

# CHINA

## BIRDING & NATURAL HISTORY

June 7 - 21, 2025



*Wild* **LATITUDES**  
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

# CHINA

## BIRDING & NATURAL HISTORY

Experience the incomparable natural wonders of China with Wild Latitudes. On this 15-day tour, you'll explore the mist-shrouded forests and alpine grasslands of **Sichuan Province**, where a rich diversity of birds awaits you, including colorful pheasants and songbirds found nowhere else. Here, in the heart of China, we'll visit habitats that are home to mammals like the **Red Panda**, **Leopard Cat**, and the **Golden Snub-nosed Monkey**. This region is also the stronghold of China's most iconic and beloved animal: the **Giant Panda**.

Our adventure begins in the city of **Chengdu**, in the fertile lowlands of the Sichuan Basin. After enjoying a bit of the local culture, we'll venture into the wild, traveling through bamboo forests to reach the **Tibetan Plateau**. The ecosystems we'll visit along the way are home to over 300 bird species. Outstanding examples include **Golden Pheasant**, **Chinese Monal**, **Black-necked Crane**, **Golden Parrotbill**, **Giant Laughingthrush**, and the **Chinese White-browed Rosefinch**. We'll search for birds and other wildlife in several of China's protected areas, including **Tangjiahe Nature Reserve**, **Ruoergai Grasslands**, **Giant Panda National Park**, and **Wolong National Nature Reserve**. It's rare to see Giant Pandas in the wild, but we'll make a special visit to the world's most renowned panda sanctuary to see and learn about these amazing animals up close.

And on our journey, we'll witness stunning scenery and experience a rich array of Asian cultures... Much of our time will be spent in the homelands of **Tibetan ethnic groups**, such as the Amdo and Gyalrong people. This tour is designed to be an educational, inspiring, and fun adventure. With Wild Latitudes guiding the way, you'll immerse yourself in the mystery and beauty of China, its birds, wildlife, and culture.

### ● EXTENSION TRIP: Ancient Wonders of China

**DATES: Jun 21-26.** Enhance your experience in China by joining us on this 6-day extension. The focus will be on several of the country's most spectacular cultural wonders: The **Terracotta Army of Xi'an**, The **Forbidden City in Beijing**, and the **Great Wall of China**. We'll take the bullet train north from Chengdu, first to Xi'an, then onward to Beijing, and as we enrich our understanding of Chinese history and culture, we'll be sure to include some fun birding experiences along the way.

## TRIP DETAILS

**Start Date:** June 7, 2025

**Duration of Main Tour:** 15 days

**Duration of Extension:** 6 days

**Number of participants:** Max of 12

**Fee for Main Tour:** \$6,595 per person

**Fee for Extension:** \$2,800 per person

**Deposit:** \$3,200 (+\$500 for extension)

**Single Supplement:** \$800 (+\$400 for extension)

**Trip Leaders:** Ivan Phillipsen, Steve Backus

### Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground and water transportation
- Breakfasts and lunches
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

### Not Included:

- Flights
- Dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen  
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes

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## ITINERARY

*Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.*

### Day 1 - Jun 7 - Arrive in Chengdu

Welcome to China! Our adventure begins in the city of **Chengdu**, in the province of Sichuan. Founded over 2,300 years ago, this is now western China's largest city. It's also the cultural heart of Sichuan cuisine, with its world-famous mix of spicy, flavorful dishes. Recognized by UNESCO as a **"City of Gastronomy,"** Chengdu is both vibrant and historic, with its many restaurants and bustling markets thriving amongst traditional teahouses and examples of ancient architecture.

Ivan Phillipsen, Steve Backus, and our local Chinese guides will greet you on arrival at the Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport. After brief introductions all around, we'll transport the group to the hotel. If time allows, we'll head out to do some easy birding in a nearby park. Examples of birds we may find are **Long-tailed Shrike, Rufous-faced Warbler, Black-throated Tit, Vinous-throated Parrotbill, Chinese Blackbird, and Yellow-billed Grosbeak.**

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In the evening, we'll gather to have an orientation for our trip, and to go over our bird list for the first time. Then it's off to dinner to experience some authentic Sichuan cuisine!

Lodging: [Tianchenlou Hotel](#)

## Day 2 - Jun 8 - Cultural Activities in Chengdu

Today, we'll be exploring the city of Chengdu, focusing on cultural activities before we head into more remote, wild places for the next two weeks. A visit to **Sanxingdui Museum** will be our main morning activity. Sanxingdui is an archaeological site dating to the Bronze Age, with impressive artifacts such as bronze altars and tree-like sculptures, large human figures, and gold masks.

