

# Amazing Yellow Sea

2017 Autumn Tour

16 days starting from November 2nd, 2017

*Bird watching while helping to conserve the migratory shorebirds in China*



Photo by Chen Tengyi, one of our tour guides

## Basic Information

SBS in China and CCWCT have been working in the front line for shorebirds conservation over a decade. Click for more information;

<http://www.sbsinchina.com/col.jsp?id=500>

Read the trip report of Amazing Yellow Sea 2017 Spring Tour at

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Know our tour guides

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**Dates:** November 2 ~ November 17, 16 days

**Sites:** Shanghai, Coast of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian, Poyang Lake Nature Reserve, Dongzhai Nature Reserve, Yancheng Nature Reserve

### Highlights:

Coastal areas of China: Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Nordmann's Greenshank, Asian Dowitcher, Far Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Saunders's Gull, Relict Gull, Black-faced Spoonbill, Reed Parrotbill and over 200 migratory shorebirds and forest birds in the largest intertidal areas of China;

Wuyuan: Scaly-sided Merganser, Scimitar Babblers, Short-tailed Parrotbill, Dusky Fulvetta, Chinese Bamboo Partridge, and other forest birds including Pied Falconet, Red-billed Leiothrix, Red-billed Starling, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Chestnut Bulbul, Grey-headed Parrotbill etc.

Poyang Lake NR: Siberian Crane, Baer's Pochard and Geese of all kinds

Dongzhai NR: Reeves's Pheasant and the reintroduced Crested Ibis.

Yancheng NR: Red-crowned Crane, Japanese Reed Bunting and Baikal Teals

Led by China Coastal Waterbird Census Team surveyors who have been working as volunteers for over 10 years.

**Cost:** US\$ 4,800

Including all accommodation and travel cost in China and guide fee; single room supplement is US\$ 400; A 50% deposit is needed.

**Amazing Yellow Sea tour is a fundraising program, 10% income will be donated to China Coastal Waterbird Census Team.**

For more information, please contact [info@sbsinchina.com](mailto:info@sbsinchina.com) .

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**Itinerary:**

		<b>Sites and Activity</b>	<b>Bed</b>	<b>Hours in travel</b>
Day 1	Nov 2	Hotel Pickup	Rudong 如东	4 hours by bus
Day 2	Nov 3	Dongtai-Rudong birding	Rudong 如东	
Day 3	Nov 4	Dongtai-Rudong birding	Rudong 如东	
Day 4	Nov 5	Dongtai-Rudong birding	Shanghai 上海	4 hours by bus
Day 5	Nov 6	Hangzhou bay	Xiamen 厦门	3 hours by bus & late evening flight
Day 6	Nov 7	Zhao'an	Xiamen 厦门	4 hour by bus
Day 7	Nov 8	Wuyuan	Wuyuan 婺源	4 hours by high speed train
Day 8	Nov 9	Wuyuan	Wuyuan 婺源	
Day 9	Nov 10	Wuyuan	Yongxiu 永修	4 hours by bus
Day 10	Nov 11	Poyang Lake NR	Yongxiu 永修	
Day 11	Nov 12	Poyang Lake NR	Yongxiu 永修	
Day 12	Nov 13	Poyang Lake NR	Xinyang 信阳	4 hours by high speed train
Day 13	Nov 14	Dongzhai NR	Wuhan 武汉	1 hour by high speed train
Day 14	Nov 15	Yancheng NR	Sheyang 射阳	1.5 hour early flight
Day 15	Nov 16	Yancheng NR	Sheyang 射阳	
Day 16	Nov 17	Yancheng NR Back to Shanghai late evening	Shanghai 上海	7 hours by bus

Map of the tour



## **Day 1 November 2nd, 2017**

Four hours drive in the early morning from **Shanghai** to cross the mighty **Yangtze River** to reach one of the best shorebird watching sites in the world in **Dongtai**, guided by our water bird surveyors from China Coastal Waterbird Census (CCWC) and Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China (SBS in China). Night at **Rudong**.

