Beidaihe & Beijing, China: 14-16+18th Sep 2012

An at-a-glance list of 138 species of birds recorded.

By Jesper Hornskov ® ***this draft 6 Oct 2012***   ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Please note that the following list is best considered a work in progress. It should not be quoted without consulting the author.

Based on my own field notes, this brief write-up covers the birds noted at Beidaihe & Beijing by M Neale & myself during an add-on to a work visit to China’s capital – the add-on was planned to make the most of the time available, drawing on general experience garnered over the years & inspired in particular by three highly enjoyable visits in autumns 2011 & 2012:

a four-nights-away extension to the 2011 Oriental Bird Club Fundraiser to NE Tibet (see http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_Aug2011_JesperHornskov.pdf ),

a ‘Pied Harrier Quest’ over 12-19 Sep 2011 (see http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_Sep2011_JesperHornskov.pdf ),

and a follow-up ‘Pied Harrier Quest’ over 2-8 Sep 2012 (see http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_2-8Sep2012_JesperHornskov.pdf )

Beidaihe - rediscovered in 1985 and almost instantly recognised as THE place to enjoy a superb range of E Asian migrants - had been receiving some poor reviews over the last 3-4 years, but in 2011 some good news: the local mudflats had been fenced-off to create an 'Ecological Restoration Area', virtually eliminating disturbance! In terms of ease of access (<2 hours by train from Beijing, or 3 hours by car from Beijing airport) & opportunities to view waders, gulls and terns we were suddenly and unexpectedly back to World Class!

Back in Beijing it was only feasible to do a morning, and we opted for Botanical Gardens – a fairly safe bet except in mid-summer, and we were not disappointed!

We recorded 138 species of birds without any undue rushing about. Everything – the ease of the birdwatching, the outstanding food, and extremely comfortable & convenient accommodations - came together to produce a pleasant & enjoyable short break.

Anyone considering China as a birding destination is welcome to contact the author at:

Tel (fax on request) +86 10 8490 9562   /  NEW MOBILE +86 139 1124 0659

E-mail  goodbirdmail(at)gmail.com  or  goodbirdmail(at)126.com

Enquiries concerning future Oriental Bird Club Fundraisers - to Yunnan, following an updated itinerary, or NE Tibet (our near-annual trips have been very popular) - can be made to Michael Edgecombe, OBC’s Promotion Officer, at mail(at)orientalbirdclub.org or directly to this author.
Species list:

In the species list the concept "bird-days" is used - it is the avian equivalent of man-hours, the day totals added up – it indicates relative abundance but does not consider the "problem" of lingering birds or, important in a non-scientific context such as a birding holiday abroad, how satisfying the encounters were. 25 bird-days for e.g. Spoon-billed Sandpiper could be one distant flock of migrating birds, gone in a flash, or one bird lingering for 25 days, offering the observers point-blank views anytime in that period…

Common Pheasant  *Phasianus colchicus*
6+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.
***The genuine, wild article… Cheng (1987) listed no fewer than 18 races for mainland China!***

Common Shelduck  *Tadorna tadorna*
Eight on 15th.

Falcated Duck  *Anas falcata*
Four on 14th.

Mallard  *Anas platyrhynchos*
Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Chinese Spotbill  *Anas zonorhyncha*
36 bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event 32 at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

Northern Pintail  *Anas acuta*
One male at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

Common Teal  *Anas crecca*
Six bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Common Goldeneye  *Bucephala clangula*
2-3 female-types on the sea on 15th.

Little Grebe  *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.
***It was good to get views that allowed us to confirm that these birds had the white iris of ssp poggei, which also differs from the nominate in vocalizations…***

Great Crested Grebe  *Podiceps cristatus*
Six bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Black-crowned Night Heron  *Nycticorax nycticorax*
20 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Striated Heron  *Butorides striata*
A juvenile was seen repeatedly on 15th.

