

MONGOLIA

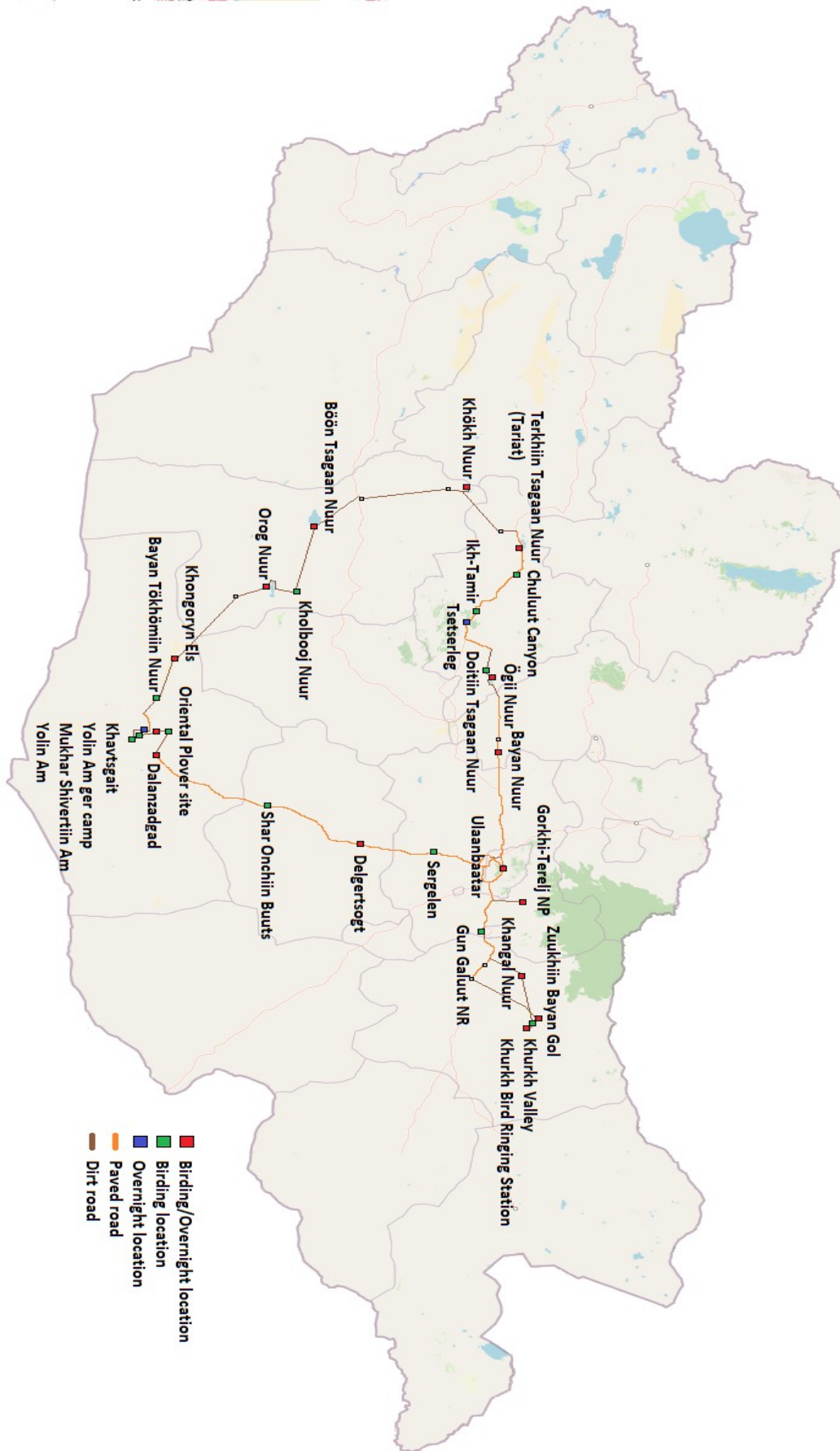
A report on birds seen on a trip to Mongolia
13 May – 05 June 2023



Black-billed Capercaillie *Tetrao urogalloides*

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INTRODUCTION

To undertake an extensive birding trip to Mongolia was already long on my radar.

As this is largely a camping trip and as I do not get any younger, I knew it was time to go and not to wait any longer. To make this trip cost effective I had to get a group of seven to eight birders together.

So I sent an email to some of my birding friends in the Netherlands with the question who was interested to do this trip in May/June 2023.

Within two weeks I had a group together and I could start to organize this trip.

After reading the excellent report by Miguel Demeulemeester of their very successful trip to Mongolia in 2019, organized by Starling reizen, I decided to contact them.

After several emails and discussions about target species, timing and itinerary we agreed on a trip from 14 May – 5 June 2023.

VISA

As of January 2023 a visa is no longer required to visit Mongolia.

GETTING THERE – FLIGHT

As the option to fly to Ulaanbaatar via Moscow for obvious reasons is no longer available there were two options left:

Turkish Airlines with a stopover at Istanbul or MIAT (Mongolian Airlines) with a stopover at Frankfurt or Istanbul.

As the stopover time at Istanbul was rather short and we did not want to risk that our luggage would not arrive on time in Ulaanbaatar we made the choice to fly directly from Frankfurt to Ulaanbaatar with MIAT. From all corners of the Netherlands we used the train to travel to Frankfurt Airport.

Originally we would fly back on June 4 but that meant that we had a stopover at Istanbul so we added an extra day to our trip because on June 5 we could fly directly to Frankfurt.

The travel by train to and from Frankfurt Airport was not without additional hassle as both the Dutch and the German Railways have their problems with delays and even cancellations of trains.

For a return ticket Frankfurt – Ulaanbaatar we had to pay 780 Euros.

I paid another 150 Euro for the return ticket by train from Venlo to Frankfurt Airport.

GETTING AROUND

We used three 4 x 4 Russian UAZ minibuses to travel around and these were both sturdy as well as surprisingly spacious and comfortable.

Two cars were used for our own transportation and one car took the two cooks and held the dining tent, camping equipment and food.

We drove 4200 km. during our trip and most of these kilometers off road. The drivers were very experienced and they had no problems coping with sand, mud and several river crossings.

One of the cars got stuck in the mud once but was pulled out by one of the other cars.

We had some minor mechanical issues which were solved easily by the drivers.

ACCOMMODATION

We spent five nights in a hotel, three nights in a Ger/Yurt camp, one night in some wooden huts and the rest of the nights we camped. Every team member had a tent for himself.

The tents were fine North Face tents and we were also provided with a sleep mattress and a very fine, large and warm sleeping bag, which we really needed.

Most of us brought an extra sleeping mattress from home to have some extra comfort.

Generally we slept very well though we had two extremely cold and windy nights in the Khangai Mountains.

FOOD & DRINKS

The cooking was absolutely fabulous. The cooking crew always provided us with an excellent breakfast and two warm meals a day with plenty of vegetables and in between there was always water, coffee and tea available. It was really amazing how the cooks succeeded in preparing such tasteful meals every day. Lunch and dinner were mostly served at beautiful sites and while the crew were busy preparing the meals and/or rebuilding the camp we could start birding in the immediate vicinity of these sites.

They often positioned the cars in a way that we were able to sit outside, out of the wind, to have our meals or if the weather was not good, which was often the case, we had our meals in the large dining/cooking tent. The camping chairs were also very comfortable.

MONEY

As we paid for the whole trip upfront to Starling reizen we only brought some cash with us for small expenses. A credit card can also be used easily in Mongolia.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Safety is not really an issue in this very sparsely populated country and nobody got sick during this trip. Take enough sun protection with you and a hat/cap against the sun. It makes sense to take a small medical kit with you as most of the time you are travelling in very remote areas.

WEATHER

We were rather unlucky with the weather conditions encountered on this trip. The spring in 2023 was late, cold, wet and windy. The wind is always a major factor in the spring time in Mongolia but during our trip we encountered a sand storm as well as a snow storm. The weather conditions made the birding from time to time rather unpleasant and hampered our birding significantly. Make sure to bring warm, even winter-proof clothing with you. I brought thermal underwear with me and this was actually rather essential to keep warm. Take woolen hats/caps, gloves and plenty of layers of clothing with you just as sturdy, waterproof hiking shoes and rain gear. But despite these weather conditions we saw most of our target species.

BIRDING

Mongolia is large and contains only 3.5 million people half of which live in the capital of Ulaanbaatar. The remaining people live their nomadic lives out in the country. Although Mongolia is sparsely populated by humans that does not apply to the large number of livestock, freely roaming the countryside. A staggering number of approximately 70 million sheep, horses, cows, goats and camels are present in this country and this has a profound impact on the natural habitat. Fences are not used to keep livestock in but to keep them out to protect the small areas of natural grasslands. Slowly an ecological disaster is developing in this country and this is in fact of great concern to the Mongolian government. Having said this the birding in Mongolia is fantastic, even if the weather conditions are not favorable. The spirit in our team was excellent and we had a great time together while doing this trip. Day by day you travel and bird in breathtaking landscapes and driving through these very remote areas that really makes you feel privileged. During spring time large numbers of birds are migrating through Mongolia and at the most unusual places you can expect migrating species. It pays off to bird small pockets of greenery in the immense, empty plains, as these often attract migrating birds and you can always expect to find a surprising species. I personally had nine target species and of these I missed the Chinese Bush Warbler. That species is always tricky as it normally arrives on its breeding grounds from the first week of June onward. Though we had some nice warm weather during our last days in the country (June 2-4) we dipped that species. Of course the cold, late spring did not help in this respect. We found out later that the first Chinese Bush Warbler was observed on June 11. Another target species we could not find was Mongolian Short-toed Lark. It is merely a passage migrant in the areas we visited in our itinerary and we just did not come across this species. We observed 258 species during our trip which is not bad considering the weather conditions but that did not come close to the amazing number of 295 species observed during the 2019 trip of Demeulemeester and his team. Highlight of our trip were the visits to the display site of the Black-billed Capercaillie during the first two days of our trip. The major dip of our trip was the fact that we were unable to observe Relict Gull despite extensive searching and scoping at suitable sites where the species had been seen in the past. In our itinerary/route the Relict Gull is a rare passage migrant on the steppe lakes visited by us. Many lakes are suffering from drought and some of them lost more than half of their water during the last couple of years. The terrible weather conditions at Böö'n Tsagaan Nuur, where the species was seen a couple of days before we arrived did not help either. Three other members of our team and I had seen the species at Beidahe and Happy Island, China in 2008 and 2002 respectively but for the others this was a really important species. And frankly it was for all of us a bit of a deception that we were unable to find Relict Gull on this trip. This is the reason that some bird tours include a trip to a lake more to the west which harbors breeding pairs of Relict Gull.

The implication of this option means that you have to add two to three days to your itinerary as this lake is situated approximately 600 km west from the standard route.

In retrospect I would certainly consider this option when planning a trip to Mongolia.

Of course you have to add some extra days to your itinerary or you have to skip for instance the khurkh Valley extension. That all depends on your priorities.

