west to the farthest east end at 188 meters, the vast land is home to a lot of sought-after wildlife and unique minority groups that live in the depth of mountains and remote areas. We have carefully selected some classic sites for wildlife, flowers, and culture and customized these sites in one itinerary. Thus, we can enjoy a diversified experience covering nature and culture highlights.



Chinese White-browed Rosefinch



Highlights

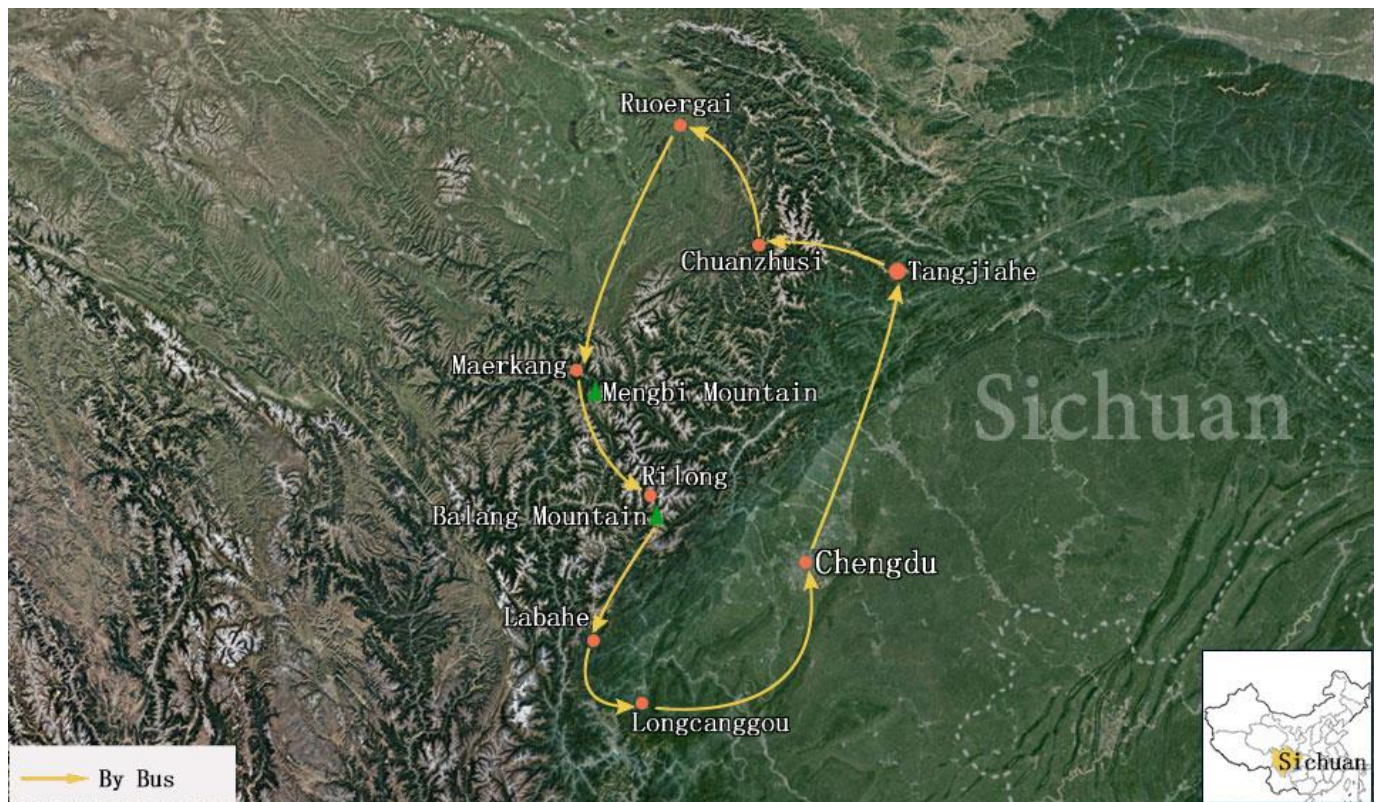
1. An exciting combination of birds, mammals, flowers, culture, etc.
2. Visiting Balang Mountain, the "kingdom of pheasants" for Chinese Monal, Tibetan Snowcock, Tibetan Partridge, Chesnut-throated Partridge, etc.
3. Beautiful alpine flowers including Primulas, Rhododendrons, Gentianas, Lilies, Meconopsises, etc.
4. We run the trip in the best season. Not only wildlife is in the breeding seasons, but all the destinations have the most beautiful sceneries in this season with alpine flowers blooming.
5. Experienced wildlife and flower guides ensure you a lifetime traveling experience.
6. A small group size of no more than 8 travelers.
7. Years of working as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and wildlife.
8. A strong logistic team in the office to ensure our trip goes smoothly and every participant has a comfortable and memorable journey.



