



# Birding Ecotours

## JAPAN BIRDING TOUR: PELAGIC TRIP AND MIYAKE-JIMA ENDEMIC BIRDING EXTENSION

06 – 08 MARCH 2026

06 – 08 MARCH 2027



*Black-footed Albatross is one of three albatross species possible on this short extension.*

This short three-day extension follows on from our two-week **Japan: Spectacular Winter Birds** tour and offers a pelagic birding trip via a ferry crossing to the small island of Miyake-Jima. We will also have a morning on the island looking for endemic, localized, and overwintering species unlikely or less likely to be seen on the main tour.

While our main tour will focus on those famous, stunning, and spectacular birds the country is so well-known for to world birders, such as **Steller's Sea Eagle**, **Blakiston's Fish Owl**, **Hooded Crane**, **White-naped Crane**, **Red-crowned Crane**, and so many more fantastic birds, this extension will look for a very different set of birds such as albatrosses, gulls, cormorants, seaducks, and localized species.

Our first day can be spent at your leisure, or we could go enjoy some fine Tokyo birding. As we will have just completed our main tour, we will see if there are any species the group has not seen properly yet or if there are any potential new species available to us. There are sure to be loads of great birding options on offer, Tokyo Bay in the winter is a fantastic birding area, particularly for wildfowl and gulls.



*Black-faced Spoonbill may be seen around Tokyo Bay.*

In the evening of the first day (around 10 pm), we will catch the overnight ferry to Miyake-Jima. “**Miyake Island**”, as it is also known, is a volcanic island in the **Izu archipelago** and is located approximately 110 miles (180 kilometers) southeast of Tokyo.

We will arrive on the island in the early morning of the following day and will have the full morning looking for several interesting endemic or localized species that can be found on the island, such as **Izu Thrush**, **Owston's Tit**, and **Izu Robin**. In the afternoon we will again depart for Tokyo, but the first half of our journey will be during daylight hours, and this is when we will

be in a great zone for pelagic species. Top target species at the time of our tour include **Black-footed Albatross**, **Laysan Albatross**, **Short-tailed Albatross**, **Providence Petrel**, and **Tristram's Storm Petrel**. Several other seabird species, cormorants, and gulls are also possible while we are crossing this section of the Philippine Sea. We will arrive back to Tokyo in the evening and following a night in a city hotel we will depart the country the following day.



*We hope to find three species of albatross on this trip, including **Laysan Albatross**.*

### Itinerary (3 days/2 nights)

#### Day 1. Optional birding in Tokyo and evening ferry departure to Miyake-Jima

This is the final day (Day 14) of our **Japan: Spectacular Winter Birds** tour. Those people not taking part in this extension will depart today. Those taking this extension can spend the day undertaking some optional birding (or sightseeing) around Tokyo, or enjoy some time resting, prior to catching the overnight ferry to Miyake-Jima island.

Our actual plan for the day will, in part, be determined by what we have seen around Japan on the preceding tour, however the Bay of Tokyo and the nearby coastal areas and ports can be checked for a wide range of species. This is also a perfect opportunity to rather go explore the many cultural highlights of Tokyo, or just enjoy exploring this huge and modern city.

