

## Birding and Business in Metropolitan Seoul – March 2016

Jeff Hopkins

(all photos copyright Jeff Hopkins and Lee ByoungWoo)



I recently had a business trip to our plant in Ansan City, in Gyeonggi-do (Gyeonggi Province) on the southern outskirts of Seoul and took the opportunity to do some birding with my free time on the weekends. I've birded in Korea and Asia many times before, so I used the time to go after a couple special target birds in addition to some general birding.

I wouldn't recommend Ansan as a destination. It is located on the Seoul Subway system, but it's essentially in existence to support the nearby Shiwha and Banwol industrial Zones as well as being a bedroom community for Seoul and Incheon. It's close to Shiwha Lake, which used to be a decent birding location, and is reasonably close to the Song-Do area of Incheon, but a lot of the habitat of both of those places has been lost to development. And since Ansan is on the south side of Seoul, it takes a while to get from there to some of the other birding locations in the Seoul outskirts. If you want to go birding around Seoul, I'd recommend you base yourself more centrally in Seoul as it gives you access to more locations via subway.

### Guides

My company doesn't allow us to drive in Korea, so I was at the mercy of public transportation. Although public transport is very good in Korea, even that doesn't go to some of the more remote areas for some specialty birds. Also considering I had limited time, it was more convenient for me to hire a couple of guides to get to some places.

I had originally contacted Nial Moores of Birds Korea, who is the premier birding and conservation expert in Korea, but unfortunately he lives in Busan at the opposite end of the country from Seoul. He felt, and I agreed, that the cost of him coming to Seoul for a single day of guiding was prohibitive. I asked, but he could not suggest an alternate guide in the Seoul area.

Some searching on line turned up the name of Lee ByoungWoo. He has led small tours through meetup.com and recently founded his own tour company called Eco Bird Tour. The webpage for Eco Bird Tour ([www.ecobirdtour.co.kr](http://www.ecobirdtour.co.kr)) is in Korean, but ByoungWoo speaks decent English and responds quickly by email ([ecobirdtour@naver.com](mailto:ecobirdtour@naver.com)). I contacted him and he set up an itinerary in the area around Seoul to find a couple of my targets. His mobile number is 010-4935-8441.

Also, during our day out, ByoundWoo and I talked about visiting Cheorwon for cranes. He'd done it just the week before, but he mentioned that the only way to enter the civilian control zone (CCZ) was to either take an organized tour (which couldn't be guaranteed for a single visitor) or to find a local "guide" to bring you into the zone. While he said it would be possible to see cranes outside the zone, he did feel that there were ten times as many cranes inside the zone. In light of that he contacted Mr. Choi JongSoo, who is a local farmer that is involved in crane conservation.

Mr. Choi was willing to meet me and a local friend in Cheorwon and take us around the fields for a few hours looking for cranes and other specialties of the area. He knows the area and the birds. He doesn't speak English other than a couple of the bird names, but since I had a Korean friend come along, that was no problem. If you speak Korean, his email is [imagin65@hanmail.net](mailto:imagin65@hanmail.net) and his mobile number is 010-4255-6520.

I can heartily recommend both of these guides.

### Korean Birds

Wintertime in Korea is a very good season for birding.

Most of the Asian waterfowl species can be found, even in the Seoul area. Spot-billed ducks are probably the most easily found species and there's a large pochard/tufted duck flock on the Han River in town. Of the rarer species, scaly-sided mergansers are regular, but their locations are often kept secret because of their highly endangered status. Baer's pochard are found but are rare in the Seoul area (they're supposedly more likely to be found in the south). Geese are also present, including swan geese, but these weren't really on my target list so I didn't make an effort to find them.

Korea is also a very good location for seeing several species of cranes. Because the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the "border" with North Korea, is completely undeveloped, it's very attractive to wildlife. In addition, in most places the military maintains a 20 kilometer Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) beyond the DMZ. Development in that area is restricted and the land is used only for farming. The cranes feed in the farm fields and can be easy to see. Access is limited, but can be obtained with a tour or local guide.

