JAPAN 2015 ITINERARY

22 May  Depart London Heathrow at 13:30 to Tokyo Narita
23 May  Arrive Narita at 09:10; Tonegawa  Toyoko Inn Narita Kuko
24 May  Narita - Karuizawa  Pension Edohara
25 May  Karuizawa  Pension Edohara
26 May  Karuizawa - Gotemba  Hotel Mt Fuji
27 May  Gotemba - Tokyo  Toyoko Inn Haneda Kuko 1
28 May  Tokyo - Ishigaki  Best Inn
29 May  Ishigaki  Best Inn
30 May  Ishigaki - Okinawa  Ada Garden Hotel
31 May  Okinawa  Park Stadium Hotel
01 June  Okinawa - Amami  West Court Hotel
02 June  Amami  West Court Hotel
03 June  Amami - Tokyo - Ferry
04 June  Miyakejima  Hotel Kairaku
05 June  Miyakejima - Ferry - Tokyo  Tokyo Sotetsu Fresa
06 June  Tokyo - Kushiro - Kussharo  Gasthof Papilio
07 June  Kussharo  Gasthof Papilio
08 June  Kussharo - Rausu  Rausu-kuru
09 June  Rausu - Furen  Lodge Furen
10 June  Furen  Lodge Furen
11 June  Furen - Kiritappu - Tokyo  Toyoko Inn Haneda Kuko 1
12 June  Depart Tokyo Haneda 08:50 Arrive London Heathrow 13:15
This was a marvellous trip. We stayed at thirteen hotels or lodges, took six internal flights, hired five different cars and took one sea-ferry. We used public buses on Miyakejima and the monorail in Tokyo. The trip was sometimes rather tiring, but was well worth the cost and effort. Many interesting species were observed and hardly anything was missed. British birders will enjoy driving in Japan as it is done on the left-hand side of the road. It is worth getting the staff at each of the car hire offices to turn the satnav to ‘english’ and asking them to programme it with your key destinations (hotels and where possible, birding sites) as their equipment is different to that we are familiar with in the UK. Programming is normally done by entering the phone number of your destination, rather than a post code. We used toll roads wherever possible as driving, navigation and journey time were all better on them. We probably spent nearly £70 on tolls. It is not worth exceeding the low speed limit as the police will appear from nowhere and you could get a hefty fine. Our total cost for hiring cars was £645 (booked in the UK, but paid in Japan by credit card) and for the five internal flights the total cost for two was £1050 (pre-paid in the UK). The International flights cost £550.46 each. Nearly all costs in Japan were paid for in yen, which were bought in the UK and collected at London Heathrow. Weather ranged from too hot and too humid on the southernmost island of Ishigaki, becoming cooler on Okinawa and Amami, milder on Honshu, but cold wet and windy at times on Hokkaido. The friendliness of the people and the lack of crime meant that we never had to worry about our safety and had a very enjoyable trip.

All photographs are by Béatrice Henricot. Front page: Amami Thrush. Interesting, endemic or target species for the trip are in bold. Codes used are: $h$ = heard only, $m$ = many.
22 May 2015 London – Tokyo

We flew from LHR at 13:30 on an overnight flight.

23 May 2015 Narita - Tonegawa

Weather: Hot.

Upon our arrival at 09:10 we went straight to the car hire office. The helpful man on duty entered our first birding destination, our hotels for the next four nights and the location of the car drop off site at Haneda, onto the satnav, which would ensure almost easy navigation for us. We drove east to the Tonegawa River, a river which has reeds along the side and paddies nearby, to see some species that we might not see elsewhere on the trip. All were seen very well. After two hours we drove to our hotel and checked in at 15:30.

Spot-billed Duck 6, Little Grebe h, Black-crowned Night Heron 2, Grey Heron 20, Great Egret 1, Intermediate Egret 2, Little Egret m, Great Cormorant 5, Black-eared Kite 4, Barn Swallow 6, Japanese Skylark 3, Zitting Cisticola 5, Marsh Grassbird 5, Japanese Bush Warbler 3, Oriental Reed Warbler 25, White-cheeked Starling 20, Eurasian Tree Sparrow m, Japanese Reed Bunting 5.
24 May 2015 Narita - Karuizawa

Weather: Hot at midday.