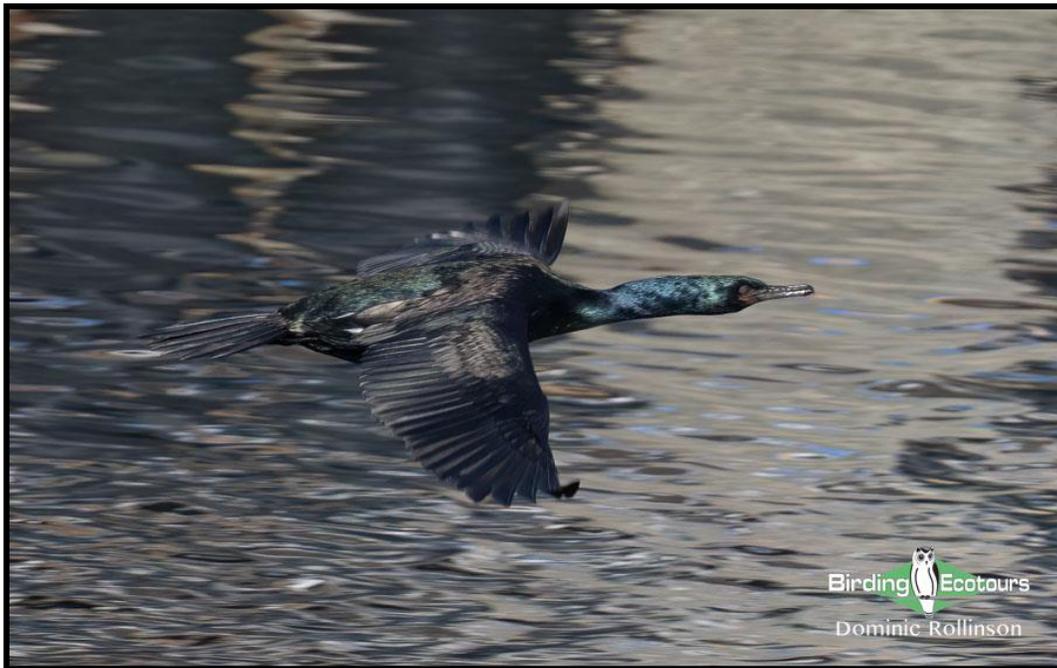
In the evening we will catch the overnight ferry from Tokyo to Miyake-Jima. Our night will be spent in comfortable cabins onboard.

Overnight: On ferry

## Day 2. Miyake-Jima endemic birding then afternoon ferry departure to Tokyo (pelagic birding from ferry)

We will arrive at Sabigahama Port in Miyake-Jima early in the early morning (around 05:00hrs.) where we may spot a range of gulls, and other species like **Japanese Cormorant**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, and **Meadow Bunting**, once it gets light.

We will then have until lunchtime on the island looking for the special birds found here. Top of the list will be **Izu Thrush**, **Owston's Tit**, **Izu Robin**, and **Japanese Wood Pigeon**. One of the best sites on the island is the area surrounding Tairo-ike in the south of the island (this is an important breeding ground for the rare Ijima's Leaf Warbler during the summer, but they won't be present during our stay, they will likely be overwintering further south in Taiwan or The Philippines). Other species we could discover during our time on the island include **Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker**, **Bull-headed Shrike**, **Japanese Bush Warbler**, **Warbling White-eye**, **Eurasian Wren**, **Pale Thrush**, **Red-flanked Bluetail**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, and **Meadow Bunting**.



*Pelagic Cormorant can be found around Tokyo and should be seen on this extension.*

In the early afternoon we will depart Sabigahama Port on Miyake-Jima for our return ferry trip back to Tokyo. The first part of this pelagic trip will be during daylight hours through a good area for pelagic species. During this section of the crossing, we will look for **Black-footed Albatross**, **Short-tailed Albatross**, and **Laysan Albatross**. At this time of year, we also have a good chance of seeing **Tristram's Storm Petrel** (this is a winter-breeding seabird species). Other pelagic species we might encounter include **Streaked Shearwater**, **Providence Petrel**, **Pomarine Jaeger** (Skua), and **Pelagic Cormorant**. A wide range of gulls are also possible in this section of water so we will grill those, as opportunities arise, though our prime focus will be on observing the three

species of albatross and other truly pelagic species, as this is a great opportunity to see them. Hopefully this pelagic birding will provide a great end to our short extension. We will arrive in Tokyo in the early evening and have a final dinner together.

Overnight: Tokyo

### Day 3. Departure from Tokyo

Time at leisure prior to your international departure from Tokyo. You can book your flight at any time today.

