

China Birding Tour

World of Pheasants

14 Days



Pheasant Photography Tour

This specialised photography tour takes you through China's most biodiverse regions in search of its rare and striking pheasants. Beginning in the temperate forests of Sichuan, you will capture elusive species such as Lady Amherst's, Silver and Temminck's Tragopan from dedicated hides. The journey continues into the Tibetan Plateau for high-altitude species like the Chinese Monal, White-eared, and Blood Pheasants. In Henan's rural valleys, you will photograph the endangered Reeve's Pheasant and Crested Ibis, before heading to the lush Wuyi Mountains of Fujian for Cabot's Tragopan, Elliot's and White-necklaced Partridges. Combining scenic landscapes, exceptional biodiversity, and patient hide photography, this tour offers unparalleled opportunities to document China's pheasants across their natural habitats.

Day 1: Arrival in Chengdu – Transfer to Pingshan (250 km / 4 hrs)

After arriving in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province and one of China's largest cities, you will travel south to Pingshan in Yibin Prefecture. Pingshan lies at the edge of the Hengduan Mountain Range, part of the eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot. This region features a mosaic of temperate forests, bamboo thickets, and subtropical valleys—ideal habitats for a number of rare pheasants and forest birds.

Overnight: Deshengyuan Hotel, Pingshan



Day 2: Pingshan – Full-Day Hide Photography

Pingshan's forest reserves are known for offering excellent chances to photograph Sichuan's most elusive pheasants from permanent hides. The **Lady Amherst's Pheasant**, native to southwestern China, is a prized target for bird photographers due to its iridescent plumage and secretive behaviour. Other key targets include the boldly patterned **Silver Pheasant** and the bright red-faced **Temminck's Tragopan**. Also present are several high-elevation endemics such as the **Sichuan Partridge** and **Emeishan Liocichla**.

Overnight: Deshengyuan Hotel, Pingshan

Day 3: Pingshan to Xinduqiao (470 km / 7 hrs)

After morning birding, the journey continues westward into the Tibetan Plateau. Xinduqiao, located at 3,600 metres above sea level in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is a scenic highland town surrounded by yak pastures, alpine forests, and meandering rivers. It is a key transition zone between the Sichuan Basin and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with a high diversity of montane bird species.

Overnight: Xinduqiao

**Day 4: Xinduqiao – Chinese Monal Site via Kangding**

Begin early to search for the **White-eared Pheasant** and **Blood Pheasant** in the subalpine forests. These pheasants inhabit coniferous woodlands and are highly adapted to cold, high-altitude environments. Later, drive via Kangding—once a frontier trading town on the Tea Horse Road—to reach a remote site that supports the rare and brilliantly coloured **Chinese Monal**.

Overnight: Homestay near Chinese Monal site

Day 5: Full-Day Chinese Monal Photography – Drive to Kangding

Spend the full day photographing the **Chinese Monal**, a high-elevation bird known for its iridescent blue, green, and gold plumage. It is one of the least photographed pheasants in the world due to its restricted range in the alpine meadows of central China. Later in the day, return to Kangding for overnight.

Overnight: Kangding

Day 6: Kangding – Wenchuan (330 km / 4.5 hrs)

In the morning, visit a site where **Lady Amherst's** and **Common Pheasants** display in a scenic snow-capped mountain setting. The journey then continues northeast to Wenchuan in Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture. Wenchuan is located near the Min Mountains and has rich forested gorges that are home to the Golden Pheasant and many other upland species.

Overnight: Wenchuan



Day 7: Wenchuan – Chengdu

The focus of the day is the **Golden Pheasant**, one of China's most iconic birds, easily recognised by its golden crest and crimson body. This species prefers dense understory in temperate evergreen and deciduous forests. After the session, drive back to Chengdu for an overnight stay near the airport in preparation for the next leg of the tour.

Overnight: Chengdu



Day 8: Chengdu – Xinyang (Flight)

Fly from Chengdu to Xinyang in Henan Province. Xinyang lies at the foot of the Dabie Mountains, a transitional zone between the North China Plain and the Yangtze River basin. This rural area is one of the few locations in China where **Reeve's Pheasant** can still be reliably found.

Overnight: Village near Reeve's Pheasant site, Xinyan

Day 9: Reeve's Pheasant Photography

Reeve's Pheasant is a stunning and endangered bird, endemic to China. Males have exceptionally long tails—sometimes over two metres—and striking black-and-white barred plumage. Photographing them requires patience in blinds near traditional feeding grounds. If time permits, a visit may be made to a nearby wetland site where **Crested Ibis**, once nearly extinct, have been successfully reintroduced.

Overnight: Xinyang

Day 10: Xinyang – Sanming (Bullet Train, 6.5 hrs)

Make the most of the early morning for additional bird photography. Then, travel via China's efficient high-speed rail system to Sanming in Fujian Province, located in the southeast. Sanming is part of the Wuyi Mountain Range and features subtropical broadleaf forests that are rich in endemic birdlife, particularly pheasants.

Overnight: Birding guesthouse, Sanming

Days 11–13: Sanming and Nearby Villages

These three days will be spent in forest hides deep within Fujian's protected reserves. Main targets include **Cabot's Tragopan**, a shy and brilliantly coloured pheasant restricted to southeast China; the elegant **Silver Pheasant**; and **Elliot's Pheasant**, which is endemic to southern China. **The White-necklaced Partridge** is another regional specialty found in dense undergrowth. This area offers one of the best remaining tracts of lowland and montane forest for pheasant photography in East Asia.

Overnight: Birding guesthouse, Sanming

Day 14: Departure from Sanming

The tour concludes in Sanming. You will be transferred to the airport for your departure flight. Sanming is connected by air to several major cities including Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Shanghai, although not all routes operate daily.

**Tour Cost**

USD: TBA (Including Domestic Flights and Bullet Train Ticket) Twin Share.

Accommodation

- We strive to book the hotels mentioned in the itinerary. However, if any are unavailable, we will arrange accommodation at similar properties of comparable standard.
- Prices are quoted on a twin-sharing basis. If you are a solo traveller and we cannot find a suitable participant to share the room, you may need to pay a single room supplement, which will be provided upon request at the time of booking.

Meals

- Mainly, local food will be served at most locations. We encourage you to embrace this as part of the experience.

Wildlife Sightings

- While our guides will make every effort to find the birds and animals mentioned in the itinerary, sightings cannot be guaranteed, as they depend on weather, season, and natural behaviour.

Rates Include:

1. All meals: breakfasts, lunches, and dinners.
2. Bottled drinking water throughout the tour.
3. All entrance fees as required by the itinerary.
4. Ground transportation in a suitable vehicle.
5. Services of an experienced English-speaking bird guide.
6. Domestic flight from Chengdu to Wuhan.
7. Bullet train from Xinyang to Sanming.

Rates Do Not Include:

1. International flights to and from China.
2. China visa fees.
3. Costs related to money transfers.
4. Laundry charges, and additional food and beverages beyond what is included.
5. Any other costs not explicitly mentioned in the "Rates Include" section.

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