

# THE BIG CCTERN TWITCH

Matsu + Taiwan

17 T/M 23 July 2008



*Chinese Crested Terns (2 a pair) and Crested Terns at Matsu*

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## Itinerary and Dairy

*In 2000 breeding Chinese Crested Terns were discovered in the Matsu Archipel belonging to Taiwan but geographically more belonging to China. Since this species (before this last seen in 1937) is on the holarctic list and always was a mythical bird for me (going over and over its picture in the Hong Kong guide during a stay there in 1989, pictured as extinct) there was no question about it. Try to see it as soon is possible !! (paid of with the SBCurlew..). The question was how? In July (the best month for the species since they arrive late and are difficult to find when on eggs) 2004 Bjorn Anderson (living in China) managed to see it. My turn came in 2008 when Simon Liao of "Birding in Taiwan" arranged a trip to the area and made this public in 2007 on the net. I joined immediately and the result is presented in this report.*

**17+18-07:** I went on the fast train from Aachen via Koln to Frankfurt. Off course (as normal in western Europe nowadays) there was a delay due to "technical problems" but I arrived in time on the airport. Here Lufthansa flew me (Business Class, because a nice stewardess) to Hong Kong where I connected on a Dragonair flight to Taipei to arrive (in very bad weather) in the late afternoon. An hour drive took me to the town hotel (near the domestic airport). Time for a message (good for a jetleg) and Chinese food and a night sleep.

**19-07:** In the morning I arrived on the domestic airport to meet my other 10 participants from over the world (two I new well from former trips) who had the same idea as my. I was to early on this busy airport and the speaker announced "*The flight from 10.40 to Nangan (Matsu) is cancelled due to bad weather*".... I was astonished seeing the whole twitch falling apart. I met my fellow companions and our leaders Simon Liao and his help Dustin. They seemed not too worried??

We where taken to a VIP lounge to wait and after 10 minutes my conclusions seemed right. No flight, the typhoon Kalmaegi, in which I arrived yesterday, was now over Matsu causing problems for landing planes and ferries. Hours of nail biting followed. Laptops where open and checking weather stations via them was the thing to do. Simon was constantly on his mobile phoning Matsu for updates on the situation. When you miss a flight to Matsu due to weather problems you are usually "fucked", because flights are difficult to rearrange in short notice. Simon said he went to Matsu 20 times, half of the times he had problems going out, half of them when coming in. He is a politician so he has his contacts and they where very helpful. To make a long story short. The weather passed at the end of the afternoon and around 17.00 hour we where on the small plain for the 40 minutes flight for Nangan arriving there in time for a good meal and sleep for the day to come. Simon for President!!!

### Typhoon Kalmaegi

**Link:** <http://agora.ex.nii.ac.jp/digital-typhoon/summary/wnp/s/200807.html.en>

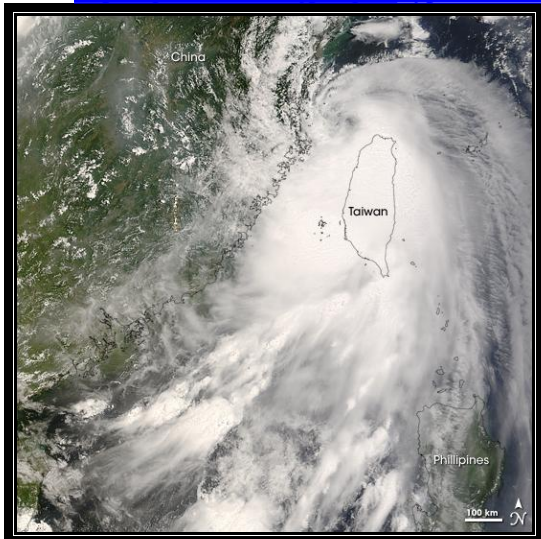
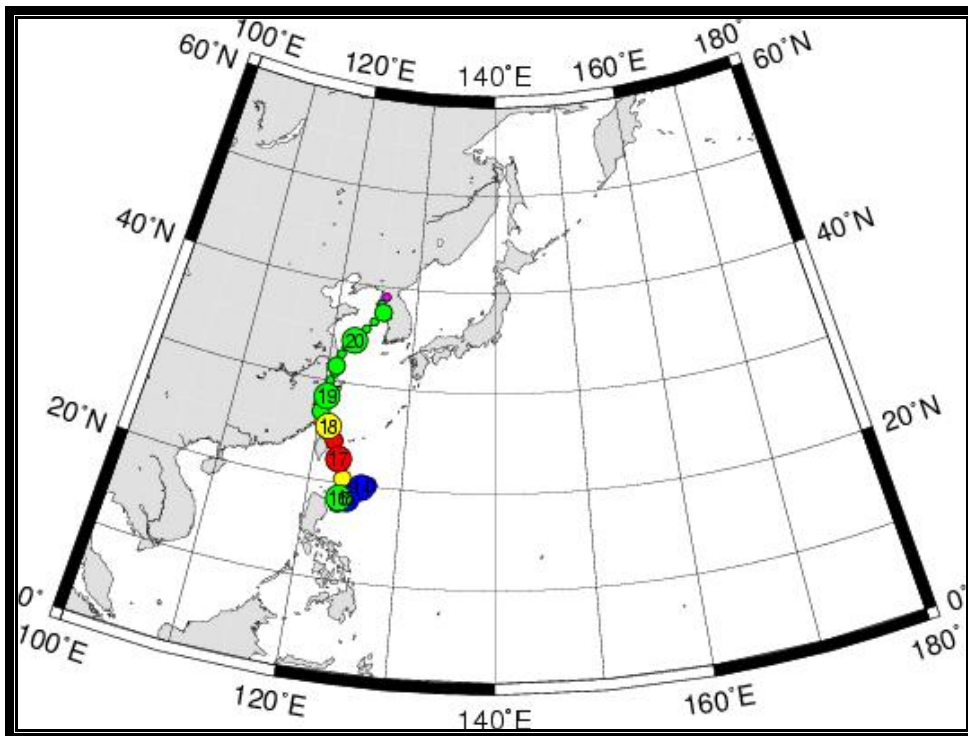


