Japan
Dancing Cranes & Winter Birding
26th November to 13th December 2013 (18 days)

Steller’s Sea Eagle by Glen Valentine
White-naped and Hooded Crane congregation at Arasaki Crane Reserve by Glen Valentine

Blakiston’s Fish Owl by Glen Valentine
Copper Pheasant by Glen Valentine

Red-crowned Cranes by Glen Valentine
Tour Leaders: Glen Valentine & Bryan Shirley

Trip Report compiled by: Glen Valentine

Tour Summary

Japan showcases some of the world’s most spectacular birding spectacles, most notably the staggering numbers of wintering Hooded and White-naped Cranes on Kyushu, the magnificent Steller’s Sea Eagle with its monstrous, yellow bill, elegant Red-crowned Cranes dancing and cavorting in the expansive fields of snow on Hokkaido, the enormous Blakiston’s Fish Owl, impressive Ural Owl, the massive rafts of Baikal Teal and numerous other species of waterfowl on Honshu and, of course, the sought-after selection of Japanese endemics including the handsome Japanese Green Woodpecker, Japanese Wagtail, Ryukyu Minivet, Green Pheasant and spectacular Copper Pheasant. Our 18-day tour of Japan’s three largest islands, Honshu, Kyushu and Hokkaido, gave us unbeatable views and extremely intimate encounters with all of these much-acclaimed Japanese specialties. On top of these already mentioned highlights, we also encountered a vast array of other noteworthy species that included the incomparable Smew, Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese, Greater White-fronted Goose, stately Tundra and Whooper Swans, a vagrant Swan Goose, three male Scaly-sided Mergansers (yet another Japanese rarity), several Saunders’s Gull, vagrant Sandhill and Common Cranes, a stunning male Steller’s Eider, swathes of sea-ducks and gulls, the often-elusive Hazel Grouse and subtly beautiful Asian Rosy Finch, while on the mammal front a troop of around 160 Japanese Macaques parading around us in the fresh snow at Jigokudani stole our hearts!

After an extremely successful pre-tour extension to the islands of Amami and Okinawa, it was time to begin our main tour of Japan. Arriving in Tokyo in the mid-afternoon we soon boarded our comfortable bus and began the drive west towards the town of Karuizawa, situated in the mountainous interior of Honshu. Our drive there was fairly uneventful bird-wise (a few Black Kites and a Vega Gull along the way) and we arrived at our hotel in town in the early evening and settled in for an exciting three-night stay in this bird-rich area.
Our first morning saw us striking out for the nearby trails that meander through wonderful broad-leaved deciduous and coniferous forest. Soon after entering this attractive habitat we were admiring a flock of Japanese Grosbeak as well as Eurasian Jay and Great Spotted and Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers. We also bumped into several mixed tit flocks that included Willow, Japanese, Coal, Varied and Long-tailed Tits with Eurasian Nuthatch in attendance. A little further on we located a lovely little party of exquisite Long-tailed Rosefinch made up of two females and a beautiful, pink male. After eventually being rewarded with superb views of the rosefinches we decided to continue along the trail deeper into the forest. Out of the blue, an Ural Owl flushed from nearby and flew across the trail out of sight. We decided to chase after the bird in hope of relocating it but unfortunately could not find where it had landed. However, this search proved most rewarding as we encountered a female Copper Pheasant feeding unperturbed in the leaf litter. By the time the entire group had arrived the pheasant had move off slightly up-slope and out of view. Most of the group managed to obtain some kind of a view but we naturally wanted more, and so Bryan and I sped off up the slope and managed to relocate the female (a male was also found but in typical shy fashion, scurried away hastily not to be seen again) and steer it back down into the gulley where the group was waiting. As hoped for, the female Copper Pheasant obliged and popped into view and then hung around the gulley for ages, feeding and trotting around in the open for all to admire. She even jumped up onto a branch about three metres off the ground and posed for her intruders to admire at length. What an incredible and lucky encounter with one of Japan’s toughest and most desired endemics! On an all-time high we made our way back to where the bus was waiting for us and headed off for our afternoon birding site at the nearby Lake Toden. The lake was teaming with waterfowl and besides the usual array of water-birds like Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Mallard, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Teal and Tufted Duck, we also found two beautiful, female Smew – a wonderful find indeed! We circled the lake and birded along the nearby river and this yielded more close views of the waterfowl as well as fair numbers of Japanese Wagtail, another female Long-tailed Rosefinch, many Rustic and Meadow Buntings, and a male Green Pheasant that flushed up from a weedy field. Soon the sun began to dip behind the mountains and the temperature plummeted, so we decided to call it an afternoon and return to the comfort of our hotel. We were however quite keen to obtain better views of the Ural Owl that we’d flushed earlier in the day and so we returned to the forest for an hour at dusk and tried to call it in, but unfortunately we didn’t even hear a peep and returned to our accommodation owless.
Up at dawn the next morning, we took a short stroll along the stream adjacent to our hotel in search of the scarce Japanese Green Woodpecker that was eluding us so far. The walk turned up a few buntings as well as close Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker in good morning light, several Hawfinch, plus another Green Pheasant. After breakfast we tried our luck at the woodpecker in a likely area of town which was dominated by well-wooded gardens, the perfect habitat for Japanese Green Woodpecker. Here we added a lovely flock of Red Crossbill as well more Hawfinches, Great Spotted and Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers, Eurasian Jay and all the Tit species already seen. Thereafter we took a winding drive through the hills to a nearby lake where a wonderful flock of Mandarin Duck awaited us. After soaking in these spectacular ducks we returned to Karuizawa where we spent the afternoon ambling along a beautiful forest road. The birding was quiet though but we did enjoy views of four separate Brown Dippers, which is always a great bird to see! Some of the group also watched a Japanese Serow and in the early evening we tried again for Ural Owl but without any luck.