We left our hotel in Tokyo after breakfast and drove west for 3.5 hours, checked in to our Pension and then went out birding in the nearby forest. The habitat was very pleasant, the walking was easy and we saw a lot of interesting species. Blue-and-white Flycatchers, with their rich songs, were only seen here. The song of the Narcissus Flycatchers seemed to vary a lot, from one bird to the next, leading to confusion. Five Japanese Thrushes were seen, but Brown-headed Thrush was only heard and we saw our first Japanese Varied Tit and Bull-headed Shrike. While I was looking the other way Beatrice photographed two Japanese Yellow Buntings by a pool in the forest. We returned to the Pension at 18:30 for our meal.

Black-eared Kite 3, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** 2, Great Spotted Woodpecker 2, **Bull-headed Shrike** 1, Oriental Crow m, Eastern Great Tit 12, Coal Tit 1, **Japanese Varied Tit** 1, Willow Tit 8, Barn Swallow 4, Asian House Martin, 20 Long-tailed Tit, 3 Brown-eared Bulbul 15, **Japanese Bush Warbler** 3, Eastern Crowned Warbler 1, Japanese White-eye 4, Winter Wren 3, Eurasian Nuthatch 1, White-cheeked Starling 5, **Japanese Thrush** 5, **Brown-headed Thrush** h, **Narcissus Flycatcher** 8, **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** 4, Eurasian Tree Sparrow m, Meadow Bunting 1, **Japanese Yellow Bunting** 2.
25 May 2015 Karuizawa and Paddies to South

Weather: Cold morning and evening, hot at midday.

We were up at 05:00 and out soon after to search the forest trails. At 09:30 we were back for breakfast, then went back out at 10:30. We tried two sites higher up, but they were not very good so we returned to the Karuizawa trails. From 15:30 to 18:00 we drove round the mostly dry paddies to the south, where some open country species were seen, which included a male Green Pheasant, a Black-browed Reed Warbler, five Japanese Skylarks and three Chestnut-eared Buntings.

![Blue-and-white Flycatcher](image1)

![Bull-headed Shrike](image2)

Green Pheasant 1, Spot-billed Duck 3, Grey Heron 4, Oriental Honey Buzzard 1, Black-eared Kite 1, **Eastern Buzzard** 1, Oriental Turtle Dove 1, Eurasian Cuckoo h, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** 2, Great Spotted Woodpecker 2, Ashy Minivet h, **Bull-headed Shrike** 2, Eurasian Jay 2, Oriental Crow 6, Eastern Great Tit 18, Coal Tit 2, **Japanese Varied Tit** 4, Willow Tit 12, Barn Swallow 12, Long-tailed Tit 1, **Japanese Skylark** 5, Zitting Cisticola h, Brown-eared Bulbul 15, **Japanese Bush Warbler** 2, Oriental Reed Warbler 4, Black-browed Reed Warbler 1, Eastern Crowned Warbler 1, Chinese Hwamei 1, Japanese White-eye 2, Winter Wren 2, Eurasian Nuthatch 3, Eurasian Treecreeper 1, White-cheeked Starling 5, **Japanese Thrush** 6, **Brown-headed Thrush** h,
Siberian Blue Robin 1, Stejneger’s Stonechat 2, Narcissus Flycatcher 8, Blue-and-white Flycatcher 2, Eurasian Tree Sparrow m, Oriental Greenfinch 35, Japanese Grosbeak 2, Meadow Bunting 4, Chestnut-eared Bunting 3, Japanese Yellow Bunting 2.

26 May 2015 Karuizawa - Mt Fuji

Weather: Cold morning, hot when driving, cool and cloudy on Mt Fuji.

Up at 04:45 and birded the Karuizawa trails until 08:00. After breakfast we drove to our next hotel, where there was a noisy Lesser Cuckoo. We then continued to Mt Fuji where we birded until it was dark. Not much was seen, but four Stejneger’s Stonechats and 20 Olive-backed Pipits where seen above the treeline. I was surprised to see Olive-backed Pipits in such a barren site as the slopes of the volcano, but were presumably on their breeding grounds. At the edge of the treeline five Red-flanked Bluetails were singing, but only one was seen well.

Weather: Warm to hot.