Chinese Pond Heron  *Ardeola bacchus*
18 bird-days. Noted on three dates – nice fly-bys & ‘scope views of singletons perched up in willows…

Grey Heron  *Ardea cinerea*
21 bird-days. Noted on three dates.
Purple Heron  *Ardea purpurea*
   Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Great Egret  *Ardea alba*
   95+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Little Egret  *Egretta garzetta*
   180+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Great Cormorant  *Phalacrocorax carbo*
   54 bird-days. Noted on three dates – most were loafing birds but we did see a flock of 16 flying S with determination, high above the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

Common Kestrel  *Falco tinnunculus*
   Nine bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***In addition, a Kestrel sp. at Great Wall on 15th.

Amur Falcon  *Falco amurensis*
   Four bird-days. Noted on two dates: three juveniles (incl one in superb light which landed in a willow near where we had taken up position!) on 14th & a juvenile hunting over Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Eurasian Hobby  *Falco subbuteo*
   72+ bird-days. Noted daily – morning counts of 31 on 15th & 33 on 16th…

***Patrols high and/or offshore for passing migrants, heading inland only when passerine migration dries up as the morning wears on.

Saker  *Falco cherrug*
   We were amazed to get long ‘scope views of a grounded 2nd+c-y bird feeding as a Peregrine stood close by awaiting its turn…

Peregrine  *Falco peregrinus*
   One 2nd+c-y on 14th. See above! As it took off after finishing the Saker’s leftovers it flushed 11 Relict Gulls off the tideline…

Osprey  *Pandion haliaetus*
   Four bird-days. Two singles on 15th, one hunting on 16th & one migr at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Oriental Honey Buzzard  *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
   Five bird-days. Noted at Great Wall on 15th (good views of birds in both adult & juvenile plumage) & at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Eastern Marsh Harrier  *Circus spilonotus*
   Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates…

Pied Harrier  *Circus melanoleucos*
   Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates – three were adult males passing through… very nice, but on balance it was the juvenile appearing out of the blue at Great Wall which made the greatest impression.

Japanese Sparrowhawk  *Accipiter gularis*
   Singles on 15+16th – could have been the same individual on both dates: a juvenile male more concerned with getting some food than with heading S.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk  *Accipiter nisus*
Three bird-days – one female on 14\textsuperscript{th} & two at Botanical Gardens.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
Seven bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
39 bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*
A flock of 15 on the tideline on 15\textsuperscript{th}.

**Grey-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus cinereus*
c750 bird-days. Noted daily – main event c500 on 15\textsuperscript{th}, incl a particularly impressive, strung-out flock of 320 heading S.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
13 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Grey Plover** *Vanellus squatarola*
Two heading off S w/ three Pacific Golden Plovers on 16\textsuperscript{th}…

**Long-billed Plover** *Charadrius placidus*
One 1\textsuperscript{st} c-y at the river S of Beidaihe on 14\textsuperscript{th}… ‘eventually flying by and landing in good light close to us, allowing ‘scope views before heading off with some LRP\textsc{s}. It soon returned with just two of the LRP\textsc{s}’.

**Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius*
17 bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl 14 at the river S of Beidaihe on 14\textsuperscript{th}.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
153+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Pintail Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*
One on 14\textsuperscript{th}.


**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*
21 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 14 on 15\textsuperscript{th}.

**Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa melanuroides*
Two on 15\textsuperscript{th}, migr w/ one Spotted Redshank.

‘**Siberian Bar-tailed Godwit**’ *Limosa baueri*\textsuperscript{\textdagger}
15 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

***\textsuperscript{\textdagger}vide Inskipp \textit{et al} (2011) split from ’Lapland’ Bar-tailed Godwit \textit{Limosa lapponica}. Both Cheng (1987) & Zheng \textit{et al}. (2005) lists only \textit{baueri} from China. However, \textit{lapponica} breeds E to the Taimyr peninsula and winters E to Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and coasts and islands of W Indian Ocean (BWP volIII, p476) and should be considered certainly in W China. NE Asian birds (\textit{anadyrensis} vide Rasmussen & Anderton (2005)) differ from E-most ‘Lapland’ (separated as \textit{taimyrensis} vide Rasmussen & Anderton (2005)) ‘mainly in much darker (barred) axillaries and upper tail coverts’: Rasmussen & Anderton (2005). In addition, back and upper rump dark brown, feathers tipped white; lower rump and upper tail coverts white, barred or spotted with black; under-wing coverts (and axillaries) brown with narrow white bars (BWP vol III, p481).