Our final morning at Karuizawa saw us up early again in a final attempt at locating the rather elusive Japanese Green Woodpecker. However, this time we scored! Soon after leaving our hotel, along a stretch of road that we hadn’t yet walked, two participants called out that they had the woodpecker. Soon we were all on it and subsequently enjoyed good, prolonged views of this much sought-after Japanese endemic. With the main target in the bag we could enjoy breakfast and spend the remainder of the morning looking for anything new that may be around. We traversed a few suburban roads through beautiful woods and found a local birder who kindly took us to a picturesque little pond nearby where several species of waterfowl were hanging about. This area also produced the full suite of tits, more Hawfinches and further views of Japanese Green (now a trash bird!) and Great Spotted Woodpeckers. However, it was time to leave Karuizawa and make our way
slightly north towards Nagano via Jigokudani (the famous Snow Monkey Park). Here we hoped to connect with the troop of endearing Japanese Macaques that regularly visit the hot springs in the park. Unfortunately our visit coincided with one of the only days of the year when the macaques did not visit the entire day. We left Jigokudani empty-handed but with the hope that the monkeys would visit the following morning. The late afternoon was spent at an impressive shrine in Nagano before settling into our hotel for the night. The temperature had dropped considerably as the afternoon progressed and snow was predicted during the evening.

We woke with anticipation of a monkey-filled morning and with the sight of fresh snow all around as we neared Jigokudani, our excitement mounted even further. The landscape was truly exquisite and picture perfect! We struck out on the trail to the “monkey-park” through a wonderfully wintery wonderland, stopping along the route to take photos of the beautiful scenery (the snowy landscape being a bit of a novelty for the South African leader…). Arriving at the park as it opened we were told that no monkeys had arrived as yet and so the wait began... We could give it about two hours for the Macaques to appear and then we’d have to make tracks towards Kaga on the west coast of Japan. However, after waiting only an hour the calls of “Snow Monkey” went up and off we went into the park to where a massive troop of around 160 individuals awaited us. We watched them cavorting in the snow as well as bathing in the steamy hot springs, an awesome experience indeed and certainly one of the highlights of the tour! From Nagano we then continued the journey to Kaga where we arrived in the late afternoon and birded a large wetland in the dwindling light, adding a handsome sub-adult male Smew as well as several fairly distant Baikal Teal before calling it a day.
We were extremely excited for what lay ahead of us at the famous Katano Kamo-ike reserve, which lay just around the corner from our hotel. Some initial morning birding before the reserve opened produced a wonderful flock of 11 Grey-headed Lapwings, a female Hen Harrier in flight, as well as scope views of Japanese Cormorant and Black-tailed Gull on the coast. Also seen flying overhead was a flock of Tundra Swan transiting between their roosting and feeding grounds, a marvellous sighting! As soon as Kamo-ike opened we were in there scoping the staggering numbers of waterfowl. Highlights included excellent views of several very special species like Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese (both in fair numbers where the subtle differences could easily be told) and hundreds of Baikal Teal. Of interest too was a juvenile Eastern Marsh Harrier that paraded back and forth in front of us on several occasions. After enjoying the multitude of waterbirds at the Katano we decided to head into the nearby fields in search of the flock of Greater White-fronted Geese that were hanging around, and within no time at all after entering the area we located a large flock of around 300 birds wheeling around in flight over the extensive fields before dropping down to feed. We chased up to where they landed and were treated to excellent views. With all the area’s target species in the bag we were thrilled to be able to take up the opportunity to go on a bit of a “wild goose chase”. We had learnt of the presence of a vagrant Swan Goose that had arrived at Lake Biwa to the south of Kaga. The bird was associating with a flock of Taiga and Tundra Bean Geese and, upon arriving at the lake, we could see that the edge was lined with Japanese birders and photographers, a great sign, and immediately after parking our bus we were watching a superb Swan Goose in the scopes. Fantastic! We also found out that there was a Sea Eagle hanging around in the same general area and after chatting to the local birders we made a bee-line for the base of the hill that straddled the eastern edge of the lake. At the end of this road we found the road to be lined once again with local birders and ‘bazooka’ lenses aimed at one of the larger trees on the slope of the hill. We scanned and found the quarry – but instead of it being a White-tailed Eagle, which we had expected, to our utter amazement it turned out to be a splendid adult Steller’s Sea Eagle! What a great surprise and we spent quite some time admiring this beauty, which had turned up well south of its usual wintering grounds. On an all-time high we began the journey back to Kaga for our final night’s stay on Honshu.
The next morning we struck out for the airport at Komatsu where we connected with our internal flight south to the city of Fukuoka, situated on the north-west coast of Kyushu. Upon arrival we loaded up into our new bus and whizzed down the freeway towards the mudflats of the Yatsushiro River, where small numbers of the rather scarce and localized Saunders’s Gull winter. Here we also found two Black-faced Spoonbills, four Lesser Sand Plovers and hordes of Vega Gulls, as well as three adult winter-plumaged Lesser Black-backed Gull; the subspecies here sometimes split as Heuglin’s Gull. Once we had scanned the area thoroughly and were utterly happy with our views of Saunders’s Gull we carried on the drive to Izumi, the gateway to the world-famous Arasaki Crane Reserve, which would be our focus of the next two days.
White-naped Crane by Glen Valentine

Hooded Crane by Glen Valentine
Arasaki did not disappoint and overwhelmed us with immense numbers of both Hooded and White-naped Cranes. Accompanying the hordes of these two species (over 10000 Hooded Cranes and 2000 White-naped Cranes) were a few Sandhill and Common Cranes, both of which we managed to find without much effort at all. We spent most of the remaining time at Arasaki driving and walking around the extensive fields, the edges of reedbeds, tree-lined watercourses and boulder-strewn rivers picking up a wonderful suite of noteworthy species that included a few Daurian Jackdaws amongst the thousands of Rooks, Meadow, Chestnut-eared and Common Reed Buntings, Chinese Penduline Tit, Brambling, Northern Lapwing, Pale Thrush, Daurian Redstart and huge flocks of Grey-crowned Greenfinches. We also visited a small lake nearby that held a large flock of around 40 Mandarin Ducks as well as another drake Baikal Teal and two hens. After a fabulous time at Arasaki it was time to head east towards Mt. Kirishima and the scenic Lake Miike with its beautiful mixed broadleaved and coniferous forests. En route we stopped in at the Kirishima Shrine, which was rather impressive but did not produce any new species for us. We did however encounter a few tit flocks and enjoyed close encounters with Varied, Japanese and Long-tailed Tits. After hitting another 7 Eleven for a quick on-the-go lunch we made our way to the lake and wandered the roads and trails for the remainder of the afternoon. This yielded some good birds that included many Pale Thrushes, a few Daurian Redstarts and a mixed flock harbouring Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Ryukyu Minivet and a host of tits. A small group of gorgeous Yellow-throated Bunting feeding on the trail was a treat and a large, fast-moving flock of Red-billed Leiothrix entertained us too. In the late afternoon we encountered a secretive “bunting flock” in the forest under-story that included Yellow-throated and Black-faced Buntings as well as a few females of the scarce and extremely shy Grey Bunting. It soon became too dark to bird in the forest anymore so we made our way towards our delightful Onsen in the nearby town, where we spent the night. The Onsen was classically traditional and we were treated to the most sensational and delicious dinner here.