Although we were up at 05:15 we did not leave until 06:00. We checked a few places on the lower, forested slopes, but birding was slow and not much was seen. At 08:00 we arrived in the top car park and walked to an altitude of 2600 metres; it was not a difficult hike. The Japanese Sparrowhawk was above the treeline in a scrubby area and some way beyond that we found the Japanese Accentor. We observed this high altitude species for a while then turned around and headed back down. Most of the rather vocal Japanese Leaf Warblers that we saw were not far below the treeline. I was surprised that the Japanese Woodpecker was the only one I saw. Some were heard at Karuizawa but had proved impossible to see. As we drove back down the road we made more stops where we could, but little was seen. At 15:30 we left for Tokyo and drove for two hours then dropped our car near Haneda Airport, where our next hotel was situated.

Grey Heron 12, Black-eared Kite 3, Japanese Sparrowhawk 1, Eurasian Cuckoo 2, Pacific Swift 40, Ruddy Kingfisher h, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker 2, Japanese Woodpecker 1, Eastern Great Tit 2, Coal Tit

28 May 2015 Tokyo - Ishigaki

Weather: Hot and humid

We were up at 04:30 to get the first shuttle bus to the airport. A lot of people were waiting for it, but all managed to squeeze aboard. At the car hire office nobody spoke any English, but after they put the hotel and car hire numbers into the satnav we were ready to go. We stopped at a little shop in the middle of nowhere and bought food and water then went to Bana Park and over the bridge, but it was very hot and few birds were found. The Ryuku Serpent Eagle was only seen by Beatrice. We saw two Ruddy Kingfishers three Ryuku Green Pigeons and some Ishigaki Great Tits. A few interesting species
were seen at the river mouth on the west side of the island. These included six Whimbrel, three Terek Sandpipers, one Grey-tailed Tattler, four Little Terns and a few Ishigaki Tits. At 15:00 we checked in to our hotel for two nights, then returned to Bana Park, where the temperature and humidity were dropping, but birding was still slow and difficult. Towards dusk several Ryuku Scops Owls began calling from different areas, some quite close. Eventually one was seen extremely well on the edge of the car park. Later after dark a bird was found crouching in the middle of the road and I was surprised to find that it was an immature Slaty-legged Crake. It may have just been stunned so I put it amongst vegetation away from the road.


![Ryuku Scops Owl](image1.jpg)

![Slaty-legged Crake](image2.jpg)
29 May 2015 Ishigaki

*Weather: Hot and humid*

We were up at 06:00 then went across the road to Coco’s to buy our breakfast. We drove straight to Bana Park, where at the entrance, we had a close view of a Chinese Sparrowhawk and some Ryuku Green Pigeons. Three Ruddy Kingfishers, six Ryuku Minivets, two Ryuku Flycatchers and 12 Ishigaki Great Tits were later found. We left the park at 10:30. So now only the Ryuku Serpent Eagle was needed and just by me. We spent five hours searching, but could not find one. We again stopped at the river mouth on the west side of the island seeing two Whimbrel, one Common Greenshank, one Terek Sandpiper, three Grey-tailed Tattlers and four Little Terns. We explored the island as far north as Tamatorizaki, where we saw 30 Black-naped Terns. Several Ryuku Scops Owls were calling at dusk.

![Ruddy Kingfisher](image1.jpg) ![Ryuku Flycatcher](image2.jpg)

Common Pheasant 4, Spot-billed Duck 30, Cinnamon Bittern 3, Black-crowned Night Heron 1, Cattle Egret m, Purple Heron 2, Great Egret 2, Little Egret 10, Chinese Sparrowhawk 1, White-breasted Waterhen 4, Common Moorhen 4, Black-winged Stilt 7, Whimbrel 2, Common Greenshank 1, Terek Sandpiper 1, Grey-tailed Tattler 3, Black-naped
Tern 30, Little Tern 6, Whiskered Tern 25, Oriental Turtle Dove m, Emerald Dove 1, Ryuku Green Pigeon 6, Ryuku Scops Owl h, Ruddy Kingfisher 3, Ryuku Minivet 6, Ishigaki Great Tit 12, Pacific Swallow 25, Zitting Cisticola 5, Chinese Bulbul 12, Brown-eared Bulbul m, Japanese White-eye 8, Ryuku Flycatcher 2, Eurasian Tree Sparrow 20.

30 May 2015 Ishigaki - Okinawa

Weather: Still Hot

The hour between getting up and dropping off the car was again spent searching for a Ryuku Serpent Eagle, but one was not found. This was the only dip of our trip. We flew to Okinawa, collected another car and drove towards the Yanbaru Peninsula, with a stop at Kin Paddies, but it was not really worth it. We reached our hotel near Ada at 16:00 and then saw all the necessary endemics within three hours. The Ryuku Robins were at first very hard to see, but eventually we had good views. They are now split and these ones become Okinawa Robins. Further along the same track near Ada we found a pair of Pryer’s Woodpeckers, which were also quite hard to observe; we had heard them drumming and calling for a while before the first sighting. Along the road in the evening we had decent views of four Okinawa Rails so we returned to the hotel and relaxed.