Photo van Typhoon Kalmaegi 18/19-07

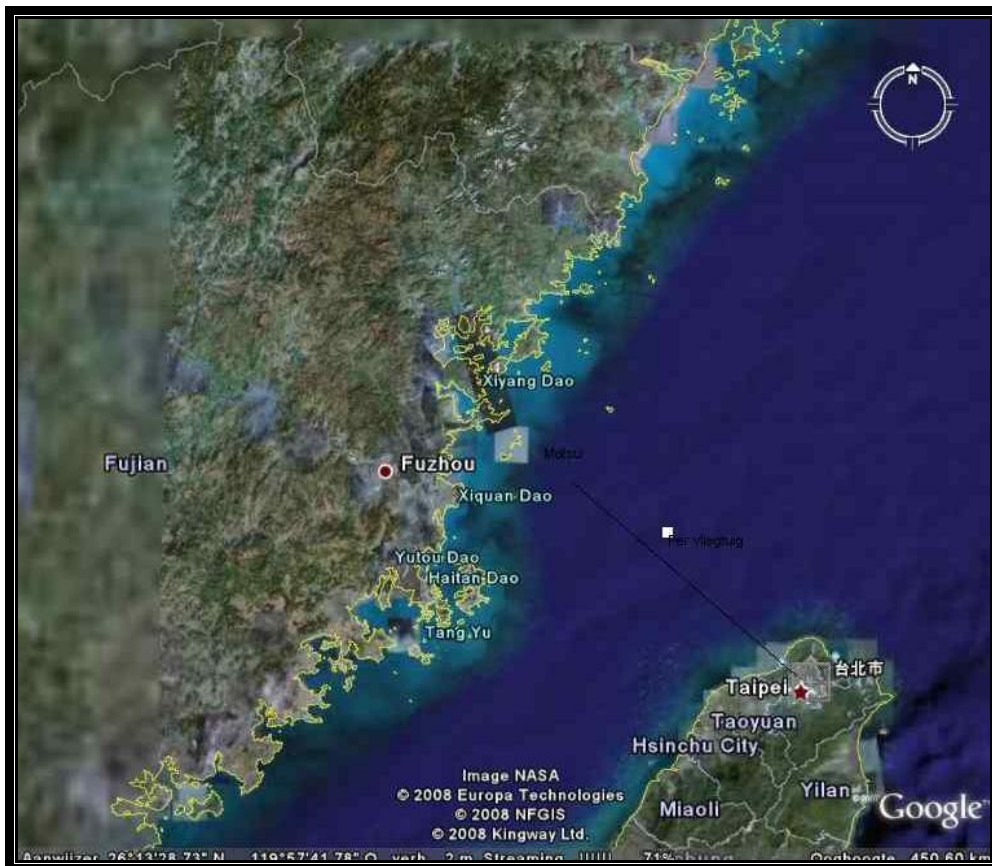




Track of Typhoon Kalmaegi, note 20-07 it just past Matsu and the "raintrog" is still over the islands (not visibele)