EQUIPMENT

We brought five scopes with us which we used extensively and these are in fact essential on a birding trip to Mongolia. I did not bring mine and I am very grateful to my birding companions who did bring their scopes and allowed me many times to use their scope to observe a species.

Wiel and I carried a Canon 7d Mark II with 300 mm lenses with 1.4 extender with us and others used different cameras and lenses to photograph birds.

Jan Hein van Steenis compiled a nice and complete selection of bird songs and calls of Mongolian birds which were useful during several occasions.

I brought a couple of spare batteries with me for my camera and a power pack to charge cameras and phone. But it turned out that we could easily charge our stuff in the car while travelling from one site to the next one if you had the right adapter with you.

Communication possibilities are limited in Mongolia as at many areas you do not have access to the internet.

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USEFUL ADRESSES/CONTACTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all many thanks to our Mongolian crew who made sure we had a successful and comfortable trip to this great country.

Secondly I want to thank all the members of our team. Despite the sometimes difficult weather conditions the spirit in the team was great and together we saw a fine selection of very good birds and on the road we had many interesting conversations.

Thanks to Jan Hein van Steenis, Peter de Rouw and Hemme Batjes for providing me with info about the mammals observed on this trip.

Finally thanks to the team members who helped me with corrections and improvements of the rough version of this report.

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DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 0: 12 May

Late afternoon Roel, Frans's son, drove my brother Frans and me to the train station of Venlo.

At 6 pm we took the slow train from Venlo to Dusseldorf. The train was rather crowded because of the cancellation of a previous departure of the same train.

We arrived at Dusseldorf around 7 pm where we ate some food before we boarded the fast train from Dusseldorf to Frankfurt at 8 pm.

At 9.30 pm we arrived at Frankfurt International Airport and took the shuttlebus to our hotel. Holiday Inn Airport hotel.

Day 1: 13 May

We were not in any hurry, so at 10.30 am we took the shuttle to the airport Terminal 1. It turned out that we had to take a yellow bus from Terminal 1 to Terminal 2 for our check-in. This only takes 10 minutes and at Terminal 2 we met all the other members of our birding team.

Most of us arrived by train, some with more hassle than others, and Jan Hein who actually lives in Germany, arrived by car. With a small delay we flew at 3.30 pm from Frankfurt to Ulaanbaatar.

I cannot say that the entertainment the company offered us on this flight was very inspiring.

Day 2: 14 May

At 5.35 am we arrived at Ulaanbaatar and after collecting our luggage we met our guide Tuugii in the arrival hall. We traveled with 2 minivans from the airport to Hotel Mongolica, situated at the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar.

After checking in, we went out birding in the immediate vicinity of the hotel.

The weather was overcast with some sunny spells and it was rather windy, which is a normal feature in Mongolia during spring.

From 7.30 to 11.30 am we birded the scrub and riparian forest along the Tuul River, near hotel Mongolica and saw a nice selection of species.

We observed several species of thrush like **Naumann's Thrush, Dusky Thrush, Eye-browed Thrush, Red-throated Thrush, Black-throated Thrush** and I was the only person briefly observing a skulking **White's Thrush**.

Overhead **Black-eared Kite** and twice a small flock of **Swan Geese** were seen. In a secluded part of the river we found a pair of **Common Mergansers** and at least five **Mandarin Ducks**.

Additional species found in the area include some nice **Azure Tits**, several pairs of **Siberian Long-tailed Rosefinches**, a single **Oriental Turtle Dove**, a flushed **Eurasian Woodcock**, at least three **Eurasian Wrynecks**, plenty of **Daurian Jackdaws, Eurasian Nuthatch** of the subspecies *asiatica*, **Daurian Redstart** and a few **White-cheeked Starlings**.

Around noon we had lunch in our hotel and after lunch and a small rest we went out birding again.

We observed more or less the same species as we found in the morning but an interesting snipe caused some debate. The first of several discussions about the identification of **Swinhoe's/Pintail Snipe**.

All in all a nice first birding day and a fine introduction to the avifauna of Mongolia.

After dinner in the early evening we went to bed as we had to leave early next morning at 4 am for our drive to the Black-billed Capercaillie site in Gorkhi-Terelj NP.

Day 3: 15 May

We got up at 3 am and at 4 am we met our crew and their vehicles outside of our hotel.

It took almost three hours to reach our campsite in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.

It was bitterly cold and we encountered rather overcast weather conditions.

We knew that the Black-billed Capercaillies start to display just after dawn and that their display activities decrease significantly after 7 am.

So immediately after our arrival we walked to the nearby display site inside the forest and we surely were not disappointed. First a female crossed the track and then we reached the core area of the display site.

The next hour or so we had at least six fully adult male **Black-billed Capercaillies** displaying around us in the forest. What an amazing spectacle we were watching and surely one of the highlights of this trip.

Meanwhile the crew had erected the camp. It turned out that we were three tents short but after some phone calls it was arranged that we would receive additional tents early next morning when driving to our next destination. It meant that for the coming night some of us had to share a tent.

Most of the day we birded along a broad track in the immediate vicinity of our campsite, with some forays into the forest itself.

We flushed several times an **Ural Owl** and in the end I was the lucky one who briefly saw the bird perched.

Other species encountered in the forest that day include **Eye-browed Thrush, Red-throated Thrush, Coal Tit, Willow Tit**, our first **Pallas's Leaf Warbler, Eurasian Treecreeper, Red-flanked Bluetail, Olive-backed Pipit, Little Bunting, Black-faced Bunting** and **Pallas's Reed Bunting**.

In the afternoon we birded a different stretch of the forest and we succeeded in obtaining good views of a pair of **Hazel Grouse**.

At the edge of the forest we saw **Eastern Buzzard, Blyth's Pipit** and several gorgeous **Pine Buntings**. After an excellent dinner, the first of many fine meals we enjoyed during this trip, we settled in our tents. With two persons in one tent it was rather crowded and it would be rather uncomfortable if this would be the standard for the entire trip. It was a rather windy and cold night and the temperature dropped below zero.

Day 4: 16 May

When we crawled out of our tents just after dawn, we were in for a surprise.

The world had turned white as the ground was covered with a thick layer of snow. It was very cold but sunny and at 6.30 am we walked through the snow into the forest to the display site of the Capercaillies. It was truly an awesome experience to watch these birds displaying in the snow. The snowy conditions really gave an extra dimension to the whole show. After indulging ourselves in this spectacle we walked back to have some breakfast. After breakfast we birded a couple of hours in the surrounding forest in glorious sunshine which gave us the same set of birds we observed the previous day.

We discussed our options and decided to leave and to start our long drive south towards Dalanzadgad. After dismantling our camp we walked 30 minutes to a broader track to give our cars more flexibility to drive out of the snowy forest.

We drove at 9.30 am to the main road between Ulaanbaatar and Dalanzadgad and met a car who brought us three extra tents for the rest of our trip.

We drove towards Dalanzadgad until 12.30 when we stopped for lunch near Sergelen. The weather was still cold and windy but sunny. Our lunch stop was just opposite of a rock face where a pair of **Sakers** had their nest with three young birds. Great to observe how these birds attacked any raptor who came close to their nesting site. During our stay we saw them chase off **Golden Eagle, Upland Buzzard** and **Black-eared Kite**.

While the crew was preparing lunch we birded the surrounding area. A small stream with some marshy margins attracted species like **Citrine Wagtail, Pallas's Reed Bunting** of the subspecies *lydiae*, **Little Bunting, Black-faced Bunting, Temmink's Stint** and we found an exhausted **Siberian Rubythroat** in the middle of the plain.

After lunch we continued towards Dalanzadgad and at 5 pm we erected our camp near a small plantation at Delgertsogt.

From 5.30 to 7 pm we birded around this small plantation. Several pairs of **Mongolian Larks** were present and other species observed were **Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Asian Short-toed Larks, Olive-backed Pipit, Lesser Whitethroat, Horned Lark** of the subspecies *brandti*, some very obliging **Pallas's Leaf Warblers**, a few **Rock Sparrows** and at dusk a small flock of **Pallas's Sandgrouse** was seen in flight.

Day 5: 17 May

Some of us went out at dawn and found a fine male **Japanese Sparrowhawk** just next to the plantation.

We birded around the plantation until 09.30 am. Best species was no doubt the **White's Thrush** which showed itself completely in the open.

At 10 am we continued towards Dalanzadgad. Around noon we had lunch at a site called Shar Onchiin Buuts. It was also a small plantation in the middle of the plains, with some water dripping pipes. We birded the area for a full hour and scored among others **Red-throated Thrush, Dusky Thrush, Desert Wheatear, Wryneck, Citrine Wagtail** and **Little Bunting**.

In the afternoon we continued and we arrived at a large plantation (Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation), close to the airport of Dalanzadgad around 4.30 pm.

We birded the area until 6.30 pm. A soaring **Booted Eagle** showed nicely and phyllos observed in the scrub were **Dusky Warbler, Arctic Warbler** and **Siberian Chiffchaff**.

A stonechat found at the end of the plantation was identified by us as a **Stejneger's Stonechat**. **Isabelline Shrike** was rather common. A Sparrowhawk was briefly seen and this was probably another Japanese Sparrowhawk but the observation time was too short to be absolutely certain of its id.

Our first **Amur Falcon** passed by and afterwards we drove the short distance to our hotel in Dalanzadgad. Khan Uul Hotel.

The small park in front of our hotel sometimes hold **Desert Finch**, which was a lifer for one of us. A small stroll through the park did not yield anything though.

Day 6: 18 May

At dawn we left for the short drive to a waterhole on the outskirts of Dalanzadgad.

During the full hour we spent at this site we observed seven species of duck, **Great Crested Grebe**, several species of wader including our first **Long-toed Stint** and our first **White-winged Terns** of the trip. At the edge of the pond we found **Crested Lark** and in the adjacent bushes some **White-cheeked Starlings**.

We returned to our hotel to have breakfast. During our breakfast Tuugii walked in and casually mentioned that he had just seen a single **Desert Finch** in the small park, opposite of our hotel.

We decided to spend another half hour to try to relocate the bird but in the end we only found some **Common Rosefinches** and a fly-by **White-crowned Penduline Tit**.

Then we left for our drive to the plains, west of Dalanzadgad, where we were hoping to find one of the main targets of this trip, **Oriental Plover**.

It was cold, very windy but sunny. It took a while but finally we connected with at least one pair of this enigmatic species. One of the birds was accompanied by a **Greater Sand Plover**.

We studied the birds for a while before we continued further to the west. Meanwhile we received news that a serious sand storm was heading our way and after some discussion we decided not to camp but to spend the night at a nearby Ger Camp at Khavsgait.

Around noon we arrived at Khavsgait where we had lunch. We walked/birded around the camp before we headed into the nearby gorge for an extensive walk.

A **Black-throated Thrush** was located around the main building hiding from the strong wind.

During our walk we observed a fine **Golden Eagle, Upland Buzzard**, many **White-winged Snowfinches** and several **Godlewski's Buntings**. The gorge is normally a good site for **Grey-necked Bunting** but we did not locate any.

