

Wild Japan: Summer in Hokkaido Species List | June 19 – 29, 2024 With Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by Naturalist Journeys guide Peg Abbott, with guides Bryan Shirley and Takumi Koichi, and 11 participants: Jane, Analice, Cilla, Kent, Pomera, Denise, Debbie, Susan, Doug, Martha, Gerry, and Claudia.

SUMMARY

This was a grand and in-depth exploration of Japan's second largest and northernmost island, Hokkaido. Sitting north of the Tsugaru Straits, an ecological boundary between temperate and boreal regions, Hokkaido is a splendid summer retreat. Its lush habitats and fine mountain and coastal scenery provided memorable background to our birding; wildflowers were an added bonus at several locations. This was designed as a Sampler tour, so we blended some cultural experiences, sightseeing, and fun dining to the mix. We saw 109 birds species in total, doing particularly well on some of the hard to see and regional endemic species, while a few of the common forest birds eluded us – perhaps due to a couple days of rain that precluded some planned walks. The highlights were so many, the top of the list perhaps the Blakiston's Fish Owl that came its normal feeding area at Yoroushi Onsen, but then hopped into the creek for an hour + viewing time of watching it hunt! We saw both Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, had 14 species of waterfowl that included some lingering winter visitors, and Latham's Snipe, a migrant that comes all the way from Australia to breed, were common. We had success finding Lesser Spotted and Black Woodpeckers, and furtive Sakhalin and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers.

eBird Trip Report Link by Bryan Shirley and local guides

The eBird link below details the 105 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Wild Japan: Summer in Hokkaido | June 19-29, 2024 | eBird Trip Report](#)

in FAMILY line = # of species seen in that family

in SPECIES line = # of days seen out of 11 total

I = Introduced

E = Japanese Endemic

NE = Near (Regional-Ezo) Endemic

EZO is often used to describe the region of Hokkaido, Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands

Ssp = subspecies

BIRDS (111 species):

DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS Anatidae (14):

Brant *Branta bernicla* – (1) On our day out the Notsuke Peninsula, while scanning the coastal lagoons, Bryan picked out a lone individual, a late sighting for this species that winters in Japan. We got it in the scope, then as a White-tailed Eagle spooked the group from the water, we had a good confirmation in flight.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* – (1) A late sighting for this migratory species that winters in Japan, normally departing by late April. A few have been known to stay and breed in Hokkaido, we saw this lone bird feeding out in open water of the Notsuke Peninsula wetlands.

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* – (1) A lucky surprise find this summer breeding resident resting on a muddy bank on our canoe trip on the Toro Lake – Kishimu River our final day of the trip. Analice was delighted to find one in its native habitat! It is a wintering species on the temperate islands of Japan below the Blakiston's Line. In summer it breeds only on Hokkaido.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* – (1) A few individuals in the large group of ducks seen at a distance on the Notsuke Peninsula. This species winters throughout the main islands of Japan, and a small breeding population occurs on Hokkaido in the summer months.

Falcated Duck *Mareca falcata* – (1) Five were seen huddled together on a blustery day on the Notsuke Peninsula, in with numerous Mallards and other ducks. Bryan was able to hone in on them and get us all good scope views.

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca Penelope* – (1) The colors of this lovely species shone in the sun as we scoped the ducks of a large group feeding lagoons and wetlands of the Notsuke Peninsula. We had them at two locations that day, 17 in total.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck *Anas zonorhyncha* – (3) Seen by the Tama River our first morning walk in Tokyo. A fly-over as we walked in an open wetland area by the airport at Wakkanaion Hokkaido. Kent spotted two on our canoe trip down the Kishuro River our final afternoon, and some of the other boats did as well. This species is widespread across Japan as a year-round resident, in Hokkaido it is considered a summer breeding resident.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – (5) Seen on an inland lake near Wakkani. Seen in small pond of Daisetsuzan NP, male and female paired. The most common duck encountered, with high numbers on the Notsuke Peninsula.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* – (2) Seen as we scanned Lake Tofutsu and again on the Notsuke Peninsula. Similar to Northern Shoveler, this species winters in large numbers throughout the main islands of temperate Japan and a small number may stay to breed on Hokkaido as individuals migrate north.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* – (1) Two individuals were scoped, then flew out of a small pond we inspected as we walked to the Visitor Center on Notsuke Peninsula. These are likely late winter visitors (rare, but annual) lingering in the Notsuke wetlands.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* – (1) One individual scoped in with myriad Mallards and several Falcated Duck, resting on a sand bar. This species breeds locally in northeast Hokkaido, more are present in winter but birds further north to breed.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* – (2) Seen on the walk in Tokyo over to the Tama River from our hotel. We then had an excellent sighting of a small group was swimming on Lake Kushu on Rebun Island. This species breeds in small numbers in northern Hokkaido across the island but many more are present throughout the islands of Japan to winter.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* – (1) Three individuals swimming together at the back of a group of ducks we scoped at Lake Tofutsu, where we scoped from a covered area as rain fell. This diving duck winters in Japan; these were late sightings.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* – (1) Seen on our canoe ride the final day on Lake Toro before we turned into the Kushiro River. An adult with a brood. This species winters throughout temperate Japan and some individuals move to Hokkaido to breed on freshwater lakes, lagoons and rivers.