Other than that, certain species in Korea are exceptionally common so I'll tend not to mention them in my day-by-day narration. Eurasian magpies are everywhere there are trees, even in suburban and

industrial areas. Brown-eared bulbuls are nearly as common. Eurasian tree sparrows are easily found in brushy edges in urban areas. Japanese tits and yellow-throated buntings are also fairly common – I even saw a couple of them inside our plant in Banwol (It's bordered by woods on three sides). And larger patches of low brush will likely have a flock of vinous-throated parrotbills.

Other easily found birds are grey heron, oriental turtle-dove, rustic bunting, Naumann's and dusky thrushes, and several species of crows and tits. Rock pigeons have been introduced and can be found throughout the cities.

My main targets on this trip were scaly-sided merganser, solitary snipe, red-crowned crane and if still around, Siberian accentor or Baer's pochard. These are all winter visitors to Korea. The first three are pretty reliable in the northern part of South Korea, although it was getting late in the winter to guarantee finding them. The latter two are hit-or-miss and require some luck.

Unfortunately, luck was not on my side. I only saw the merganser and the crane (although those are two pretty good birds). Overall I had 66 species, many of which were ducks. But I enjoyed the time I spent birding in Korea and had the chance to see a few species I hadn't seen in a while. Besides, knowing my job, I'll have other opportunities to come back and find the targets.

### Day-by-Day Narration

Weekdays were spent working in our plant in Ansan, so the only birds seen were in the car between the hotel and the plant. These were the usual common suburban species. The narration below will therefore include the weekend outings only. Those were:

- March 5<sup>th</sup> – 1) Jungnang River, 2) Paldang Area, and 3) Korean National Arboretum
- March 6<sup>th</sup> – 4) Gyesan Mountain and 5) Dongmak Lagoon (Incheon)
- March 12<sup>th</sup> – Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan and 6) Ansan Reed Marsh Park
- March 13<sup>th</sup> – Cheorwon Area



The first and last of these days were guided. The middle two were on my own using public transport (subway and taxis).

### March 5<sup>th</sup> - Out and around Seoul with Lee ByoungWoo

I took the subway from Ansan into Seoul, where Lee ByoungWoo picked me up at Ichon Station. We then headed to the confluence of the Jungnang and Han Rivers. Our goal was to pick out a lone Baer's pochard that had previously been reported to be hanging out with the large common pochard flock wintering on the Han.



From where we first came to the river we could see the flock on the far side of the river. The light was wrong and the distance too far to scope the flock so we walked to the other side. As we crossed the footbridge over the Jungnang, we found a few ducks: **mallard, gadwall, pintail, eastern spot-billed ducks**, and a lone drake **mandarin duck**.

Along the walk we found a small flock of **vinous-throated parrotbills** and a couple **Japanese tits** along with the expected common urban birds (magpie, brown-eared bulbul, and tree sparrow).

Eventually we rounded the point and came upon the **common pochard** flock. It was huge! I estimated it at over a thousand birds. Mixed in were several hundred **tufted ducks**, many **shovelers**, some **coots**, and both **great crested and little grebes**. Further out on the river was a flock of gulls. They were mostly herring gull types: a.k.a. **vega/Mongolian gulls**.

We scanned the flock for about a half hour. I picked out a lone **greater scaup**. We found a few drake **smew**. I'd seen females before but never a male. We also had a few **grey herons** and a **great egret** or two. But after a while we realized the search for the Baer's was not going to pan out. ByoungWoo suggested it may have moved pre-migration to join the large waterfowl flocks at the Han-Imjin confluence. So we gave up and walked back to the car.

On the way, I noticed one darker backed gull. It was about the same size as the herrings, so I figured it was a **Heuglin's (lesser black-backed) gull**. As we neared the car, a flock of 8 **whooper swans** flew over. ByoungWoo said they were uncommon to see in central Seoul.



The next stop was the upper reaches of the Han River at Paldang. This is another known waterfowl wintering spot, and this year had held as many as a dozen scaly-sided mergansers. It's also a reliable spot for wintering eagles. I'd seen them before at this spot.