31 May 2015 Okinawa

Weather: Cooler with fog in the morning but clear in the lowlands

We went out at 05:30 and had great views of Okinawa Rails; we saw a total of eleven from the car and most were singles. There were a lot of Okinawa Robins singing in the forest, but we only saw six and another Pryer’s Woodpecker. We took breakfast at 08:30 and birded till 10:30 when we had to stop as fog had appeared and it became too thick to see anything. We drove south in search of good weather and checked some paddies at Kiyoka, where little was seen, but we had better views than before of Roseate Terns from the bridge connecting Yagaji and Kouri Islands. We drove to Naha, reaching our hotel at 16:40.

Intermediate Egret 5, Little Egret 3, Black-crowned Night Heron 1, **Okinawa Rail** 11, Common Moorhen 3, Roseate Tern 20, Black-naped Tern 50, Common Tern 4, Oriental Turtle Dove 6, **Ruddy Kingfisher** h, Common Kingfisher 1, **Pryer’s Woodpecker** 1, **Ryuku Minivet** 2, Pacific Swallow 20, Zitting Cisticola 6, Chinese Bulbul 12, Brown-eared Bulbul
01 June 2015 Okinawa - Amami

Weather: Okinawa hot from 08:30. Amami rainy, but brighter later

We visited some local wetland sites, Manko, Senaga Lagoon, Toyosaki Tidal Estuary and Triangle Pond. Although most sites did not hold many birds we saw one Eurasian and five Black-faced Spoonbills. There were the usual Egrets, including a Pacific Reef Egret, two Ospreys and a Grey-tailed Tattler. We flew to Amami, bought some food for lunch and drove to the Natural Forest where we saw a few Ryuku Green Pigeons, four Japanese Pygmy Woodpeckers, three Ryuku Minivets and seven Japanese Varied Tits. Lidth’s Jay, although moving around in a noisy group, were difficult to observe, but eventually seen very well. Despite Amami Robins singing very loudly and close to us we did not even get a glimpse. I assumed it might just be the wrong time of day and we would have better luck in the morning. We reached our hotel at 19:30. After dark we drove to the Virgin Forest and saw three Amami Woodcocks within one kilometre of the start of the track. Many Ryuku Scops...
Owls and three Northern Boobooks were heard. Some Ryuku Scops Owls were seen very well, but the only Boobook that came in was not very close and views were not good due to fog.


02 June 2015 Amami

Weather: Not so hot today, but still humid

We left the hotel at 05:30 and drove to the Virgin Forest and parked at a left hand turn on the tarmac and walked on the track for four kilometres. We must have seen more than 15 Amami Woodpeckers;
they were quite showy and drummed frequently. A pair of Japanese Paradise-flycatchers, were shy, but mobile and the Amami Robins were seen very well. By 11:00 we needed to go back to the hotel for lunch and a rest, but went back to the Virgin Forest at 14:00, stopping at the 12 km mark. We were very surprised to find two Amami Thrushes with at least one fledgling, very close to where we were parked. We observed these amazing birds for some time and then walked further along the trail. We returned 30 minutes before dusk and the Thrush was singing from the canopy, but we could not see it. At dusk we began our slow drive back down the track and heard another Amami Thrush singing about a kilometre from the first site, then when dark, a further kilometre or so along the track we flushed another one up from the roadside. It was observed for a few minutes on a bare branch. Although we drove much further along the forest tracks than yesterday we only saw two Amami Woodcocks. It soon became very windy and very few Ryuku Scops Owls were calling and no Boobooks were heard.