We'll have lunch in the city, then enjoy a relaxing visit to an old **teahouse at People's Park**. You should have some time to explore Chengdu on your own before we gather again for dinner. As a special treat, we'll experience a traditional **Sichuan Opera** after dinner. Distinctive features of Sichuan opera include rapid switching of masks, commonly referred to as "face change," as well as the significance of the "fool" character.

Lodging: [Tianchenlou Hotel](#)



## Day 3 - Jun 9 - Huanhuaxi Park and Travel to Tangjiahe

**Huanhuaxi Park** in central Chengdu is a birding hotspot, where nearly 200 species have been recorded. After breakfast, we'll walk to the park and enjoy some birding there. We'll be looking for birds like **Common Kingfisher**, **Azure-winged Magpie**, **Light-vented Bulbul**, **White-browed Laughingthrush**, **Red-billed Starling**, **Oriental Magpie-Robin**, and **Oriental Greenfinch**.

Next, we'll check out of our hotel, have lunch, then leave the city behind. For the rest of the afternoon, we'll be driving north to **Tangjiahe Nature Reserve**. The road takes us from about 1,500 feet in Chengdu up to 4,000 feet on the foothill fringe of the **Tibetan Plateau**. As soon as we enter the nature reserve, there are chances of seeing exciting birds and wildlife.

We'll check in to our lodge, then gather before dinner to enjoy beverages and go over our bird list for the day. This is the first of two nights at this lodge.

Lodging: [Tangjiahe Hotel](#)



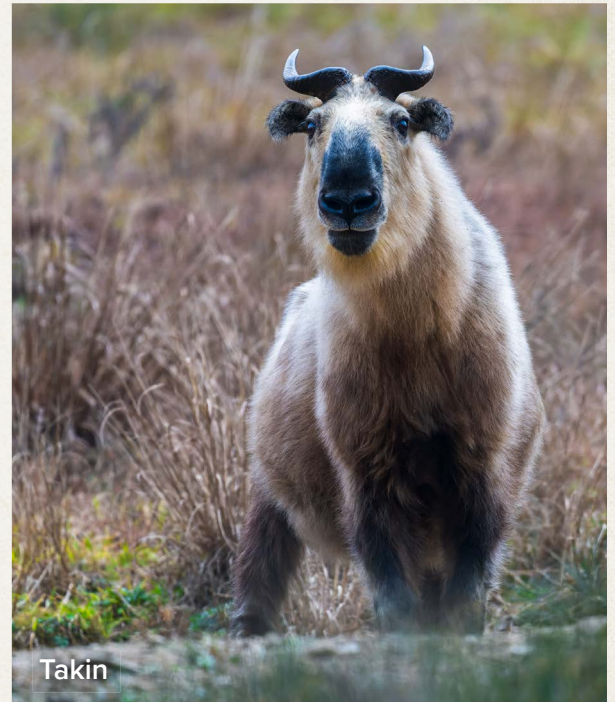
Sichuan Opera



Tangjiahe Nature Reserve



Tangjiahe Nature Reserve



Takin

## Day 4 - Jun 10 - Tangjiahe Nature Reserve

We have the entire day to explore the amazing **Tangjiahe Nature Reserve**. The region is dominated by East Asian Bamboo Forest. This unique ecosystem is the last stronghold of the **Giant Panda**. Other mammals in the forest include the **Leopard Cat** and **Hog Badger**.

We will mainly focus our birding on two low-elevation valleys in the reserve, and one trail that winds up to the middle-elevation area. Walking the roads and trails, we'll be looking out for species like **Asian Koel**, **Himalayan Cuckoo**, **Long-tailed Minivet**, **Green-backed Tit**, **Collared Finchbill**, and **Red-billed Leiothrix**. Along the streams, we may find **Brown Dipper**, **Plumbeous Redstart**, **White-capped Redstart**, **Crested Kingfisher**, **White-crowned Forktail**, **Little Forktail**, **Blue Rock Thrush**. Our major bird target for the day is the stunning **Golden Pheasant**. The male of this species has an elegant tail and vibrant plumage of yellow, orange, and red.

There's a good chance that we'll see one of the region's special mammals: the **Takin**, also known as a Gnu Goat. This strange and yet charming ungulate looks somewhat like a muskox, but it's more closely related to mountain goats and sheep. Other mammals we may encounter include the **Tibetan Macaque**, **Reeve's Muntjac**, and **Asian Wild Boar**. Although it's exceedingly rare to encounter a wild **Giant Panda**, we have better chances of seeing the **Asiatic Black Bear**.