After another expansive and varied Japanese breakfast the next day we loaded up the bus and began the drive further east and then north to the coastal town of Hyuga. Here we spent the remainder of the day searching the surrounding peninsulas and bays for the non-existent Japanese Murrelet. Despite our best efforts and scanning endlessly for hours we saw little besides a few Vega and Black-tailed Gulls, and I
can only assume that the weather leading up to our arrival had been too warm and fine for them to be close inshore. We did find a wonderful consolation though in the late afternoon in the form of a Japanese Wood Pigeon, which was found perching up in full view right next to the trail. The bird took flight fairly quickly after being spotted but only flew a few metres into the forest, where it sat exposed and we were able to obtain good scope views of this rare forest species that is usually confined to offshore islands.

The following day was our earliest start of the trip as we needed to leave our hotel at 05h00 to connect with our internal flight from Miyazaki to Tokyo (Hanneda), where we had a reasonably short lay-over before connecting with our onward flight to Kushiro on Japan’s northerly island of Hokkaido. We arrived as scheduled on the crisp but rather unseasonably warm Hokkaido in the mid-afternoon and immediately struck out for the nearby Red-crowned Crane sanctuary. Arriving with an hour of beautiful, late afternoon light still remaining we were entertained by 30+ Red-crowned (Japanese) Cranes feeding and intermittently calling very close to our viewing point, a wonderful experience and a great way to end a mostly travel day. A pair of Marsh Tit also fed close by in the bare, wintery trees and we decided to call it an afternoon just after sunset when the temperature began to plummet most drastically. We enjoyed yet another outlandish and scrumptious feast that evening and retired to bed satisfied and all fired up for the very exciting day ahead.
Dancing Red-crowned Crane by Glen Valentine

Red-crowned Crane flock by Glen Valentine
Today ultimately proved to be probably the most memorable and thrilling day of our entire Japan in Winter birding tour! It began after breakfast in a wonderfully snowy and wintry wooded area where we were extremely fortunate to find a splendid Ural Owl in full view on the day roost. Thereafter we were spoilt by dancing, calling and frolicking Red-crowned Cranes in gorgeous light on a chilly but divine winter’s morning. Here we also saw several more Marsh Tits as well as a flock of Red Crossbill. As if this wasn’t already enough we were blown away by repeat views at point blank range of the magnificent and regal Steller’s Sea Eagle on the Notsuke Peninsula. We counted at least 40 Steller’s this afternoon – incredible! Good numbers of impressive White-tailed Eagles were also on show and we were treated to scores of Whooper Swan, flocks of Brant Goose and hordes of Black Scoters and other sea ducks like the gaudy Harlequin Duck, Common Goldeneye and elegant Red-breasted Merganser. We also enjoyed wonderful looks at Sika Deer and Red Fox before continuing to Rausu. Then, to end off an already mind-blowing day was a pair of Blakiston’s Fish Owl with their two young, fishing in an icy, snow-lined stream and entertaining us for a full hour and a half! Absolutely sensational! Winter birding in Japan at its absolute best!

The following day saw us venturing further north to the towns of Shari and Abashiri to the north of the mountainous Shiretoko Peninsula. Here we popped into the Shari River mouth where loads of Glaucous and Slaty-backed Gulls scavenged and squabbled over tasty morsels. They were joined by a few Black-headed and Mew Gulls...
and further upriver were more Common and Red-breasted Mergansers and Eurasian Teal. At the nearby Lake Tofutsu we enjoyed extremely close Whooper Swans and Northern Pintail and in attendance were rafts of Northern Shoveler, Common Goldeneye and a single, beautiful male Long-tailed Duck. One of our best afternoons of the trip was to be had this day when we embarked on a sea-watch from the Notoro Point just north of Abashiri. There were hundreds of Harlequin Ducks off the point as well as small rafts of Black Scoter, good numbers of Pelagic Cormorant and a large flock of Long-tailed Duck. A flock of 7 White-winged Scoters was then seen flying past the point and we were also chuffed with good views of Red-throated, Black-throated and Pacific Loons, three Spectacled Guillemots, a single Rhinoceros Auklet and the absolute cherry on top, a cracking male Steller’s Eider that showed incredibly well in the scopes for an extended period. In fact, we ended up walking away from this rare beauty after obtaining saturation scope views!

Unfortunately some rainy and windy weather had moved in over night and our following day was mostly rained out, and even during the breaks the wind was blowing such a gust that birding of any sort was almost impossible. Fortunately it was a bit of a travel day as we made our way from Rausu down to Nemuro. We did stop and scan sections of coastline and several harbours along the way and around Nemuro and picked up many of the commoner Hokkaido species already mentioned. The best birding of the day was probably had at Shunkunitai (Lake Furen Bird Observatory) where we could at least sit inside a warm, dry and sheltered building looking out onto Lake Furen and the feeders just outside the windows. It was amazing the number of birds that came
regularly to the feeders even in the lashing rain and driving wind and these included Eurasian Nuthatch, Marsh and Japanese Tits and Great Spotted Woodpecker. As the light faded and the inclement weather persisted we headed for our comfortable and warm minshuku at the edge of the lake for a two-night stay.