GREBES Podicipedidae (1):

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – (1) A lone individual seen diving and feeding in the wetland lagoon of the Notsuke Peninsula. This species is resident to temperate Japan but mostly a summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

PIGEONS AND DOVES Columbidae (3):

Rock Pigeon (l) *Columba livia* – (1) Seen in urban areas, and under the bridge on our canoe trip on the Toro Lake / Kushimu River.

Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* – (1) Common in urban areas, and four were seen on a wetland walk at Wakkanai near the airport. Then seen daily, in small numbers. A summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

White-bellied Green-Pigeon *Treron sieboldii* – (1) We heard their haunting notes when walking a trail at Wakkanai Park, and someone commented that the call sounded like Native American flute music. A summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

CUCKOOS Cuculidae (2):

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* – (3) We were often alerted by its classic cuckoo clock call which we could match up to perched or flying birds. A summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* – (8) Heard at some distance as we walked the wetland area near the airport in Wakkanai. Heard again at the loop walk by the campground of Wakkanai City Park. We had a fly over while at the view point of our hike above the Ropeway in Daisetsuzan NP, Asahidake Mtn. area. Heard regularly at multiple locations on our journey, quite common. At Kaminoko Pond, off the boardwalk, we had a fledged cuckoo chick being fed by a Black-browed Reed Warbler, thought to be this species as it was the more common of the two, but just a guess on that. A summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

SWIFTS Apodidae (2):

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* – (3) Gerry spotted two high above us as we walked in the afternoon from the Bearmonte Hotel in the Asahidake Mtn. area. We got views at a couple of other locations on the journey. A summer breeding visitor in Hokkaido.

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* – (6) We saw a half dozen or so flying above Peach Rock on Rebun Island, moving quickly. We saw them again the next day before leaving Rebun, with better views. On the main island of Hokkaido, we had sightings intermittently along the route we took on the eastern side of the island. A summer breeding visitor in Hokkaido.

CRANES Gruidae (1):

Red-crowned Crane *Grus japonensis* – (3) The Japanese name for this species that crept to the brink of extinction and back is *Tancho*. We had the good fortune to see several pairs, a few with chicks, at close range. Peg found the first one at a distance on Notsuke in the wetlands, but as Bryan said, always good to log the first one for the trip on Hokkaido, an iconic resident species here we'd not want to miss. Once around Kushiro we saw pairs in agricultural areas, one almost at the road edge with a very small chick. Special was seeing on feeding on the cutbank of the Kushiro River as we floated by on our canoes,

unafraid. Kushiro's airport is named for Tancho and they can be rightfully proud for protecting this beloved species, which in Japan is associated with fidelity, love and longevity. One population of this highly vulnerable (once endangered) species is resident on Hokkaido and represents close to half the world's population – 1800 birds estimated today, from a low of 30-50 in the 1920's. The other population migrates between northern China/Russia/Mongolia and Southern China, the Koreans.

OYSTERCATCHERS Haematopodidae (1):

Eurasian (Far Eastern) Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus osculans* – (1) Seen at Lake Tofutsu, one individual feeding on a mudflat in scope view. The range and habits of this species are yet to be understood, with birds in Japan thought to be migrants heading to breeding grounds in Kamchatka to the north. There are two distinct breeding areas, the other along coasts of Korea and the Fujian Province of China. An recent article on their distribution calls them “nowhere common”.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS Charadriidae (1):

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* – (1) Three individuals seen at Lake Tofutsu, two across the water on a small island, and one feeding not far from the oystercatcher. A summer visitor throughout Japan.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES Scolopacidae (1):

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii* – (5) Seen perched up on a reflector post in a wetland near the airport. We then heard and saw several displaying over us as we walked through a wonderland of flowers at Sarobetsu. Surprisingly easy to see, at this time of year they tee up often before launching up into a display flight. This is a long distance migrant that flies to Hokkaido to breed all the way from Australia. We found them perched prominently on barn roofs and electric poles and fence posts, in several areas including our last morning walk in Kushiro, always a good find!

AUKS, MURRES, AND PUFFINS Alcidae (4):

Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata* – (4) At least 42 were seen flying in groups of 6-11, with additional lone birds on the water, on the ferry coming and going to Rebun Island from Wakkanaï. These are expected as there is a breeding island to the north, one of the largest colonies in the region. We also had views of them flying and in the water in the Rausu Harbor and on our cruise there.

(NE) Spectacled Guillemot *Cephus carbo* – (3) Seen in the harbor of our bear cruise boat on the Shiretoko Peninsula, swimming, flying and on cliffs for nesting. We got good photo opportunities and sightings of this near-endemic species, which is essentially range restricted to the Sea of Okhotsk for breeding.

Common Murre *Uria aalge* – (1) One lone bird on the ferry ride to Rebun Island, flying with a group of Rhinoceros Auklets. This species used to be a common breeder on offshore islands west of Hokkaido but that population is in steep decline; there are breeding cliffs to the north on the Kuril Islands. It winters commonly around Hokkaido.

