

Japan. Bonin-Island.

Bonin island is actually a group of small islands known in Japan as the Ogasawara Gunto. They are located about 1000 km to the south from Tokyo. Famous among ornithologists for the **Bonin Island White Eye (*Apalopteron familiare*)**, formerly classified among the Honeyeaters. The island-group attracts Japanese holiday-makers and among them not so few birdwatchers, which is evident from different souvenirs for sale connected to the White eye, but few foreigners have so far made the 25 hour ferry-trip to these islands.

The promising perspective of going there is 100 % security in finding your target-bird, and nice sea-birding during the cruise.

The main island is Chichi-jima which is served once weekly by a ferry from Tokyo (25 hours journey). The bird only survives on the neighbor-island Haha-jima which is connected by a local ferry (2 hours) from Chichi-jima. It leaves in connection with the Tokyo ferry. (Travelling details further down.)

Sunday 13 may 2012; Left Tokyo from Takeshiba pier ferry terminal 10 am. a few *Black-tailed Gulls* (*Larus crassirostris*) seen inshore. As soon as we left for the open sea numerous *Streaked Shearwater* (*Calonectis leucomelas*) were encountered. *Brown Booby* (*Sula leucogaster*) a few seen

Monday 14 may 2012; Up and out early. *Wedge tailed Shearwater* (*Puffinus pacificus*) in big numbers. *Black-footed Albatross* (*Phoebastria nigripes*) 1 + 1. *Bulwer's Petrel* (*Bulweria bulweri*) every five minute or so.

At Chichi-jima harbor, went directly to buy the ticket for Haha-jima.

2 hours cruise. 1 Sperm-whale and *Bulwer's Petrel* in good numbers.

Landed at Haha-jima , afternoon. From the quay I walked to the right for 100 m., and then to the right at the road junction after which I took the second of the small streets to the left , looked into the first garden at my right hand side and there it was; **Bonin island White-Eye**. If you take to the left at the first junction instead and follow the windy road you will almost immediately be in more undisturbed habitat.

Along all the tracks and roads at the Haha-jima island this confinding bird will be seen with a few minutes interval (outnumbered at lower altitudes though by the Japanese white-eye). Often you will find it at the ground just a few meters away.

Tuesday 15 may 2012. Walked up to Mt. Chibusa (1.5 h.) **Bonin island White Eye** seen on many occasions without specifically looking for it. *White's Thrush* (*Zoothera aurea*), *Brown Eared Bulbul* (*Microscelis amaurotis f. squamiceps*), *Japanese Bush Warbler* (*Cettia diphona*), *Japanese Buzzard* (*Buteo (buteo) japonicus ssp. toyoshimai*).

Wednesday 16 may 2012 Ferry back to Chichi-jima; *Bonin Petrel* (*Pterodroma hypoleuca*), 1 seen well, *Bulweria* many.

Stayed at a guesthouse on Chichi-jima.

Tuesday 17 May 2012 – Friday 18 May 2012 Tokyo ferry same birds as coming out with one addition: 1 obs of *Tristram's Storm-Petrel* (*Oceanodroma tristramii*).

See Birdquest Japan 2007 report for more birds.

TRAVEL DETAILS.

I arrived in Japan without having made any reservation for the ferry and I didn't even know it's schedule. At present it leaves Tokyo on Sundays at 10 am. and return from Chichi-jima on Thursdays 2 pm. You can't make any reservations for the ferry later than two weeks before departure which means that if you come later you have to pay for the ticket. I believe that except for July-Sept it's little risk for the ferry to be fully booked. The price for a return ticket (including the Haha-jima extension, which is bought at Chichi-jima terminal), lowest class is about 500 euro. You will be provided with a floor space, bed-sheet and a pillow, which are lined out on the deck, each with a number and little more than elbow-space to the next passenger. (But thanks to Japanese discipline, integrity and politeness it's very smooth). I bought the ticket at the ferry terminal at Takeshiba pier. From Narita airport there are different options to reach the terminal. I went to Shinjuku station (with a rather slow train that took well over one hour). At Shinjuku I bought a ticket for 170 yen in an automat, which was sufficient for the 12 stations to Hamamatsucho station along the JR Yamanote metro /commuter train line (25 min.). At Hamamatsucho station northern exit there is a sign for Takeshiba pier (ferry terminal). 10 min. walking turning to the right at the exit. (Capsule hotel is two blocks up to the left from this station entrance) Try to make a reservation for the ferry or buy the ticket using the following contacts.

Ogasawara Kaiun

TEL: 03-3451-5171

(Except on Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays. 9:00~17:30)

WEB: <http://www.ogasawarakaiun.co.jp/>

Which is the ferry terminal purchase encounter.

Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) London office telef. +44 (0)20 7398 5678 I suggest you call them and let them enquire about the ferry schedule.

Another opportunity is to call or e-mail the Ogasawara Hahajima Tourist association. Tel. 04998-3-2300. E-mail info@hahajima.com they have a homepage www.hahajima.com You should book your accommodation with them anyway upon arrival on Haha-jima if that hasn't been done previously. The office is just in front of the landing at Hahajima. I stayed at the family-run Anna's guesthouse with dormitory-style lodging. 04998-3-2371

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Swedish Museum for Natural History Phanerogamic dep.