Overnight: Not included

*Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as weather conditions, availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors (such as health and safety). In addition, we sometimes must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.*

<b>Duration:</b>	3 days / 2 nights
<b>Group Size:</b>	5 - 10
<b>Dates:</b>	06 - 08 March 2026 06 - 08 March 2027
<b>Start:</b>	Tokyo
<b>End:</b>	Tokyo
<b>Prices:</b>	US\$995 per person sharing (2026) US\$1,060 per person sharing (2027)
<b>Single Supplements:</b>	US\$95 (2026) US\$125 (2027)

*The tour cost includes shared accommodation on the ferry, if you would like to upgrade to more private facilities, please let us know. Please see the "Ferry Accommodation Note" for further details.*

*If the boat trip is cancelled, we should be able to refund some of the refundable items purchased (such as the ferry ticket) after the tour.*

**Price includes:**

All accommodation (Day 1 until Day 2 as described above, or similar – note one night is spent on an inter-island ferry)  
Meals (from breakfast on Day 1 (included as part of the main tour) until breakfast on Day 3)  
Drinking water – please bring a refillable water bottle  
Expert tour leader  
Local bird and wildlife guide fees  
Birdwatching site entrance fees (including all national park fees) and travel permits  
Boat trips as referred to in itinerary  
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour

**Price excludes:**

International flights to and from Tokyo (Honshu)  
Expenditures due to flight/ferry cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)  
Airport transfers at beginning and end of tour  
Visa fees if visa required  
Departure tax  
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls etc.  
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing excursions  
Soft/alcoholic drinks  
Personal travel insurance  
Customary gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

**Important note:**

We will make plans with the hotel in Tokyo to ensure that we can leave bags here during our time on the ferry. This will allow you to leave the majority of your belongings in the hotel rather than take them on the boat trip, as we cannot easily leave luggage onboard the ferry while we are on Miyake-Jima.

The boat usually (and currently) leaves Tokyo at 22:30hrs and arrives in Miyake-Jima at 05:00hrs. The ferry then leaves Miyake-Jima at 13:35hrs, arriving back in Tokyo at 19:40hrs.

During the winter there is a moderate chance that the ferry service might get cancelled due to poor weather. If that happens, we have an alternative plan for Day 2, that will involve some further birding in the Tokyo area. We will only have the one chance for the pelagic and island birding trip (Day 1 into Day 2). If the weather prevents the trip, we will be unable to go and we are unable to reschedule the trip (we should be able to offer a refund from the ferry if the trip is cancelled due to poor weather).

There is also a chance that the crossing goes ahead but, due to bad weather and large swells, the Miyake-Jima landing/s does not happen. If this scenario is at all a possibility, and we stand the chance of getting stuck on the island for the night, we will rather stay onboard the ferry and spend the day pelagic birding from the ferry. If the landings do get cancelled due to bad weather, it will likely mean the pelagic birding will be very productive (strong winds improve pelagic birding) and we will likely have an excellent day of pelagic birding onboard the ferry.

**Ferry Accommodation Note:**

The tour is costed based on using Special 2nd class cabins for the outbound journey (for our overnight journey between Tokyo and Miyake Jima island) and 2nd class for the return journey back to Tokyo (when we intend to be outside birding). Details of these cabins are:

- Special 2nd class: a berth in a shared area with own curtain and locker
- 2nd class: space on shared floor area with locker and Japanese pillow (blankets can be hired)

If you would like to upgrade one or both of your journeys (costs differ for each journey) there are several options:

- 1st class: space on shared floor area with locker, futon, blanket, and Japanese pillow.
- Special 1st class (Japanese): space on shared floor area with locker, futon, blanket, and Japanese pillow. Limited to four passengers per cabin.
- Special 1st class (Western): berths with sheets and pillows. Limited to four passengers.
- Deluxe (VIP): two beds with sheets, pillows per cabin. Can be used as a single occupancy room.

Please note that the 1st class and deluxe (VIP) options are limited and can only be booked two months prior to departure. If you are interested in these options please let us know and we can provide the costs. We can then try and book you into your desired cabin.