The plain



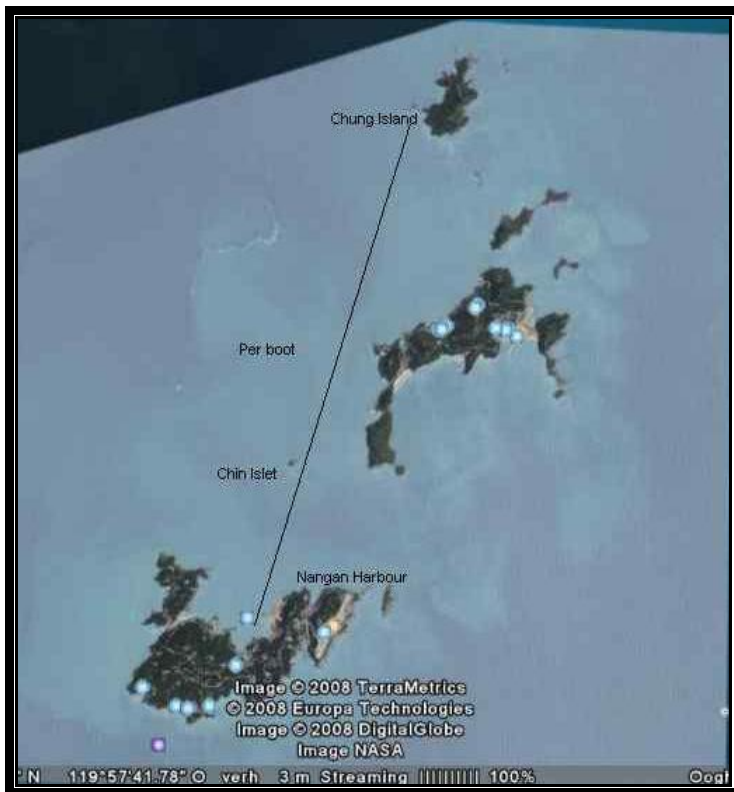
*Matsu in relation to Taiwan*

**20-07:** Breakfast at 07.00 and after that the twitch was on. At 08.30 exactly we started heading for Chung Island by a little boat which took 40 minutes not included a short stop at Chin Islet:



*The boat*





*Boat route at Matsu*

Closing in at the island with all the Crested Terns hanging over them our heartbeat rose considerably. It did not take long before I saw my first bird on the top of the island flying and dropping in and soon many more were found and seen sitting, some with young and some close flying by the boat. One of the birds speared its under bill with a piece of plastic. This bird had a chick.



*CCTern by Robert Tizzard*

Aboard our boat some journalists picked up this story and we were in the papers the next day. Remarkably this bird was photographed this same day about 30 K away near Fujian along the Chinese coast

(<http://www.fjbirds.org/bbs/viewthread.php?tid=9101&extra=&page=1>), proving that birds at this new location are Matsu birds. After two hours at the island we returned by the same route back. Happy and fulfilled. Around 15.00 hours we took the plain back to Taipei and the group splitted up. I went to the YMCA and later on went to the Botanical Gardens for some “after party birding”.



Participants from left to right: Robert Tizzard (Laos), Nick Lethaby (US), David Stanton (Hong Kong), Geoff Carey (HK), Valerie Brown (US), Dave Sargeant (Oman), Peter Milburn (Aus), Phil Hansboro (Aus), Richard Allison (UK) and myself. On the foreground, Simon Liao (leader) and Chang Shou-hua of the Matsu Wild Bird Society

21-07: Today I decided to join Simon, Dustin and Valerie on there Taiwan trip for two days. First we went trough the local paper, we where in it with the “canister story”:

電話: 02-23087111 ■ 訂座服務專線: 0800-033-088 ■ 廣告部: 02-23087111 ■ 採訪中心及新聞部: 02-23064553 ■ 投訴專線: 02-23085924

# 塑管卡嘴 馬祖神話鳥命危

**連勝/馬祖報導**

一度傳已絕種。近年才再度發現，是隻嘴卡塑膠管的「黑嘴端鳳凰」，昨天竟被發現嘴卡住，無法進食，瀕臨死亡。專家說，這是一場「天災」，但若不火急救援，這隻鳥將無法存活。

來自馬祖的十一位鳥人，參加由「台灣水鳥協會」主辦的「馬祖水鳥調查」，昨天在馬祖南竿鄉的「黑嘴端鳳凰」保護區，發現一隻嘴卡塑膠管的「黑嘴端鳳凰」。

這隻鳥的嘴卡住了一根塑膠管，專家說，這根塑膠管是從馬祖的「黑嘴端鳳凰」保護區，被一隻「黑嘴端鳳凰」咬破，掉落在地上，被這隻鳥咬住，卡住了嘴。

專家說，這隻鳥的嘴卡住塑膠管，是因為牠在吃東西時，不小心咬住了塑膠管，結果卡住了嘴。這隻鳥的嘴卡住塑膠管後，無法進食，瀕臨死亡。

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只能活一周 ▲被譽為神話之鳥的「黑嘴端鳳凰」，昨天被發現其中一隻的下颚，被一類似塑膠管物體卡住。鳥類專家說，若狀況持續，這隻鳥只能再活一周。(圖：連江縣政府建設局技正張壽華提供)