**Amami Woodcock** 2, **Oriental Turtle Dove** 15, **Ryuku Green Pigeon** 5, **Ryuku Scops Owl** 3, **Ruddy Kingfisher** 1, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** 4, **Amami Woodpecker** 15+, **Ryuku Minivet** 6, **Japanese Paradise-flycatcher** 2, **Lidth’s Jay** 4, **Eastern Great Tit** 2, **Japanese Varied Tit** 5, **Pacific Swallow** 2, **Amami Thrush** 5, **Amami Robin** 5, **Blue Rock Thrush** 2, **Ryuku Flycatcher** 2.
03 June 2015 Amami - Tokyo – Ferry

Weather: Cool and cloudy, rather windy. Ferry crossing rather rough

As we had seen the Amami Thrush we did not have to get up early today and slumbered until 07:00. We returned to the Natural Forest and birded till 11:00, then drove to Ose Beach, where we found some rare waders and some other interesting birds. These included one Pacific Reef Egret, one Black-faced Spoonbill, one Osprey, one Kentish Plover, one Far Eastern Curlew, one Common Redshank, one Marsh Sandpiper, one Terek Sandpiper, one Great Knot and two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Then it was time to drop off the car and go to the Airport. We flew to Tokyo, then took the monorail to Hamamatsucho Station, seeing an Azure-winged Magpie on the way. We found somewhere to eat, then walked from there to the Ferry Terminal for the crossing to Miyakejima. The ticket office did not open until an hour before sailing. The weather had been very bad and they told us that we would be brought back and our money refunded if we could not land. We put our bags in the rather expensive lockers and boarded the boat with hand luggage only. It was a large vessel and there were not too many passengers. We left
at 22:35 and slept through a slightly bumpy crossing in our very nice, but expensive de luxe cabin.

Great Egret 3, Intermediate Egret 1, Little Egret 5, Pacific Reef Egret 1, **Black-faced Spoonbill** 1, Osprey 1, Kentish Plover 1, **Far Eastern Curlew** 1, Common Redshank 1, Marsh Sandpiper 1, Terek Sandpiper 1, **Great Knot** 1, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 2, Black-naped Tern 8, Little Tern 5, Whiskered Tern 1, Oriental Turtle Dove 10, Pacific Swift 6, House Swift 2, **Ruddy Kingfisher** h, Common Kingfisher 1, **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker** 2, Amami Woodpecker 2, Ryuku Minivet 3, Lidth’s Jay 10, Azure-winged Magpie 1, Japanese Varied Tit 5, Pacific Swallow 8, Brown-eared Bulbul 4, Amami Robin 2, Blue Rock Thrush 6, Eurasian Tree Sparrow 20.

04 June 2015 Miyakejima

*Weather: Raining for the first two hours, then warm and windy*

When we were awakened at 05:30 the boat was already docking. We walked to Taiko-ike and saw most of the endemics along the short road that leads into the crater. Ijima’s Leaf Warbler was common here, as was the Izu Thrush. Owston’s Varied Tit, now split from Japanese Varied Tit, was less common, but still easily found, while Japanese Bush Warblers were calling frequently, but very hard to see. Eventually the elusive Japanese Robins emerged and we saw them very well. Although several were heard we only saw two. Some
Black-crowned Night Herons were around the edge of the lake. Japanese Wood pigeons were only briefly glimpsed and heard, but were later seen well from the bus stop nearby as they flew over and landed on exposed boughs. Lesser Cuckoos were very obvious along the telephone wires. When we had finished we caught a bus to our hotel, but as usual were not allowed to check in until 15:00, so we had a meal there and left our bags. Later the chef kindly gave us a free lift to Izu Misaki and collected us later. Here the Styan’s Warblers were easily found, several often singing from exposed perches in the open grasslands. From the lighthouse we saw 20 Streaked Shearwaters. Before our evening meal we tried for owls, but only heard a distant calling Northern Boobook, but after the evening meal I went out again and had close views of a Northern Boobook in some dead trees near the hotel.


Styan’s Warbler

Japanese Woodpigeon
05 June 2015 Miyakejima - Ferry to Tokyo

Weather: Overcast, some rain, much cooler. Heavy rain in afternoon

Although we had seen everything we took the 08:00 bus back to Tairo-ike, where a Yellow Bittern was a new bird for the trip list. Later as we waited for the boat we had good views of 20 Black-tailed Gulls. We took the 13:35 ferry back to Tokyo, arriving at 19:40. We saw huge rafts of Streaked Shearwaters, one Short-tailed Shearwater, a dark Storm-petrel and a Japanese Murrelet, which was very close to the boat. Due to rainy weather we had to watch from the more sheltered port side, but perhaps more of note would have been seen from the starboard side. Seawatching was discontinued when the drizzle turned to heavier rain. We walked back from the Ferry Terminal to our next hotel in the pouring rain.