Tour Info Sheet

Highlight Birds	Snow Partridge, Temminck's Tragopan, Golden Pheasant, Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Tibetan Snowcock, Chestnut-throated Partridge, Chinese Monal, Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, White Eared Pheasant, Grandala, Sichuan Jay, Sichuan Wood Owl, Przevalski's Pinktail, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Goldcrest, Great Parrotbill, Brown Parrotbill, Three-toed Parrotbill, Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Golden Parrotbill, Emei Shan Liocichla, Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Slaty Bunting, Crested Tit Warbler, White-browed Tit Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Sichuan Tit, White-browed Tit, Wall Creeper, Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Common Rosefinch, Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch, Crimson-browed Finch, Red-fronted Rosefinch, etc.
Numbers of Species to Expect	200-250
Ease of Birding	mostly easy birding with a few tricky species
Highlight Mammals	Red Panda, Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Fox, Wolf, Leopard Cat, Hog Badger, Takin, Tibetan Macaque, Reeves's Muntjac, Chinese Goral, Tufted Deer, Sambar, Masked Palm Civet, etc.
Other Attractions	plateau scenery, wild panda habitat, delicate food, the culture of Anduo Tibetan, Jiarong Tibetan, Qiang People, gorgeous alpine flowers, etc.
Photography Opportunities	good photography chances for wildlife, scenery, people, and flowers
Habitats Covered	subtropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, snow mountains, wetlands, plateaus
Expected Climate	mostly comfortable, windy and cold on the plateau, humid in the basin, rain is possible
Physical Requirements	mostly easy, demanding but optional in certain parts
Accommodation	very comfortable
Transportation	19-seat or 30-seat van

Map



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Chengdu, China.

Our private guide or driver will meet you once you arrive at Chengdu Shuangliu Airport. After that, we will drive about 30 minutes to a downtown hotel for one night stay. For early arrivals, we will go for a relaxing birding at a local park near the hotel.

Day 2: Chengdu to Tangjiahe (Alt.: 500-1,500m).

We will have a short visit to the Chengdu Botanical Garden before we start our long drive to the national nature reserve in Tangjiahe. Chengdu Botanical Garden is considered one of the best city parks for birding due to its big diversity of flora and high forest coverage. We can find some urban and special resident birds here, including Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Chinese Bulbul, White-browed Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leiothrix, Japanese White-eye, Chinese Blackbird, Chinese Grosbeak, Collared Finchbill, Long-tailed Shrike, Fork-tailed Sunbird, Hoopoe, etc.

Followed the exploration, we will complete a fairly long (around 6 hours) journey to Tangjiahe. By the time we arrive, it should be around sunset time when animals normally come down close to

the river-side meadow for water and salt. We will likely encounter our first Takin. Besides, Reeves's Muntjac and Masked Civet are also relatively easy and often found by the road. By contrast, although the elusive Leopard Cat is also active at night, but is not so easy to see it. We will continue our search in the coming days and prioritize spotting all of the species here.



Tawny Fish Owl

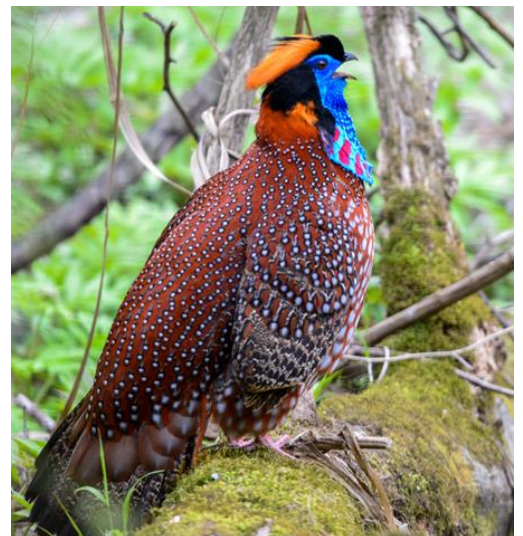
Day 3-4: Tanghiihahe Nature Reserve (Alt.: 1,500-2,600m).