**燦坤**

前赴奧運 好棒耶

**會員招待會**

活動日期 7.21

AM 10:00-PM 10:00

**最後 1 天**

更多好康請詳見

A11版

心血管疾病年輕化 治水大工程 政府將籌錢徵地





Taiwan news paper with the front cover story

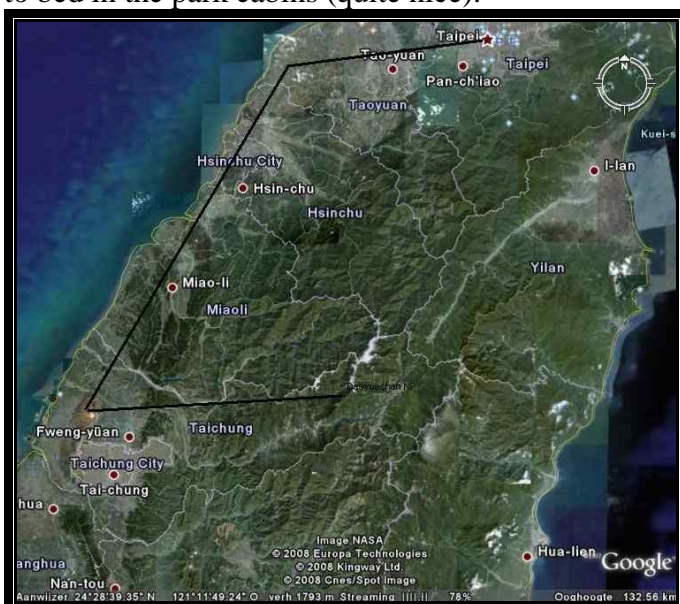
<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2008/07/23/2003418300>

<http://tw.news.yahoo.com/article/url/d/a/080725/4/13vbi.html> (the continuation with a picture of a Chinese egg collector picked up while watching the "plastic" tern by authorities, also a threat to the CCTern)

We left the YMCA about 07.00 and along the way to Dasyueshan NP (2640 meters),

[http://www1.forest.gov.tw/RA\\_En\\_JP/0300003/RA\\_EN-01.htm](http://www1.forest.gov.tw/RA_En_JP/0300003/RA_EN-01.htm)

in the middle of Taiwan we picked up lunch and breakfast for the following day. We started really birding at 11.00 and try to clean up as many endemics as possible. We did well and arrived at the Dasyueshan NP around 15.00 hours, and birded until dusk, had dinner and went to bed in the park cabins (quite nice).



Route Taiwan

**22-07:** Birded from first light at Dasyueshan NP until about 16.00 hour. Drove down to 900 meters in hope to find Swinhoes Ph. but failed. In the end we cleaned up all but four of the up until now known endemics with some more lifers (30). A cap driver picked me up and drove me to Taipei in a bit more than 2 hours. I stayed in a motel (in Asia known for also other things than sleeping..) near Taipei international Airport in a quite “sleazy area”, but the hotel was extremely nice and not expensive.

**23-07:** Flew home on the same way as coming in without no delays.

### Legenda:

**\*AAAA** = New (Holarctic) Species (30)

**\*AAAA** = New species (9)

**AAAA** = Good bird species

**m** = Seen on Matsu

## THE BIRDSPECIES

### **001 LITTLE EGRETT – egretta garzetta m**

(kleine zilverreiger)

A total of 4 seen, three flying over the sea at Matsu.

### **002 EASTERN CATTLE EGRET – egretta (ibis) coromandus**

Common in the lowlands of Taiwan.

### **003 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON – nycticorax nycticorax**

(kwak)

2 birds seen in the Botanical Gardens

Common during the evening in the lowlands of Taiwan.

### **004 MALAYAN NIGHT-HERON – gorsachius melanolophus**

20-07 1 very nice adult close in the Botanical gardens in the middle of the weekend crowd...

### **005 ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD – pernis ptilorhynchus**

21-07 1 ex. flew over the beginning of the road to Dasyueshan NP

### **\*006 MOUNTAIN HAWK EAGLE – SPIZAETUS NIPALENSIS ssp: nipalensis**

21-07 2 birds, one adult (moult in the tail), quite pale (orange) underparts with not very obvious barring on the flight feathers. Huge hawk eagle's.