The rainy weather had at least cleared somewhat the next morning, but a vicious wind persisted and so it was with great apprehension that we struck out for Cape Nosappu. En route across the Nemuro Peninsula we stopped in at several “sheltered” harbours and scanned for any alcids that may have been trying to escape from the howling wind and choppy ocean. There were scores of Black Scoter and Harlequin Duck and remarkable numbers and diversity of gulls that included Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Vega, Black-tailed, Mew, Black-headed and Slaty-backed. At one of the harbours we came up trumps with a lovely Thick-billed Murre that was resting in the calmer waters of the harbour sanctuary. After scoping this target species at length we continued the drive out to the light house at the end of the peninsula. The gusting wind continued but had subsided slightly and although quite chilly, we were able to set up scopes and scan out across the swirling and turbulent Pacific Ocean. We were however, in luck as within minutes of arriving we found three Red-faced Cormorants, a rare winter visitor to extreme Eastern Hokkaido and a difficult species to catch up with anywhere. We were thrilled with our fortune and, after scanning back and forth across the sea and not finding anything else of significant interest in the less than favourable conditions, we beat a hasty retreat back to the warmth of the bus and continued across the northern edge of the peninsula back to Nemuro. Stopping in at the many harbours again produced another good bird in the form of a Black-legged Kittiwake, which was located roosting amongst a massive mixed gull flock. In the late morning we took a walk around the Meiji Park in Nemuro in the hope of finding a few passerines that we were missing thus far. However, the fruiting trees that had attracted a mixed flock of waxwings a week earlier were bare and fruitless and so we left for the forests and shoreline of Lake Furen, where we spent the remainder of the afternoon. A short trail through the beautiful woods produced familiar species like
Marsh and Japanese Tits, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Eurasian Nuthatch, as well as a pair of Goldcrest. Sika Deer milled around the forest edge and several cute Hokkaido Red Squirrels were also encountered scrambling along tree limbs. After scoping a massive flock of White-winged Scoter and two Horned Grebes we exited the forest to opt for spending the late afternoon along the grassy island at the edge of the lake. Birding here was rather quiet as is expected during the heart of winter but we did enjoy further views of Whooper Swans as they trumpeted in the pre-dusk chill. Red-crowned Cranes fed on the shoreline and more magnificent Steller’s Sea Eagles were seen dotted around the edge of the lake against the beautiful orange and pink sunset and awe-inspiring backdrop of the surrounding snow-enshrouded mountains. A fitting way to end another wonderful day in Japan!

Alas, the end of the trip was drawing near and it was time to leave the scenic Lake Furen and begin the drive south to Kushiro, from where we would fly to Tokyo in the evening to spend the final night of our epic Japanese birding and wildlife adventure. However, with most of the day free to bird we made several stops at key sites for key species still on the target list. In Kiritappu we searched the grasslands and cliff edges for the rather scarce and erratic Asian Rosy Finch and finally came up with the quarry as a somewhat nervous and flighty flock of around 10 birds was located. The finches finally settled after chasing them back and forth for a while and we were all eventually spoilt with superb views of this tricky species. With time to spare we stopped in at the bird observatory at the edge of town and Bryan once again managed to obtain the latest birding “gen”. This led us to walking a quiet forest track in the hope of finding something special before our Hokkaido leg of the trip drew to a close. That we managed to do when a short burst of playback attracted a pair of Hazel Grouse, the male flying straight into the top of a large bare tree directly in front of where we were standing and showing for a few seconds before dropping down into the forest. For the next while the male of these
scarce and elusive grouse showed on and off as he flew up into the tops of the surrounding trees calling almost continuously, a great surprise and a cracking way to end a fabulous time on Hokkaido.

Our final morning of the trip was spent at the nearby Maioka Park in Tokyo where we ambled along the paths and trails through the woodland here and managed to find a further two new species for the trip: a group of Chinese Hwamei and a pair of Chinese Bamboo Partridge. We also enjoyed final looks at several attractive Japanese Green Woodpeckers, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Japanese and Varied Tits, White-cheeked Starling and Dusky Thrush, as well as several Black-faced Buntings that showed remarkably well for a change! An enjoyable morning and fine way to end a brilliant trip! It was then off to the respective airports where we would say our farewells and begin our journeys back home.

Thank you to everyone for making this Rockjumper 2013 tour of Japan such an immense success and so extremely memorable and enjoyable for both Bryan and I. Until next time…

**Annotated Checklists of Birds & Mammals**

**ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS SEEN ON THE JAPAN DANCING CRANES & WINTER BIRDING TOUR**

(163 species seen on the main Japan Dancing Cranes & Winter Birding tour)
(89 species seen on the Ryukyu Islands Extension)
(197 species seen on both tours combined)

*Note: Names and taxonomical order of the bird species list follows that of IOC (International Ornithological congress), Gill, F. and M. Wright. 2013; Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (version 3.5). Names in square brackets represent names given by IOC and omitted by Clements whereas names in round brackets represent names given by Clements and omitted by IOC. Names without square or round brackets represent the name given by both IOC and Clements. A notes section can be found where notably distinctive subspecies or races are concerned and where the taxonomy of a species differs between Clements and IOC. Clements names and taxonomy is derived from version 6.8.*

**Key to abbreviations:**

**E:** an endemic species

**NE:** a near-endemic species

**BE:** a breeding endemic species

**I:** an introduced species
**Pheasants & Allies Phasianidae**

**Hazel Grouse**

A pair was seen reasonably well although rather briefly in coniferous forest near Kiritappu.

**Chinese Bamboo Partridge (I)**

A pair was seen briefly in Maioka Park, Tokyo on the final morning of the trip.

**Copper Pheasant (E)**

Unbeatably close views were enjoyed of a female on the trails at Karuizawa. A male was also seen briefly in the same area.

**[Green] (Ring-necked) Pheasant (E)**

A few separate sightings of both males and females were had in the Karuizawa area.