We stopped first at a spot downstream (north) of the Paldang Bridge to scope the river. There were lots of **great cormorants**, most of which were already in their white-headed breeding plumage and a few fly-by whooper swans, grey herons, and bean geese. We picked out a few **common mergansers** and **black-tailed gulls**, and the more expected gadwall, mallards and spot-bills. Then I picked out a distant eagle. It was a juvenile **Steller's Sea-eagle**.

We stopped right under the bridge to scan and turned up nothing new except a couple great crested grebes, so we moved upstream to a lookout above the river between the bridge and the dam. From there we could see a few distant mergansers. Those were common mergs. Eventually, I spotted another drake merganser diving. I thought it might have been just another common, but ByoungWoo got the scope on it and concluded it was a **scaly-sided merganser (lifer)**. I eventually got it in the scope and could see the pattern on the flanks and the pinkish breast. Eventually it perched on a rock and was joined by a female. Spectacular.

As we headed south, we saw a couple photographers at a pullout, so we stopped there to see what they were looking at. One of whom pointed out a white spot in the trees on the far shore. It was an adult Steller's sea-eagle! The photographer told us that five of them spent the winter there. When we had our fill of the eagle, we checked out the ducks on the river: more common mergs, a few smew, and a small flock of **common goldeneye**. We also spent some time talking to the photographer and looking at his amazing shots, including a group of shots of the Steller's catching and eating a fish. And while we spoke to him a juvenile **white-tailed eagle** flew downriver.

We made one more stop, just downstream of Paldang Dam. There we found another white-tailed eagle. We also saw a few **carrion crows** chasing a **large-billed crow**, and a couple **long-tailed tits** collecting nesting material by the roadside.

We crossed over the dam and pulled out at an overlook on Paldang Lake. This was a roosting spot for whooper swans and bean geese. I asked ByoungWoo which bean geese they were, and he said he didn't know in English. So I asked large bill or small bill, to which he replied "small." That made them **tundra bean geese**. There were also a few more common mergs and goldeneye, along with more gulls.



Our next stop was a place called the Gyeongancheon (Gyeongan River) Wetland Ecological Park in Teocheon-Myeon, south of Paldang Lake. ByoungWoo said this was a place where photographers go to get good shots of swans in flight. We walked on the dikes a bit and saw distant swans and bean geese on the river. But we added a few new passerines: a large flock of **azure-winged magpies**, a couple of **yellow-throated buntings**, a **grey-headed woodpecker**, and a **Naumann's thrush**. We also heard a fly-by white wagtail and a ring-necked pheasant.

We stopped for lunch at a wonderful little country-style restaurant which specialized in sundubu (soft tofu) dishes. ByoungWoo spread some rice in the parking lot to see if we could pull in some birds, but when we came out from lunch, none were coming into the food. There was just too much pedestrian traffic.



After lunch, we passed back through Paldang, this time on the opposite side of the river from the morning. We checked, and the Steller's sea eagle was still perched beside the river. So we stopped to take a few pictures. The light was horrible and I got off a few OK shots, but unfortunately it started to rain as we were doing that and we rushed back to the car and continued to the northern suburbs of Seoul.

ByoungWoo had made a reservation at the Korean National Arboretum in Gwangneung Forest. It's usually a very good place to see solitary snipe in the creek along the fence line. But by the time we arrived at the Arboretum, the rain was quite heavy. Even so, we bought our tickets and headed in.

We found a **green sandpiper** below the entrance bridge along with another drake mandarin duck. Once we got to the creek we found another green sandpiper, but unfortunately after a half-hour of scanning in the rain we couldn't find a snipe. Even the songbirds were quiet – we heard one Japanese tit. That's all. Once the thunder and lightning started we decided to give up the search.

After an hour's drive into town, we were back at Ichon Station. I paid ByoungWoo for his services and he generously gave me his copy of "Birds of Korea" by Lee, Koo, and Park as a souvenir. After that it was just a quick subway ride back out to Ansan.

### March 6<sup>th</sup> - A couple of Stops in Incheon

I had seen a report online that a few Siberian accentors had been seen the week before during a walk on Gyesan Mountain in Incheon, so I made that my goal for the day. It was about 80 minutes by

subway from my hotel including two transfers which I figured was a reasonable trip. However, when I arrived I realized I'd forgotten about the Korean passion for mountain hiking. Since it was a Sunday morning the road to the trailhead as well as the main trail was full of hiking groups.