### **\*007 MIKADO PHEASANT – SYRMATICUS MIKADO**

22-07 3 birds, two females and a male (without a long tail) at to Dasyueshan NP. All views long and next to the car, the male was (even without a tail) very impressive.



Male Mikado Pheasant (without the long tail) Dustin Wang



**008 COMMON MOORHEN – gallinule chloropus**  
(waterhoen)

Common in the Botanical Gardens.

**009 EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER – haematopus ostralegus m**  
(scholekster)

20-07 2 ex, on Chung Island together.

**010 WOOD SANDPIPER – tringa glareola m**  
(bosruiter)

20-07 1 ex, passed the boat going back from Chung Island.

**011 BLACK-TAILED GULL – larus crassirostris m**  
20-07 3 ex, all no adult birds at Chung Island.

**012 BRIDLED TERN – onychoprion anaethetus m**  
(brilstern)

20-07 100 ex on Chin Islet in a small colony, also some seen around Chung Island. Very nice views.

**013 ROSEATE TERN – sterna dougallii m**  
(dougalls stern)

20-07 1500 ex present mainly on Chung Island, but seen all over the waters at Matsu. The bills of the birds where mostly red.

**014 BLACK-NAPED TERN – sterna sumatrana m**  
20-07 25 ex. all on Chin Islet, in pairs.

**015 GREAT CRESTED TERN – sterna bergii m**

20-07 2000 ex., mainly in a colony at Chung Island but also during the boat trip. Many quite grown chicks.

**\* 016 CHINESE CRESTED TERN – STERNA BERNSTEINI m**

20-07 16 ex and one chick seen very well between the Crested terns on Chung island. A maximum of 20 was seen with three chicks. One bird had a speared underbill (for the full story see itinerary). The chick seems paler and different marked than the chicks of 014. Seen CCterns, flying by the boat, sitting around and feeding chicks, for about two hours on less than 100 meters. The birds stand out, being white instead of grey on the upperparts, the eye is a white area (black in crested) and off course the black bill tip.





Chinese Crested, Crested and Roseate Terns, Chung Island, by Robert Tizard

**YouTube link for video:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sk7hw0Z608>

**\*017 ASHY WOOD-PIGEON – COLUMBA PULCHRICOLLIS**

22-07 3 ex, seen in flight (quite distinctive) at Dasyueshan NP. Nice grey heads and mostly neck.

**018 ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE – *streptopelia orientalis* ssp: *orii***

A total of 4 seen in the lower parts of Taiwan.



**019 SPOTTED DOVE – *streptopelia chinensis* m**

Common all over Matsu and Taiwan.

**020 FORK-TAILED SWIFT – *apus pacificus* m**

19-07 1 bird over the hotel at Nangan.

**021 HOUSE SWIFT – *apus nipalensis* m**

20-07 3 ex, flying around the hotel at Nangan

21-07 5 ex. seen somewhere on the day.

**\*022 TAIWAN BARBET – *MEGALAIMA NUCHALIS***

20-05 5 ex. in the Botanical Gardens, one recently fledged juv. (with a grey head and green body), great views.

21-05 heard a few times in the lowlands.

**023 BARN SWALLOW – *hirundo rustica* m**

(boerenzwaluw)

Common on Matsu, hunting the less windy parts.

22-07 2 ex, seen somewhere along the way.

**024 ASIAN (HOUSE) MARTIN – *delichon dasypus***

21-07 25 in a colony on the way up to Dasyueshan NP. For the first time I found them very different than House Martins, less contrasting with darker underwings and undertailcoverts.

**025 COLLARED FINCHBILL – *spizixos semitorques* ssp: *cinereicapillus***

21-07 3 ex, together on the way up to Dasyueshan NP.

22-07 1 ex. on the wires on the way down from Dasyueshan NP.

**026 CHINESE BULBUL – *pycnonotus sinensis* m**

Common on Matsu

Common around Tapei mainly in the Botanical Gardens.

**027 BLACK BULBUL – *hypsipetes leucocephalus* ssp: *nigerrimus***

20-07 5 ex. at the Botanical Gardens in Taipei

21+22-07 a total of 6 seen in the lower elevations of Dasyueshan NP.

**\*028 FLAMECREST – *REGULUS GOODFELLOWI***

21-07 2 ex, of which one seen very well (attracted by tape) with the open white face, at 2500 meter in Dasyueshan NP.

**029 BROWN DIPPER – *cinclus pallasii***

21-07 2 ex, one adult and a juv. in a stream near Dasyueshan NP.

**\*030 FORMOSAN WHISTLING THRUSH – *MYOPHONUS INSULARIS***

22-07 2 ex, along the way down from Dasyueshan NP. Huge, like a little corvid, dark blue.