Red-billed Leiothrix

Chinese White-browed Rosefinch



Tibetan Woman

Returning to our lodge, we'll freshen up before gathering to celebrate the natural wonders we experienced today, and to fill out our bird and wildlife lists. Then it's time for dinner and a peaceful night's rest.

Lodging: Tangjiahe Hotel

## Day 5 - Jun 11 - Birding and Snub-nosed Monkeys

We now venture to higher elevations and further onto the **Tibetan Plateau**.

The **Golden Snub-nosed Monkey** is our target mammal today. This rare primate is found nowhere else in the world. It has long golden-blond hair and pale blue skin around the face. No other non-human primate can tolerate cold temperatures as

## Our Commitment to Conservation

*On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.*



Golden Snub-nosed Monkey

well as the Golden Snub-nosed Monkey, which must survive winter snowstorms every winter.

Several birding stops are scheduled along the way today as well. We'll look for species like **Collared Crow**, **White-cheeked Nuthatch**, **Maroon-backed Accentor**, **Grey-crested Tit**, and **Rufous-vented Tit**.

Our ultimate destination for the day is **Chuanzhusi**, located at an elevation of nearly 10,000 feet. Chuanzhusi is a peaceful town with a mix of Tibetan and Chinese cultures. Its buildings—some ancient, some modern—are surrounded by scenic mountains.

We'll update our bird and wildlife lists in the evening, then enjoy dinner together.

Lodging: [Yari Hotel](#)



## Day 6 - Jun 12 - Chuanzhusi Town to Ruorgai Grasslands

This will be an early morning for us. We'll leave in the dark to search the nearby forest for the endemic and rare **Sichuan Wood Owl** (Pere David's Owl), as well as the elusive **Chinese Grouse** and other forest species such as the **Three-banded Rosefinch**, **Crested Tit-warbler**, **White-cheeked Nuthatch**, **Goldcrest**, and **Chinese Rubythroat**.

After lunch, we'll drive onto the **Ruorgai Grassland** and enjoy the beautiful vistas along the way. We've left the foothills behind, and have emerged onto the relatively flat, open

Tibetan Plateau. Here we can expect grassland species such as the **Himalayan Griffon**, **Upland Buzzard**, **Black Kite**, **Common Kestrel**, **Amur Falcon**, **Daurian Jackdaw**, **Horned Lark**, **Azure-winged Magpie**, **Oriental Skylark**, **Carriion Crow**, **Grey-backed Shrike**, **Rock Sparrow**, **Siberian Stonechat**, **Citrine Wagtail**, and more. We will also keep an eye out for special plateau mammals such as the **Black-lipped (Plateau) Pika**, **Himalayan Marmot**, **Tibetan Fox** and **Grey Wolf**.

We'll be staying at this lodge for two nights. After check in, we'll gather to tally up the bird and mammal species for the day, then it's time to have dinner and get some rest.

Lodging: [Shengdi Hotel](#)



Black-necked Crane



Black-lipped Pika

## Day 7 - Jun 13 - Flower Lake and Baxi Forest

We'll spend the day searching for birds in different habitats of the **Tibetan Plateau**. We are now at an elevation of approximately 11,200 feet.

In the morning, we'll be birding in the alpine forests of **Baxi**, at the edge of the plateau. This is good habitat for some unique forest birds including the rare **Chinese Grouse**, **Blue Eared Pheasant**, **White-cheeked Nuthatch**, **Plain Laughingthrush**, **Elliot's**

**Laughingthrush, Snowy-cheeked Laughingthrush, Sichuan Tit, White-browed Tit-Warbler, Crested Tit-Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Slaty-backed Flycatcher, and the elusive Black Woodpecker.**

In the afternoon, we will visit the wetlands around **Flower Lake**, an area that is teeming with waterbirds and grassland species. While here, we hope to get good looks at the elegant **Black-necked Crane**. From the elevated boardwalk, we'll search for waterfowl and grassland birds including the **Bar-headed Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Horned Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Tufted Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Teal, Brown-cheeked Rail, Lesser Sand Plover, Citrine Wagtail, Oriental Skylark, Little Ringed Plover, White-rumped Snowfinch, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, Tibetan Lark, Bearded Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Upland Buzzard, and Common Kestrel.**

Ruoergai is the central homeland of the **Amdo Tibetan people**. We can enjoy an immersive experience of their nomadic culture in this region. We'll see local people dressed in their colorful clothing as well as their tents and herds of yak and sheep.