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba* – (1) *Leader only, one breeding plumage bird right at the harbor entrance leaving Rebun Island, near the buoys. We were moving fast and no one else was able to get on this quick view. It is a winter visitor, mainly to the eastern side of the island, but strong white patches on the wing precluded Snow's Guillemot.*

GULLS AND TERNS Laridae (6):

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* – (1) Seen as we came back into the Rausu Harbor on our cruise, a lone individual. A lucky find, it is pelagic around Hokkaido and seen in harbors typically only after storms.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* – (1) Three were seen inland on Lake Tofutsu where we birded under shelter as it rained. This location is at the base of the Shiretoko Peninsula, a birding hotspot stop we made before turning north. This species winters in the temperate islands south of Hokkaido and occasional migrants linger for the summer months in Hokkaido.

Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* – (6) Very common at coastal areas and flying over to freshwater lakes as well. Seen on both sides of the island in good number, though less common than Slaty-backed Gull when present at the same locations. Our high counts were 20 and 25 at two of several locations. This species is a common breeder in Hokkaido, especially on the Sea of Japan side.

Herring (Vega) Gull *Larus argentatus* – (1) One individual seen on the jetty leading into Wakkanai Harbor, among the more abundant Slaty-backed Gulls. Typically seen in migration to and from the temperate islands of Japan below Blakiston's Line.

Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* – (6) Very common on the west coast of Rebun Island, nesting. We saw young chicks on offshore rocks and jetty structures at the harbors. We picked them up again on the eastern side of the island, with high counts of 100+ at two of the locations. It was for us the most common gull, a resident species in Hokkaido.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* – (1) Seen independently by Martha and Peg, as we came into the harbor at Rausu from our cruise, and then waited by the bus as our foragers came out of the 7-11. It was a lone, non-breeding second year bird, but its light color stood out clearly in flight. It is far more commonly seen in winter on Hokkaido.

ALBATROSSES Diomedidae (2):

Laysan Albatross *Phoebastria immutabilis* – (1) One came off the water as our boat at Rausu motored out to see Orca, it angled up and in classic style, wings not moving veered off towards shore, its striking black and white pattern unmistakable. This heavy bodied albatross feeds off the rich waters of eastern Japan, particularly Hokkaido and Honshu, after breeding in the winter months on islands of the Pacific.

Black-footed Albatross *Phoebastria nigripes* – (1) Great views from the boat trip in Rausu, one of Gerry's favorites for the trip, seeing so close their long wings and sleek form. This species occurs in its non-breeding season on the Pacific side of Japan.

SHEARWATERS Procellariidae (2):

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* – (3) Seen on the ferry trip to and from Rebun Island, and then again on our boat trip out to sea from the Rausu Harbor. This migratory species roams up the coasts of Japan on both sides with higher numbers using the Pacific side.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* – (1) Found in Koichi's photo review, clearly showing the underwing pattern and proportions. We had quite a few Sooty that day and some choppy seas, so we add this for the record here, though it was documented by photos only. Seabird watching is tricky!

CORMORANTS Phalacrocoracidae (3):

Pelagic Cormorant *Urile pelagicus* – (2) A lone individual on the jetty structures with numerous Japanese Cormorants at the harbor at Wakkanai. Another was seen on our cruise to Cape Utoro on the Shiretoko Peninsula.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* – (4) Best seen on inland lakes on Hokkaido, where we had time to scope them well. We had a flyover at Sarobetsu but time to scope and scan them at Lake Tofutso and again on Lake Toro.

Japanese Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capillatus* – (5) Quite numerous at sea, and on the jetty structures at Ruben Island we had at least 30. We picked them up again along the rocky coast on the east side of the island, with about 10 on a rock as we cruised up to Cape Utoro looking for bear.

HERONS AND EGRETS Ardeidae (4):

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* – (2) One seen on the morning walk to the Tama River in Tokyo where resident populations occur. Then another lone individual flew into a shrub by the road as we scanned the wetlands on Notsuko Peninsula. While listed as resident on the temperate islands, our bird on the Notsuke Peninsula was probably a bird that overshot its normal range in migration.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* – (1) Five seen at Lake Kushu on Hokkaido, three in breeding plumage with far more extensive rust than the western species. This species is a breeding visitor to the temperate islands of Japan, with some individuals occurring in Hokkaido where populations may increase with milder climatic conditions.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – (2) Seen infrequently, lone individuals, near wetlands and wet agricultural areas when traveling. More common in winter than breeding season for much of Japan, there are scattered resident populations on the southern temperate islands and migrants move through Hokkaido.

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* – (9) Seen in wetlands at several locations, typically lone individuals. Memorable were scores of them feeding in the wetlands of the Notsuke Peninsula, and later individuals flying close by, over our canoes on the Kishuro River. A resident of all the islands of temperate Japan, this species is now remaining year-round in larger numbers in Hokkaido than decades previous when it was considered to be a summer visitor.

OSPREY Pandionidae (1):

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – (2) First seen by Lake Onuma before we boarded the ferry to Rebun. Then seen in flight from the bus, at a wetland of northern Hokkaido. This species is normally only a summer visitor to Hokkaido, but resident on the temperate islands to the south.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES Accipitridae (4):

Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus* – (1) Seen coursing the open meadows and wetlands near the airport at Wakkanai in classic harrier fashion. This long tailed, sleek raptor is a summer visitor to Hokkaido mainly associated with coastal wetlands.