**031 BLUE WHISTLING-THRUSH- *myophonus caeruleus* m**

20-07 1 ex, flying by but seen well on Matsu.

**\*032 WHITE-BROWED SHORTWING – *BRACHYPTERYX MONTANA***

22-07 2 ex, one calling (coming in to tape) and seen without bins at the base of a bush and one flew over the road, dark bird with a tail and an obvious white brow. Both on the almost highest part of Dasyueshan NP. Better views would be nice...

**033 STRIATED PRINIA – *prinia crinigera* ssp: *striata***

21-07 2 ex. seen well along a stream. This is a (new) candidate for an endemic split (G.Sangster pers.med)



Still a striated Prinia but maybe something for the future, Dustin Wang

**\*034 YELLOWISH BELLIED BUSH WARBLER – cettia acanthizoides**

22-07 7 ex seen spread over the day at the highest elevations in Dasyueshan NP.

Nice cettia, with a yellow belly and a ridiculous song.

**\*035 TAIWAN BUSH WARBLER – BRADYPTERUS ALISHANENSIS**

22-07 2 ex, seen well, one juv sitting on a stone wall and one singing adult in the open. Like a Savi's warbler..

**036 RUFOUS-FACED WARBLER – abroscopus albogularis**

Quite commonly seen in the lowlands and therefore surprisingly more easy than on the mainland of China, about 27 seen also in small flocks.



*Rufous-faced Warbler by Dustin Wang*

**\*037 FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER – MUSCICAPA FERRUGINEA**

22-07 3 ex, on the highest point of Dasyueshan NP, together, one male and one female at the top, and one juv (dull colour) lower down



*Ferruginous Flycatcher, female, Dustin Wang*

**\*038 VIVID NILTAVA – NILTAVA VIVIDA**

21-07 3 ex, two males and a juv. (with drops on head and breast) seen well just below the highest point at Dasyueshan NP, nice flycatcher.

**\*039 COLLARED BUSH-ROBIN – TARSIGER JOHNSTONIAE**

21-07 4 ex, with a pair at a nest, quite high at Dasyueshan NP. The nest and pair fed there young at very close range without interest at us watching and digiscoping.





**040 PLUMBEOUS REDSTART – *rhyacornis fuliginosa***

21-07 6 ex, spread over the day at streams, some very young juv.

**041 ORIENTAL MAGPIE ROBIN – *copsychus saularis* m**

20-071 ex at Matsu.

20-07 3 ex in the Botanical gardens (seems to be introduced)

**\*042 WHITE-TAILED ROBIN – *CINCLIDIUM LEUCURUM* ssp: *montium***

21-07 3 ex, a pair seen very well in the lowlands and a male at Dasyueshan NP. Nice big dark robins with obvious white in the tail. This subspecies is not much different than the mainland birds.

**\*043 BLACK-NAPED MONARCH – *HYPOTHYMIS AZUREA* ssp: *oberholseri***

20-07 2 males seen well at the Botanical Gardens in Taipei. Cracking birds. This subspecies is not much different from mainland birds.

**\*044 RUFOUS CAPPED LAUGHINGTHRUSH – *GARRULAX RUFICEPS***

22-07 2 ex, seen very well, noisy as the where a bit lower down in Dasyueshan NP. It took a bit of searching.

**\*045 RUSTY LAUGHINGTHRUSH – *GARRULAX POECILORHYNCHUS***

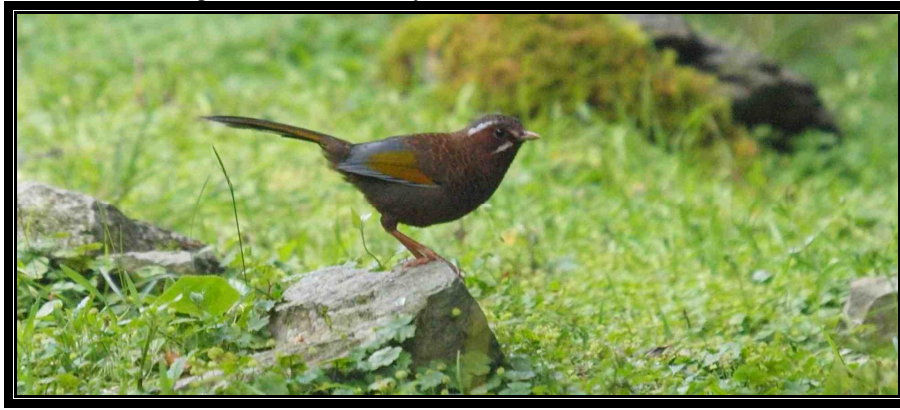
22-07 1ex, seen well and heard even better at Dasyueshan NP. The diamond shaped blue eye was seen very well.