Before dinner, we should have many new species to add to our lists for the day.

Lodging: Shengdi Hotel



Flower Lake and the Ruoergai Grasslands

## Day 8 - Jun 14 - Ruorgai to Maerkang

This morning we check out of our lodge, then head back into the alpine forests to see what other birds and wildlife we can find. Later, we'll descend to about 8,500 feet as we travel to the town of **Maerkang**. Along the drive, we will have several stops looking for birds like **Black-necked Crane**, **Pink-tailed Rosefinch**, **White-browed Tit**, **Robin Accentor**, and **Tibetan Partridge**.

Maerkang (also known as Barkam) is nestled in a deep canyon along the Suomo River. Its residents are mostly of the **Gyalrong Tibetan culture**. We'll gather for our customary list review and camaraderie after checking in, then enjoy dinner.

Lodging: Dongzang Rongba Hotel



Tibetan Woman



Crested Ibis

## Day 9 - Jun 15 - Mengbi Mountain and Travel to Rilong

We have the entire morning to go birding on **Mengbi Mountain**, one of Sichuan's most famous birding hotspots. The steep elevation gradients, well-protected forests, abundant vegetation, and small human population make for some excellent birding. Here, we'll look for exciting bird species like the endemic **Chestnut-throated Monal-Partridge** and **Sichuan Jay**. In the early morning, we'll drive to the mountain pass at nearly 13,000 feet. We'll walk slowly down the main road and explore some trails. During our exploration, we can expect some good sightings of species like **Blood**

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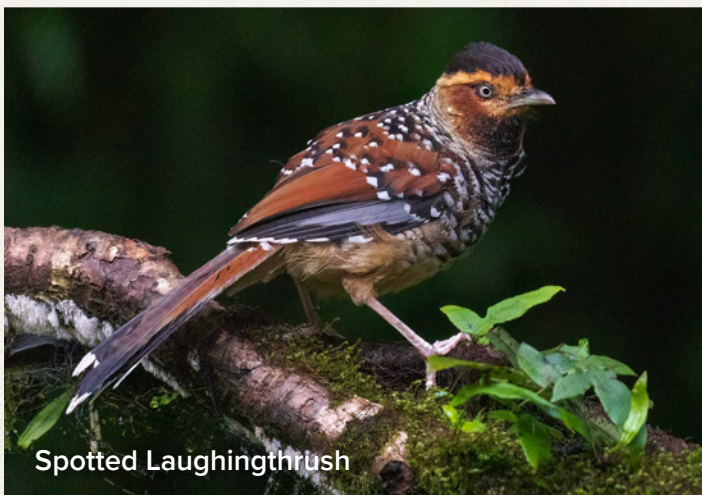
**Pheasant, Crested Tit-Warbler, Chinese Fulvetta, Crimson-browed Finch, Three-banded Rosefinch, Przevalski's Nuthatch, Goldcrest, Rufous-vented Tit, Grey Crested Tit, Hodgson's Treecreeper, White-winged Grosbeak, Grey-headed Bullfinch, and Red Crossbill.**

After a well-deserved hot lunch, we'll drive to the town of Rilong (also known as Siguniangshan) in the late afternoon. We'll go through our bird and wildlife lists, enjoy beverages, and then head to dinner.

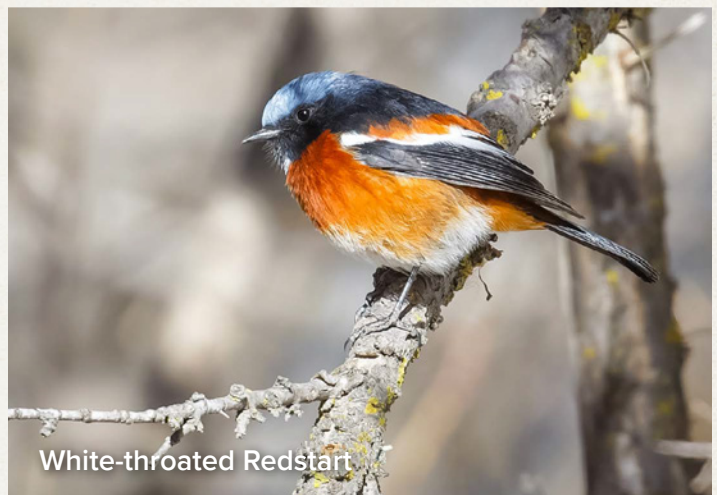
Lodging: [Dongzang Rongba Hotel](#)



Blood Pheasants



Spotted Laughingthrush



White-throated Redstart

## Day 10 - Jun 16 - Balang Mountain

For the next two days, we'll be birding in what is arguably the most fascinating birding site in all of China: **Balang Mountain** (also known as Siguniang Mountain). Its highest peak reaches an elevation of 20,510 feet. Balang is the most prominent barrier between the Sichuan Basin and the Tibetan Plateau. It's more than just a geologic feature—the mountain also marks the ethnic divide between the Chinese of the lower elevations to the east and the Tibetans of the plateau. The steep slopes and deep ravines here create diverse habitats that foster rich flora and fauna.