However, I'd already made the long subway ride, so I headed up the trail. Eventually, I found a side trail where I could get away from the crowds. On that trail I found a few a couple **daurian redstarts**, some yellow-throated buntings and long-tailed tits along with the usual Japanese tits. Further up the main trail, I found another side trail where I found a couple **marsh tits** and a few **rustic buntings** mixed in with the yellow-throateds.

I worked my way back to the main trail, and turned up a distant Eurasian jay, but not much else. So rather than heading further upwards I headed back down to that first side trail which led downward to a secondary trail head. There was very little birdlife on the way down...just a lot of people. Eventually I came out at the top of the entrance road and walked down toward the subway station with a stop for lunch on the way.

Heading back towards Ansan, I stopped at Dongmak Lagoon in Song-do, Incheon, to see what might be there. This is normally a great spot for black-faced spoonbill in summer and shorebirds in migration, but in the winter it can have a good selection of ducks. The reeds along the creek were teeming with vinous-throated parrotbills but not much else. I also picked out a **brambling** in a flock of tree sparrows.

Eventually I made it to the main lagoon where the ducks were. Of course there were the usual mallards and spot-billed ducks, but there were also a few gadwall, **ruddy shelducks**, **common shelducks** and many **green-winged teal**. There were quite a few herring-type gulls and one large, dark-backed gull that was likely a **slaty-backed gull**.

Without a scope, I wasn't likely to find anything else unusual, so I made my way back to the train station. On the way I had a **Eurasian kestrel**. Two more train transfers and I was home!. I spent the rest of the afternoon getting over jet lag.

### March 12<sup>th</sup> – The Long Walk Home

This was a day to spend birding in the Ansan area. I'd discovered that there was a nature preserve called Ansan Reed Marsh Park on the south side of Ansan near the inlet stream to Shiwha Lake. That was my goal for the day. However, the park didn't open until 10 AM, so I had some time to kill.

I first headed to a small park near my hotel where I'd visited in the past. It's basically a couple of wooded peaks in the middle of complete urbanization. On Google Maps it's called Banwol Jungang Park (though I didn't see any signs in the park calling it that).

After finding a flock of parrotbills working the bottom of the hill, I climbed one of the peaks. Partway up, I heard a melodious song, which after a lot of effort I tracked down to an **oriental greenfinch**. While looking for that, I spooked a **ring-necked pheasant**. I also had a couple of Eurasian jays and a grey-headed woodpecker making much less melodious noises. There were also a couple of thrushes but they were at the top of the trees and the light was bad and I couldn't ID them.

Climbing further, I had a few yellow-throated buntings and heard a **Japanese pygmy-woodpecker** make its buzzy call along with another greenfinch. At the top of one of the peaks I found another flock of yellow-throated buntings along with a pair of **great-spotted woodpeckers** and a grey headed woodpecker (which was calling to another distant one).

After enjoying the woodpeckers, I started back down finding a nice mixed flock of tits (mostly Japanese, but with a couple long-tailed and marshes mixed in). There was also a brambling foraging with the flock. The remaining descent added another jay and a few crows, but nothing else of note.

Coming back to the developed area, I caught a taxi to Ansan Reed Marsh Park. I arrived at about 9:45 and the gates were still closed, so I walked along a raised dike that ran beside the park. I could look down into the edge of the reed beds and could hear and see a lot of parrotbills. There was a large flock of magpies and a few **dusky thrushes** in the trees along with the requisite Japanese tits. At one point I found a yellow-throated bunting and it was accompanied by another bunting that looked like one of the reed buntings.

Since it was after 10, I wandered back to the park gate which was now open. I saw a couple of spot-billed ducks on the creek near the entrance bridge, so I decided to walk along the river side trail rather than down the middle of the park through the red beds. The river was not exactly pristine, but it was full of spot-billed ducks and green-winged teal with a few gadwall. There were quite a few grey herons a great egret, and the occasional cormorant along with several overhead flights of bean geese. And at one point, there were four beautiful drake **falcated ducks** – the first I'd seen in a few years (that was also in Korea).