Some of us opted for a second walk into a smaller side valley and found a few **Pied Wheatears**.

During the night the wind increased to gale force and apparently a sand storm passed the area. We slept very well inside our comfortable ger. We heard that other groups had to hide as well and were unable to travel any further because of the poor visibility.

Day 7: 19 May

At dawn we drove to the nearby Mukhar Shivertiin Am where our main target was the endemic **Kozlov's Accentor**. It was sunny but extremely windy and very, very cold. We encountered hardly any bird activity.

It took us several hours before finally at a smaller side valley we found a **Kozlov's Accentor**.

Initially very skittish but in the end we all had fine views. Later we found another bird.

The accompanying cast this morning included **Himalayan Griffon Vultures, Cinereous Vulture, Golden Eagle, Chukar, Brown Accentor**, and **Chinese Beautiful Rosefinches**. There is a lot of uncertainty about which species of Beautiful Rosefinch actually occurs at this site. The most recent info, supported by recorded vocals and photos, indicates that this is **Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch**.

Twice we observed a raptor which we initially thought to be a **Long-legged Buzzard** but it turned out to be a look-a-like **Upland Buzzard**.

High upon one of the slopes we observed a group of Siberian Ibexes.

At noon we returned to our camp to warm up and to have lunch. After lunch we drove to another gorge: the famous Yolin Am. We birded this beautiful area from 3.30 to 6.30 pm.

Raptor species seen that afternoon included **Golden Eagle, Upland Buzzard** and of course **Bearded Vulture**. At one time I had three birds in the same view through my binoculars.

At a rock face we had great views of a **Wallcreeper** and other species observed that afternoon were **Citrine Wagtail, Water Pipit** of the subspecies *blakistoni*, **Twite, Mongolian Finches**, and **Brown Accentor**.

When we left the area we noticed a flock of migrating **Crested Honey Buzzards**.

Nara, the head of the crew asked us if we were willing to spend an extra night at another Ger Camp as the weather conditions for the coming night did not look very promising. Very windy and very cold. As this was not included in our itinerary we agreed on paying some extra money to avoid the hassle and to have some extra comfort. A very wise decision.

Day 8: 20 May

After a very comfortable night in Yolin Am ger camp we started our drive further west through the Gobi area.

Around 8 am we arrived at a large lake area, Bayan Tokhomiin Nuur, where we birded until 10 am.

This interesting wetland had a lot of birds. We observed only regular species and nothing really special, besides an **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** and a distant adult **Pallas's Gull**. The weather was cold, windy but sunny.

One of the cars got stuck in the treacherous, marshy area around the Nuur but was pulled out quickly by one of the other buses.

After this short intermezzo we continued to an area where we were hoping to find our next target, the **Mongolian Ground Jay**. When we reached the area, it did not take long before we laid eyes on one of this sought-after species. At least four different birds were observed.

In the same area we were surprised to stumble upon another **Kozlov's Accentor** and we also found a couple of **Steppe Grey Shrikes**.

After this successful morning we drove to a nearby well (Naran Bulag) where we had lunch.

Around the well and the adjacent small bushes we observed **Hoopoe, Long-toed Stint**, a few **Greenish Warblers**, a single **Arctic Warbler** and **Taiga Flycatchers** of course.

In the afternoon we continued towards Khongoryn Els, an astonishing beautiful area with impressive sand dunes.

Late afternoon we checked two sites where in the past **Saxaul Sparrow** had been seen, but we failed to find any and only found **Rock Sparrows**.

We observed a few **Pintail Snipes** but another flushed snipe caused again a lot of debate between us. We had nice views of several flocks of **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, a single **Oriental Turtle Dove, Brown Shrike**, a few **Asian Desert Warblers**, a nice male **Pied Wheatear, Desert Wheatear, Siberian Rubythroat, Pallas's Reed Bunting** and **Black-faced Bunting**.

We spent the night in a large, comfortable ger camp, Gobi Discovery Camp.

The set-up of this ger camp is very similar to the set-up of a campsite with us. There is a small building with toilet and washing facilities and a place to eat something.

In the ger/tent itself there is room for usually four people with a heater in the middle with a drain pipe upwards. Beds have been placed all around.

Day 9: 21 May

Tuugii received info that a pair of **Saxaul Sparrow** was breeding in a sheep shed close to a local ger camp. We went to the place and had brief but good views of this pair before the birds vanished in the surrounding area.

One of our cars needed some fixing and in the mean time we birded the general area at Khongoryn Els. Several **Asian Desert Warblers** gave nice views.

Then we started our long drive to the Jaran Bogd area. We made a stop at a camel drinking place, which was situated in a nice patch of Saxaul bushes. Within minutes we observed our first **Saxaul Sparrow** and when we left we had seen at least 11 **Saxaul Sparrows**.

We continued and traveled through a beautiful and unspoiled area for the greatest part of the day.

Some casual road stops produced species like **Saker Falcon, Chukar** and **Lesser Kestrel**.

Late afternoon we left the mountains and just in front of us Orog Nuur appeared.

We decided to erect our camp, close to the lake and next to a small plantation.

When the crew was preparing camp and dinner we made an extensive walk along the lake.

In the reed beds we found several singing **Paddyfield Warblers** and **Savi's Warblers**. A few **Bearded Reedlings** showed in the same area and **Brown-cheeked Rail** was heard but not seen.

All the gulls were carefully checked for possible Relict Gull but we only observed a single **Brown-headed Gull** and two **Little Gulls** between the **Black-headed Gulls, Mongolian Gulls** and the **Pallas's Gulls**.

A single **Siberian Sand Plover** was notable as this was the only observation of this species during our trip.

Displaying snipes were identified as mostly **Common Snipes** but we also identified two calling **Swinhoe's Snipes. Eastern Marsh Harriers** were hunting above the reed beds.

Next to our camp was a small patch of greenery and in this patch we found a single **White's Thrush** which was unfortunately rather skittish.

Day 10: 22 May

The first two hours after dawn we birded along the edge of Orog Nuur.

Twice we observed a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** and several **Red-throated Thrushes** were feeding in the open just next to our camp.

Isabelline Shrike, Hoopoe, Lesser Whitethroat, Hume's Leaf Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler and **Common Rosefinch** were observed in the small patch of greenery near our camp.

We decided to continue to Kholbooj Nuur as, according to Tuugii, we would have better chances to find a **Relict Gull** at this site.

So our expectations were high, also because de Meulenmeester in 2019 had excellent observations at this site, including some Relict Gulls.

When we arrived at Kholbooj Nuur we were rather disappointed to find that large areas of what used to be a lake had fallen dry and birds were few and far between both in species and in numbers.

Nevertheless we carefully scanned the whole area and best bird was a single **Greater Sand Plover**.

We discussed our options and as Kholbooj Nuur did not seem to yield anything new or interesting for us, we decided to continue to our next site, Böön Tsagaan Nuur.

This lake is one of the best areas in our itinerary to find a Relict Gull and a birding group who visited the area before us had actually seen the species at that lake, so we were eager to go there and give the area a thorough scan. When we arrived at the lake we encountered overcast weather conditions.

It was very windy, cold and we had some rain from time to time.

The camp was erected close to the lake and the large observation tower.

Until dusk we scanned the lake at both sides from the tower and from the lake shore itself.

We observed large numbers of **Caspian Terns**, a single **Little Grebe**, a single **Ferruginous Duck**, a pair of **Red-breasted Mergansers** and scoped a distant **Red-necked Phalarope**.

At least three **Pallas's Fish Eagles** were observed and one of these birds passed by at close range, giving great views from the observation tower.

A single **Mew Gull** was observed from the tower and a **White-tailed Eagle** was also present in the same area.

Day 11: 23 May

Today we visited several sites along this large lake, by car and by foot. The weather was terrible as we had a lot of rain and very strong wind that did not make a very nice combination for birding.

Despite these weather conditions we tried all day very hard to locate our main target for this area, a Relict Gull, but to no avail.

Highlight was the observation of several **Asian Dowitchers**.

Species seen that day include summer-plumaged **Ruffs**, a single **Whimbrel** and more or less the same species as the previous day.

Day 12: 24 May

When we crawled out of our tents, the weather was still not very good.

Instead of another short birding session along the lake we decided to leave and to try our luck at other steppe lakes for the Relict Gull during the next couple of days.

We drove from Böön Tsagaan Nuur to Khukh Nuur in the Khangai Mountains.

We had lunch along a stream in an area called Buutsagaan.

A stroll along this stream gave us species like **Bar-headed Geese, Avocets, Common Redshank and Mongolian Larks**.

Another stop was made in a village called Gurvanbulag.

Meanwhile Peter de Rouw received a call that his mother was taken to hospital and that her health situation was rapidly deteriorating and it became clear that he had to consider to return back home.

The last stretch to our camp site, near Khukh Nuur was completely off-road and our cars carefully drove over the plains, guided by the GPS coordinates provided by Tuugii.

When we arrived in the area we found Khukh Nuur completely frozen and the upper parts of the surrounding hills covered with a small layer of snow.

It was still cold and windy and we had some snow from time to time.

Nevertheless we immediately started to bird along the lower hill sides, close to our campsite.

A pair of **Güldenstädt's Redstart** was the highlight of our afternoon birding session. We also observed **Willow Ptarmigan**, a couple of **Brown Accentors** and a pair of **Altai Accentors**.

We were glad to return to camp and to have some hot coffee or tea.

Day 13: 25 May

It was an extremely cold night, the coldest of the entire trip. We estimated that the temperature dropped to below minus 5 to minus 8 degrees during the night. Combined with a strong cold wind that makes for a very cold night. My brother Frans had a plastic bottle of water inside his tent and the next morning this bottle was transformed into a solid block of ice. I had 2 pairs of socks, thermal clothing and even a woolen cap on my head to keep myself warm during the night.

Anyway, after some much appreciated fried eggs and hot coffee and tea we were ready to go.

We slowly walked into the direction of the slopes on the higher parts of the mountain ridge to try for one of our main targets today, the **Altai Snowcock**. We had no problems in locating another sought-after species, the **White-throated Bush Chat**, on the lower slopes. In the course of the morning we observed four to five pairs of this species. When planning this trip I was worried that we would be in the area too early in the season for this species but I need not to have worried about this as we had no problems at all. This must be one of the best sites to observe this rare bush chat.

Despite the cold and the strong wind we observed other nice species like **Brown Accentor, Altai Accentor** and an **Alpine Accentor**.

The *suskini* subspecies of the **Asian Rosefinch** gave brief but fine views but **Altai Snowcock** proved to be difficult to locate.

Because of the wind it was hard to hear the distinctive call of the snowcock. After a few hours the wind dropped a bit and finally we heard a snowcock call and it was Jan Hein who discovered the bird in the scope. We all could observe the bird in the scope, slowly walking along the slope for the next 20 minutes and that was a great relief. It was my last snowcock species.

A second bird was heard but could not be found. At one time the snowcock appeared on top of the ridge and gave us another opportunity to study the bird in the scope.