Hiding in the depth of the Mingshan Mountains, Tangjiahe is one of the panda reserves in China that hosts a variety of rare mammals and birds. Tangjiahe is also known as a premier biodiversity hotspot, consisting of murmuring streams, lush mixed broadleaf-conifer forest, and cliffs. These factors have made it one of the best places to search for mammals and birds in China. Our main activities here will be arranged in the mornings and late afternoons. We will focus on two main valleys at low elevation and one trail that winds up to the middle elevation area. The Golden Pheasant will be our very top target at low elevation, we should have a good chance of spotting some. With some patient searches

along the streams, we can encounter Brown Dipper, Plumbeous Water Redstart, White-capped Water Redstart. Without much difficulty, we can also find Crested Kingfisher, White-crowned Forktail, Little Forktail, and Blue Rock Thrush. There is a chance to find the spectacular Tawny Fish Owl, but it requires a good amount of work and some luck.

In the broad-leaved forest, we will look for Speckled Wood Pigeon, Asian Koel, Large Hawk Cuckoo, Himalayan Cuckoo, Pacific Swift, Grey-capped Woodpecker, White-backed Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Mountain Bulbul, Spectacled Fulvetta, Pygmy Cupwing, Yellow-bellied Tit, Sooty Bushtit, White-collared Yuhina, Slaty Bunting, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Bianchi's Warbler, Martens's Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Sulphur-breasted Warbler, Rufous-faced Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, etc.

In one morning, we will do a special hike. We will get there early to ensure we get the best chance to try Temminck's Tragopan. The dense broadleaf foliage and bamboo forest are also home to other interesting species including Rufous-capped Babbler, Barred Laughingthrush, White-throated Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Black-faced



Temminck's Tragopan

Laughingthrush, Red-winged Laughingthrush, Indian Blue Robin, Blue Whistling Thrush, etc. Occasionally, we can see Spectacled Parrotbill and Koklass Pheasant in this area.

Our mammal safari is sure to be one of the highlights of this trip. We will spend one morning looking for the spectacular Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, a stunning animal that is known for its golden fur and blue face. Besides, Takin is relatively easy to find and sometimes can be spotted from a close distance. Other widespread species like Tibetan Macaque, Reeves's Muntjac, Asian Wild Boar like wandering along the riverside, while Chinese Goral is often spotted along the steep cliffs. We may also see some challengeable species like Hog Badger, Leopard Cat, Serow, Yellow-throated Marten, Tufted Deer, and with some luck, even the elusive Asiatic Black Bear.

In terms of flower watching, we have chances to see interesting flora species like *Pleione bulbocodioides*, *Changnienia amoena*, *Cercis glabr*, *Ischnogyne mandarinorum*, and various kinds of Rhododendrons.



Takin

Day 5: Tangjiahe to Chuanzhusi (Alt.: 1,500-3,000m).

Continue our exploration before driving on to our next destination. We will have some birding stops along the way looking for birds like Collared Crow, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Maroon-backed Accentor, Grey-crested Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, etc.



Blood Pheasant

Day 6: Chuanzhusi to Ruergai via Gonggangling (Alt.: ~3,500m).

Gonggangling has lush Alpine coniferous forests where it is home to many special alpine forest birds. We will search for the endemic and rare Sichuan Wood Owl (Pere David's Owl) here, as well as the elusive Chinese Grouse and other forest species like Blue Eared Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Three-banded Rosefinch, Chinese White-browed Rosefinch, Grey-headed Bullfinch, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Goldcrest, Chinese Rubythroat, Sichuan Tit, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey-crested Tit, Buff-barred Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Greenish Warbler,

Chinese Fulvetta, Grey-backed Shrike, White-backed Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, White-bellied Redstart, Blue-fronted Redstart, Himalayan Bluetail, Rufous-breasted Accento, Maroon-backed Accentor, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, etc.