Turning back to the marsh area, I heard even more parrotbills and saw both yellow-throated and rustic buntings. While I was creeping up on those, I spooked a snipe from the mudflats. It was small and noisy as it flew off, so I suspect it was a **common snipe**. The habitat fit better for that species, too.

Eventually I came to the end of the riverside path and turned to walk through the middle of the red beds. At this point I heard a lot of activity. I first found another flock of parrotbills with some long-tailed tits mixed in, but as I walked on I realized there were also some buntings mixed in. I started working to see the buntings and I found that they were all reed buntings. **Pallas' reed bunting** is the more expected species and I was able to ID at least one of that species, but I also found two birds that were definitely **common reed bunting**. Interestingly, the two common reed buntings were in near-breeding plumage. The Pallas' bunting I could ID was not.

Eventually I made it back to the headquarters. They had a small photo checklist of some of the common birds and plants which I picked up as a souvenir, then I headed back to town. The river along the entrance road had more spot-billed ducks and teal, and a strange call along the roadside turned out to be one of the many strange calls made by brown-eared bulbul. Near the intersection with the main road I found a small group of **coal tits** in some evergreen trees.

At this point, I was hoping to either find a bus or flag down a taxi on the main road, but there were none to be found. I walked a little further...and further...and further. Still no buses and what few taxis drove by were already occupied. By this point I was almost back to downtown, so I gave up looking for transport and just kept walking. Even in the downtown area I found few taxis, but by this point I was



less than a kilometer from my hotel, so I stopped in a restaurant for lunch, then continued on to the hotel. Between the birding walks and the long walk back from the park, I'd walked about 16 kilometers, so I called it a day.

### March 13<sup>th</sup> - Day of the *Durumi*

I learned a new word in Korean today: *durumi*. It means crane.



One of the notable locations for birding in South Korea is the small town of Cheorwon. It's located in the central north of the country just a short distance from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the "border" with North Korea. In addition the military maintains a 20 kilometer Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) beyond the DMZ. Development in that area is restricted and the land is used only for farming. Between that and the total lack of conflict with people in the DMZ, it's very attractive to wildlife, and Cheorwon has become known for its population of wintering cranes. For this reason, I wanted to visit there to find some red-crowned cranes, the last regularly occurring Asian crane I hadn't yet seen. I was told that they might have already left for the breeding grounds, since it had been an unusually warm winter, but I had to give it a shot.

One of my Korean co-workers had become interested in photography and he'd expressed interest in coming out with me sometime. So I invited him to come to Cheorwon with me. I figured something big and impressive like a crane would be reasonably attractive to a non-birder. He thought it would be a good day and he even agreed to drive. He met me at my hotel at 10 AM, and from there we started the drive to Cheorwon. The drive was pretty uneventful – the only unusual bird was a great egret in a roadside creek.

But about halfway there it started to rain. Then it got foggy. At one point we pulled up at a stop light and I opened the window to see how cloudy it was outside and I noticed there was snow mixed in with the rain. This was not good. But we arrived in Cheorwon just after noon and found a small restaurant for a quick meal. We then went to meet Mr. Choi at 1:00 at the DongSong District municipal building, where we transferred our gear into his 4WD and headed into the fields. Fortunately the weather was improving. It was still pretty grey, but the rain had let up.

We hadn't gone more than a few kilometers when we spotted a family group of six **white-naped cranes** in a field beside the road. We excitedly stopped and took some pictures. Little did we know how many more we'd see! After that, we turned onto a single-lane concrete road between the fields and started seeing even more cranes, usually in groups of three or four. We'd also see flocks of geese, which unlike in the Seoul area (where we had bean geese) were all **greater white-fronted geese**.

We continued to wind our way between the fields as the concrete roads turned to dirt (mud) tracks, seeing more and more cranes. At one point Mr Choi pointed out a juvenile crane in a flock of white-napes that looked different. With the help of my field guide, he noted that it was a **common crane**, an unusual but regular vagrant to Korea. I saw the clean black throat and white breast which confirmed his ID. Good find!