**\*046 TAIWAN HWAMEI – *GARRULAX TAEWANUS***

21-07 1ex., seen and heard well in the lowlands, coming in to the tape. Has little to do with Hwamei of the mainland...

**\*047 WHITE-WHISKERED LAUGHINGTHRUSH – *GARRULAX MORRISONIANUS***

Common at the highest altitude at Dasyueshan NP, in small flocks.



WWLaughingthrush by Dustin Wang

**\*048 STEERE'S LIOCICHLA – *LIOCICHLA STEERII***

Common from middle elevations in the mountains often in small flocks and very tame.

**\*049 BLACK-NECKLACED SCIMITAR BABBLER – *POMATORHINUS ERYTHROCNEMIS***

21-07 2 ex., seen and heard well in the lowlands going up to at Dasyueshan NP. Plain face and big (called “the big one”). Recently split from the mainland complex.

**\*050 TAIWAN SCIMITAR BABBLER – *POMATORHINUS FORMOSANA***

21-07 3 ex., seen and heard well though skulking in the lowlands going up to at Dasyueshan NP (called “the small one” by local birders). Nice rusty sides of the neck. Recently split from the mainland complex.

**\*051 TAIWAN WREN-BABBLER – *PNOEPYGA FORMOSANA***

221-07 5 ex of which one seen reasonably well at the higher elevations Dasyueshan NP. Like a chick, very rusty on the upperparts and white speckled on the underparts. The song is completely different than Pygmy from the mainland. A Swiss ornithologist recently spitted this species from Pygmy.

**052 RUFOUS-CAPPED BABBLER – *stachyridopsis ruficeps* ssp: *praecognita***

21-07 1 ex. seen well in a reedbed next to a small river in the lowlands.

**\*053 TAIWAN BARWING – *ACTINODURA MORRISONIANA***

21-07 3 ex, two at the guesthouse and one at the peak, nice bird with obvious barring on the wingcoverts.



*Taiwan Barwing by Dustin Wang*

**\*054 TAIWAN FULVETTA – *ALCIPPE FORMOSANA***

22-07 1 ex., at the highest point of Dasyueshan NP. Seen well with grey streaked cheeks on the throat, brown green in the wings and an obvious eyering coming in to the tape of 035.

**055 GRAY-CHEEKED FULVETTA – *ALCIPPE MORRISONIA* ssp: *morrisonia***

21-07 5 ex, spread over the day on almost all elevations usually on its own.

**\*056 WHITE-EARED SIBIA – *HETEROPHASIA AURICULARIS***

21+22-07 a total of 15 seen spread over the trip, nice birds and quite common



*White-Eared Sibia by Dustin Wang*

**\*057 TAIWAN YUHINA - *YUHINA BRUNNEICEPS***

21+22-07 a total of 25 seen spread over the trip, nice birds always in small flocks



*Taiwan Yuhina by Dustin Wang*



**\*058 GOLDEN PARROTBILL – PARADOXORNIS VERREAUXI SSP: morrisonianus**

22-07 2 ex, seen very well near the house at the top (2640 meter) of Dasyueshan NP. What a cracker!!



Golden Parrotbill by Dustin Wang

**059 BLACK-THROATED TIT – aegithalos concinnus**

22-07 40+ ex, in total all in small flocks at Dasyueshan NP.

**060 COAL TIT – parus ater ssp: ptilosus**

(zwarte mees)

22-07 10+ ex, in small flocks at Dasyueshan NP, a very long crest.

**061 GREEN-BACKED TIT – parus monticolus ssp: insperatus**

22-07 10 ex, seen usually in flocks with other species at Dasyueshan NP.

**\*062 YELLOW TIT – PARUS HOLSTI**

22-07 2 seen very well in a group of other tits at Dasyueshan NP, one more yellow on the underparts than the other, what a cracker, Near threatened by BLI, I wish it was Holarctic.....

**063 EURASIAN NUTHATCH – sitta europaea**

22-07 7 ex. seen in various “raving titflocks” at Dasyueshan NP.

**064 FIRE-BREASTED FLOWERPECKER – dicaeum ignipectum**

22-07 1 female in a flock of tits at Dasyueshan NP.

**065 JAPANESE WHITE-EYE – zosterops japonicus m**

20-07 Common at Matsu and later that day in the Botanical gardens in Taipei.

**066 BLACK DRONGO – dicrurus macrocercus ssp: harterti**

A total of 4 birds seen on the way up and down from Dasyueshan NP.