***N Moores (email 19 Sep 2012) commented: ‘without additional details, I would assume that the
Barwits you saw were *menzbieri* rather than *baueri*? While both subspp are known to be numerous on northward migration in the Yellow Sea, *baueri* undertakes the cross-Pacific route on southward migration. Therefore, while we do get very occasional *baueri* in autumn in the ROK (singletons that had oversummered in the Yellow Sea?) the vast majority are clearly *menzbieri*. As *menzbieri* show much white on the uppertail covers and other differences from *baueri* (size, underwing barring, migration strategy, and some differences in range) they seem often to be considered to be part of "western" Bar-tailed Godwit (more or less inseparable from *taimyrensis*?), and *baueri* (if it is to be split) as monotypic. 

‘*Whimbrel*  *Numenius phaeopus*’
One on 15th.

***vide Inskipp et al (2011) split into three species, incl Siberian Whimbrel *Numenius variegatus* & European Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*…

**Eurasian Curlew**  *Numenius arquata*
Three on 14th.

**Far Eastern Curlew**  *Numenius madagascariensis*
Nine bird-days. Seen well on three dates – of note was four heading off S at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

**Spotted Redshank**  *Tringa erythropus*
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Marsh Sandpiper**  *Tringa stagnatilis*
One heard on 15th.

**Common Greenshank**  *Tringa nebularia*
21 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Green Sandpiper**  *Tringa ochropus*
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates, incl at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

**Wood Sandpiper**  *Tringa glareola*
24 bird-days. Noted only on 14th.

**Common Sandpiper**  *Actitis hypoleucos*
One on 15th.

**Grey-tailed Tattler**  *Heteroscelus brevipes*
A juvenile giving superb 'scope views on 16th was pretty much the last bird we saw before heading back to Beijing: what a way to finish - TINGALING!

**Great Knot**  *Calidris tenuirostris*
26 bird-days. 6-11 noted daily over 14-16th.

**Red-necked Stint**  *Calidris ruficollis*
18 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Temminck’s Stint**  *Calidris temminckii*
Two 'scoped at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

**Dunlin**  *Calidris alpina*
Perhaps the same individual on both 14+15th.
Oriental Pratincole  
*Glareola maldivarum*
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Black-tailed Gull  
*Larus crassirostris*
Up to 75+ were noted daily over 14-16\textsuperscript{th}.

‘Yellow-legged’ Gull  
*Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*
Several 1\textsuperscript{st} c-y birds were identified.

Heuglin’s Gull  
*Larus (fuscus) heuglini ssp taimyrensis\textsuperscript{^a}*
Three 1\textsuperscript{st} c-y birds were identified on 15\textsuperscript{th}.
\textsuperscript{^a}taimyrensis was considered a synonym (of *heuglini*) by Dickinson (2003) who did not follow the trend of elevating Heuglin’s Gull to full species status.

***’Herring’ / ‘Large White-headed’ Gull***
Up to 150+ seen daily over 14-16\textsuperscript{th}.

Common Black-headed Gull  
*Larus ridibundus*
Noted daily over 14-16\textsuperscript{th}… main event 500+ roosting on 16\textsuperscript{th}.

Relict Gull  
*Larus relictus*
14 bird-days. 1\textsuperscript{st} c-y birds were noted on two dates.

Gull-billed Tern  
*Sterna nilotica*
Twop on 14\textsuperscript{th}.

Caspian Tern  
*Sterna caspia*
One on 15\textsuperscript{th}.

White-winged Black Tern  
*Chlidonias leucopterus*
25 heading S on 15\textsuperscript{th}.

Oriental Turtle Dove  
*Streptopelia orientalis*
64 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 35 on 16\textsuperscript{th}.

Eurasian Collared Dove  
*Streptopelia decaocto*
One on 16\textsuperscript{th}.