Black (Black-eared) Kite *Milvus migrans* – (7) A lone individual was first seen flying with gulls over the ocean along the shore of Rebun Island. On the Hokkaido mainland, it was seen on travel days in agricultural areas, typically lone individuals but fairly common. A widespread resident of the region.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* – (6) First seen flying above us along the southern road on Rebun Island, being harassed by gulls. On both coasts, we saw them daily, at times quite close perched on driftwood or old boats. On the bank of the river as we canoed the Kurshiro, one had been in the water and was drying out, reluctant to fly giving us super close views. This species breeds in northern Hokkaido but numbers swell in winter when large numbers of individuals arrive from Russia and northern breeding areas.

Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicus* – (3) Seen at Lake Kushu just as we got out of the bus, being harassed by crows. Seen near the hotel Bearmonte, and sightings of a few individuals were picked up on our

travel days, from the bus. A resident species, widespread in temperate Japan.

OWLS Strigidae (2):

Blakiston's Fish-Owl *Ketupa blakistoni* – (2) A highlight of the trip for so many, seeing the world's largest owl is incredible. A habituated male comes in to a fish pond and perch at Yoroushi Onsen so its possible to see this wilderness species while being totally comfortable with beverage in hand. It takes some patience, both Susan and Denise were determined our first night, inspiring others so that about ¾ of our group stayed up until it came in about 11:40 PM. When it did come it, it settled and caught six fish in sequence, each time exhibiting its incredible wings. It picked up fish with its feet, then fed by passing them up to its mouth. To see its features, its un-owl-like face up close was amazing. Night two was a first for Koichi and Bryan, after coming in and eating three or four fish in its typical style, the owl flew down into the river, where it stayed, hunting, hopping from rock to rock to survey the river, for well over an hour, more like an hour and a half. It seemed odd to leave a Blakiston's Fish Owl but one by one we peeled off to bed! We all commented that this night it seemed less settled, but how great it was to see wild behaviors and natural hunting.

Ural Owl *Strix uralensis* – (1) Our final evening, Bryan suggested an owl drive, with stops to call, on a route he'd not done before. Those of us engrossed with packing missed out as almost right behind the hotel they found an adult Ural Owl, perched in good view atop a telephone pole. Almost too easy! We had checked two winter roost locations earlier in the day, but if home on this sunny day, none were showing.

KINGFISHERS Alcedinidae (2):

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* – (4) Our first few sightings were by one or two individuals, quick glimpses, but on our final day, final morning at the hotel in Kushiro, one came to the small pond visible from our rooms and perched on light fixtures and fence posts – a turquoise gem we all loved adding to our list of species. A summer breeding visitor in Hokkaido, resident in the rest of Japan.

Crested Kingfisher *Megaceryle lugubris* – (1) *Leader only – Koichi had one fly up the river while we were at Yoroushi Onsen, he alerted us and we all tried to re-find it but to no avail. This is a very local resident in Hokkaido.*

WOODPECKERS Picidae (6):

Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus kizuki* – (3) We watched this resident species coming and going to a nest hole at a campground at Wakkanai City Park. Scattered sightings in forest edge habitat at Sorobetsu, at the campground at Asahidake, and in the forest by the trail at Lake Kaminoko.

White-backed Woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos* – (2) We had two chances with this sought-after species, one in the forest tucked well into leaves and then the second, on the boardwalk trail at Kushiro Marsh, we watched its classic behavior of foraging almost to the ground while it thrashed a standing dead tree. Resident species of Hokkaido.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* – (4) Martha and Doug were the first to find this species, as we continued our afternoon walk from the Bearmonte Hotel to a nearby campground. Luckily the rest of us caught up with several opportunities to see this colorful species. Resident on Hokkaido.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobatis minor* – (1) Seen at a small pond, likely nesting as we observed a pair moving together. The female was vocal, feeding actively out branches and among leaves, but she flew to some open trunk perches where we got fine views. This species is very local resident on Hokkaido and we were happy our guides had a place in mind to search!

Gray-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus* – (2) Quick views of this one both times we had it, first at the 7-colored Fountain pond, and then later on the walk we took to find Black Woodpecker in the rain.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius* – (1) Cilla ranked our soggy trek to find this charismatic species as one of the memorable moments of the trip. We geared up, not to be deterred but failed on our first try at a perfect habitat (older forests, wet footing, lots of standing dead trees). We saw several other species and were about to get back on the bus when the rain let up. Peg and Bryan simultaneously said, let's give it another try. Back we went and we had success – scope views and high fives all around. This is a crow-size woodpecker that has a similar niche to our Pileated Woodpecker in the USA. A resident species on Hokkaido.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS Falconidae (1):

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* – (1) One individual, seen by Pomer, near the Yoroushi Onsen as she was exploring.

SHRIKES Laniidae (1):

Bull-headed Shrike *Lanius Bucephalus* – (2) Seen in rural areas on wires, the first one near Wakkanai and another near Lake Toro as we went for our canoe adventure the final day. This is a summer resident on Hokkaido but present year round on temperate islands of Japan.