Eventually we drove over a wooded hillside into a secluded valley where Mr Choi told my friend that we'd look for small birds. No sooner than he said that than we found a large flock of buntings. Most of them were rustic buntings with a few yellow-throated buntings mixed in. In the bottom of the valley, we found still more cranes, but still only white-naped. And buntings were constantly flying up from the side of the road as we drove by anywhere it bordered the woods.

After a while, we drove back out of the valley and into the area near the White Horse Hill Memorial. We found a flock of 70 or so rooks in a field and also inspected some man-made anti-artillery berms that had concrete bunkers overlooking the CCZ built into them. But there wasn't much to be seen in this area.

We next went to the White Horse Hill Memorial, for a quick tour. Mr. Choi asked one of the soldiers at the memorial to give me a quick tour in English. It's a very sobering place: That one hill saw 12 engagements between the Korean and Chinese armies. There were 3,600 Korean and 14,000 Chinese casualties over the span of 10 days in October of 1952. When the battle was over, the hill had been so denuded of soil and trees that the bare rock of the hill looked like a white horse lying down, hence the name.

After that we entered the CCZ. It was a fairly simple process. Mr. Choi showed his ID to the guard, and my friend and I simply gave the guard our names. He recorded our names, they moved a barricade out of the way, and we simply drove in. That was it. On the way out, we repeated the process, even though we left by a different gate than the one we entered.

Inside the CCZ the crane numbers were even higher. We started seeing flocks of 20-30 white-naped cranes at a time as well as even larger flocks of geese. Mr. Choi pointed out a **Eurasian kestrel** on the wires. Then he saw an **eastern buzzard** that flew before I saw it, but soon thereafter we saw another

one. A little after that I found myself saying “Those are starlings!” Yep, there were a couple of **Eurasian starlings** on the wires: An invasive trash-bird in the USA, but an uncommon visitor to Korea.

After about 45 minutes driving around, we stopped suddenly. I asked what we were seeing, and my friend said “Look ahead. White cranes!” There were four **red-crowned cranes (lifer)** foraging in the field.



We crept up on them slowly to try to get some better pictures, and found three more, but they were very skittish. All of a sudden one of them jumped up and then another. They were dancing! It was so amazing. Eventually we got too close (and we really weren't very close) and they all flew off.

We drove on a bit, at which point we stopped again. This time someone said there was an eagle in flight. It was distant. I pulled out my field guide open to a page of eagles to ask Mr. Choi which one it was, but he turned the page to the vultures. It was a **Cinereous (Black) Vulture**. We dove further on and there were many more perched vultures. They were sitting on the tops of the telephone poles and almost every pole had one. I counted about 15 of them. We made another stop nearby and found another group of 20 or more sitting on the ground in the distance.

Near this stop was a small lake. I saw a few cormorants and mallards, but Mr. Choi was more interested in a group of about 10 whooper swans. I guess they were unusual for the area. We eventually ended up at the Crane Museum, but it was closed, so we continued back into the fields.

Now we started seeing huge flocks of white-napes. I didn't count them, but these flocks we all between 50 and 100 birds. And one flock had a bird that caught Mr. Choi's eye. At that point he pulled out his scope and took a closer look. This bird was brownish with no black on the throat at all and just a little on the face. Mr. Choi suggested it was possibly a **hybrid crane**. He thought it may have been a white-naped x common crane, but wasn't certain. I've also learned that hybrid hooded x common

cranes have been recorded several times in Korea before. We didn't see it long enough or well enough to be sure, but either way it was an interesting find.

We made one last quick stop at a grey heron rookery where there were about 20 birds on nests. After that we headed out of the CCZ and back to our meeting point. While ByoungWoo had told me that we'd spend three hours with Mr. Choi, we'd actually spent about four hours. I paid Mr. Choi for his services – I actually gave him a little extra since he'd put in extra effort and time. He said the money would go toward the cranes, not for his personal benefit, which impressed me. After that, we switched our gear back to my friend's car and headed home.

My friend and I had a very interesting conversation on the drive home to Ansan. It turns out he'd had many conversations with Mr. Choi about the conservation and protection of the cranes and their habitat. While my friend probably didn't instantly become a born-again environmentalist, it certainly raised his awareness of conservation issues.

We arrived back in Ansan at about 8 PM, bringing to an end a very successful day.