We decided to walk back to our camp when Tuugii noticed that he had lost his phone!! That was painful as besides all the personal info, including many pictures, he had all the info about birding sites on his phone. We decided to walk back in line along the slope in a desperate attempt to relocate his phone and it was again Jan Hein who found the thing. Amazing.

Relieved, especially Tuugii, we walked back to camp to have lunch.

The afternoon we birded the same general area and despite some rain and snow we had a nice birding session. I mainly focused on photographing some species like **White-throated Bush Chat** and **Willow Ptarmigan**. In retrospect we could have traveled to the next area to save time.

Some excitement arose in the late afternoon when one of our drivers, who were scanning the opposite hill sides with our scopes, suddenly claimed to have a Wolverine in the scope.

Unfortunately, in the excitement, he knocked over the scope and afterwards we were unable to relocate the animal.

Day 14: 26 May

After another very cold night we broke camp after breakfast and drove the short distance to nearby Khukh Nuur. We started to walk along the scrubby hillside next to the lake to try for our next target, **Eversmann's Redstart**. We observed plenty of *Phylloscopus* warblers, mainly **Pallas's Leaf Warblers**, **Dusky Warblers** and some **Siberian Chiffchaffs**. A male **Common Rock Thrush** was flushed when looking for the redstart.

First we found a female **Eversmann's Redstart** and later Tuugii found a nice male.

Other species recorded were several **Brown Accentors** and **Daurian Redstart**.

Large areas of the lake were frozen but in the open areas we found a small flock of **Stejneger's Scoters**, a large flock of **Common Goldeneye's**, **Common Mergansers**, **Black-necked Grebes**, a single **Horned Grebe** and a **Black-throated Diver**.

Most of the day we drove towards Tariat. It became clear that Peter definitely had to return home. Starlingreizen, in cooperation with their local ground agent, Snowleopardtours, did a fine job in organizing the trip back home for him.

It was agreed that the next day, May 27th, we would spend the night in a place called Tsetserleg. A car would drive Peter all the way from Tsetserleg to Ulaanbaatar and they had made arrangements for accommodation, meals, transport to the airport and, via the travel insurance company, for a flight from Ulaanbaatar to Frankfurt.

On our way to Tariat we endured snow, even heavy snow fall and we discussed our options to spend the night in a hotel or pension instead of camping out. In one of the larger villages – Khangai - we asked around but nothing suitable was available. We lost some time as one of our cars was hit by another car in the center of the village, which meant a lot of discussion about who was responsible for the incident.

It was a most curious accident as actually there was hardly any traffic at all in this place.

Near Tariat the weather cleared and just opposite Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur we made camp.

A late afternoon stroll along the forest edge gave us a soaring **Eastern Buzzard**, **Eurasian Nuthatch** and **Olive-backed Pipit**.

Day 15: 27 May

Jan Hein made a short pre-breakfast walk and found a pair of **Eversmann's Redstart**, just close to our camp along the forest edge. After breakfast I was able to relocate this pair and to take fine pictures of the male.

During our walk along the forest edge we heard a presumably **Three-toed Woodpecker** call and we walked steep uphill towards the area where the bird was calling from. In the end we had fantastic views of a pair of this woodpecker species.

In the same area we observed a soaring **Booted Eagle** and a **Red Crossbill** was heard.

We drove to nearby Terkhiiin Tsagaan Nuur and birded around the lake.

Whooper Swans were breeding at the lake side and we observed a pair of **Black-throated Divers**, small flocks of **Stejneger's Scoters**, a single **Horned Grebe** and a pair of **Black-necked Grebes**.

We left the lake area and we made a stroll along a nearby stream and its adjacent scrub.

Nothing special but we did observe **Pine Bunting** and **Black-faced Bunting**.

After lunch we traveled further towards Tsetserleg.

At Chuluut Canyon we made a birding stop which gave us a soaring pair of **Golden Eagle** and another random birding stop was made in the riverine scrub and woodland near Ikh Tamir.

We found **Spotted Flycatcher**, several **Dusky Warblers**, **Brown Shrike** and **White-crowned Penduline Tit**.

It was a relief to have a fine shower in our hotel in Tsetserleg.

Day 16: 28 May

After breakfast we said goodbye to Peter who was picked up by a driver, who was arranged by Bogi, and who would drive him to Ulaanbaatar. Of course it was a bit of a sad moment.

We traveled from Tsetserleg to Ogii Nuur with a lunch/birding stop at Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur.

At Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur we observed some interesting geese. A single **Greater White-fronted Goose** and three **Taiga Bean Goose** of the subspecies *middendorffii*.

When we arrived at Ogii Nuur we drove towards the large observation tower where there was also a ringing station and made camp close to the tower.

In the afternoon we birded extensively along the shores of Ogii Nuur. The weather was not bad, it was sunny and not very windy. We observed many wader species and best species was a single **Asian Dowitcher** in gorgeous summer plumage. Small numbers of **Broad-billed Sandpiper**, **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Long-toed Stint** and **Sanderling** were some of the best wader species observed.

When scoping through the many **Whooper Swans** we located a **Mute Swan**.

A single adult **Pallas's Gull** and two **Little Gulls** were found and incredible numbers of **White-winged Terns**. A female **Yellow-breasted Bunting** gave fine views, a few **Eastern Yellow Wagtails** of the subspecies *macronyx* and also several **Pere David's Snowfinches** were located among the many **Horned Larks**.

At dusk I wandered a bit along the edge of the lake when suddenly a large flock of **Citrine Wagtails** came in and landed in the area just in front of me. One *calcarata* was identified by me in this flock of *citreola* Citrine Wagtails.

Day 17: 29 May

The weather had changed overnight. It was rather cold, windy and cloudy.

In the early morning we made another stroll along the shore of Ogii Nuur. Really impressive numbers of **White-winged Terns** were observed. A few **Black Terns** were found with the **White-winged Terns**.

After taking down our camp we drove along the lake where we made several birding stops to scan the lake. A large flock of **Red-crested Pochards** was floating on the lake but a few **Falcated Ducks**, including some immaculate males, were new for the trip and additionally three **Eastern Spot-billed Ducks** were found among the large numbers of waterfowl.

Mid-morning we carried on to our next destination, Bayaan Nuur. A lunch stop was made near Dashinchilen.

As soon as we arrived at Bayaan Nuur we started to bird along this lake. The water level at this lake was also rather low and large parts of the area were completely dried up.

At the marshy edge of the lake we succeeded in observing some species like **Eastern Marsh Harrier**, a female **Hen Harrier**, **White-naped Cranes**, **Swan Geese** and a few **Marsh Sandpipers**.

In the reed beds we heard and saw **Oriental Reed Warbler**, **Paddyfield Warblers**, **Bearded Reedling**, **Asian Brown Flycatcher** and we heard several **Baillon's Crakes** and a **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**.

A flock of the *tytleri* subspecies of **Barn Swallow** gave nice photographic opportunities and between the **Sand Martins** we identified at least two **Pale Martins**.

At dusk six/seven **Eastern Marsh Harriers** gathered in one corner of the lake.

Day 18: 30 May

The first couple of hours we drove along the edge of the lake in a final attempt to locate a **Relict Gull** but to no avail.

We drove further towards Ulaanbaatar and made a stop at the outskirts of the city at the so-called Swan lake. A few **Falcated Ducks** were notable.

After this short intermezzo we drove to hotel Mongolica and birded the rest of the day in the surrounding area of the hotel along the Tuul River.

Overcast weather conditions with occasionally some rain.

Several pairs of **Azure-winged Magpies** were observed and other species recorded that afternoon were **Greenish Warbler**, a single **Two-barred Greenish Warbler**, **White-crowned Penduline Tit**, **Asian Brown Flycatcher**, **Siberian Long-tailed Rosefinch** and **Azure Tit**.

The shower and the fine dinner in the evening were really appreciated by us.

Day 19: 31 May

Today our extension to the Khurkh Valley started and after an early breakfast we drove out of Ulaanbaatar to Gun Galuut. It was cold, windy and we had some rain from time to time.

We scanned most of the lake shores of Gun Galuut while sheltered from behind our cars.

Best observation was the discovery of two **Grey-tailed Tattlers** and a single **Terek Sandpiper** which were nice additions to our list of observed waders.

No sign of our target gull, which is sometimes observed during migration at this site and so we continued towards Khurkh Valley.

In the afternoon we arrived at Khangal Nuur. As it was cold and windy our crew asked one of the local people if we could stay in two of his wooden cabins and this request was granted.

We made an extensive walk along the marshy areas along the lake and up the hill into the surrounding woodlands.

We identified a female **Western Marsh Harrier**, which was our only reliable observation during this trip.

Oriental Cuckoo called from the hill side but no views were had and in the scrub we first located an immature male **Yellow-breasted Bunting** and later a female of this species.

Black Woodpecker was added to our list and several **Siberian Stonechats** were found along the lake side. When I walked back to our accommodation I flushed twice a couple of **Black Grouse**.

Day 20: 01 June

After a short stroll in the surrounding area, which yielded **Japanese Quail** which was flushed twice as well as several **Black Grouse**, we left for our drive further into the Khurkh Valley.

During our drive we observed five **Curlews** of the *orientalis* subspecies in a marshy area.

Around noon we arrived at the Khurkh Valley ringing station. The ringing station is situated in an area along a small stream and is fenced off to keep the cattle out.

The scrub, bushes and willow trees along this stream really are a magnet for migrants as it stands out in the surrounding dry valley and overgrazed plains.

The crew picked out a camping spot, a short distance from the ringing station, which was more or less secluded from the wind.

In the afternoon we birded both the scrubby area, within the fences of the ringing station as the hills and plains in the surrounding area.

Amur Falcon was found nesting close to our campsite, some **Black Storks** were observed and in the marshy scrub near the ringing station, we had great views of a single **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler**.

Several **Arctic Warblers** showed well, just as a single **Common Whitethroat** and late afternoon we heard and observed at least two **Brown-cheeked Rails**.

Day 21: 02 June

At first light we walked the short distance to the ringing station where we birded for an hour or so before we returned to camp to have breakfast.

After breakfast we drove into the wide Khurkh Valley in search of two species of crane: **Hooded Crane** and **Siberian Crane**.

From a vantage point we scanned the area when suddenly a flock of **Hooded Cranes** passed just over our heads giving great views in flight.

Tuugii thought he saw **Siberian Cranes** in the scope far out in the valley so we decided to try to get closer.

We had to cross several streams and finally we found a small flock of seven **Siberian Cranes**, four adult and three juvenile birds.

Really fantastic to see this rare species and it was the fifth crane species we observed on this date.

At noon we drove back to camp to have lunch and in the afternoon we started our search for the *dybowski* subspecies of **Great Bustard**, which is a rare species.

We found two different birds but the birds kept their distance although we had good views in the scope. Several **Amur Falcons** were observed that afternoon.

Late afternoon we spent in the immediate area around our camp and around the ringing station.

Day 22: 03 June

Before breakfast we made another walk around the ringing station and the team at the ringing station showed some of us around.

I heard a **Spotted Crake** and we observed several **Arctic Warblers**.