We'll prioritize some of the more outstanding bird species in the morning. The **Chinese Monal**—with its rainbow-hued, iridescent plumage—will be our top target. We'll also be searching for birds like **Chinese Fulvetta**, **Golden Bush Robin**, **Streaked Rosefinch**, **Dark-breasted Rosefinch**, **Dark-rumped Rosefinch**, **Crimson-browed Finch**, **White-backed Thrush**, **Rufous-vented Tit**, **Sichuan Tit**, **Asian House Martin**, **Alpine Leaf**



Balang Mountain

## Warbler, Giant Laughingthrush, and White-throated Redstart.

Our explorations today may take us to nearly 15,000 feet as we enter the alpine habitat high on the mountain. High-altitude birds we hope to find include **Snow Partridge**, **Tibetan Snowcock**, and the stunningly blue **Grandala**. Other montane specialties we can expect include the **Bearded Vulture**, **Golden Eagle**, **Red-billed Chough**, **Yellow-billed Chough**, **Alpine Accentor**, **Brandt's Mountain Finch**, **Snow Pigeon**, **Red-fronted Rosefinch**, and **Rosy Pipit**. While searching the shrub and forest habitats lower down, we'll look for birds like **Chinese Rubythroat**, **White-browed Tit-Warbler**, **Streaked Rosefinch**, **Blue-fronted Redstart**, and **Collared Grosbeak**.

Back at the lodge, we'll drink hot beverages and relax while going over our bird list for the day, followed by dinner.

Lodging: Jiarong Tibetan Guesthouse

Grandala



Golden Eagle



Chinese Monal



## Day 11 - Jun 17 - Birding Wolong

We have the morning to continue enjoying the high country of Balang Mountain. We'll visit the middle and high-elevation areas again to see what new species we can turn up. After departing the lodge, we'll visit the low-elevation **Wolong National Nature Reserve**, on the east side of Balang Mountain. This 490,000-acre reserve is dominated by East Asian Bamboo Forest, and is protected by the Chinese government as it is ideal habitat for the **Giant Panda**. Seeing pandas in the wild is highly unlikely, but we'll certainly be on the lookout for them!

Our target bird species for the afternoon include the **Large Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Himalayan Cuckoo**, Wallcreeper, **Black-capped Kingfisher**, **Eurasian Nutcracker**, **Green-backed Tit**, **Yellow-streaked Warbler**, Buff-throated Warbler, **Chinese Leaf Warbler**, Sichuan Leaf, **White-collared Yuhina**, **Chinese Babax**, **Chestnut Thrush**, and **Yellow-throated Bunting**.

After a full, rewarding day, we'll take some time to relax and then gather for our customary evening activities.

Lodging: [Shoumoren Hotel](#)



Spot-breasted Parrotbill

## Day 12 - Jun 18 - Wolong Panda Base

Wolong hosts a world-famous "panda base," a facility that integrates scientific research on **Giant Pandas**, captive breeding, and a reintroduction program. This is one base in a network of such facilities in Sichuan Province. Collectively, these sanctuaries have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We'll visit **Wolong Panda Base** early in the morning, when it should be quiet and less crowded to better-ensure our chances of getting up-close looks at pandas in the sanctuary. Compared with panda bases in and near the city of Chengdu, this location has the most natural setting, offering us a more pleasant experience with these rare

and charismatic animals. We should also see some low-elevation bird species here.

Following our visit with the pandas, after lunch, we'll drive several hours to **Wawu Mountain**, where we'll do some mellow birding in mid-elevation forest upon arrival. Then we head for our lodge and settle in for a pleasant evening.