CROWS AND JAYS Corvidae (3):

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* – (1) This resident species is listed as common but we had only one sighting, thankfully a good one with the bird calling and then flying on either side of the trail.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* – (11) Seen daily in good number, particularly around farms and agricultural lands. Our high counts were half a dozen but we saw several groups on many days.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* – (11) Seen in towns and cities as well as farmland. We often saw them as two or three in a group, but multiple groups per day. Highly vocal.

TITS AND CHICKADEES Paridae (3):

Coal Tit *Periparus ater* – (4) A noisy flock was busy in the larch trees that rimmed the campground at Wakkanai City Park. Seen in woodland trees near Hotel Bearmonte and at a few other locations. This crested species is a resident throughout Japan.

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* – (4) Seen by some of the group at several locations so eventually most got to catch up to this non-crested tit. Thankfully they were calling which helps to sort them from the similar Willow Tit which we did not see. A resident species on Hokkaido.

Japanese Tit *Parus minor* – (3) We had this resident species a couple of times by our hotels or on our stops for lunch or convenience stores. We then got good looks on our last morning, walking out from the hotel on a lushly forested bike path in Kushiro.

LARKS Alaudidae (1):

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* – (5) At least four were singing and displaying on the wing as we walked at Lake Kushu one morning, such a wonderful sound! Seen on our hikes above tree line on Mt. Asahidake. They give a feeling of joy to the northern summer, a much-welcomed breeding visitor on Hokkaido.

REED WARBLERS Acrocephalidae (2):

Black-browed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps* – (3) Good views in tall reeds at the lakeshore of Lake Kushu near Wakkanai. They were present at Lake Tofutsu and again on the boardwalk loop we made at the marsh near Kushiro. There we had at least 20 – a conservative estimate!

Oriental Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis* – (1) Heard singing on the walk to the Tama River in Tokyo.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLERS Locustellidae (2):

(NE) Sakhalin Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes amnicola* – (4) Very vocal but skulky, we managed to get views of on at Sarobestu Wetlands. We heard them near the base of the Ropeway before our hikes, near Hotel Bearmonte, our base for exploring Asahidake Mtn.

(NE) Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes ochotensis* – (4) Seen near Peach Rock on Rebun Island, we had one cross the road back and forth, and sing quite close to us along a roadside ditch.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS Hirundinidae (2):

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – (4) Seen by Lake Kushu near Wakkanai, on our canoe trip and a few other wetland locations on our journey. A summer visitor to Hokkaido.

Asian House-Martin *Delichon dasypus* – (4) Seen on the morning walk and drive back to the airport in Tokyo. Then seen on Rebun Island and in the Asahidake region. A summer visitor to Hokkaido.

BULBULS Pycnonotidae (1):

Brown-eared Bulbul *Hypsipetes amaurotis* – (4) Loud and gaudy, we picked them up usually on phone wires around towns and near our hotels.

LEAF WARBLERS Phylloscopidae (2):

Eastern Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus* – (5) Good views, this summer breeding visitor was one of the more common songbirds encountered.

Sakalin Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus borealoides* – (4) We got very good looks at this species, alerted by its calls. We could usually find them feeding in the canopy. A summer breeding visitor.

BUSH WARBLERS Scotocercidae (1):

Asian Stubtail *Urosphena squamiceps* – (1) Only seen at the Wakkanai Forest Park but very good views, on several low perches. A summer breeding visitor to Hokkaido.

Japanese Bush Warbler *Horornis diphone* – (11) Highly vocal, widespread, more often heard than seen but with some work we found them. Our clearest sighting was one that popped into plain view on our morning walk from the Bearmonte hotel, at the base of the Ropeway to Mt. Asahidake. But they were everywhere, perhaps our most common species encountered regularly. Highly vocal! Most depart Hokkaido for the winter, but the few that stay on in marshy areas such as Kushiro are silent.

LONG-TAILED TITS Aegithalidae (1):

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* – (1) Seen on our canoe trip, several small groups quite vocal and moving about like our Bushtits do in the New World. This common resident is particularly well-loved in Hokkaido where the race has an all-white head as adults, making them cute enough to create hundreds of tourist items carry their image. We thought we'd find them with ease, but only a few of the canoe travelers located them.

NUTHATCHES Sittidae (1):

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* – (1) We had a couple opportunities to hear and see this resident species in woodlands at two locations on the same day, in the central part of the island.

TREECREEPERS Certhiidae (1):

Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* – (3) Good looks on our afternoon walk from Hotel Bearmonte to the campground, it was feeding on the trunk of a massive tree, then flew back across the trail to smaller trees, with some work we got good views. We heard them a few times and could always locate them from the call. A resident species on Hokkaido.

WRENS Troglodytidae (1):

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* – (2) Heard near the campground below Hotel Bearmonte, Asahideake Mtn. area. We then got glimpses on a forest trail but a White-backed Woodpecker flew in at the same time, drawing off our attention. A resident on Hokkaido.

DIPPERS Cinclidae (1):

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* – (4) Our first sighting was at a bridge where a pair called and moved about rocks and other perches just below us, as we searched for Brown Bears on quiet roads of Shiretoko National Park. Early risers at Yoroushi Onsen were able to see them from the large windows in the dining area. A resident species on Hokkaido.