Then we started our journey back towards Ulaanbaatar out of the Khurkh Valley.

Our destination today was a site called Zuukhiin Bayan Gol. A beautiful area, with marshy streams, meadows and forested hill sides.

Our main target was the **Chinese Bush Warbler**, a late migrant in the area.

As we had nice warm, weather the last couple of days, we were hoping to find an early migrant of this species. So in the afternoon we birded extensively in the area but not a sniff of the Bush Warbler.

At one time Dick found a suspicious, skulking warbler in the willow scrub but that turned out to be a **Lanceolated Warbler**, which did give fantastic and close views.

Other species observed that afternoon included **White-crowned Penduline Tit**, **Siberian Stonechat**, **Chestnut-eared Bunting** and **Black-faced Bunting**.

Day 23: 04 June

In the early morning we broke camp and drove the short distance to an area, where the Bush Warbler had been found in the past. We birded the area, hoping to hear the distinctive song of the **Chinese Bush Warbler** but after an hour we had to admit defeat.

We left as we had a long drive ahead of us towards Ulaanbaatar.

On our way back we made another short stop at Gun Galuut but that did not give us anything new.

It was also very windy at this site.

We had some discussion with Nara, the leader of the crew, as according to him, we were supposed to spend the night in a Ger camp, close to the airport but in our itinerary we would go to a fine hotel in the city to have a final shower, farewell dinner and where we would prepare ourselves for our flight back home.

After some phone calls with Bogi, who represents the ground agent of Starling reizen, we drove to a fine hotel in the city.

We later met Bogi in a nearby restaurant and we had a great farewell dinner with the entire crew.

Our crew was really fantastic. They did their utmost to make this a trip an unforgettable experience.

Day 24: 05 June

In the early morning we met Bogi in the lobby of our hotel and with two minibuses he drove us to the airport.

Check-in was fast and smooth and we had breakfast at the airport.

At 9.50 am we flew from Ulaanbaatar to Frankfurt where we arrived at 1 pm.

At the train station we tried to take an earlier train to Dusseldorf but our request was denied, so we had to wait a couple of hours as our pre-booked train would leave at 4.20 pm.

I will spare you all the details but the travel by train back to Venlo in the Netherlands was a complete disaster. Trains were cancelled, delayed and the information was very poor so in the end we ended up in Mönchengladbach from where we phoned Frans's son with the info not to pick us up in Venlo but to drive to Mönchengladbach.

Early evening we arrived back in Geldop.

SHORT ITINERARY

- 14 May Arrival – Ulaanbaatar: Mongolica Hotel + Tuul River
- 15 May Ulaanbaatar – Gorkhi-Terelj NP
- 16 May Gorkhi-Terelj NP – Sergelen (roadside stop) – Delgertsogt
- 17 May Delgertsogt – Shar Onchiin Buuts – Dalanzadgad: Korean – Mongolian “Green Belt” plantation
- 18 May Dalanzadgad: Dalangiin Bulag – Plains west of Dalanzadgad – Khavtsgait
- 19 May Khavtsgait – Mukhar Shivertiin Am – Yolin Am
- 20 May Yolin Am ger camp – Bayan Tökhömiin Nuur – Naran Bulag – Khongoryn Els
- 21 May Khongoryn Els – Bayanlig – Jaran Bogd – Orog Nuur
- 22 May Orog Nuur – Kholbooj Nuur – Böön Tsagaan Nuur
- 23 May Böön Tsagaan Nuur
- 24 May Böön Tsagaan Nuur – Buutsagaan – Gurvanbulag – Khökh Nuur
- 25 May Khökh Nuur
- 26 May Khökh Nuur – Khangai – Tariat
- 27 May Tariat – Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur – Chuluut Canyon – Ikh-Tamir – Tsetserleg
- 28 May Tsetserleg – Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur – Ögii Nuur
- 29 May Ögii Nuur – Dashinchilen – Bayan Nuur
- 30 May Bayan Nuur – Ulaanbaatar: Swan Nuur + Mongolica Hotel
- 31 May Ulaanbaatar – Gun Galuut – Tsenkhermandal – Khangal Nuur
- 1 June Khangal Nuur – Khurkh Valley – Khurkh Bird Ringing Station
- 2 June Khurkh Bird Ringing Station – Khurkh Valley
- 3 June Khurkh Bird Ringing Station – Zuukhiin Bayan Gol
- 4 June Zuukhiin Bayan Gol – Jargaltkhaan – Gun Galuut – Ulaanbaatar
- 5 June Departure for Frankfurt

LIST OF OBSERVED SPECIES

Taxonomy of this lists follows the latest update of IOC World Bird List

- 1. Hazel Grouse** *Tetrastes bonasia sibericus*
15-05: Heard and fine views of a pair in Terelj N.P.
- 2. Black-billed Capercaillie** *Tetrao urogalloides nominate*
15/16-05: Astonishing views of at least six males on their display grounds in Terelj N.P.
The second day it was really mind-blowing to see these birds displaying in freshly fallen snow.
15/06: A female was also seen, crossing the trail just in front of us.
16/06: Another two males were observed when we left the area, but they probably were part of the six birds observed before at the display site as one of the birds was identified with an obvious head wound.
- 3. Black Grouse** *Lyurus tetrrix baikalensis*
31-05: Four males flushed at the start of the Khurkh Valley.
01-06: Three males flushed in the Khurkh Valley.
02-06: Just above our last campsite at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley, we observed a flock of no less than 15 birds.
- 4. Willow Ptarmigan** *Lagopus lagopus kozlowae*
24/25-05: A pair was observed on the boulder slope near our campsite at Khukh Nuur, Khangai Mountains.
- 5. Altai Snowcock** *Tetraogallus altaicus*
25-05: After hours of searching and scanning the cliff face near our campsite in the Khangai Mountains, we heard, despite the strong winds, a bird calling.
Jan Hein succeeded in locating the bird and we had lengthy views in the scope.
A second bird was heard.
- 6. Chukar Partridge** *Alectoris chukar pubescens/dzungarica*
19-05: A pair at Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
21-05: A pair on transit when driving through Ikh Bogd Mountain NP, near Jaran Bogd Uul.
- 7. Japanese Quail** *Coturnix japonica*
Single birds were flushed in the Khurkh Valley on three dates.
- 8. Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus*
Recorded on 11 dates.
- 9. Greylag Goose** *Anser anser rubrirostris*
Recorded on or near the steppe lakes on eight dates.
- 10. Swan Goose** *Anser cygnoides*
14-05: Ten+ in the Tuul River area.
Recorded in small numbers on or near the steppe lakes on six dates.
29-05: 30+ at Ogii Nuur.
01-06: A single bird at Khurkh Valley.
- 11. Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis middendorffii*
28-05: Three birds at Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur.
- 12. Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons nom*
28-05: A single bird at Doitiin Tsagaan Nuur.
- 13. Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*
28-05: A single bird at Ogii Nuur.
- 14. Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*
Recorded on 13 dates.
28-05: 300+ at Ogii Nuur. Many displaying birds were seen.
- 15. Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*
Recorded on 15 dates.
- 16. Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea*
Recorded on 21 days.
- 17. Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*
14-05: At least five (four males and one female) at Tuul River area.
30-05: Two in the same general area.
- 18. Garganey** *Spatula querquedula*
Recorded on seven dates.
23-05: 20+ at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: Common at Ogii Nuur.
- 19. Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*
Recorded on nine dates.

- 22-05: 100+ at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
23-05: Common at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28/29-05: Common at Ogii Nuur.
- 20. Gadwall** *Anas strepera* nom
Recorded on 12 dates.
- 21. Falcated Duck** *Mareca falcata*
29-05: Three males and one female at Ogii Nuur.
30-05: One male at Bayaan Nuur.
31-05: Ten males Gun Galuut.
02-06: Ten+ at Khurkh Valley.
- 22. Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*
Recorded on ten dates.
22-05: 100+ at Böön Tsagaan Nuun.
- 23. Eastern Spot-billed Duck** *Anas zonorhynchos*
28-05: A single bird at Ogii Nuur.
29-05: Three birds at Ogii Nuur.
30-05: A single bird at Bayan Nuur.
31-05: Ten+ at Gun Galut.
01-06: A single bird at Khurkh Valley.
- 24. Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* nom
Recorded on 13 dates.
- 25. Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
Recorded on nine dates.
- 26. Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*
Recorded on 11 dates.
- 27. Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*
Recorded on six dates
23-05: 100+ at Buun Tsagaan Nuur.
29-05: 80 at Ogii Nuur.
- 28. Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*
Commonly recorded on 13 dates.
- 29. Ferruginous Duck** *Anas nyroca*
23-09: A male at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 30. Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*
Recorded on 13 dates.
- 31. Stejneger's Scoter** *Melanitta stejnegeri*
Up to 15 daily at Khukh Nuur during three days.
27-05: 60 at Terkshin Tsagaan Nuur.
29-05: 50 at Ogii Nuur.
31-05: Five at Gun Galuut.
01-06: Eight in the Khurkh Valley..
- 32. Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*
Recorded on eight days.
- 33. Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*
14-05: Seven along the Tuul River.
24-05: A pair at Khukh Nuur.
26-05: Ten at Khukh Nuur.
30-05: A single bird at Bayaan Nuur.
- 34. Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*
22-05: A pair at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 35. Grey Nightjar** *Caprimulgus jotaka* nom
03-06: Heard at our last campsite at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley.
- 36. Common Swift** *Apus apus pekinensis*
Recorded on nine dates.
- 37. Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* nom
Recorded on eight dates.
- 38. Great Bustard** *Otis tarda dybowskii*
02-06: Two males in some agriculture fields in the Khurkh Valley, close to our campsite.
- 39. Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus*
31-05/01-06: Heard in the Khurkh Valley.
- .