**Dongtai-Rudong** is in the southern Yellow Sea. In autumn many shorebirds will gather from the north including Siberia and Alaska, to go on to spend their non-breeding season in south China, south/southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand etc. Some species use this site for a brief stop but some use it as a key staging site to finish their annual wing/tail/body moult. The ones doing the full moult here include Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann's Greenshank. Thus in September and October we have the best chance to get large counts as moulting takes more than one month. The best formal population estimate on Spoon-billed Sandpiper is based on the counts here and for several years our counts on Nordmann's Greenshank exceeds the current population estimate.

In early November, some individuals which finish moult earlier (female, failed breeder, 1st-summer) may have departed, while some which do the moult later (male) still stage here till late November. Thus we still have chance to find decent numbers of them.

Besides, we may see almost all other possible species of shorebirds in this flyway. Especially, we will find hundreds of the osculans subspecies of Eurasian Oystercatcher, treated as a full species by many experts as Far Eastern Oystercatcher, the population of which is only more than 10000 and Jiangsu coast supports almost of half of it in winter.

Dalmatian Pelican is another species our team monitors. The East Asian population is in trouble and thought to be no more than 100. November is the peak time of their southward migration through here and once we counted 112. Usually we can see tens of them in early November.

Black-faced Spoonbill and the very rare Baer's Pochard are in migration and we may encounter a few. Baikal Teal is possible.

Besides waterbirds, Rudong is also a hotspot for passerine migrants. Although it's late for many of them, we can still meet some late ones and some wintering ones eg. thrushes, buntings, robins and residents incl. the endemic Reed Parrotbill.

## **Day 2 and Day 3, November 3rd and 4th, 2017**

We will spend a whole day birding Dongtai-Rudong and night at Rudong.

## **Day 4, November 5th, 2017**

After an early morning birding for passerines, we will start to drive towards Shanghai and visit **Dongling**, the southern part of Rudong. Night at Shanghai.

Dongling has softer intertidal mudflat than Dongtai, which attracts more Far Eastern Curlew and gulls. Here we have our best chance to find small number of 1st-winter Relict Gull, together with larger number of Saunders's Gull.

And here we will say farewell to Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Nordmann's Greenshank and Black-faced Spoonbill and be ready for the next part of our journey further south.

## **Day 5, November 6th, 2017**

Today we will cross another mighty river mouth, called the **Hangzhou Bay**, which has the world's largest tidal bore. In October, 2016 for the first time three Spoon-billed Sandpipers caught in Dongtai were fitted with sat tags and in their southward migration two made brief stops at Hangzhou Bay. Years ago when we started monitoring Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Rudong, we also did some trips and found one here. In recent years, a local member joined CCWC team and visits the site frequently and has reported Spoon-billed Sandpiper. He has been the award-winner of several conservation projects. This time we will be accompanied by him and enjoy his stories on conservation when watching shorebirds, hoping to catch up with a Spoon-billed Sandpiper or two.

After birding we will drive along the southern bank of Hangzhou Bay to Hangzhou Airport to take an evening flight to overnight at **Xiamen** city in south Fujian Province.

## **Day 6, November 7th, 2017**

Xiamen Birdwatching Society is the earliest birdwatching society in China. It promotes the development of CCWC since 2005. From here we will follow surveyors from Xiamen to visit **Zhao'an** in southernmost Fujian. Among the three sat tagged Spoon-billed Sandpipers, one male spent its whole winter in Zhao'an and was seen by our surveyors. They also found the other two birds flagged at the breeding ground in Russia, with a few others without flags.

In the nearby wet paddies and aquaculture ponds, we can also find a few other shorebird species such as Long-toed and Temminck's Stints.

As to migrants, since it is in the south China, We may find some birds that we haven't seen in Rudong. When we drive back to stay overnight at Xiamen, if time permits, we may do night-spotting for Savanna Nightjar. In the name of the subspecies amoyensis, Amoy means Xiamen.