STARLINGS AND MYNAS Sturnidae (2):

Chestnut-cheeked Starling *Agrospar phillipensis* – (2) A favorite species for Doug who appreciated their sharp colors and markings. They perched obligingly for us on phone wires outside one of our 7-11 stops. A summer visitor we were pleased to see as they are uncommon.

White-cheeked Starling *Spodiopsar cineraceus* – (2) Seen in Tokyo around the hotel and on the walk there, and in a city park in Hokkaido as we drove south from Sarobesto Wetlands. This species is likely one to keep moving north, as some now winter in southern Hokkaido.

THRUSHES Turdidae (1):

Japanese Thrush *Turdus cardis* – (1) We had glimpses of this species feeding in the high canopy, a female on one of our forest walks. A summer breeding visitor.

Brown-headed Thrush *Turdus chrysolaus* – (1) Just one individual, one location, seen hopping around the lawn at the forest edge of the city park campground at Wakkanai. A summer breeding visitor.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS Muscipidae (6):

Japanese Robin *Larvivora akahige* – (2) Excellent views in the Wakkanai Forest Park close to our hotel. It stayed low in some dense brush but crossed a clearing and then we were able to locate it, for some moments it stayed in good view on a horizontal branch about a foot off the ground. Later on we heard it walking near Kaminoko Pond. A summer breeding visitor.

Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* – (4) First views were of several males, on territory and singing, near Peach Rock on Rebus Island. We then saw them at a good number of our birding stops, often with excellent views of singing males. We had good looks at a couple of females, which lack that waxy-looking red throat patch, as well. A summer breeding visitor.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* – (1) Two females were seen, each time by part of the group, on the loop trail we took just at tree line, at the top of the Ropeway to Mt. Asahidake. A summer breeding visitor.

Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* – (4) This species was on the favorite list for many of our group, its striking orange, black and yellow colors reminiscent of our Blackburnian Warbler of the USA. It was quite tame and allowed close approach, even a few I-Phone photos were captured. A summer breeding resident.

Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius* – (1) We saw it on two locations of the same day, first in the harbor before we boarded our “bear” cruise to Cape Utoro, and then later that afternoon as we walked for an overview of Furupe Falls. A summer visitor to Hokkaido but year-round resident along the coast of several islands south.

Amur Stonechat *Saxicola stejnegeri* – (6) Fairly common in the open habitat at Rebun Island, then also at wetlands and open areas throughout Hokkaido. We found a nest, and later one pair feeding young. Their sweet song often led us to sightings, one we learned to recognize. A summer breeding visitor.

ACCENTORS Prunellidae (1):

(E) Japanese Accentor *Prunella rubida* – (1) Excellent views of this endemic species atop pines and shrubs at tree line at the top of the Ropeway to Mt. Asahidake.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS Passeridae (2):

Russet Sparrow *Passer cinnamomeus* – (5) First seen on Rebun Island, we got some really good views in a small park we stopped at to look at Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, male and female. This species is a summer breeding visitor.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* – (8) This resident species is very common, seen in a variety of habitats, often around our hotels.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS Motacillidae (4):

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* – (6) Quite common in the Mt. Asahidake area, near the hotel, around the small ponds at treeline, along the small stream across from the Bearmonte Hotel. This summer breeding visitor on Hokkaido is often vocal.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* – (1) Seen in the meadow near the airport at Wakkanai, one individual perched up for scope views, nice! This is a very local breeder in northeastern Hokkaido.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* – (11) Quite common, in towns, along coastlines, near waterfalls, and quite tame. They would perch on the roof lines of our hotels, and several park Visitor Centers. Mostly a summer visitor on Hokkaido, resident in other parts of temperate Japan.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* – (1) Seen by our hikers atop Mt. Asahidake in tundra habitat, high elevation. A summer breeding visitor.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS Fringillidae (4):

Long-tailed Rosefinch *Carpodacus sibiricus* – (3) Seen well when a male came down to the road as we birded the wetlands near the airport at Wakkanai. We had them at a couple of our stops including great views and photos behind one of the 7-11 lunch stops. Mostly a summer visitor on Hokkaido.

Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator* – (2) A high elevation that feeds on the Siberian Dwarf Stone Pine, we had really good looks at eye level at Asahidake and later at Rausu Pass.

Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* – (1) Just a glimpse, likely a late record for this wintering species, it was heard and briefly seen in the campground at Asahidake.

Oriental Greenfinch *Chloris sinica* – (10) Common and vocal, good views of this species daily. Likely moving north, some birds are now resident on Hokkaido though the species here is more widespread in summer.

OLD WORLD BUNTINGS Emberizidae (4):

Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata* – (1) This beautifully patterned summer visitor was seen well at Sarobestu Wetlands, perched up and singing in that sea of flowers, often from the tops of small shrubs.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides* – (3) Seen at two different small ponds on our travel day to Akan and then easy to find at the parking lot of one of our hotels. This is a summer breeding visitor.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* – (3) Somewhat skulky, we had a couple of individuals respond to calls and come up long enough to get scope views. Fairly common in appropriate habitat in summer.

Masked Bunting *Emberiza personata* – (10) Fairly widespread in open areas, we saw them perched and in flight. This is one of the most common species we encountered in a wide range of habitats. A summer breeding visitor.