- 40. Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* nom
26/27-05: Heard in the Tariat area.
30/31-05: Heard at Bayaan Nuur.
Heard and seen in the Khurkh Valley daily .
- 41. Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*
Recorded in the central steppe areas on 11 dates.
- 42. Rock Dove** *Columba livia*
Observed. Probably genuine wild birds observed in suitable habitat outside settlements.
- 43. Hill Pigeon** *Columba rupestris*
24-05: Three birds seen in a small village, Buuzagan, during a roadside stop.
26-05: Three birds at campsite, Khukh Nuur and ten birds seen on transit.
01-06: Six in Khurkh Valley.
03-06: A single bird in Khurkh Valley.
- 44. Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* nom
14-05: A single bird along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
20-05: A single bird Khongoryn Els area.
02-06: A single bird near our campsite in the Khurkh Valley.
- 45. Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
17-05: A single bird at our campsite at Delgertsogt in the early morning .
During our lunch stop at Shar Onchiin Buuts a single bird was observed.
Another four birds at the plantation (Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt") near Dalanzadgad.
- 46. Brown-cheeked Rail** *Rallus indicus*
22-05: At least two birds heard at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
01-06: Two birds heard and seen in the marshy area around the ringing station in the Khurkh Valley.
02-06: Heard in the same area as the previous day.
- 47. Baillon's Crane** *Porzana pusilla nominata*
29-05: At least three birds heard at the edge of Bayan Nuur.
- 48. Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*
03-06: In the early morning I heard one bird calling in the marshy area around the ringing station, Khurkh Valley.
- 49. Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* nom
21-05: Heard at Orog Nuur.
29-05: A single bird was observed at Bayaan Nuur.
31-05: One of us observed a single bird at Khangal Nuur.
- 50. Eurasian Coot** *Fulica atra* nom
Observed around the lakes on ten dates.
- 51. Siberian Crane** *Leucogeranus leucogeranus*
02-06: Nice views of a flock of seven birds in the Khurkh Valley.
- 52. White-naped Crane** *Antigone vipio*
29/30-05: Five + three birds around Bayan Nuur.
On four dates observed in small numbers in the Khurkh Valley.
02-06: 80+ in the Khurkh Valley.
- 53. Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo*
Observed on 18 dates.
- 54. Common Crane** *Grus grus*
Observed on 12 dates but far less common than the previous species.
- 55. Hooded Crane** *Grus monacha*
02-06: A flock of 12 birds was observed in the Khurkh Valley.
- 56. Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis albescens*
22-05: A single bird at Böön Tsagaan Nuur was our only observation.
- 57. Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* nom
Observed on eight dates.
22-05: 30+ at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 58. Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* nom
A total of 12 birds on the steppe lakes on six dates.
- 59. Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* nom
A total of 21 birds on the steppe lakes on six dates.
- 60. Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*
Commonly observed on nine dates.

- 61. Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*
Commonly observed on 11 dates.
- 62. Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*
Observed on 13 dates.
- 63. Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*
20-05: Four at Khongoryn Els area.
21-05: Six in the Khongoryn Els area and four at Orog Nuur.
22-05: A single bird at Orog Nuur.
23-05: 12 at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: 60+ at Ogii Nuur.
29-05: Ten at Ogii Nuur.
31-05: Three at Gun Galuut.
- 64. Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* nom
22-05: One at Orog Nuur.
23-05: Two at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 65. Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius curonicus*
Observed on 12 dates.
- 66. Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus nominate*
Observed on seven dates.
22/23-05: Common at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 67. Siberian Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*
21-05: A single bird at Orog Nuur.
- 68. Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii nominate*
18-05: A single bird at the plains in the Gobi where we searched for the Oriental Plover.
22-05: A single bird Kholbooj Nuur.
- 69. Oriental Plover** *Charadrius veredus*
18-05: Great views of three birds on the plains in the Gobi, west of Dalanzadgad.
- 70. Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus variegatus/ragachevae*
20-05: A single bird during our stop at Bayan Toechoem Nuur.
23-05: A single bird at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
29-05: Heard at Ogii Nuur.
- 71. Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata orientalis*
01-06: Five birds in the Khurkh Valley.
- 72. Eastern Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa melanuroides*
Observed in small numbers on nine dates.
24-05: A single bird of subspecies *limosa* was identified during our lunch stop, Buutsagaan
- 73. Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*
22/23-05: One + seven birds at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28/19-05: 20 + 5 at Ogii Nuur.
31-05: Two at Gun Galuut.
- 74. Ruff** *Calidris pugnax*
22/13-05: Three + two birds at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 75. Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus siberica*
23-05: Ten at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: Ten at Ogii Nuur.
- 76. Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*
28/29-05: Three + three birds at Ogii Nuur.
- 77. Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*
Observed on ten dates.
- 78. Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta*
Observed on eight dates.
- 79. Sanderling** *Calidris alba ribida*
22-05: Five at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: Ten at Ogii Nuur.
- 80. Dunlin** *Calidris alpina centralis*
22/23-05: Ten+ 20 at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
30-05: A single bird Bayan Nuur.
- 81. Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*
22/23-05: One + ten at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: Ten at Ogii Nuur.
31-05: Three at Gun Galuut.

- 82. Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
23-05: Four at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: A single bird at Ogii Nuur.
- 83. Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*
14-05: A single bird flushed twice along the Tuul River.
16-05: A single bird in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
- 84. Pin-tailed Snipe** *Gallinago stenura*
20-05: Three birds at Khongoryn Els.
These birds were considered not to be Swinhoe's Snipes because of the extreme short tail, hardly extending from the projected primaries, which could be well observed in the scope.
- 85. Swinhoe's Snipe** *Gallinago megala*
21/22-05: Two + two identified at Orog Nuur. These were calling birds.
Several times we were unable to identify a snipe species.
These were either Pintail or Swinhoe's Snipe but despite (sometimes) photos and a lot of discussion we were not certain of a positive id.
- 86. Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago nominate*
20-05: Heard at Khongoryn Els.
21/22-05: Two + five displaying at Orog Nuur.
Recorded in the Khurkh Valley on three dates.
- 87. Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*
31-05: A single bird at Gun Galuut.
- 88. Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*
22/23-05: One + two at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 89. Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*
Observed on eight dates.
- 90. Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*
Observed on four dates.
- 91. Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes*
31-05: Two at Gun Galuut were a nice found.
- 92. Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus ussuriensis*
Observed on 14 dates.
- 93. Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis*
28/29-05: One + four at Ogii Nuur.
30-05: Two at Bayaan Nuur.
02-06: A single bird in the Khurkh Valley.
- 94. Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*
Observed on seven dates in small numbers.
- 95. Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
22/23-05: Five + two birds at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
24-05: A single bird at Buutsagaan.
- 96. Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
18-05: Four at Dalangiin Bulag, Dalanzadgad.
20-05: A single bird at Khongoryn Els
22-05: Heard at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
23-05: Two at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 97. Brown-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*
21/22-05: A single bird (second calendar year) at Orog Nuur was our only observation.
- 98. Black-headed Gull** *Croicocephalus ridfibundus*
Observed on nine dates.
- 99. Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*
21/22-05: Two + one at Orog Nuur.
28/29-05: Two + one at Ogii Nuur.
- 100. Pallas's Gull** *Ichthyætes ichthyætes*
20-05: A single bird at Bayan Tökhömiin Nuur.
22/23-05: Ten + 20 at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
28/29-05: Single birds at Ogii Nuur.
- 101. Mew Gull** *Larus canus heinei*
22-05: A single bird at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 102. Vega (Mongolian) Gull** *Larus vegae mongolicus*
Observed on 15 dates.

- 103. Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* nom
Observed on eight days.
A bird I photographed in flight at Ogi Nuur on 23-05 had a Brandt's Vole in its beak.
- 104. Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*
Observed on five days.
22/23/24-05: Some large groups of 100+ birds were observed at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 105. Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo longipennis/tibetana*
Observed on 13 dates. Mostly ssp. *longipennis* as these birds had a black bill but some birds could have been ssp. *tibetana*, as they had darker breasts and some red on the bill.
- 106. Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* nominate
31-05: A single bird at Gun Galuut.
01-06: At least ten birds seen in a flock of White-winged Terns in the Khurkh Valley.
- 107. White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*
Observed on 12 dates.
Some impressive numbers were seen, especially around Ogi Nuur.
- 108. Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* nominate
22/23-05: Single birds at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
27-05: Two birds at Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur.
28/29-05: Five birds daily at Ogi Nuur.
- 109. Black-throated Loon** *Gavia arctica* nominate
26/27-05: One + two birds at Khukh Nuur.
27-05: A pair at Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur.
28-05: A single bird at Ogi Nuur.
- 110. Black Stork** *Ciconia niger*
14-05: A single bird along the Tuul River.
01-06: Four birds in the Khurkh Valley.
03-06: One near our campsite in the Khurkh Valley.
- 111. Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*
Observed on ten dates.
- 112. Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* nominate
Observed on nine dates.
- 113. Eurasian Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* nominate
22-05: Heard at Orog Nuur.
- 114. Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* nominate
Observed on 14 dates.
- 115. Great Egret** *Ardea alba* nominate
A total of eight birds observed on four dates only.
- 116. Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* nominate
22-05: Two birds at Orog Nuur.
- 117. Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus* nominate
19-05: Two at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and three at Yolin Am.
25-05: Single birds seen twice near our campsite at Khukh Nuur.
- 118. Crested Honey-Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
17-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt.
19-05: A group of 35 birds migrating at Yolin Am.
30-05: A single bird in Tuul River area.
- 119. Himalayan Vulture** *Gyps himalayensis*
19-05: Three at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and five birds at Yolin Am.
21-05: Two birds near Orog Nuur.
- 120. Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*
Commonly observed. Recorded on 18 dates.
Regularly we encountered groups of up to ten birds along the road.
- 121. Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus*
17-05: A single bird at the Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation near Dalanzadgad.
27-05: A dark morph near our campsite at Tariat.
- 122. Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* nominate
Small numbers observed on ten dates.
- 123. Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos kamtschatica*
16-05: A pair during a lunch/birding stop at Sergelen, between Ulaanbaatar – Dalanzadgad.
18-05: A single bird near Khavtsgait.
19-05: A single bird at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and a pair at Yolin Am.

- 24-05: A single bird on transit.
25/26-05: A pair at Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
27-05: A single bird at Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur and two at Chuluut Canyon.
- 124. Japanese Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter gularis sibericus*
17-05: A single bird on the ground near our campsite at Delgertsogt in the early morning.
17-05: A single bird seen at Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation near Dalanzadgad was probably also this species but the observation time was too short to be absolutely certain to exclude Eurasian Sparrowhawk.
- 125. Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus nominate*
16-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt.
18-05: A single bird near Dalanzadgad, Dalangiin Bulag.
- 126. Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*
03-06: A single bird in the Khurkh Valley.
- 127. Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus auruginosus nominate*
31-05: A female bird was observed at Khangal Nuur.
Only reliable observation of this species during this trip.
- 128. Eastern Marsh Harrier** *Circus spilonotus*
Observed on seven dates.
21/22-05: A pair at Orog Nuur.
28-05: Two males at Ogii Nuur.
29-05: A single bird at Ogii Nuur and no less than eight birds at Bayaan Nuur in the early evening.
30-05: Three at Bayaan Nuur.
31-05 and 02-06: A single bird and two birds in the Khurkh Valley.
- 129. Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*
29/30-05: A female at Bayaan Nuur.
02-06: A female in the Khurkh Valley.
- 130. Black-eared Kite** *Milvus (migrans) lineatus*
Daily observed.
- 131. Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
22/23-05: Three birds observed around Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
- 132. White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla nominate*
22-05: A single bird at Orog Nuur.
27-05: Two birds, including a fine adult bird, at Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur.
28/29-05: Single birds at Ogii Nuur.
03-06: A single in the Khurkh Valley.
- 133. Upland Buzzard** *Buteo hemilasius*
Observed on 16 dates.
On 19-05 we observed a dark phase bird at Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
On 18-05 and 19-05 we observed birds on the Gobi plains which we initially thought to be Long-legged Buzzards, but the photographs taken of these birds made clear that these were in fact look-a-like Upland Buzzards.
No Long-legged Buzzards were observed by us on this trip.
- 134. Eastern Buzzard** *Buteo japonicus nominate*
15-05: Two birds in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
16-05: A single bird on transit.
19-05: A single bird at Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
26-05: A single bird near Tariat.
30-05: A single bird en route to Ulaanbaatar.
- 135. Ural Owl** *Strix uralensis yeniseensis*
15-05: A single bird was seen a few times at Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
- 136. Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops nominate*
Observed and heard on ten dates.
- 137. Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla chinensis*
14-05: Three birds along the Tuul River.
15-05: Heard at Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
17-05: A single bird during a lunch/birding stop at Shar Onchlin Buuts.
21/22-05: Three + one in the scrub near our campsite at Orog Nuur.
27-05: Heard at Chuluut Canyon.
30-05: Heard along the Tuul River.
31-05/01-06: Heard and one seen in the khurkh Valley.