### Species Accounts

Ring-necked Pheasant - *Phasianus colchicus* – A couple heard during the Seoul outing, and one seen flying away in Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Tundra Bean Goose – *Anser serrirostris* – A single skein at the Jungnang River in Seoul and a few at Ansan Reed Marsh Park. Larger numbers in the Paldang area.

Greater White-fronted Goose – *Anser albifrons* – Large flocks in the fields around Cheorwon.

Whooper Swan – *Cygnus cygnus* - A single skein at the Jungnam River in Seoul and a few in the CCZ at Cheorwon were unusual for the location. Larger numbers in the Paldang area and at Gyeongancheon Wetland Ecological Park are common.

Common Shelduck – *Tadorna tadorna* – 10-20 birds at Dongmak Lagoon in Song-Do, Incheon

Ruddy Shelduck – *Tadorna ferruginea* – About 10 birds at Dongmak Lagoon in Song-Do, Incheon

Mandarin Duck – *Aix galericulata* – Two drakes. One on the Jungnang River in Seoul and another at the Korean National Arboretum.

Gadwall – *Anas strepera* – Scattered sightings on most bodies of water.

Falcated Duck – *Anas falcata* – Four drakes on the river at Ansan Reed Marsh Park.

Mallard – *Anas platyrhynchos* – More numerous than gadwall at the same locations, but not especially common.



Eastern Spot-billed Duck – *Anas zonorhyncha* – The most common duck on all locations except for on the Han River in Seoul where outnumbered by other species.

Northern Shoveler – *Anas clypeata* - 10-20 birds at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul.

Northern Pintail – *Anas acuta* – A few on the Jungnang River in Seoul.

Eurasian Teal – *Anas crecca* – Large flocks at Dongmak Lagoon and along the river at Ansan Reed Marsh Park.

Common Pochard – *Aythya ferina* – A huge raft of this species winters at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul.

Tufted Duck – *Aythya fuligula* – Hundreds mixed in with the pochard flock at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul.

Greater Scaup – *Aythya marila* – One drake at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul.

Common Goldeneye – *Bucephala clangula* – A few of these on the Han River at Paldang was fewer than I've seen there on previous visits.

Common Merganser – *Mergus merganser* – Many of these on the Han River at Paldang.

Scaly-sided Merganser – *Mergus Squamatus* – A pair on the Han River at Paldang. Lifer.

Little Grebe – *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – A couple on the Han River in Seoul.

Great Crested Grebe – *Podiceps cristatus* – No more than 10 on the Han River in Seoul.

Grey Heron – *Ardea cinerea* – A few at Paldang and Ansan Reed Marsh Park. Over 20 at a rookery in Cheorwon.

Great Egret – *Ardea alba* – Scattered sightings of one or two at a time on the various rivers during the trip.

Great Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax carbo* – Numerous on the Han River at Paldang. A few sightings at Ansan Reed Marsh Park and in Cheorwon. Even one seen on the canal in Ansan City! In white-headed breeding plumage.

Cinereous (Black) Vulture – *Aegyptius monachus* – 30 to 40 inside the CCZ at Cheorwon.

White-tailed Eagle – *Haliaeetus albicilla* – Two immatures on the Han River at Paldang.

Steller's Sea-eagle - *Haliaeetus pelagicus* – And adult and an immature on the Han River at Paldang.

Eastern Buzzard – *Buteo japonicus* – Two birds inside the CCZ at Cheorwon.

Eurasian Kestrel – *Falco tinniculus* – One at Donmak Lagoon and another inside the CCZ at Cheorwon.

Eurasian Coot – *Fulica atra* – A few on the Han River at the Jungnang River confluence.

White-naped Crane – *Grus vipio* – Hundreds (Thousands?) in the Cheorwon area

Red-crowned Crane – *Grus japonensis* – Seven inside the CCZ at Cheorwon including a pair dancing. Lifer.

Common Crane – *Grus grus* – One immature in a flock of white-napes at Cheorwon.

Hybrid crane sp. – *Grus grus x grus vipio* or *grus grus x grus monacha* – One immature in a flock of white-napes at Cheorwon. Mr. Choi thought it might have been the former although the latter has been recorded in Korea.