MAMMALS:

(NE – Ssp) Ezo Northern Pika *Ochotona hyperborea yesoensis* – (1) Heard only, we hiked up to rocky habitat and waited about 30 minutes, and though they had been seen this day, we were not lucky enough to see activity. We did hear two individuals call.

(NE – Ssp) Ezo Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris orientis* – (1) Seen at the Yoroushi Onsen, showing off its hairy tufted ears well.

(I) American Mink *Neovison vison* – (1) This species was introduced in early decades of the 20th century as a way to provide an income for local residents. They have persisted and Debbie saw one moving up the stream at the Yoroushi Onsen one morning of our stay.

(NE – Ssp) Ezo Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes schrencki* – (2) Our best views were on the day we drove out the Notsuke Peninsula, running between our bus on the road and the line of huge tetrapods that formed a sea wall. It had a big fish in its mouth and ran a long way, over a half a mile at a trot. At one point it ducked into the sea wall and came out without its fish – a den?? It then trotted up and over a colorful line of fishing floats and then circled back to cautiously approach us. We did not want to encourage that so got back in the bus and it trotted off, confident and on a mission.

(E – Ssp) Ezo Sika Deer *Cervus nippon* – (8) Seen often, in fields, in forests and even around our hotel on a couple of occasions. We saw mothers with very young fawns, and on the Notsuke Peninsula three males. One male was young and had antler nubbins in velvet, but two were mature and shedding the velvet, their antlers a deep red color. The Hokkaido subspecies is the largest of those in Japan.

Spotted Seal *Phoca largha* – (1) It was great to see this beautifully patterned seal in the water, and then hauled out on several small rocky flat islands on the east side of Rebun Islands. We got great photos and enjoyed watching their faces and stretching. This species ranges to the north around the Ring of Fire.

Pacific White-sided Dolphin *Sagmatias obliquidens* – (2) Seen as small groups, coming and going on the ferry to Rebun Island.

Dall's Porpoise *Phocoenoides dalli* – (2) Seen well on our cruise from the Rausu harbor, and we suspect the first (larger) dolphin we saw on the ferry crossing to Ruben Island was this species as well, based on the dorsal fin and behavior.

Orca *Orcinus orca* – (1) Very close views of a huge pod that was spread out across the ocean as we left the harbor. The captain pointed us first to a group of females with young, and then over to a very large male with a straight dorsal fin. This was a sunny day and all were very active, swimming, feeding and blowing. This may be the pod that got stranded in ice last winter, but if so they seem to be doing well!

Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus* – (1) Remarkable to see this enormous (second longest to the Blue Whale) species right along side our boat! The crew said this was the first sighting of the year, and it was very tolerant, coming up to breathe, we could hear it blow. It lounged at the surface, showing off its length and rear fin. A very exciting find for our journey.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS:

Ezo Brown (Hokkaido) Frog *Rana pirica* – (2) Some of our group encountered one of these frogs on a wetland walk early on in the trip. On our final night there was a loud chorus of this species, coming from the pond behind our rooms.

BUTTERFLIES:

Garden White *Pieris brassicae*

Green-veined White

Popular Admiral *Limentis populi*

Compton Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis vaualbrum*

Large Map Butterfly

Asian Swallowtail (yellow)

Alpine Black Swallowtail (black)

Tortricine Leafroller Moth (Family Tortricinae)

OTHER INVERTEBRATES:

Moorland Ground Beetle *Carabus arvensis hokkaidoensis* (from a genus called Worm and Slug Hunters)

Japanese Giant Hornet *Vespa mandarinia japonica*

Japanese Water Spider *Argyroneta aquatica japonica*

Dragonfly sp. *Orthetrum japonicum* (male blue, female yellow)

White-faced Darter *Leucorrhinia dubia*, an endemic subspecies seen at Kushiro Wetlands

Subarctic Darner (*Aeshna subarctica*)

SELECTED PLANTS:

“name” = Japanese Name

REBUN ISLAND

REBUN GIANT LADY SLIPPER ORCHID: “Akarenga” *Cypripedium macranthum var. rubunense*

ORANGE HAWKWEED Fox and Cubs “Kourin-tanpopo” *Pilosella aurantiaca*

GIANT JAPANESE BUTTERBUR “Rawan-buki” *Petasites japonicus*

EZO DAY LILY “Ezo-ki-suge” *Hemerocallis flava var. yesoensis*

EUROPEAN or COMMON COLUMBINE “Miyama-odamaki” *Aquilegia flabellate var. pumila*

GIANT HOGWEED “Oh-hanaudo” *Heracleum lanatum*

OXEYE DAISY “France-giku” *Leucanthemum vulgare*

SMOOTH RATTLEBOX *Crotalaria pallida* (yellow pea)

WILD ROSE Hamanasu” *Rosa rugosa*

BUTTERCUP “Rebun-kinpoge” *Ranunculus sp.*

GERANIUM “Chishima-furo” *Geranium erianthum*

6/20 Sarobestu Wetland

EZO DAY LILY “Ezo-ki-suge” *Hemerocallis flava var. yesoensis*

RABBIT-EAR IRIS “Kakitsubata” *Iris laevigata*

WHITE FALSE HELLABORE “Kobaikeisou” *Veratrum stamineum*

COMMON SUNDEW “Mousengoke” *Drosera rotundifolia*

HARE’S COTTON GRASS “Watasuge” *Eriophorum vaginatum*

6/22 Mt. Asahidake (peak is 2291 meters) Ropeway (Cable car) Loop Trail – Daisetsuzan NP