- 138. Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides tridactylus nominata*
27-05: Great views of a pair in the forest near our campsite at Tariat.
- 139. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** *Dryobates minor kamtschaticensis*
14-05: Three along the Tuul River.
27-05: A male was observed during a stop at Ikh-Tamir.
- 140. Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major brevirostris*
14-05: Heard along the Tuul River.
15-05: Heard in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
16-05: Four birds Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
31-05: Two birds at Khangal Nuur.
- 141. Black Woodpecker** *Dryocopus martius nominata*
31-05/01-06: Heard and one seen at Khangal Nuur.
- 142. Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*
22-05: A male on transit.
- 143. Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus nominata*
Observed on seven dates.
- 144. Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis*
17-05: A single bird was seen at the Koren-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation near Dalanzadgad.
28-05: A male observed near hotel Mongolica.
Up to six in the area around our campsite in the khurkh Valley daily.
A pair was nesting nearby and gave fine views.
- 145. Merlin** *Falco columbarius lymani*
01-06: A single bird was seen by two of us in the Khurkh Valley.
- 146. Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*
16-05: Two in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P. and one at Delgertsogt.
17-05: One at Delgertsogt and one at Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation.
Single birds on two dates in the Khurkh Valley.
- 147. Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug milvipes*
This impressive falcon was observed on seven dates.
21-05: No less than seven birds between Khongoryn Els and Orog Nuur.
- 148. Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
16-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt.
- 149. Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus*
Observed on nine dates.
- 150. Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus nominata*
Observed on five dates during the first part of the trip.
- 151. Steppe Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor pallidirostris*
20-05: Three birds in the Gobi Altai region.
- 152. Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus nominata*
14-05: Heard in the Tuul river area.
28-05: Nesting observed by Peter in the Tuul River area.
30-05: Six birds along the Tuul River.
- 153. Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica leucoptera*
Observed.
- 154. Mongolian Ground Jay** *Podoces hendersoni*
20-05: Four birds in the Gobi-Altai region.
- 155. Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax brachypus*
Observed on 17 dates.
- 156. Daurian Jackdaw** *Coloeus dauuricus*
Observed on 11 dates.
- 157. Oriental Rook** *Corvus frugilegus pastinator*
Observed on 11 dates.
- 158. Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone orientalis*
Observed on 10 dates.
- 159. Northern Raven** *Corvus corax kamtschaticus*
Observed on 22 dates.
- 160. Coal Tit** *Periparus ater nominata*
15-05: Heard and five seen in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
16-05: Three in the same area.
27-05: Heard at Tariat.
01-06/03-06: Two in the Khurkh Valley.

- 161. Marsh Tit** *Poecile palustris brevirostris*
03-06: Two birds seen and sound recorded by Jan Hein at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol, Khurkh Valley.
- 162. Willow Tit** *Poecile montanus baicalensis*
15/16-05: Ten+ in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
26-05: Heard at Tariat.
27-05: Five at Tariat.
- 163. Azure Tit** *Cyanistes cyanus yeniseensis*
14-05: Ten+ along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
30-05: Four in the same area.
- 164. Great Tit** *Parus major kapustini*
14-05: Ten+ along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
15-05: A single bird in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
27-05: Two at Tariat.
30-05: Four along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
31-05: Four at Khangal Nuur.
- 165. White-crowned Penduline Tit** *Remiz coronatus stoliczcae*
14-05: Heard only along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
18-05: A single bird in flight in front of our hotel in Dalanzadgad.
27-05: Two during a birding stop at Ikh-Tamir.
29-05: A single bird at Bayan Nuur.
30-05: Two along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
03-06: Heard and one seen at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley.
- 166. Bearded Reedling** *Panurus biarmicus ruscicus*
21/22-05: Three + four at Orog Nuur.
29-05: Two at Bayan Nuur.
30-05: Heard at Bayan Nuur.
- 167. Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis dulcivox/kiborti*
Observed on seven dates.
- 168. Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata magna*
18-05: Three at Dalangiin Bulag near Dalanzadgad.
20-05: Five birds on transit in the Gobi Altai, near Bayan Tokhomiin Nuur.
- 169. Steppe Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris brandti*
Observed on 15 dates.
- 170. Mongolian Lark** *Melanocorypha mongolica*
This beautiful lark was observed on 12 dates.
- 171. Asian Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala cheleensis nominate*
Observed on 15 dates.
- 172. Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia taczanowskii*
Observed on nine dates.
- 173. Pale Martin** *Riparia diluta gavrilovi*
18-05: A single bird identified near Dalanzadgad, Dalangiin Bulag.
27-05: A single bird at Chuluut Canyon.
29-05: Two birds at Bayan Nuur.
- 174. Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica tytleri*
Observed on 14 dates.
- 175. Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*
Observed on five dates.
- 176. Siberian House Martin** *Delichon lagopodum*
This recently split species was observed on eight dates.
The extensive white rump patch was really obvious.
- 177. Hume's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei nominate*
22-05: Four were present in the small plantation near our campsite at Orog Nuur.
25-05: Two at Khukh Nuur.
26/27-05: A few present at Tariat.
27-05: A single bird at Ikh-Tamir.
30-05: Heard and a single bird seen along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
- 178. Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*
Observed on nine dates. This species gave some really great and close views.
- 179. Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus nominate*
Observed on 11 dates.

- 180. Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus (collybita) tristis*
17-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt and a single bird at Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation.
19-05: A single bird at Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
- 181. Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides viridianus*
20-05: Three at Naran Bulag.
30-05: 10+ around hotel Mongolica.
- 182. Two-barred Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*
30-05: A single bird identified near hotel Mongolica.
- 183. Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*
17-05: A single bird at Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation.
20-05: A single bird at Naran Bulag.
30-05: Five at the Tuul River area.
01 to 04-06: Up to six in the khurkh Valley.
- 184. Thick-billed Warbler** *Arundinax aedon*
28-05: A single bird seen singing near hotel Mongolica, in Tuul River area. (Peter de Rouw)
- 185. Oriental Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis*
29-05: A single bird seen and heard at Bayan Nuur.
30-05: Heard in the same area.
- 186. Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola nominate*
21/22-05: Three + two birds seen and heard at Orog Nuur.
- 187. Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Helopsaltes certhiola sparsimstriatus*
29-05: Heard at Bayan Nuur.
01-06: Nice views of a single bird at the ringing station in the khurkh Valley.
- 188. Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata nominate*
03-06: A single bird found by Dick gave exceptional fine views at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley.
- 189. Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides fusca*
21/22-05: Two and one bird heard and seen at Orog Nuur.
- 190. Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca blythi*
Observed on eight dates.
- 191. Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana*
20/21-05: Four + three in the Khongoryn Els area.
- 192. Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis rubicola*
01-06: Two birds around the bird ringing station in the Khurkh Valley.
03/04-06: Rather common at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley.
- 193. Eurasian Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea baicalensis/asiatica*
14-05: A single bird along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
15-05: Three birds in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
26-05: Heard at Tariat.
27-05: A single bird observed at Tariat.
- 194. Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria nepalensis*
19-05: Very nice views of a single bird in the Yolin Am gorge.
- 195. Eurasian Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris daurica*
15-05: Two in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
- 196. White-cheeked Starling** *Spodiopsar cineraceus*
14-05: Two along the Tuul River near hotel Mongolica.
15-05: Ten in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
18-05: Four at Dalangiin Bulag, just outside Dalanzadgad.
30-05: Five along the Tuul river, near hotel Mongolica.
03-06: A single bird at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol.
- 197. White's Thrush** *Zoothera aurea nominate*
14-05: One flushed along the Tuul river, near hotel Mongolica.(H.H.only)
17-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt.
22-05: A single bird was present in the plantation near our campsite at Orog Nuur. Unfortunately we had fleeting views only.
- 198. Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*
Observed during the first five days of our trip.
- 199. Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis*
14-05: Two along the Tuul river near hotel Mongolica.
18-05: One was present around our ger camp at Khavsgait.

- 200. Red-throated Thrush** *Turdus ruficollis*
Observed on 11 dates.
- 201. Naumann's Thrush** *Turdus naumanni*
Observed mainly during the first half of our trip on seven dates.
29-05: A single bird near Ogii Nuur.
- 202. Dusky Thrush** *Turdus eunomus*
14-05: Four along the Tuul river, near hotel Mongolica.
15/16-05: Two + one in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
17-05: Four at lunch stop at Shar Onchiin Buuts.
30-05: A single bird at hotel Mongolica.
- 203. Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata mongola*
20-05: One in the area where we found Mongolian Ground Jay.
21-05: One at our lunch stop and one at the village of Bayanlig near the petrol station.
27-05: Two at Ikh-Tamir.
Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica nominate*
02-06: One was caught at the ringing station, Khurkh Valley.
- 204. Asian Brown Flycatcher** *Muscicapa dauurica*
29-05: Two at Bayan Nuur.
30-05: Three along the Tuul river, near hotel Mongolica.
Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane*
02-06: A male was caught at the ringing station, Khurkh Valley.
- 205. Siberian Rubythroat** *Calliope calliope nominate*
16-05: One bird gave amazing views on the open plain during a lunch/birding stop at Sergelen.
16-05: One at Delgertsogt.
19-05: Single birds at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and Yolin Am.
20-05: One in Khongoryn Els area.
25-05: A female around Khukh Nuur.
26/27-05: Two around Tariat.
- 206. Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*
15/16-05: Up to 10 daily heard and seen in Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
26/27-05: Heard at Tariat.
- 207. Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*
Observed on 14 dates.
- 208. Eversmann's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythronotus*
26-05: A pair was finally found at the edge of Khukh Nuur.
27-05: A pair at Tariat gave amazing views, close to our campsite.
A nice result of a pre-breakfast walk of Jan Hein.
- 209. Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*
18-05: Two near Khavtsgait.
19-05: Two at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and three at Yolin Am.
- 210. Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus nominate*
14-05: A male near hotel Mongolica.
24-05: A male at the village of Gurvanbulag.
26/27-05: A male near Tariat.
- 211. Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureus nominate*
Observed on nine dates.
- 212. Gldenstdt's Redstart** *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus grandis*
24/25-05: A pair gave fine views on the slope near our campsite near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
- 213. Common Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*
26-05: A male and two females were observed at the edge of Khukh Nuur.
27-05: A single bird near Tariat.
- 214. White-throated Bush Chat** *Saxicola insignis*
24-05: A single male was briefly seen by Wiel in the late afternoon near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
25/26-05: Four to five pairs were found on the slope near our campsite at Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
- 215. Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus*
23-05: A male at Bn Tsagaan Nuur area.
26-05: Six birds near Khukh Nuur.
27-05: A female near Tariat.