*NOTE: IOC splits Common (Ring-necked) Pheasant *P.* colchicus* into two species: Common Pheasant *P.* colchicus and Green Pheasant *P.* versicolor, whereas Clements only recognizes one species: Ring-necked Pheasant *P.* colchicus.*

**Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae**

**Swan Goose**

We successfully chased this vagrant that was hanging about on Lake Biwa, while we were staying at Hyuga. A wonderful bonus bird for the trip!

**Taiga Bean Goose**

Around 20 birds seen at Katano Kamo Ike with a further 40 or so being found later at Lake Biwa.

**Tundra Bean Goose**

About 20 birds were encountered at each of Katano Kamo Ike and Lake Biwa. A further three birds were later seen in the Arasaki area.

**Greater White-fronted Goose**

A huge flock of around 300 birds was seen in flight and then perched in fields south of Kaga. Another singleton was later seen with three Tundra Bean Geese in the Arasaki area.

**Brant [Goose]**

At least 40 birds were found on the Notsuke Peninsula, Hokkaido.

**Tundra Swan**

A few flocks were seen in flight and perched in the Kaga area.

**Whooper Swan**

Good numbers were seen daily on Hokkaido.

**Mandarin Duck**

Two separate flocks were seen: the first being at Lake Myogi near Karuizawa and the second being at Lake Miyama near Arasaki.

**Gadwall**

Seen in small numbers at scattered wetlands throughout the country.

**Falcated Duck**

A single female was seen at Katano Kamo Ike.

**Eurasian Wigeon**

Good numbers were seen at most wetlands throughout the trip.

**Mallard**

Huge numbers were encountered at most wetlands.

**Eastern Spot-billed Duck**

Seen in good numbers throughout the trip.

**Northern Shoveler**

Good numbers seen at most wetlands.

**Northern Pintail**

Anas acuta
Commonly seen throughout the trip.

**Baikal Teal** *Anas formosa*

About a dozen seen at Kahokugata Lagoon, Kanazawa then several hundred were scoped at Katano Kamo Ike and finally a further three (1 male and 2 females) were seen at relatively close range at Lake Miyama, Arasaki area.

**[Eurasian] (Green-winged) Teal** *Anas crecca*

Abundant throughout!

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

**Common Pochard** *Aythya farina*

Small numbers were seen on 6 separate days.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Fair numbers were encountered on 4 separate days of the tour.

**Greater Scapu** *Aythya marila*

First seen in small numbers on Lake Biwa and later seen daily on Hokkaido.

**Steller’s Eider** *Polysticta stelleri*

A cracking male was seen at reasonably close range and showed extremely well in the scope off the Notoro Point, north of Rausu.

**Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*

This stunning duck was seen daily in fair numbers off the Hokkaido coastline.

**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi*

A flock of 7 birds flew past us while birding from the Notoro Point with a further, massive flock of at least 150 seen later on off the coast at Lake Furen.

**Black Scoter** *Melanitta Americana*

Large numbers were encountered daily off the Hokkaido coastline.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

First seen on Lake Tofutsu, north of Rausu and later seen in small numbers on a few occasions off the Hokkaido coastline.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

A female was seen on Lake Toden, a few birds were also found on Lake Biwa and on Hokkaido it proved common and was seen daily in good numbers.

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

An absolute stunner! This gorgeous little pied duck was seen on a few occasions: two females at Lake Toden near Karuizawa, 1 sub-adult male at Kahokugata Lagoon and six birds on Lake Biwa (4 females and 2 males).

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*

Seen on Lake Toden and Biwa in small numbers and then also seen daily on Hokkaido.

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

Scarcer than the previous species and more oceanic, we encountered small to large numbers on a few occasions during our time on Hokkaido.

**Scaly-sided Merganser** *Mergus squamatus*

A very rare and difficult-to-find species throughout its limited range! We were extremely fortunate to learn of a single bird being present at a river south of Izumi…and after chasing after it, it turned out that there were actually at least three males present there and very likely a female too, although the female was seen too briefly and distant to be sure. The males, however showed very well once the fog had cleared enough to see! What a cracker!
Loons \textit{Gaviidae}

\textbf{Red-throated Loon} \textit{Gavia stellata}

Seen in fair numbers (up to 50 birds) on for separate days on Hokkaido.

\textbf{Black-throated (Arctic) Loon} \textit{Gavia arctica}

Much scarcer than the previous species, we were thrilled to find one juvenile and a winter-plumaged adult that showed in the scope at Notoro Point.

\textbf{Pacific Loon} \textit{Gavia pacifica}

Two birds were seen well at Notoro Point and a further individual was unfortunately found caught in a fishing net in a harbour along the Nemuro Peninsula.

Grebes \textit{Podicipedidae}

\textbf{Little Grebe} \textit{Tachybaptus ruficollis}

Seen in small numbers on 6 separate days of the tour.

\textit{NOTE}: IOC splits Little Grebe \textit{Tachybaptus ruficollis} into two species: Little Grebe \textit{Tachybaptus ruficollis} and Tricolored Grebe \textit{Tachybaptus tricolor}, whereas Clements only recognizes one species, Little Grebe \textit{Tachybaptus ruficollis}.

\textbf{Red-necked Grebe} \textit{Podiceps grisegena}

Individuals and pairs were seen on four consecutive days off the Hokkaido coastline.

\textbf{Great Crested Grebe} \textit{Podiceps cristatus}

Small numbers were encountered at scattered wetlands on 7 days of the trip.

\textbf{Horned Grebe} \textit{Podiceps auritus}

Two birds were seen off the coastline at Lake Furen and a further 12 were seen off Cape Kirritapu.

\textbf{Black-necked (Eared) Grebe} \textit{Podiceps nigricollis}

Fair numbers were seen on both Lakes Toden and Biwa.

Ibis & Spoonbills \textit{Threskiornithidae}

\textbf{Black-faced Spoonbill} \textit{Platalea minor}

Two birds were seen well in flight and then perched at Yatsushiro.

Bitterns & Herons \textit{Ardeidae}

\textbf{Black-crowned Night Heron} \textit{Nycticorax nycticorax}

Two juveniles were encountered: one at Yatsushiro and another in the Arasaki area.