Common Snipe – *Gallinago gallinago* – One bird flushed off the mud at Ansan Reed Marsh Park

Green Sandpiper – *Tringa ochropus* – Two birds at the Korean National Arboretum

Black-tailed Gull – *Larus crassirostris* – A few birds on the Han River at Paldang

Herring Gull – *Larus argentatus* – Large flock at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul and a few more at Paldang. Both *L. a. vegae* and *L. a. mongolicus* occur, but I didn't distinguish between the two. These are split by some authorities as Vega Gull and Mongolian Gull but are not split by Clements.

Slaty-backed Gull – *Larus schistisagus* – One bird seen at Dongmak Lagoon.

Lesser Black-backed Gull – *Larus fuscus* – One bird at the confluence of the Han and Jungnang Rivers in Seoul was probably this species. The subspecies *heuglini* that occurs in Korea is split by some authorities as Heuglin's Gull but is not split by Clements.

Feral Rock Pigeon – *Columba livia* – Common urban bird (Introduced)

Oriental Turtle Dove – *Streptopelia orientalis* – Common in wooded areas and even suburban streets.

Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker – *Dendrocopos kizuki* – One bird heard in Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Great Spotted Woodpecker – *Dendrocopos majori* – Two birds seen in Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Grey-headed Woodpecker – *Picus canus* – One bird seen at Gyeongancheon Wetland Ecological Park and a few birds seen in Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Eurasian Jay – *Garrulus glandarius* – A few at Gyesan Mountain in Incheon and Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Azure-winged Magpie – *Cyanopica cyanus* – A large flock at Gyeongancheon Wetland Ecological Park.

Eurasian Magpie – *Pica pica* – Abundant anywhere there's trees.

Rook – *Corvus frugilegus* – A large flock in the fields in Cheorwon.

Carrion Crow – *Corvus corone* – A few birds at Paldang and scattered birds heard elsewhere

Large-billed Crow – *Corvus macrorhynchos* – One bird being chased by the previous species at Paldang was the only one definitively IDed.

Marsh Tit – *Poecile palustris* – A few birds at Gyesan Mountain in Incheon and Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Coal Tit – *Poecile ater* – A couple birds along the roadside near Ansan Reed Marsh Park.

Japanese Tit – *Parus minor* – Fairly common in any wooded area.

Brown-eared Bulbul – *Hypsepetes amaurotis* – Common (and noisy).

Long-tailed Tit – *Aegithalos caudatus* – A couple collecting nesting material at Paldang. Usually present with mixed flocks in wooded areas.

Vinous-throated Parrotbill – *Sinosuthora webbiana* – Large flocks are likely in any brushy habitat or reed-beds.

Eurasian Starling – *Sturnus vulgaris* – Two birds on the wires in the Cheorwon area.

Naumann's Thrush – *Turdus naumanni* – One bird at Gyeongancheon Wetland Ecological Park.

Dusky Thrush – *Turdus eunomus* – Three birds at Ansan Reed Marsh Park

Daurian Redstart – *Phoenicurus aureus* – A couple at Gyesan Mountain in Incheon.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow – *Passer montanus* – Common in brushy habitat in suburban areas.

White Wagtail – *Motacilla alba* – One heard at Gyeongancheon Wetland Ecological Park and another heard at Ansan Reed Marsh Park.

Brambling – *Fringilla montifringilla* – One seen at Dongmak Lagoon and another at Banwol Jungang Park in Ansan.

Oriental Greenfinch – *Chloris sinica* – A couple seen in Banwol Jungang Park.

Rustic Bunting – *Emberiza rustica* - A few at Gyesan Mountain and Ansan Marsh Reed Park. Large flocks in the Cheorwon area.

Yellow-throated Bunting – *Emberiza elegans* - Fairly common in most wooded areas.

Pallas' Reed Bunting – *Emberiza pallasii* – At least one of these was identified in a large mixed flock of reed buntings at Ansan Reed Marsh Park.

Common Reed Bunting – *Emberiza schoeniclus* – At least two of these (in near breeding plumage) were identified in a large mixed flock of reed buntings at Ansan Reed Marsh Park.