06 June 2015 Tokyo - Kushiro - Kussharo

Weather: Rainy and cold after 13:00. Windy

It was drizzling in Tokyo as we made our way to the monorail and it was an easy ride to the airport where we boarded our flight to Kushiro. We then picked up our car and drove to Kushiro Marshes seeing two drake Falcated Ducks, three White-tailed Sea Eagles, an Eastern Buzzard, four Red-crowned Cranes, a Latham’s Snipe, a few hundred White-throated Needletails (hawking low overhead), a Black-faced Bunting and a family party of Chestnut-cheeked Starlings, which were on wires around some houses. We continued to Lake Kussharo and after checking in to our lodge we went to the lake and birded Wakoto, but did not have time to go all the way round. It had become cold and very windy. We heard an Asian Stubtail and saw two White-backed Woodpeckers before deciding to turn around.

**Falcated Duck** 2, Mallard 4, Tufted Duck 4, Goosander 1, Greater Scaup 2, Black-crowned Night Heron 1, Grey Heron 15, Osprey 1, Black-eared Kite 12, White-tailed Sea Eagle 3, **Eastern Buzzard** 1, **Red-crowned Crane** 4, Latham’s Snipe 1, Little Tern 25, Oriental Turtle Dove 6, Eurasian Cuckoo 7, **White-throated Needletail** m, Pacific Swift 4, White-backed Woodpecker 2, Oriental Crow m, Sand Martin m, Asian Stubtail h, **Japanese Bush Warbler** 2, Black-browed Reed Warbler 3, Eastern Crowned Warbler 1, **Chestnut-cheeked Starling** 5, **Stejneger’s Stonechat** 4, Asian Brown Flycatcher 1, Eurasian Tree Sparrow m, Black-backed Wagtail 1, **Black-faced Bunting** 1, Common Reed Bunting 1.
07 June 2015 Kussharo

*Weather: Cool morning and evening, warmer midday, dry*

Today we were up at 03:20, the earliest start of the trip. We drove to Kawayu and birded the forest trail between two mountains, named Ponponyama and Atosanupuri. Birding was slow and sometimes tough, but it was worth it. White-bellied Green Pigeon, Eurasian Cuckoo and Oriental Cuckoo were all heard and we saw one Black Woodpecker, six Willow Tits, six Eastern Crowned Warblers, two Eurasian Nuthatches, at least two White’s Thrushes, Red-flanked Bluetails (several heard, but only one was seen) and three Asian Brown and two Narcissus Flycatchers. At 10:00 we returned for breakfast. Feeling a bit tired, we dozed until 12:30, then returned to Wakoto. We began with good views of a Black-faced Bunting, then further on we saw an Asian Stubtail and heard others, then some Eastern Crowned Warblers, but the best bird was a singing Kamchatka Warbler. At first I thought it was just another Eastern Crowned Warbler, as its underparts were very white and it also had an orange base to the bill, but it lacked the yellow undertail coverts. The song however was quite different and we managed to record it with the mobile phone and compare it with the song of a Kamchatka Warbler that I had downloaded to my iPod. We also got photographs.
of the bird, but it did not come lower down; it seemed to prefer the canopy and was presumably a migrant. We returned to our lodgings at 17:00.

Greater Scaup 2, Grey Heron 6, Osprey 2, Black-eared Kite 6, Oriental Turtle Dove 10, White-bellied Green Pigeon h, Eurasian Cuckoo h, Oriental Cuckoo h, Great Spotted Woodpecker 5, Black Woodpecker 1, Bull-headed Shrike 1, Eurasian Jay 2, Oriental Crow m, Eastern Great Tit 1, Willow Tit 6, Sand Martin m, Long-tailed Tit 1, **Asian Stubtail** 1, **Japanese Bush Warbler** h, Eastern Crowned Warbler 6, **Kamchatka Warbler** 1, Winter Wren 1, Eurasian Nuthatch 2, **White’s Thrush** 2+, **Brown-headed Thrush** h, Red-flanked Bluetail (mostly heard, but one was seen), **Stejneger’s Stonechat** 7, Asian Brown Flycatcher 3, Narcissus Flycatcher 2, Eurasian Tree Sparrow 4, Black-backed Wagtail 3, **Olive-backed Pipit** 10, Oriental Greenfinch 3, Eurasian Siskin 2, Meadow Bunting 7, **Black-faced Bunting** 1.
08 June 2015 Kussharo