\textbf{[Eastern] Cattle Egret} \textit{Bubulcus coromandus}

A handful of birds were seen during the drive from Fukuoka to Izumi.

\textit{NOTE}: Clements lumps this species with Western Cattle Egret \textit{B. ibis} as Cattle Egret \textit{B. ibis}.

\textbf{Grey Heron} \textit{Ardea cinerea}

Small numbers were seen on almost every day during the first week.

\textbf{Great Egret} \textit{Ardea alba}

Small numbers were seen daily during the first week.

\textbf{Intermediate Egret} \textit{Egretta intermedia}

Small numbers were seen on four consecutive days during our time in the Arasaki area.

\textbf{Little Egret} \textit{Egretta garzetta}

Small numbers were seen on a few occasions during the first week.

\textbf{Pacific Reef Heron} \textit{Egretta sacra}

A singleton was found near Hyuga.

Cormorants, Shags \textit{Phalacrocoracididae}
Pelagic Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*
First seen near Kaga and later encountered daily on Hokkaido where large numbers were found.

Red-faced Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax urile*
We were thrilled to find three birds in winter plumage at Cape Nossapu.

Great Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax carbo*
Seen commonly during the first week and a half of the tour.

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

Japanese Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax capillatus*
Fair numbers were encountered off the coastline near Kaga with a further sighting north of Rausu.

Ospreys  
*Pandionidae*

[Western] Osprey  
*Pandion haliaetus*
Small numbers were seen almost daily during the first week.

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

Kites, Hawks & Eagles  
*Accipitridae*

Eurasian Sparrowhawk  
*Accipiter nisus*
One bird was seen in flight over the Yatsushiro River.

Eastern Marsh Harrier  
*Circus spilonotus*
A female and juvenile were seen in flight over Katano Kamo Ike.

Hen Harrier  
*Circus cyaneus*
A single female was seen quartering the wetland of Katano Kamo Ike.

Black Kite  
*Milvus migrans*
Good numbers were encountered daily.

NOTE: IOC splits the above species into two separate species: Black Kite *M. migrans* and Yellow-billed Kite *M. aegyptius* whereas Clements only recognizes one species, Black Kite *M. migrans*.

White-tailed Eagle  
*Haliaeetus albicilla*
This impressive raptor was seen daily in small numbers on Hokkaido.

Steller’s Sea Eagle  
*Haliaeetus pelagicus*
One of the world’s most spectacular eagles! We were delighted to find good numbers (around 40 birds) on the Notsuke Peninsula. Smaller numbers were seen daily thereafter on Hokkaido. Our first encounter however, was of a vagrant bird near Lake Biwa. A wonderful surprise indeed!

[Eastern] (Common) Buzzard  
*Buteo japonicus*
Seen in small numbers on most days of the trip.

NOTE: IOC splits Common Buzzard *B. buteo* into 5 separate species: Common Buzzard *B. buteo*, Eastern Buzzard *B. japonicas*, Himalayan Buzzard *B. burmanicus*, Cape Verde Buzzard *B. bannermani* and Socotra Buzzard *B. socotraensis*, whereas Clements only recognizes one species: Common Buzzard *B. buteo*.

Falcons  
*Falconidae*

[Common] (Eurasian) Kestrel  
*Falco tinnunculus*
Single birds were seen on three days of the trip.

Peregrine Falcon  
*Falco peregrinus*
Singletons and pairs were encountered on five separate days of the tour.

Rails, Crakes & Coots  
*Rallidae*

Common Moorhen  
*Gallinula chloropus*
Seen daily during the first week of the tour.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*
Abundant throughout!

**Cranes  Gruidae**

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis*
Two birds were seen on consecutive days at Arasaki.

White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*
Large numbers (over 2000 birds) were seen during our time at Arasaki.

Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis*
Wonderful views were had of this species on several occasions and on five separate days of the trip. Superb views were had of dancing birds on one morning at the Ito Crane Feeding Sanctuary near Tsurui.

Common Crane *Grus grus*
A single adult bird was seen amongst the masses of Hooded and White-naped Cranes at the Arasaki Crane Sanctuary.

Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*
Astounding numbers (over 10000 birds) were enjoyed during our time at Arasaki.

**Plovers  Charadriidae**

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Small groups and pairs were encountered in the grasslands at Arasaki.

[Grey] (Gray)-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*
We were thrilled to find a flock of 11 of these generally scarce, migratory lapwings in a field near Kaga.

[Grey] (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Around 10 birds were seen at the mudflats at the Yatsushiro River mouth.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
A single juvenile bird was found at the Yatsushiro mudflats, while a flock of three was later seen at Arasaki.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinius*
Two birds were found and scoped at the Yatsushiro mudflats.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*
Four birds were seen at Yatsushiro.

**Snipes & Sandpipers  Scolopacidae**

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Small numbers were seen perched and in flight in the Arasaki area.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Two birds were seen at Yatsushiro.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Two were found at Yatsushiro.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Singletons were seen at Yatsushiro and in the Arasaki area.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucus*
Small numbers were seen in the Arasaki area.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Four seen at Yatsushiro, 12 found around Arasaki and another 30 or so were later located on the Notsuke Peninsula.

**Gulls & Terns *Laridae***

**Black-legged Kittiwake**  
*Rissa tridactyla*

After searching most of the harbours on the Nemuro Peninsula we finally came up trumps with a single winter-plumage adult.

**Black-headed Gull**  
*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Small numbers were seen around Kaga and Yatsushiro and fair numbers were found daily on Hokkaido.

**Saunders’s Gull**  
*Chroicocephalus Saundersi*

A rather scarce and localized gull throughout its limited range! We were delighted to find at least 20 of these gulls around the mudflats at Yatsushiro where they showed well in flight and perched and at close range.

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

Fair numbers were seen on the coast at Kaga and at Yatsushiro with further sightings at Hyuga and on Hokkaido.

**Mew Gull**  
*Larus canus*

Two were seen at the Yatsushiro mudflats, while good numbers were later encountered almost daily on Hokkaido.