SIBERIAN DWARF STONE PINE “Haimatsu” *Pinus pumila*

LABRADOR TEA *Ledum palustre ssp. diversipilosum*

Heath – shrubs

CLUBMOSS MOUNTAIN HEATHER “Iwahige” *Cassiope lycopodioides* (white heath)

PURPLE MOUNTAIN HEATH “Ezonotsugazakura” *Phyllodoce caerulea* (pink flowers)

BLACK CROWBERRY “Gankouran” *Empetrum nigrum*

TRAILING AZALEA “Minezuou” *Loiseleuria (Kalmia) procumbens* (small starlike, pink)

ALASKA BELLHEATHER “Jimukade” *Harimanella stelleriana* (white heath flower)

YELLOW-FLOWERED RHODODENDRON “Kibanashakunage” *Rhododendron aureum*

WEDGE-LEAF PRIMROSE “Ezokozakura” *Primula cuneifolia*

ALEUTIAN AVENS “Chinguruma” *Geum (Sieversia) pentapetalum*

JAPANESE HYACINTH “Shojobakama” *Heloniopsis orientalis* (stalk, onion-like)

WHITE SPIREA “Ezonomarubashimotsuke” *Spiraea betulifolia ssp. aemilana*

POTENTILLA “Meakankinbai” *Potentilla miyabei* (yellow flower)

DWARF BAMBOO “Chishimazasa” *Sasa sp.* Note: *Sasa kurilensis* is the higher alpine elevation (snowfield) variety

Base of mountain by Ropeway launch and Bearmonte Hotel

KAEMPFERI or TORCH AZALEA “Yama-tsutsuji” *Rhododendron kaempferi* (or similar...) pink, simple flowered shrub on walk

MIDDENDORFF WEIGELA “Ukon-utsugi” *Weigela middendorffiana* (white bells with orange lines)

KAMCHATKA TRILLIUM “Oobana-No-Enrei-Sou” *Trillium kamtschaticum*

MANCHURIAN VIOLET (purple flower) *Viola mandshurica*

JAPANESE BUTTERCUP “Uano-ashigata” *Ranunculus japonicas*

WHITE SKUNK CABBAGE “Mizubasho” *Lysichiton camtschatcensis*

THREE LEAF FOAM FLOWER “Momiji-karamatsu” *Tiarella trifoliata*

BUNCHBERRY “Gozentachibana” *Chamaepericly (Cornus) canadense*

THREE LEAF GOLDTHREAD “Mitsubaoren” *Coptis trifolia* (small white 5 petal w stamens, starlike)

COMMON SPOTTED ORCHID “Hakusan-chidori” *Dactylorhiza aristata*

KEYFLOWER “Hakusan-chidori” *Dactylorhiza sp.* Perhaps *d. traunsteineri* (orchid, dk pink no spots)

ALEUTIAN BOG ORCHID (white) “Kobanotonbosou” *Platanthera tipuloides var. nipponica*

GIANT JAPANESE BUTTERBUR "Rawan-buki" *Petasites japonicus*
JAPANESE YELLOW HAWKWEED "Kibana-nigana" *Youngia japonica*
BLUEBELLS "Ezo-rurisou" *Mertensia sp*
DANDELION "Seiyo-tanpopo" *Taraxicum officinale*
CINNAMON FERN "Zenmai" *Osmundastrum sp.*

TREES (A PARTIAL LIST, THOSE WE NOTICED OR PHOTOGRAPHED)

SIBERIAN DWARF STONE PINE "Haimatsu" *Pinus pumila*
MOUNTAIN MAPLE "Kaede" *Acer spicatum*
JAPANESE OAK "Mizunara" *Quercus crispula var. blume*
MONGOLIAN OAK "Konara" *Quercus mongolica*
EMPEROR OAK "Daimyo" *Quercus dentata*
JAPANESE MAPLE "Iroha-momiji" *Acer palmatum*
JAPANESE or MONARCH BIRCH "Udaikaba" *Betula maximowicziana*
ERMANS BIRCH "Dakekanba" *Betula ermanii*
SILVER BIRCH "Shirakaba" *Betula mandschurica var. japonica*
WHITE BIRCH "Shirakaba" *Betula platyphylla var. japonica*
JAPANESE ELM "Akinire" *Ulmus parvifolia*
JAPANESE MAGNOLIA "Kitakobushi" *Magnolia kobus*
MOUNTAIN ASH or JAPANESE ROWEN "Nanakamado" *Sorbus commixta*
SAKHALIN SPRUCE "Aka Ezomatsu" *Picea glehnii*
EZO SPRUCE "Ezomatsu" *Picea jezoensis*
JAPANESE YEW "Ichii" *Taxus cuspidata*
SAKHALIN FIR "Todomatsu" *Abies sachalinensis*
JAPANESE LARCH "Karamatsu" *Larix kaempferi*
VARIEGATED-LEAF KOLOMIKTA *Actinidia kolomikta (native, temperate east Asia)*
JAPANESE ALDER "Yachihan no ki"
MARIES' FIR *Abies mariesii*