Weather: Mostly cool

Today we were up at 04:00 and again birded the forest between the two mountains near Kawayu. There was a White-bellied Green Pigeon, two Eurasian Cuckoos, an Oriental Cuckoo (heard only), one White-backed and one Black Woodpecker, ten Willow Tits (one visiting a nest hole), two Eurasian Nuthatches, at least five White’s Thrushes, including two fledglings, one Brown-headed Thrush and three Asian Brown and two Narcissus Flycatchers. After breakfast we checked out and drove towards Rausu with stops at Onnebetsu Bridge and Belsize Bay. Interesting birds found along the coast included Harlequins on the rocks, many Japanese and six Pelagic Cormorants, Black-tailed and Slaty-backed Gulls and groups of Rhinoceros Auklets, which hurried by low over the sea. We did not see much at Shiretoko Pass and little was seen on the trail behind the Visitors Centre. Later we went to observe the Blakiston’s Fish Owls, which were seen very well. The fee was ¥9000 each (about £62).

Tufted Duck 18, Harlequin 12, Grey Heron 4, Japanese Cormorant m, Pelagic Cormorant 6, Black-eared Kite 5, Black-tailed Gull m, Slaty-backed Gull m, Black-legged Kittiwake 6, Rhinoceros Auklet 50, Oriental Turtle Dove 6, White-bellied Green Pigeon 1, Eurasian Cuckoo 2, Oriental Cuckoo h, Blakiston’s Fish Owl 2, Pacific Swift 5, White-backed Woodpecker 1, Great Spotted Woodpecker 2, Black Woodpecker 1, Bull-headed Shrike 1, Oriental Crow m, Coal Tit 2, Willow Tit 10, Asian House Martin 60, Japanese Bush Warbler h, Winter Wren h, Eurasian Nuthatch 2, Eurasian Treecreeper 1, White-cheeked Starling 3, White’s Thrush 5, Brown-headed Thrush 1, Stejneger’s Stonechat 6, Blue Rock Thrush 1, Asian Brown Flycatcher 3, Narcissus Flycatcher h, Brown Dipper 2, Russet Sparrow 2, Eurasian Tree Sparrow 5, Grey Wagtail 1, Black-backed Wagtail 5, Olive-backed Pipit 3, Japanese Grosbeak 2, Black-faced Bunting 3.
09 June 2015 Rausu

Weather: Mostly cool, cloudy and rainy

A lie in until 07:00, then we birded a trail behind the Visitors Centre, where after a struggle we located a male Grey Bunting, the only one we saw. We returned to Shiretoko Pass, but it was far too foggy to see anything, so we came straight back down. We decided to drive to the Notsuke Peninsula, but it was raining and it got heavier. There was a Chestnut-cheeked Starling on the roadside wires. By now the rain was too strong and we were forced to find birds from inside the car. Not a lot was seen.

Mallard 4, Goosander 3, Red-breasted Merganser 5, Greater Scaup 30, Black Scoter 300, Grey Heron 20, Black-eared Kite 10, White-tailed Sea Eagle 11, Red-crowned Crane 2, Latham’s Snipe 4, Black-tailed Gull 40, Slaty-backed Gull m, Black-legged Kittiwake 2, Oriental Turtle Dove 4, White-bellied Green Pigeon 1, Eurasian Cuckoo 1, Oriental Cuckoo 1, Pacific Swift 5, Oriental Crow m, Sand Martin 10, Japanese Skylark 4, Asian Stubtail h, Japanese Bush Warbler h, Black-browed Reed Warbler 1, Sakhalin Leaf Warbler 1, Chestnut-cheeked Starling 1, Stejneger’s Stonechat 25, Asian Brown Flycatcher 4, Narcissus Flycatcher 3, Brown Dipper 1, Russet Sparrow 1, Eurasian Tree
Sparrow 10, Grey Wagtail 2, Black-backed Wagtail 10, Olive-backed Pipit 1, Oriental Greenfinch 9, **Grey Bunting** 1.

10 June 2015 Furen

**Weather: Rain all night and morning, later cold and windy**

Due to the rain we drove to Nossappu Lighthouse for a seawatch and were surprised that it took an hour to get there. We saw Spectacled Murrelet and Pigeon Guillemot quite closely on the sea. Breakfast was at 08:00 and then we birded the Nature Centre trail and saw some interesting species. Next we drove to Chobshi Lake where we saw more species. We then drove the forest trails in the area between Furen Lodge and Ochissi, birding mostly from the car. After supper at 19:00 we visited Haltaushi Bridge, but did not see much. A Blakiston’s Fish Owl was calling very closely, but we could not see it and we heard several Gray’s Warblers singing very loudly.