Spotted Dove  
*Streptopelia chinensis*
Eight bird-days. Noted daily – main event three at Botanical Gardens on 18\textsuperscript{th}.

Northern Hawk-Cuckoo  
*Cuculus hyperythrus*
One adult seen well in flight through the canopy on 15\textsuperscript{th} – it seemed to land but could not be relocated.

Black-capped Kingfisher  
*Halcyon pileata*
Perhaps the same singleton daily over 14-16\textsuperscript{th} – it eventually sat out nicely on 16\textsuperscript{th}…

Common Kingfisher  
*Alcedo atthis*
6+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Hoopoe  
*Upupa epops*
One along the river S of Beidaihe on 14\textsuperscript{th}.
Northern Wryneck  *Jynx torquilla*
A juvenile was seen briefly on 16th... 

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker  *Hypopicus hyperythrus*
Four bird-days – our visit proved well timed: this attractive long-distance migrant was noted daily over 14-16th.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker  *Dendrocopos canicapillus*
Two at Botanical Gardens on 18th – one ‘scoped at close range: mission accomplished, and the sun was barely up yet!

Great Spotted Woodpecker  *Dendrocopos major*
One male on 14th.

Grey-headed Woodpecker  *Picus canus*
One at Great Wall on 15th & four at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Ashy Minivet  *Pericrocotus divaricatus*
Two heard on 16th.

Brown Shrike  *Lanius cristatus*
20 bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16th.

Chinese Grey Shrike  *Lanius sphenocercus*
We were blown away by protacted ‘scope views of one on 15th.

Black-naped Oriole  *Oriolus chinensis*
One dropped in on 15th – nice ‘scope views!

Black Drongo  *Dicrurus macrocercus*
15 bird-days. Noted on two dates – main event 14 at the river S of Beidaihe on 14th.

Eurasian Jay  *Garrulus glandarius*
Two at Great Wall on 15th.

Azure-winged Magpie  *Cyanopica cyanus*
30+ at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Red-billed Blue Magpie  *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*
30+ bird-days. Noted daily – some superb encounters with this beautiful bird: WOW! and WOW again!!

Common Magpie  *Pica pica*
Common – not systematically recorded.

Large-billed Crow  *Corvus macrorhynchos*
One at Great Wall on 15th & four at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

‘Eastern’ Great Tit  *Parus minor*
18+ bird-days. Noted daily.

Yellow-bellied Tit  *Parus venustulus*
136+ at Botanical Gardens on 18th – we managed to find as many as 20 together, feeding in
deciduous trees…

**Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris*
Five at Botanical Gardens on 18\textsuperscript{th}.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Modest numbers were seen daily.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*
c10 on both 15+16\textsuperscript{th}.

‘Silver-throated’ Tit *Aegithalos glaucicomans\textsuperscript{a} vinaceus*
Four at Botanical Gardens on 18\textsuperscript{th}.

\textsuperscript{a}IOC, following HBW, elevates the Long-tailed Tit taxa *vinaceus* & *glaucogularis* to full species status as ‘Silver-throated Bushtit’ *Aegithalos glaucogularis* - as recently as 2008, however, the notion of *vinaceus* as a possible split was met with groans of skepticism by group members.

**Chinese Hill Warbler** *Rhopophilus pekinensis*
One ‘scoped at close range on 14\textsuperscript{th}… and two heard at Great Wall the next day.

**Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*
17+ bird-days. Noted daily – main event 13+ at Botanical Gardens on 18\textsuperscript{th}.

**Pere David’s Bush Warbler** *Bradypterus davidii*
Singles on 15+16\textsuperscript{th}.

**Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates – BVD!

**Pallas’s Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola*
One showing well on 16\textsuperscript{th}…

**Thick-billed Warbler** *Phragmaticola aedon*
Ten bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16\textsuperscript{th}.

**Oriental Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis*
One ‘scoped on 16\textsuperscript{th}.

**Black-browed Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*
17 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
38 bird-days. Noted daily.