Lodging: Dove Tree Hotel

Giant Panda cub at Wolong Panda Base



## Day 13 - Jun 19 - Wawu Mountain

Located on the western edge of the Sichuan Basin, **Wawu Mountain** marks the transition zone between the Sichuan Basin and Tibetan Plateau. The high mountains block the moisture-rich air arriving from the east from drifting further onto the plateau. The accumulation of the fog eventually turns into rainfall, nurturing a lush subtropical evergreen broadleaf forest, and making this home to many range-restricted and endemic species.

The natural beauty of Wawu Mountain attracts tourists, but it's also one of China's best birding spots to look for **parrotbills**, **fulvetas**, **laughingthrushes**, and **babblers**. It's also the best place to see the **Red Panda** in the wild, and we'll keep a keen eye out today for this amazing mammal! Although the adorable Red Panda feeds on bamboo and shares some of its habitat with the Giant Panda, it is more closely related to skunks and otters than it is the Giant Panda, which is a member of the bear family.

We'll spend the better part of two days here, searching for highlight species like the **Golden-breasted Fulvetta**, **Golden Parrotbill**, **Great Parrotbill**, **Dark-rumped Rosefinch**, **Golden Bush Robin**, **White-browed Bush Robin**, **Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Sichuan Treecreeper**, **Red-winged Laughingthrush**, **Black-faced Laughingthrush**, and **Hwamei**. Another bird we'll be keen to find here is the amazing **Temminck's Tragopan**.

No doubt we'll have many new species to add to our list this evening, as we celebrate over beverages and then enjoy dinner.

Lodging: Dove Tree Hotel



## Day 14 - Jun 20 - Morning Birding and Return to Chengdu

Our exploration of **Wawu Mountain** continues this morning. Then it's time to check out and drive down the mountain to Chengdu. Arriving in the late afternoon, we will have completed a grand, counterclockwise loop—from Chengdu, to the Tangjiahe Nature Reserve, to the Ruogai Grasslands high on the Tibetan Plateau, to Balang Mountain, Wolong Nature Reserve, and finally Wawu Mountain.

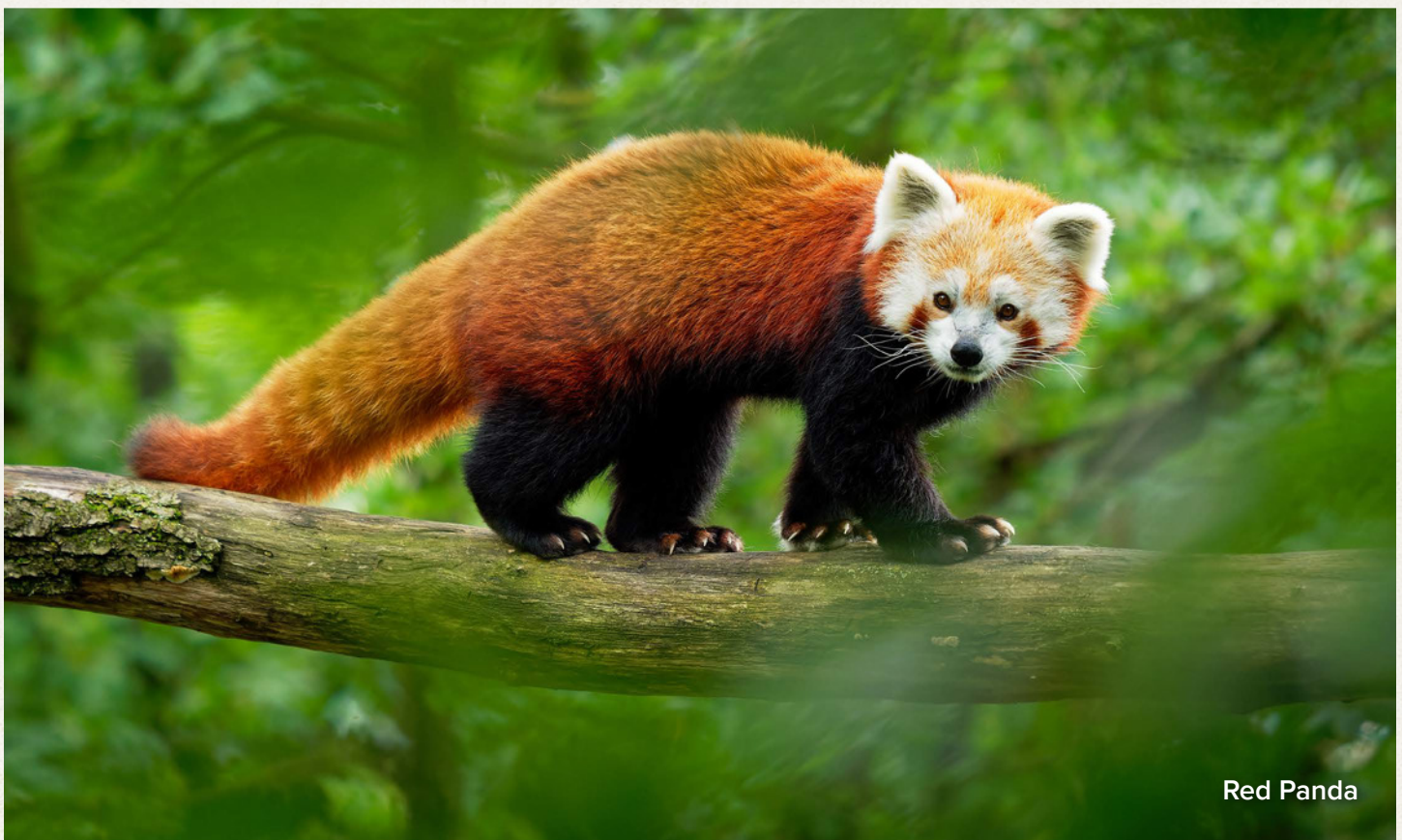
We hope to have time to savor the ambiance of a teahouse in the city before we meet in the evening. We'll wrap up our bird and wildlife lists and enjoy our last dinner of the main tour together.