*NOTE: Some authorities split Mew Gull L. canus into several different species. If split, the race or species occurring in Japan would be called Kamchatka Gull L. kantschatschensis. However, neither Clements nor IOC recognizes any splits of Mew Gull.*

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

This large, light grey and white gull was encountered fairly regularly on Hokkaido with our first sightings off the Notoro Point.

**Glaucous Gull**  
*Larus hyperboreus*

Good numbers were seen daily on Hokkaido.

**[Vega] (Herring) Gull**  
*Larus vegae*

First seen in Tokyo, we later found this species near Kaga, at Yatsushiro, Hyuga and daily on Hokkaido.

*NOTE: IOC splits Herring Gull L. argentatus into three species: European Herring Gull L. argentatus, American Herring Gull L. smithsonianus and Vega Gull L. vegae, whereas Clements only recognizes one species: Herring Gull L. argentatus.*

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

Good numbers were found daily along the Hokkaido coastline.

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

Three birds were found and scoped on the mudflats at the Yatsushiro River.

*NOTE: Some authorities split this species into a few different species: If split, the birds that we saw would be Heuglin’s Gull L. heuglini. However, neither IOC nor Clements accepts any of the Lesser Black-backed Gull splits.*

**Auks *Alcidae***

**Thick-billed Murre**  
*Uria lomvia*

A singleton was found bobbing around one of the harbours on the Nemuro Peninsula.

**Common Murre**  
*Uria aalge*

12 birds were found off the Notsuke Peninsula and another two were found off Cape Nossapu.

**Spectacled Guillemot**  
*Cephus carbo*

Three birds were scoped off the Notoro Point.

**Rhinoceros Auklet**  
*Cerorhinca monocerata*
A single winter-plumage adult was scoped off the Notoro Point.

**Pigeons & Doves Columbidae**

*Rock Dove (I)*  
*Columba livia*
Widespread in urban areas throughout.

*Japanese Wood Pigeon (NE)*  
*Columba japonica*
We were delighted to encounter this scarce and special species in the late afternoon near Hyuga.

*Oriental Turtle Dove*  
*Streptopelia orientalis*
Common and seen daily during the first week and a half.

**Owls Strigidae**

*Blakiston’s Fish Owl*  
*Bubo blakistoni*
An absolute cracker and undoubtedly one of the major highlights of the tour! We were treated to a close and prolonged encounter with a pair of this rare owl one evening on Hokkaido. Two juveniles were also seen close-by.

*Ural Owl*  
*Strix uralensis*
Incredible views were had of this species during the day near Tsurui and at Shunkunitai on Hokkaido. Our first encounter however was of a bird that flew past us during the day at Karuizawa.

**Kingfishers Alcedinidae**

*Common Kingfisher*  
*Alcedo atthis*
Singletons were seen on three consecutive days in the Arasaki area.

**Woodpeckers Picidae**

*Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker*  
*Dendrocopos kizuki*
Singletons and pairs were encountered at Karuizawa, around Miike and on Hokkaido.

*Great Spotted Woodpecker*  
*Dendrocopos major*
Commonly seen around Karuizawa and again on Hokkaido.

*Japanese [Green] Woodpecker (E)*  
*Picus awokera*
After searching high and low for this species we finally found a male near our accommodation at Karuizawa. Later the same morning, we were treated to excellent views of another bird in a different part of town. We also saw a further three birds on our final morning in the Maioka Park in Tokyo.

**Cuckooshrikes Campephagedae**

*Ryukyu Minivet (E)*  
*Pericrocotus tegima*
We found a pair of these endemics at Miike.

**Shrikes Laniidae**

*Bull-headed Shrike*  
*Lanius bucephalus*
Seen daily in small numbers during the first week and a half of the trip.

**Crows & Jays Corvidae**

*Eurasian Jay*  
*Garrulus glandarius*
Seen daily in small numbers in the Karuizawa and again on Hokkaido.  
*NOTE: We saw two distinctive subspecies of Eurasian Jay during our time in Japan. The birds seen around Karuizawa represent the race japonicas, while the birds seen on Hokkaido are of the race brandtii. Neither IOC nor Clements*
recognizes any splits of Eurasian Jay.

**Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*
A singleton was seen briefly from the bus upon leaving Karuizawa for Lake Toden.

**Daurian Jackdaw** *Coleus dauricus*
A total of three birds were seen well in the scope during our time in the Arasaki area.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*
Thousands of these crows were seen to the east of Kanazawa and again in the Arasaki area.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*
Seen daily in huge numbers.

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*
As for the previous species, seen in large numbers each day.

**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.

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**Tits & Chickadees Paridae**

**Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris*
Good, close views were had of this species on most days on Hokkaido.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus*
Seen in good numbers around Karuizawa.

**Varied Tit** *Poecile varius*
This handsome tit was seen well on many occasions in the Karuizawa area and again around Arasaki, Miike and Maioka Park.

**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*
Seen commonly around Karuizawa with a final sighting at Shunkunitai near Lake Furen, Hokkaido.

**Japanese Tit** *Parus minor*
Fair numbers were seen in wooded areas on most days of the tour.

**NOTE:** Both IOC and Clements now recognize three distinct species under *Parus major* Great Tit and are as follows: *Parus major* Great Tit, *Parus minor* Japanese Tit and *Parus cinereus* Cinereous Tit.

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**Penduline Tits Remizidae**

**Chinese Penduline Tit** *Remiz consobrinus*
A flock of around 6 birds were seen well and scoped in reedbeds in the Arasaki area.

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**Larks Alaudidae**

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*
Good numbers were seen daily around Arasaki.

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**Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**

**Brown-eared Bulbul** *Hypsipetes amaurotis*
Good numbers were seen daily throughout the country.

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**Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Two flocks were encountered during the drive from Miike to Hyuga.

**Asian House Martin** *Delichon dasypus*
A flock of around 10 birds were seen during the drive from Miike to Hyuga.
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**Cettia Bush Warblers & Allies  Cettiidae**

**Japanese Bush Warbler**  *Horornis diphone*

Seen daily in small numbers in the Arasaki and Miike areas.