- 31-05: Six birds around Khangal Nuur.
03-06: Three birds in the Khurkh Valley.
- 216. Stejneger's Stonechat** *Saxicola stejnegeri*
17-05: A single bird identified at Korean-Mongolian "Green Belt" plantation, Dalanzadgad.
- 217. Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe libanotica*.
Observed on 15 dates.
- 218. Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina*
Observed on 19 dates.
- 219. Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti nominate*
Observed in the Gobi Altai area on six dates.
- 220. Pied Wheatear** *Oenanthe pleschanka*
18-05: Two males and one female at gorge near Khavtsgait.
20-05: A male in Khongoryn Els area.
21-05: Four birds in the Khongoryn Els area and in the Jaran Bogd area towards Orog Nuur.
22-05: Four between Orog Nuur and Bogd towards Kholbooj Nuur.
- 221. Saxaul Sparrow** *Passer ammodendri stoliczae*
21-05: A pair at wooden sheep shed near our ger in the Khongoryn Else area in the early morning.
21-05: 11 in a nice patch of Saxaul scrub, close to a camel drinking place between Khongoryn Els and Bayanlig.
- 222. House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus nominate*
Observed on 12 dates.
- 223. Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*
Observed on 16 dates.
- 224. Rock Sparrow** *Petronia petronia brevirostris*
16-05: Three at Delgertsogt.
18/19-05: Single birds near Khavsgait.
24-05: Six at the village of Gurvanbulag.
01/02-06: One + two in the Khurk Valley.
- 225. White-winged Snowfinch** *Montifringilla nivalis gromgrzimailii*
18/19-05: Common in the Khavtsgait area, at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and Yolin Am.
- 226. Pere David's Snowfinch** *Pyrgilauda davidiana nominate/potanini*
Small numbers recorded on seven dates.
29-05: 20+ at Ogii Nuur.
- 227. Alpine Accentor** *Prunella ocularis erythrogygia*
25-05: Three birds seen during our morning hike up the slopes near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
- 228. Altai Accentor** *Prunella himalayana*
24-05: One pair Khukh Nuur area.
25-05: At least 10 observed during our morning hike up the slopes near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
- 229. Brown Accentor** *Prunella fulvscens dahurica*
18-05: One near Khavsgait.
19-05: 10 in Mukhar Shivertiin Am and five at Yolin Am.
24/25/26-05: Up to 10 daily near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
27-05: A single bird near Tariat.
- 230. Kozlov's Accentor** *Prunella kozłowi* – **Mongolian endemic**
We struggled initially with this species because of the unfavourable weather conditions. Very cold and windy in the early morning
19-05: Three birds at Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
20-05: A single bird was encountered in the area where we found the Mongolian Ground Jay in the Gobi Altai.
- 231. Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis macronyx*
20-05: A single bird at Bayan Tökhömiin Nuur.
28/29-05: Two + five at Ogii Nuur.
- 232. Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola citreola/calcarata*
Subspecies *citreola* and *calcarata* were observed.
The majority were *citreola* but a few *calcarata* were also seen.
26-05: One *calcarata* at our lunch site.
28-05: Late afternoon an influx of ten's at Ogii Nuur including one possibly two *calcarata*.

- 233. Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
Observed on 13 dates.
- 234. White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*
Subspecies *personata*, *leucopsis*, *baicalensis* and *ocularis* were observed.
18-05: A mixed pair of *leucopsis/baicalensis* was observed at a lake just outside Dalanzadgad, Dalangiin Bulag.
- 235. Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*
Observed on nine dates.
- 236. Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewski*
Observed on 13 dates.
- 237. Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*
27-05: A single bird at Tariat.
- 238. Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni yunnanensis*
Observed on 12 dates.
- 239. Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni*
19-05: Three at Yolin Am.
21-05: A single bird at Orog Nuur.
22-05: Heard at Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
25/26-05: Up to 20 daily in the Khukh Nuur area, Khangai mountains.
- 240. Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs nominate*
14-05: A single bird along the Tuul River.
17-05: A single bird at Delgertsogt in flight.
- 241. Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*
14-05: Two, including an adult male, seen in the Tuul River area.
- 242. Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes nominate*
03-06: Seven birds around our campsite at Zuukhiin Bayan Gold in the Khurkh valley.
- 243. Mongolian Finch** *Bucanetes mongolicus*
19-05: 15-20 at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and Yolin Am.
- 244. Asian Rosy Finch** *Leucosticta arctoa sushkini*
25-05: A nice male was observed during our morning hike up the slopes near Khukh Nuur, Khangai mountains.
- 245. Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus grebnitskii*
Observed on 10 dates.
- 246. Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** *Carpodacus davidianus*
20-05: 30 at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and four at Yolin Am.
There is a lot of uncertainty about which species of Beautiful Rosefinch actually occurs at these sites. The most recent info, supported by recorded vocals and photos, indicates that this is **Chinese Beautiful Rosefinch** and not **Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch**. More research is clearly needed to indicate the correct distribution of these 2 species in Mongolia
- 247. Siberian Long-tailed Rosefinch** *Carpodacus sibericus nominate*
14-05: Eight birds along the Tuul river, near our hotel Mongolica.
30-05: Four birds in the same area.
03-06: Three at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol in the Khurkh Valley.
- 248. Twite** *Linaria flavirostris altaica*
19-05: Two at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and 30 at Yolin Am.
22-05: 10+ at Orog Nuur.
27-05: Eight Terkhiin Tsagaan Nuur.
- 249. Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra altaiensis*
27-05: Heard near Tariat.
- 250. Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos nominate*
15/16-05: 20 + 10 at Gorkhi-Terelj N.P.
27-05: Three near Tariat.
31-05: Six at Khangai Nuur.
01-06: Two at Khangai Nuur.
- 251. Godlewski's Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii nominate*
18-05: Four near Khavsgait.
19-05: 10 at Mukhar Shivertiin Am and two at Yolin Am.
- 252. Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*
24-05: A fine male was observed in the village of Gurvanbulag.

- 253. Chestnut-eared Bunting** *Emberiza fucata*
03/04-06: Two were observed at Zuukhiin Bayan Gol, Khurkh Valley.
- 254. Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*
Observed on 10 dates.
- 255. Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola nominate*
28-05: A female at Ogii Nuur.
31-05: Male + two females were seen at Khangal Nuur.
03-06: Two males and one female in the Khurkh Valley.
- 256. Black-faced Bunting** *Emberiza spodocephala*
Observed on 10 dates.
- 257. Pallas's Reed Bunting** *Emberiza pallasi pallasi/lydiae*
Observed on 15 dates.
Both subspecies were observed.
- 258. Common Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*
28-05: A female at Ogii Nuur.

LIST OF OBSERVED MAMMALS

1. **Daurian Pika** *Ochotona dauurica*
Tuul River, Gorkhi-Terelj NP,
Yolin Am, Mukhar Shivertiin Am, Orog Nuur, Khurkh Valley
2. **Alpine Pika** *Ochotona alpina*
Khukh Nuur
3. **Mountain Hare** *Lepus timidus*
Zuukhin Bayan Gol
4. **Tolai Hare** *Lepus tolai*
Tuul River, Gorkhi-Terelj NP, Delgertsogt, Gobi-Altai, Khavsgait, Yolin Am, Khukh Nuur to Tariat.
5. **Tarbagan Marmot** *Marmota sibirica*
Khukh Nuur, Khurkh Valley.
6. **Siberian Ground Squirrel/Siberian Chipmunk** *Eutamias sibiricus*
Gorkhi-Terelj NP.
7. **Mongolian Jird** *Meriones unguiculatus*
Delgertsogt, Yolin Am, Böön Tsagaan Nuur.
8. **Pallid Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus pallidicauda*
Khavsgait, Yolin Am.
9. **Long-tailed Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus undulatus*
Khukh Nuur, Tariat- Tsetserleg, Tsetserleg – Ogii Nuur, Khurkh Valley, Khangai Nuur.
10. **Daurian Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus dauricus*
Gorkhi-Terelj NP, Uaalbaatar – Delgertsogt, Tuul River.
11. **Alashan Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus alashanicus*
Altai-Gobi
12. **Eurasian Red Squirrel** *Sciurus vulgaris fusconigrans*
Gorkhi-Terelj NP.
13. **Mongolian Hamster** *Allocricetulus curtatus*
Yolin Am, Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
14. **Brandt's Vole** *Lasiopodomys brandtii*
Sergelen, Khukh Nuur- Tariat, Tsetserleg – Ogii Nuur, Ogii Nuur- Bayan Nuur.
15. **Corsac Fox** *Vulpes corsac*
Tsetserleg – Ogii Nuur, Ogii Nuur.
16. **Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*
Kholbooj Nuur, Böön Tsagaan Nuur, Khukh Nuur.
17. **Siberian Roe Deer** *Capreolus pygargus*
Gorkhi -Terelj NP.
18. **Altai Wapiti** *Cervus canadensis sibiricus*
Khukh Nuur.
19. **Goitered Gazelle** *Gazella subguttarosa*
Yolin Am – Khongoryn Els, Khongoryn Els – Orog Nuur, Ogii Nuur.
20. **Mongolian Gazelle** *Procarpa gutturosa*
Sergelen, Delgertsogt – Dalanzadgad, Dalanzadgad.
21. **Siberian Ibex** *Capra sibirica*
Yolin Am, Mukhar Shivertiin Am.
22. **Mongolian Wild Ass** *Equus hemionus hemionus*
Khongoryn Els.
23. **Siberian Mole** *Talpa altaica*
Gorkhi-Terelj NP.
24. **Wild Boar** *Sus scrofa*
Gorkhi-Terelj NP.
25. **Daurian Hedgehog** *Mesechinus dauuricus*
Delgertsogt.

LIST OF OBSERVED DRAGONFLIES & BUTTERFLIES

We observed one species of dragonfly:

1. **Siberian Winterdamsel** *Sympetma paedisca*
Observed in the Khurkh Valley at *Zuukhiin Bayan Gol*.

We observed seven species of butterfly:

1. **Short-tailed Blue** *Cupido argiades*
Ringin Station area, Khurkh Valley.
2. **Osiris Blue** *Cupido osiris*
Zuukhiin Bayan Gol, Khurkh Valley
3. **Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticola*
Tuul Tiver area.
4. **Freija Fritillary** *Clossiana freija*
Zuukhiin Bayan Gol, Khurkh Valley
- 5 *Pyrgus maculatus*
Khangal Nuur, Khurkh Valley.
- 6 *Carterocephalus argyrostigma*
Ringin Station area, Khurkh Valley.
7. *Leptidea amurensis*
Ringin Station area, Khurkh Valley.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

1. **Variegated Toad-headed Agama** *Phrynocephalus versicolor*
Gobi area.
2. **Mongolian (Siberian) Toad** *Strauchbufo raddei*
Orog Nuur, Böön Tsagaan Nuur, Bayan Nuur.