Streaked Shearwater 2, Common Pochard 2, Greater Scaup 100, Black Scoter m, Grey Heron 8, **Japanese Cormorant** 10, Pelagic Cormorant 2, Black-eared Kite 10, White-tailed Sea Eagle 6, **Red-crowned Crane** 7, **Latham’s Snipe** 5, Ruddy Turnstone 1, Black-tailed Gull m, Slaty-backed Gull m, Black-legged Kittiwake 2, Whiskered Tern 2, Guillemot 1, **Pigeon Guillemot** 1, **Spectacled Guillemot** 1, Rhinoceros Auklet m,
Oriental Turtle Dove 4, Eurasian Cuckoo 4, **Blakiston’s Fish Owl** h, **Ruddy Kingfisher** h Oriental Crow m, Eastern Great Tit 4, Coal Tit 3, Marsh Tit 6, Sand Martin 7, **Japanese Bush Warbler** h, **Gray’s Warbler** h, Black-browed Reed Warbler 8, Eastern Crowned Warbler 2, Winter Wren h, Eurasian Nuthatch 1, **Brown-headed Thrush** 3, **Japanese Robin** h, Siberian Blue Robin 1, Red-flanked Bluetail 3, **Stejneger’s Stonechat** 12, Asian Brown Flycatcher 2, Narcissus Flycatcher 1, Black-backed Wagtail 2, Oriental Greenfinch 12, **Long-tailed Rosefinch** 3, **Grey-bellied Bullfinch** 6, **Black-faced Bunting** 3, Common Reed Bunting 2.

11 June 2015 Furen - Kiritappu – Tokyo

**Weather: Cold and windy morning, but warm midday**

We were up at 04:00 and returned to Chobshi Lake where we had good views of two Middendorf’s Warblers, then we returned to the Lodge. Takeyoshi said he would show us a Gray’s Warbler and after some searching one was found and glimpsed closely several times. It is surely the hardest of the large Locustellas to see. Breakfast followed, then we returned to the nearby forest between Furen Lodge and Ochissi, but again we could not see the Japanese Robin, despite one singing very closely. We drove to Kiritappu and stopped at a few sites. The journey took a while and we were not able to stop
as much and for as long as we wanted. The wind was very strong and because of this I only had poor views of a Lanceolated Warbler; a few others were heard. Then it was time to drop off the car, go to the airport and fly to Haneda.

Greater Scaup 60, Little Grebe 1, Grey Heron 2, Great Egret 1, Japanese Cormorant 10, Black-eared Kite 20, White-tailed Sea Eagle 6, Red-crowned Crane 7, Latham’s Snipe 15, Black-tailed Gull m, Slaty-backed Gull m, Oriental Turtle Dove 5, Eurasian Cuckoo 2, Pacific Swift 10, Great Spotted Woodpecker 1, Eurasian Jay 1, Winter Wren h, Brown-headed Thrush 1, Japanese Robin h, Siberian Rubythroat 2, Oriental Crow m, Eastern Great Tit 2, Coal Tit 2, Marsh Tit 3, Sand Martin 50, Long-tailed Tit 12, Japanese Skylark 1, Japanese Bush Warbler h, Lanceolated Warbler 1, Middendorff’s Warbler 2, Gray’s Warbler 1, Black-browed Reed Warbler 25, Red-flanked Bluetail 1, Stejneger’s Stonechat 10, Eurasian Tree Sparrow 10, Black-backed Wagtail 6, Long-tailed Rosefinch 1, Grey-bellied Bullfinch 3, Black-faced Bunting 3, Common Reed Bunting 2.

12 June 2015 Tokyo - London
Weather: Raining heavily in the morning

We were up at 05:30 and took the free 06:05 shuttle bus to the airport, flying from HND at 08:50 and arriving at LHR at 13:15.

GALLERY

Chestnut-eared Bunting

Japanese Leaf Warbler

Red-flanked Bluetail

Olive-backed Pipit
Black-faced Spoonbill

Eurasian and Black-faced Spoonbills

Japanese Varied Tit

Owston’s Varied Tit

Blue Rock Thrush

Ryuku Flycatcher
Amami Woodcock

Japanese Yellow Bunting

Brown-eared Bulbul

White's Thrush fledgling