**Bushtits  Aegithalidae**

**Long-tailed Tit**  *Aegithalos caudatus*

Small groups were encountered fairly regularly around Karuizawa and Miike.

**Cisticolas & Allies  Cisticolidae**

**Zitting Cisticola**  *Cisticola juncidis*

A few birds were seen during our time at Arasaki.

**Laughingthrushes  Leiothichidae**

Chinese Hwamei (I)  *Garrulax canorus*

A flock of these skulking laughingthrushes was encountered in Maioka Park on our final morning of the trip.

Red-billed Leiothrix (I)  *Leiothrix lutea*

A large flock was found moving quickly through the undergrowth at the edge of Lake Miike.

**White-eyes  Zosteropidae**

**Japanese White-eye**  *Zosterops japonicus*

Small flocks were seen during the first week.

**Goldcrests & Kinglets  Regulidae**

**Goldcrest**  *Regulus regulus*

Two birds were encountered briefly in a mixed flock at Shunkunitai near Lake Furen, Hokkaido.

**Wrens  Troglodytidae**

**Eurasian Wren**  *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Two birds were seen around Karuizawa, another two were encountered at Jigokudani and a further sighting was had at Shunkunitai.

**Nuthatches  Sittidae**

**Eurasian Nuthatch**  *Sitta Europaea*

Seen daily in small numbers around Karuizawa and again on Hokkaido.

**Treecreepers  Certhiidae**

**Eurasian Treecreeper**  *Certhia familiaris*

A single bird was seen while watching a roosting Ural Owl near Tsurui.

**Starlings  Sturnidae**

**White-cheeked Starling**  *Spodiopsar cineraceus*

Good numbers were seen daily during the first week and a half of the main tour.
[Common] (European) Starling  
*Sturnus vulgaris*
A singleton of this rare Japanese bird was found at Arasaki.

**Thrushes Turdidae**

*Pale Thrush*  
*Turdus pallidus*
Small numbers were encountered daily in the Arasaki area.

*Dusky Thrush*  
*Turdus eunomus*
Small numbers were seen around Karuizawa, as well as at Arasaki, around Kirritapu and at Maioka Park.

**Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**

*Daurian Redstart*  
*Phoenicurus auroreus*
A male showed well at Karuizawa with further sightings around Arasaki and Miike.

*Blue Rock Thrush*  
*Monticola solitarius*
Small numbers were seen around Arasaki and Miike.

**Dippers Cinclidae**

*Brown Dipper*  
*Cinclus pallasii*
Four birds were found in the Karuizawa area and another pair was seen on the Sendai River south of Izumi.

**Old World Sparrows Passeridae**

*Russet Sparrow*  
*Passer rutilans*
Around 20 birds were seen on consecutive days at Arasaki.

*Eurasian Tree Sparrow*  
*Passer montanus*
Seen on every day of the tour.

**Wagtails Motacillidae**

*Grey Wagtail*  
*Motacilla cinerea*
Seen on four separate days of the tour, mainly around Arasaki.

*White Wagtail*  
*Motacilla alba*
Commonly seen during the first week and a half.

*Japanese Wagtail (E)*  
*Motacilla grandis*
Seen fairly regularly around Karuizawa and again near Hyuga.

*Olive-backed Pipit*  
*Anthus hodgsoni*
Seen around Lakes Miyama and Miike.

*[Buff-bellied] (American) Pipit*  
*Anthus rubescens*
Around 30 birds were seen on consecutive days at Arasaki.

**Finches Fringillidae**

*Brambling*  
*Gringilla montifringilla*
A single winter-plumage male was encountered at Arasaki. A handsome finch indeed!

*Hawfinch*  
*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
About 8 birds were found in the Karuizawa area with another three seen at Maioka Park at the end of the tour.

*Japanese Grosbeak*  
*Eophona personata*
Five birds were seen on our first morning at Karuizawa.

**Asian Rosy Finch**  
*Leucosticte arctoa*

We enjoyed excellent views of a flock of about 10 of these scarce finches on Cape Kirritapu.

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

A gorgeous male and two females were found in the Karuizawa area. Another female was found at the edge of Lake Toden.

**[Grey-capped] (Oriental) Greenfinch**  
*Chloris sinica*

Huge numbers were found around Karuizawa and Arasaki.

**Red Crossbill**  
*Loxia curvirostra*

Fair numbers were seen around Karuizawa and another 10 were seen at the Ito crane feeding area.

**Eurasian Siskin**  
*Spinus spinus*

Two birds were seen briefly by some of the group at Lake Usui near Karuizawa.

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### Buntins & Allies *Emberizidae*

**Meadow Bunting**  
*Emberiza cioides*

Good numbers were seen during the first week and a half of the tour.

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

Three birds were seen at Arasaki and another two were found at Maioka Park.

**Rustic Bunting**  
*Emberiza rustica*

Fairly commonly seen around Karuizawa and near Hyuga.

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

This stunning bunting was found at the edge of Lake Miike. About 7 birds were counted.

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

Seen in reasonable numbers at Arasaki, Miike and again at Maioka Park. The majority of birds were very shy though but we did obtain excellent views of the Maioka Park birds!

**[Grey] (Gray) Bunting**  
*Emberiza variabilis*

At least one female popped up briefly on a few occasions amongst a mixed bunting flock near Lake Miike.

**[Common] Reed Bunting**  
*Emberiza schoeniclus*

Good scope views were finally achieved of this species in a large patch of reedbeds at Arasaki.

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### ANNOTATED LIST OF MAMMALS (8 Species seen)


**Japanese Squirrel**  
*Sciurus lis*

**(Hokkaido) Red Squirrel**  
*Sciurus vulgaris*

**(Hokkaido) Red Fox**  
*Vulpes vulpes*

**Largha (Spotted) Seal**  
*Phoca largha*

**Harbour (Common) Seal**  
*Phoca vitulina*

**Japanese Macaque**  
*Macaca fuscata*

**Sika Deer**  
*Cervus Nippon*

**Japanese Serow**  
*Capricornis crispus*

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### ANNOTATED LIST OF REPTILES (1 Species seen)
Marsh Terrapin

Siebenrockiella crassicollis

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