We can also see some interesting floras like *Fritillaria unibracteata*, and different kinds of Primulas and Rhododendrons.

After searching, we will drive on to Ruergai, a vast plain of the Tibetan Plateau known as the "lungs of Sichuan". We will enjoy picturesque views of the high mountains on either side of the road. Once we arrive, we can expect some grassland species like Himalayan Griffon, Upland Buzzard, Black Kite, Common Kestrel, Amur Falcon, Daurian Jackdaw, Horned Lark, Azure-winged Magpie, Oriental Skylark, Carrion Crow, Grey-backed Shrike, Rock Sparrow, Siberian Stonechat, Citrine Wagtail, etc.



Saker Falcon

From now on, we will also keep our eyes open for plateau mammals, the adorable Plateau Pika

emerge from their nests and graze with great alertness on the grassland near its hole, while the Himalayan Marmot tends to lay prone on the ground. Other sought-after mammals we can expect in the following days including Tibetan Fox, Red Fox, Hog Badger, Tufted Deer, and the scarce Grey Wolf, Chinese Mountain Cat, and Tibetan Roe Deer.



Blue Eared Pheasant

Day 7-8: Roergai Grassland (Alt.: ~3,500m).

We will spend two days on the grassland searching for plateau birds and mammals. We will spend one morning in the mountain with virgin forests at the edge of the plateau that provides good habitats for forest birds such as the rare Chinese Grouse, Blue Eared Pheasant, Sichuan Jay, Black Woodpecker, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Snowy-browed Nuthatch, Plain Laughingthrush, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Giant Laughingthrush, Elliot's Laughingthrush, Sichuan Tit, White-browed Tit Warbler, Crested Tit Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Yellow-streaked Warbler,

Chinese Fulvetta, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, Spectacled Parrotbill, White-throated Redstart, Hodgson's Redstart, Black Redstart, Common Rosefinch, Common Crossbill, Godlewski's Bunting, etc.

In one afternoon, we will visit Flower Lake which is one of the most important plateau wetlands in China, it attracts many migratory birds in the summertime. We normally can have a good observation of the elegant Black-necked Crane, which is the only crane species breeding on the plateau. We will slowly walk on the well-paved boardwalk searching for waterfowls and grassland birds including Greylag Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Tufted Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Ruddy Shelduck, Brown-headed Gull, White-winged Black Tern, Whiskered Tern, Black Stork, Great Bittern, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Chinese Pond Heron, Lesser Sand Plover, Common Redshank, Wood Sandpiper, Citrine Wagtail, Little Ringed Plover, White-rumped Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Oriental Skylark, Tibetan Lark,



Black-necked Crane

Horned Lark, Saker Falcon, Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Himalayan Vulture, Upland Buzzard, Common Kestrel. Some difficult species like Whooper Swan and Bar-headed Goose are occasionally spotted from distance.

Besides, the vast montane grassland and marshland have made it a paradise for plateau mammals, we will carefully searching Tibetan Fox, Chinese Mountain Cat, Sika Deer, Tufted Deer, and even the elusive Tibetan Gazelle and Wolf. We will spend one day focusing on the grassland, especially some quarries for wildlife.



Tibetan Fox

It is also very pleasant to see all the colorful flowers blooming on the plateau, the most common genus here are Pedicularis, Aster, Astragalus, Gentiana, Primula, etc.

Day 9: Ruoergai Grassland to Maerkang (Alt.: 3,500-2,600m).

This morning we will have chances to try for some key species we may still need to find before driving to Maerkang City. We will have several stops along the way looking for Black-necked Crane, Pink-tailed Rosefinch (Przevalski's Pinktail), Ground Tit, White-browed Tit, Robin Accentor, Tibetan Partridge, etc. Once we arrive at Maerkang, we will be welcomed by Jiarong Tibetans, an agricultural branch of Tibetan that features different dialects, costumes, architectures, customs, etc.



Przevalski's Pinktail



Sichuan Jay

Day 10: Mengbi Mountain (Alt.: 2,600-4,100-2,600m).