**Radde’s Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*
Three bird-days. Noted on two dates… BVD!

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*
84 bird-days. Noted daily.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides plumbeitarsus*
Five bird-days. Noted on three dates but getting views proved tricky…
Pere David’s Laughingthrush  *Garrulax davidi*  
17+ bird-days. Noted at Great Wall & Botanical Gardens.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill  *Paradoxornis webbianus*  
48+ bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16th – this cheeky reed-stirrer was seen well on a number of occasions.

Chestnut-flanked White-eye  *Zosterops erythropleurus*  
c185 bird-days. Noted daily – memorable views of a busy feeding party above us on 16th…

Chinese Nuthatch  *Sitta villosa*  
Three at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

White-cheeked Starling  *Sturnus cineraceus*  
Three bird-days. Noted on 15+16th.

Siberian Thrush  *Zoothera sibirica*  
One seen briefly on 16th.

White’s Thrush  *Zoothera aurea*  
One seen well – incl underwing pattern! – on 16th.

Chinese Blackbird  *Turdus mandarinus*  
One heard at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Eyebrowed Thrush  *Turdus obscurus*  
One on 15th.

Siberian Rubythroat  *Luscinia calliope*  
Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Siberian Blue Robin  *Luscinia cyane*  
Six bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16th.

‘Siberian’ Stonechat  *Saxicola ‘torquatus’*  
92+ bird-days. Noted daily @ Beidaihe – main event 65+ on 16th…‘even on quiter days there always seem to be a few of these charismatic birds around, flycatching out of a reed bed, hopping about on the sand, or attracting attention by landing atop a distant willow’.

***NOT elevated to full species status by e.g. Svensson et al. (2009), who treated ‘Eastern Stonechat’ as a subspecies group under ‘Common Stonechat’ and dealt with it in a separate account only ‘for practical reasons’.

Asian Brown Flycatcher  *Muscicapa dauurica*  
Instructive views of a single bird on 15th.

Red-throated Flycatcher  *Ficedula albicilla*  
24 bird-days. Noted daily – ‘scope views of one or two birds…

Eurasian Tree Sparrow  *Passer montanus*  
Common – not systematically recorded.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail  *Motacilla tschutschensis*  
383+ bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16th – main event 241 on 15th.
Grey Wagtail  *Motacilla cinerea*
  Four bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

White Wagtail  *Motacilla alba*
  199+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 78+ on 16th.
  **Only ssp *leucopsis* was identified.**

Richard’s Pipit  *Anthus richardi*
  33 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

Olive-backed Pipit  *Anthus hodgsoni*
  29 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 15 at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Pechora Pipit  *Anthus gustavi*
  One flew NW on 16th.

Red-throated Pipit  *Anthus cervinus*
  305 bird-days. Noted daily over 14-16th – main event 257 on 15th.
  **During autumns 1986-1990 recorded from 5 Sep – 16 Oct; previous max count a still pretty impressive 97 on 20 Sep 2002 (JH pers. obs., Williams 2000).**

Oriental Greenfinch  *Carduelis sinica*
  Two at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Common Rosefinch  *Carpodacus erythrinus*
  Two on both 15+16th – outstanding views as the birds stayed around…

Red Crossbill  *Loxia curvirostra*
  One at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Chinese Grosbeak  *Eophona migratoria*
  Six bird-days – five on 15th & one at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Eastern Rock Bunting  *Emberiza godlewskii*
  Two at Great Wall on 15th.

Chestnut-eared Bunting  *Emberiza fucata*
  A juvenile was ‘scoped as it sat up in reeds directly in front of us on 15th.

Little Bunting  *Emberiza pusilla*
  Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

Yellow-browed Bunting  *Emberiza chrysophrys*
  17 bird-days. This Dreambird was noted daily over 14-16th – one of the three on 14th sat up in a willow, allowing ‘scope viewing.

Chestnut Bunting  *Emberiza rutila*
  One adult male migr on 16th.

Black-faced Bunting  *Emberiza spodocephala*
  Five bird-days. Noted on three dates, incl at Botanical Gardens on 18th.

Pallas’s Reed Bunting  *Emberiza pallasi*
One on 15th – BVD!