## **Day 7, November 8th, 2017**

We will take high speed train to **Wuyuan** city and overnight there for two nights. Wuyuan has very nice country side view in hilly areas with many old trees around villages. We will visit some birding locations including old villages which are homes to Pied Falconet and many other woodland birds eg. laughing thrushes, parrotbills, babblers...

In big rivers in Wuyuan Scaly-sided Merganser is winter visitor. Besides, we can find Mandarin Duck and Crested Kingfisher, White-crowned Fork tail, Long-billed Plover, Brown Dipper, Brown Crake etc. In some valleys we will go on looking for minivet, leafbird, owlets, raptors and Chinese Bamboo Partridge. Silver and Elliot's Pheasants are residents but very difficult to find.

Blue-crowned Laughingthrush (or called Courtois's Laughingthrush) had been lost for almost a hundred years and was rediscovered in Wuyuan only around the year 2000. It's a split from Yellow-throated Laughingthrush and is Critically Endangered. The total population is a little more than 300. They gather in some breeding colonies from mid-Apr to late July. After breeding, they disappear into hills and mountains and people still don't know where to find them in winter. If we are very lucky to meet some, it will fill in a little to the gap of knowledge and contribute to its conservation.

## **Day 8, November 9th, 2017**

Birding and night at Wuyuan.

## **Day 9, November 10th, 2017**

After a final morning birding in Wuyuan. We will drive to stay in **Yongxiu** for three nights, a city next to the huge freshwater lake called **Poyang**. Poyang Lake in winter supports tens of thousand of cranes, waterfowls, storks and shorebirds. Although not all of them have arrived, we have good chance to find Siberian Crane. Almost 99% of its population winters in this lake, together with White-naped, Hooded and Common Cranes. Geese we will look for include Swan, Greylag, Greater and Lesser White-fronted and Bean. Here we should have the best chance in the whole trip for Oriental Stork.

If weather is good, the skulking Japanese Swamp Warbler can sometimes show well. In the hills around the lake we may find some crows including Rook and a few Daurian Jackdaw.

### **Day 10 and Day 11, November 11th and 12th, 2017**

Birding Poyang Lake and night at Yongxiu.

### **Day 12, November 13th, 2017**

We will drive north to visit a different part of the lake to look for Baer's Pochard. Here we will take a high speed train to cross the Yangtse River again and travel to **Dongzhai Nature Reserve** in southern Henan Province.

Dongzhai Nature Reserve was set up especially for Reeves's Pheasant and now it's not difficult to see them in the woodlands. In the farmland we can see Collared Crow and the reintroduced Crested Ibis. The ibis was thought to be extinct and in the 1980's seven birds were found in central China. Now in several places captive populations can be found and a few years ago in Dongzhai some were released and became well established in the field.

Night at Dongzhai Nature Reserve.

### **Day 13, November 14th, 2017**

Birding Dongzhai Nature Reserve and night at **Wuhan** city.

### **Day 14, November 15th, 2017**

Early flight to **Yancheng**; Drive to and night at Yancheng Nature Reserve.

**Yancheng Nature Reserve** lies north of Dongtai-Rudong with different habitats, supporting many cranes, waterfowls, storks and spoonbills. Besides Red-crowned Crane, we will find again Hooded and Common, in which we often find one or two Sandhill Cranes which should be from the small East Asian population. In the open terrain we can find quite a few raptor species such as Peregrine, Merlin, Kestrel, Common Buzzard, Eurasian Sparrow hawk, Eastern Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier and even Upland Buzzard due that this is the northernmost site we will visit in the whole trip. The extensive farmland with reedbeds gives us good opportunity for Japanese Reed Bunting and Lapland Bunting. Also at dusk it's really spectacular to see thousands and thousands of ducks (in some years, thousands of Baikal Teal) coming to farmland to feed in the evening and the next morning when they leave, hundreds to thousands of cranes and geese coming in to feed.

### **Day 15, November 16th, 2017**

Birding and night at Yancheng NR.

### **Day 16, November 17th, 2017**

Birding Yancheng NR. Afternoon drive to night at Shanghai.