Lodging: Tianfu Cheer Hotel

## Day 15 - Jun 21 - Departures or Onward to the Extension

We'll check out of our hotel this morning. For those heading home, we'll make an airport drop-off and say our farewells.

For those of us continuing on to the extension, the adventure continues!



Red Panda



## ITINERARY

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### Day 1 - Jun 21 - Chengdu to Xi'an

This extension will combine several “must-see” cultural wonders of China with some pleasant birding experiences. The key features are the **Terracotta Army of Xi'an**, the **Forbidden City**, and of course, the **Great Wall of China**. We'll travel by train, making our way north from Chengdu, all the way to the capital city of **Beijing**.

After breakfast in the hotel in Chengdu, we'll make an exciting journey by bullet train north to Yangxian. We'll spend a couple of hours birding here. Yangxian is in Shaanxi Province, located south of the Qingling mountain range, which is a natural barrier for north-south bird species movement. Yangxian is a unique birding spot where we can see the endemic and endangered **Crested Ibis**, which was once considered an extinct species until seven individuals were found here in the early 1980s. The population has gradually grown to over 3000. Other interesting species we can expect here include the **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Black-capped Kingfisher**, and **Red-throated Pipit**.

After birding in Yangxian, we'll catch another bullet train to the city **Xi'an**, one hour to the north. Xi'an is a large city, and the capital of Shaanxi Province. We'll settle in at our hotel, where we'll be spending two nights. After we work on our bird list, we'll enjoy an excellent dinner. We may offer a relaxing after-dinner walk through the city's fascinating **Muslim Quarter**.

Lodging: Xi'an Kangbo Hotel

### **Day 2 - Jun 22 - The Terracotta Army**

Today, we have the privilege of seeing the world-famous **Terracotta Army**. Thousands of life-sized clay soldiers were discovered here in the 1970s. They depict the armies of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang. The Terracotta Army was buried with the Emperor in 210–209 BCE. The soldiers were meant to guard the tomb for eternity. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Terracotta Army is one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of all time.



Terracotta Warriors

We'll head out early this morning from the hotel, doing our best to avoid tourist crowds. We'll take our time to marvel at and appreciate the amazing Terracotta Army. There's much more history to learn about as well: Xi'an is not only home to 13 Chinese dynasties, but it's also the place where Buddhism first took root in China, having come originally from Nepal. And the city is at the eastern end of the Silk Road.

After a hearty lunch, we'll visit the amazing "**Small Goose Tower**"—a towering pagoda built in 709 CE—to gain a deeper understanding of ancient Xi'an, and the development of Buddhism in China.

Ideally, you'll have a little free time to explore Xi'an in the late afternoon, with the option of having dinner on your own. Otherwise, we'll gather in the evening to celebrate the wonders of the day and to have dinner.

Lodging: Xi'an Kangbo Hotel



The Fortifications of Xi'an

**Day 3 - Jun 23 - Xi'an's Ancient City Wall and Travel to Taiyuan**

This morning, we will take a walk on the impressive **Fortifications of Xi'an**—an ancient wall around the city. The First Emperor of the Ming Dynasty commissioned the wall in the 14th Century. Our walk this morning will no doubt help us better understand this interesting era of Chinese history.