Standing between Xiaojin County and Maerkang City, Mengbi Mountain is another important birding site that we visit on this trip. Significant differences in elevations along with well-protected virgin forest, abundant flowers, and few people have made this site a paradise for birds, including endemic birds like Chestnut-throated Partridge (Verreaux's Partridge), and the rare Sichuan Jay.

In the early morning, we will drive to the top of the mountain standing at 3,900 meters, and either walk or drive slowly down the mountain to search for birds. We will spend the whole day birding in different elevations of the mountain looking for the

endemic targets and other fascinating birds like Blood Pheasant, Crested Tit Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, the range-limited Crimson-browed Finch, Three-banded Rosefinch, Pink-rumped Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, White-throated Needletail, Golden Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Himalayan Buzzard, Long-tailed Thrush, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Goldcrest, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey Crested Tit, Hodgson's Treecreeper, White-winged Grosbeak, Spotted Nutcracker, Grey-headed Bullfinch, Hume's Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Buff-barred Warbler, Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, etc.

Mengbi Mountain is also a nice flower watching spot, we can look for *Primula sikkimensis*, *Primula deflexa*, *Primula palmate*, *Corydalis pseudobarbisepala*, *Lilium duchartrei*, *Sinopodophyllum hexandrum*, *Boschniakia himalaica*, etc.

Day 11: Maerkang to Rilong (Alt.: 2,600-3,500m).

We will spend some time birding around Maerkang looking for Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Great-spotted Woodpecker, etc. We can also have a short stop in Mengbi Mountain to look for our targets again if needed. Then we drive on to Balang Mountain to look for Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough, Grandala, Pink-rumped Roesfinch, Beautiful Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Roesfinch, Common Rosefinch, Streaked Rosefinch, Plan Mountain Finch, Brand's Mountain Finch, White-winged Grosbeak, etc.



Streaked Rosefinch

Day 12-13: Balang Mountain (Alt.: 3,500-4,480-3,500m).

We will spend two days birding on this fascinating site. Balang Mountain is the first high mountain standing

between the Sichuan Basin and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, from the foot to the pass, the elevation rises sharply from 2,000m to 4,500m which provides a wide variety of habitats to support a lot of creatures. The mountain serves as a demarcation line ethnically and, due to the change in topography, has rich flora and fauna resources. So besides seeing different birds here, we can also see lots of alpine flowering plants, including about 4 kinds of Meconopsis, and a great variety of Primula, Pedicularis, Corydalis plants, as well as *Cypripedium tibeticum* and so on.

The mountain pass at around 4,500 meters is the highest point we'll reach on the entire tour. Around the snow-line of the alpine flowstone slope, we will search for the scurrying Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock, and Grandala. Other high altitude specialties we could see include Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Golden Eagle, Yellow-billed Chough, Alpine Accentor, Brandt's Mountain Finch, Snow Pigeon, Red-fronted Rosefinch, Rosy Pipit, etc.

We will also spend some time at the lower elevations around the timberline where alpine meadows and scrubs carpet the snow-covered mountain. We will visit this area several times in search of birds including the endemic Chinese Monal, White Eared Pheasant, Chestnut-throated Partridge, as well as Blood Pheasant, Koklass Pheasant, Firethroat, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Chinese Fulvetta, Chinese Rubythroat, Golden Bush Robin, Streaked Rosefinch, Dark-breasted Rosefinch, Dark-rumped Rosefinch, Crimson-browed Finch, Common Rosefinch, Kessler's Thrush (White-backed Thrush), Rufous-vented Tit, Sichuan Tit, Asian House Martin, Alpine Leaf Warbler, Giant Laughingthrush, White-throated Redstart, etc. We can also look for Chinese Goral, Blue Sheep in this area.



Chinese Monal

Additionally, we will visit broad-leaved forest and bamboo undergrowth lower down for Large Hawk Cuckoo, Himalayan Cuckoo, Eurasian Nutcracker, Green-backed Tit, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Buff-throated Warbler, Chinese Leaf Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Martens's Warbler, Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, White-collared Yuhina, Chinese Babax, Chestnut Thrush, Verditer Flycatcher, Daurian Redstart, Slaty Bunting, Yellow-throated Bunting, etc. Golden Pheasant's call normally can be heard here, but it normally hides in the bush, we may see it with luck.