**067 GRAY TREEPIE – dendrocitta formosae**

21-07 3 ex, seen in a bamboo forest in the lowlands.

**068 EURASIAN MAGPIE – pica pica**

(ekster)

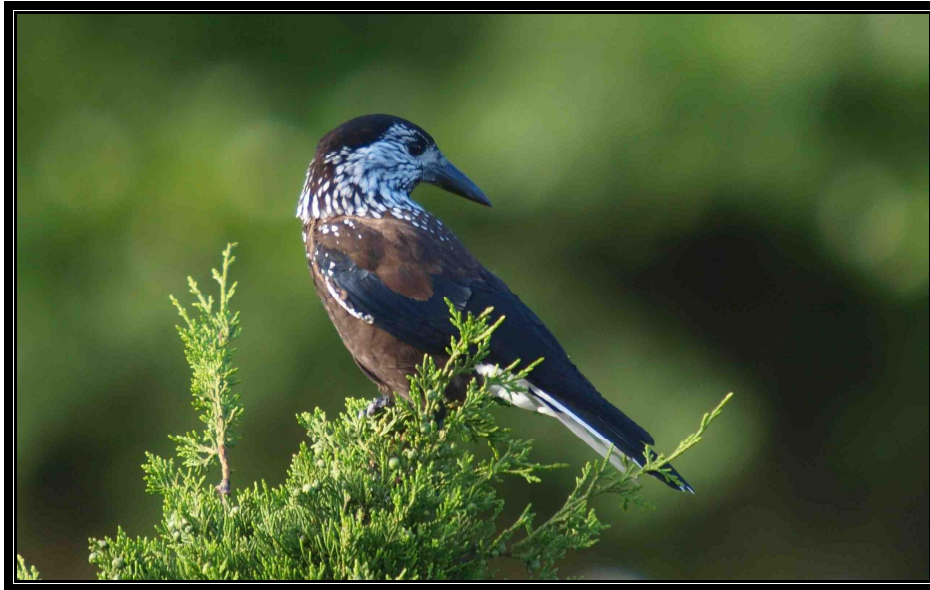
20-07 1 ex. in the Botanical Gardens in Taipei.

**069 EURASIAN NUTCRACKER – nucifraga caryocatactes ssp: owstoni**

(notenkraker)

22-07 2 ex, at the parking place at the highest point of Dasyueshan NP.

Very spotted head contrasting with a no spotted body.



*Eurasian Nutcracker by Dustin Wang*

---- **CRESTED MYNA – acridotheres cristatellus**

19-07 2 ex. at the airport of Hong Kong at a gate building.

----- **JAVAN MYNA – acridotheres javanicus**

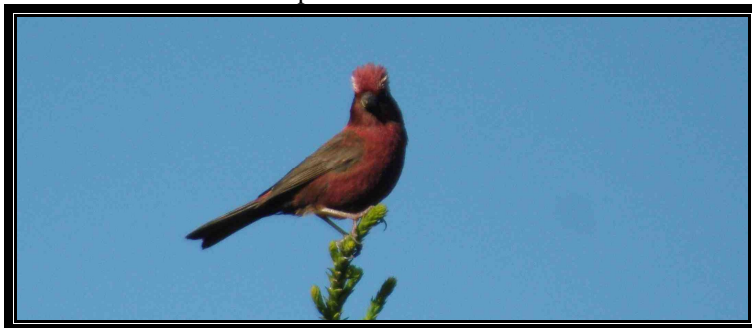
Common in the lowlands of Taiwan, it seems that there is some doubt about the species (introduced) of myna on Taiwan.

**070 EURASIAN TREE SPARROW – passer montanus**  
(ringmus)

20-07 common in the Botanical Gardens in Taipei

**071 VINACEOUS ROSEFINCH – carpodacus vinaceus ssp: formosanus**

21+22-07 14 ex in total seen well around the top of Dasyueshan NP, feeding on the ground and calling, males and females with white tertial tips.



**\*072 GREY-HEADED BULLFINCH (BEAVAN'S BULLF??.) – PYRRHULA ERYTHACA ssp: owstoni**

22-07 15 ex, in small flocks around the top of Dasyueshan NP. This subspecies will probably evaluate to species in short time.



*"Beavan's Bullfinch" by Dustin Wang*



### **THE HAIRY LIST**

001 TAIWAN MACAQUE – *macaca cyclopis* – 21-07 1 ex at Dasyueshan NP

002 FORMOSAN RED-BELLIED SQUIRREL - ?? – 20-07 5 ex, Botanical Gardens Taipei

003 FORMOSAN STRIPED SQUIRREL – *tamiops maritimus formosanus* – 22-07 10 ex at Dasyueshan NP.

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