After lunch in the city, we'll take a 4-hour bullet train ride north to Taiyuan. We'll settle in for a relaxing night at our hotel.

Lodging: TBD



Eurasian Nutcracker

**Day 4 - Jun 24 - Morning Birding and Travel to Beijing**

After breakfast, we'll drive about an hour to **Xuanzhongsi** in the early morning. We'll spend the rest of the morning here, looking for birds such as the **Brown Eared-Pheasant**, **Ring-necked Pheasant**, **Eurasian Nutcracker**, **Coal Tit**, **Willow Tit**, **Pere**

EXTENSION TRIP

## Wonders of Ancient China

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**David's Laughingthrush**, and **Long-tailed Rosefinch**. In the afternoon, we will drive back to Taiyuan to take a 3-hour bullet train onward to **Beijing**. Upon arrival, we will visit a charming old neighborhood to experience the unique architecture and authentic Beijing street life.

We'll meet to go over our bird list in the evening and head out for a wonderful dinner.

Lodging: Beijing Ruijie Hotel



### Day 5 - Jun 25 - The Forbidden City and The Great Wall

Today will be spectacular, as we visit two national treasures of Chinese culture and history: the **Forbidden City** and the **Great Wall**.

In the morning, we will visit the Forbidden City, which was the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the last dynasty, the Qing Dynasty. Originally built in 1406, it served for almost 500 years as the seat of power for the Emperors, and was the

EXTENSION TRIP

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ceremonial and political center of the Chinese government.

Following our visit to the Forbidden City, we'll drive to the amazing Great Wall of China. We'll visit in the afternoon, when it should be less-crowded. This section of the wall is among the best preserved. It was first built in the mid-6th century, but much of what we see today was built during the Ming Dynasty in the mid 1500s. We'll get to walk along the granite ramparts and immerse ourselves in the wall's fascinating history.

Returning to Beijing in the early evening, we'll freshen up before gathering one last time for a pleasant dinner.

Lodging: Beijing Ruijie Hotel



The Great Wall of China

### Day 6 - Jun 26 - The Temple of Heaven and Departures

We have one more cultural treasure to visit, and even some birding along the way. This morning, we'll visit the **Temple of Heaven**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and

EXTENSION TRIP

## Wonders of Ancient China

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a masterpiece of architecture and landscape design. The complex was visited by emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties for annual ceremonies of prayer to heaven for a plentiful harvest. We should also see some interesting birds here, such as the **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Grey-capped Woodpecker**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Yellow-bellied Tit**, **Light-vented Bulbul**, **White-cheeked Starling**, **Red-throated Thrush**, and **Red-flanked Bluetail**.

We'll enjoy a last lunch together, then head to the airport for departure.



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## YOUR GUIDES

### IVAN PHILLIPSEN

Ivan is a dedicated naturalist with a background in scientific research. He holds a M.S. in Biology from Cal State San Bernardino and a Ph.D. in Zoology from Oregon State University. As Co-owner of Wild Latitudes, Ivan has been able to apply his knowledge in crafting and leading ecotours around the world.

Natural history is Ivan's true passion and what he is most excited to share with tour participants. Although he is fascinated by just about every aspect of nature, Ivan is particularly fond of birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, plants, and geology. Everything is interconnected in nature and he does his best to take a holistic approach when teaching about the natural world.



### STEVE BACKUS

Steve is an avid birder and naturalist with a background in the maritime industry hailing from North Carolina. Through his work and personal travels he has gotten to see many beautiful corners of the world and loves to share what he has experienced.

An infinitely curious person by nature, Steve is drawn to explore the life around him and the environments they occupy. Though the particulars of the individual organisms are incredibly exciting, he feels particularly drawn to the stories told of the relationships in the world around us and how those came to be. The constant flux of the natural world is of endless interest to him, and sharing the things he has learned is a great passion of his. Learning how life interacts and connects is a true passion of Steve's.

As a mariner, waterbirds are of particular interest to Steve and his time as a ship's naturalist, a captain of wildlife cruises, a point counter at migration hot-spots, and many other employments and community science efforts has deepened his appreciation of them. Though our feathered friends are Steve's primary area of expertise, he can be found peeking under logs and listening by swamps at night for the creeping and crawling life found beneath us.



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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## THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

## TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

## HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at [info@wildlatitudes.com](mailto:info@wildlatitudes.com)
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

## DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

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# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

## PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days but more than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, all payments refunded, minus 50% of deposit.
- **Less than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

**We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.**

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.

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