Chinese Babax

Day 14: Rilong to Labahe via Shenshuping Panda Base.

Drive to Wolong Panda Base to enjoy pandas at different ages. After spending some pleasant time with adorable pandas, we will drive about 4.5 to Labahe. Upon arrival, we will go birding around the hotel to look for some low elevation species such as Red-billed Blue Magpie, White-capped Water Redstart, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Collared Finchbill, Elliot's Laughingthrush. Following dinner, we will go out to look for nocturnal creatures including Masked Palm Civet, Red and White Flying Squirrel, Sambar, Chinese Goral, etc.

Day 15: Labahe Nature Reserve.

Lying deep in the Hengduan Mountain Range, Labahe is a significant wild panda habitat. The mixed alpine forests and dense bamboo understory make an ideal habitat for the Red Panda, though it will require a good amount of hard work and patience to find one in this season.



Red Panda

In addition, Labahe is a very good birding site. We will walk on the paved road and search both sides and the rugged mountains surrounded carefully. We will likely encounter a variety of interesting species including Lady Amherst's Pheasant, Temminck's Tragopan, Brown Parrotbill, Fulvous Parrotbill, Sichuan Treecreeper, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Spotted Nutcracker, Yellow-browed Tit, Fire-capped Tit, Coal Tit, Pere David's Tit, Black-browed Tit, Brown Bush Warbler, Aberrant Bush Warbler, Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler, Chinese Cupwing, Pygmy Cupwing, Ashy-throated Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Grey-hooded Fulvetta, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Stripe-throated Yuhina, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Golden Bush Robin, etc.



Golden Parrotbill

Day 16: Labahe Nature Reserve to Longcanggou.

We will spend the morning in Labahe to search for our targets again. After that, we will spend the rest day traveling to Longcanggou. We should have some time birding around the guesthouse looking for Ashy-throated Parrotbill, Hwamei, Red-billed Leiothrix, Oriental Greenfinch, etc.

Day 17-18: Longcanggou Forest Park.

Located on the western edge of the Sichuan Basin, Longcanggou sets in the core area of the transition zone between the basin and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The special location makes the geological structures here very diverse. One of the densest subtropical evergreen broad-

leaved forests is found here and it is home to a lot of range-restricted and endemic species. If needed, Temminck's Tragopan and Lady Amherst's Pheasant are also found here. Despite this, in the lush bamboo forest of high elevation, we will look for Great Parrotbill, Brown Parrotbill, Three-toed Parrotbill, Grey-hooded Parrotbill, Golden Parrotbill, Emei Shan Liocichla, Grey-hooded Fulvetta, Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Red-winged Laughingthruhrush, Spotted Laughingthrush, Black-faced Laughingthrush, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Vinaceous Rosefinch, White-throated Needletail, Coal Tit, Fire-capped Tit, Ashy-throated Warbler, Sichuan Leaf Warbler, Emei Leaf Warbler, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler, Aberrant Bush Warbler, etc.

In the broadleaf forest of lower elevation, we will look for Gold-fronted Fulvetta, David's Fulvetta, Crimson-breasted Woodpecker, Speckled Piculet, Yellow-browed Tit, Yellow-bellied Tit, Black-throated Tit, Sichuan Bush Warbler, Pygmy



Gold-fronted Fulvetta

Cupwing, Black Bulbul, Emei Leaf Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Warbler, Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler, Rufous-capped Babbler, Red-billed Leiothrix, Red-tailed Minla, Blue-winged Minla, Ferruginous Flycatcher, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Taiga Flycatcher, Brown Bullfinch, etc.

As it is in the center of the Rainy Zone of West China, the flora resources here are also very rich, we will look for *Pleione bulbocodioides*, *Primula veitchiana*, *Magnolia sargentiana*, *Rhododendron strigillosum*, *Rhododendron calophytum*, *Davidia involucrate*, etc.

Day 19: Longcanggou to Chengdu.

Continue our exploration in Longcanggou this morning. In the afternoon, we will drive back to Chengdu.

Day 20: Departure from Chengdu.

Following a lovely breakfast at the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport to depart from Chengdu. This will conclude the services for this scheduled itinerary from the AlpineBirding.



Chengdu



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