

TRAVELREPORT

Mongolia

Birding into Nothingness

23-05 to 12-06-2010



Oriental Plover, Gobi, Mongolia

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ITENERARY

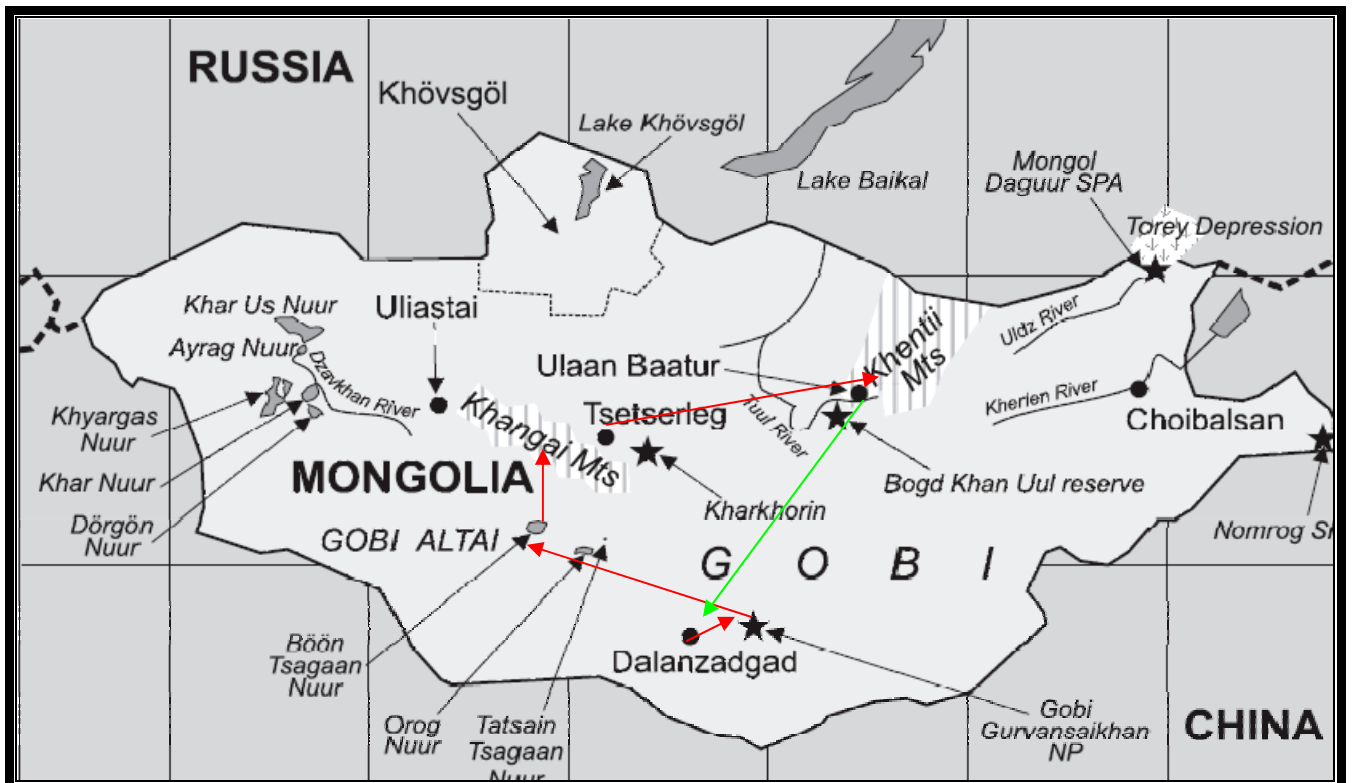
- **Sun: 23-05** Flew from Dusseldorf to Moscow where I met the rest of the group and flew in the evening to Ulaanbaatar (**UB**) to arrive in the early morning.
- **Mon: 24-05** Birded all day around UB along the Tuul river and on hills near the city.
- **Tue: 25-05** Birded around UB and visited Bogd Khan NP and later Songino Khayr Khan. Later in the afternoon took a local flight to Dalanzadgad. After arrival at the airport (we saw the lights were switched on while landing..) we drove an hour to our Ger Camp near Gurvansaykhan NP and spent the night in a (through rain leaking) Ger.
- **Wed: 26-05** Birded at the Gobi Altai in Gurvansaykhan NP (**G**) mainly at Yolyn Am (valley of the Lammergeier)
- **Thur: 27-05** Morning birding at Yolyn Am and later on drove to Khongoryn Els (**KE**) and spend the night in a very nice ger camp (not looking forward to the nine coming nights camping..)
- **Fri: 28-05** Drove from the ger camp to the slopes of Ikh Bogd Ul (**IBU**) and camped at 2488 m.
- **Sat: 29-05** Birded at the top of Ikh Bogd Ul (3250 m) and later in the afternoon along the main track down. Camped at the same site.
- **Sun: 30-05** Drove down from Ikh Bogd Ul to Orog Nur (**ON**) (a big lake at the base of the mountains) and birded there, thereafter drove with stops to a bushy area and camped.
- **Mon: 31-05** Birded in the morning at a bushy area near Orog Nuur and later on drove to Bogd and visited Holboog Nur. After that the truck and one of the cars got stuck in the mud which cost us three hours to get out (looked far more dramatic). Drove to Adginn Tsagaan Nur and camped.
- **Tue: 01-06** Birded in the early morning at Adginn Tsagaan Nuur and later on drove to Boon Tsagaan Nur and birded until sunset.
- **Wed: 02-06** Birded in the morning at Boon Tsagaan Nuur (**BTN**) and later on drove to Bayankhongor and camped at the river Tuyn (quite windy one tent was blown in the river)
- **Thur: 03-06** Birded along the river Tuyn and later on drove to the monastery of Erdenetsogt, over a pass (2700m) to Holseyeyen Davaa.
- **Fri: 04-06** Drove all day from Holseyeyen Davaa to Orkon Falls in the poring rain and put up (wet) camp. We went over a pass at 2858.
- **Sat: 05-06** Birded at Orkon Falls and later on drove via Khugort, Khugort Nur and arrived at Sangiyan Dalay Nur (**SDN**) and camped.
- **Sun: 06-06** Birded in the morning at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur and around 12.00 (after getting stuck for the \$%#@! time) drove to UB to arrive in the early evening.
- **Mon: 07-06** Drove via Gangalut (a marshy area) to Terelj. A lot of rain and wind made birding not very pleasant.
- **Tue: 08-06** Birded around Terelj (**T**). We tried to reach a site where Black-billed Capercaillie suppose to be close to the road (300 meters walking) but high rivers made that impossible so we went for a plan B site with no luck (only hear one flying of..). In the evening (now dry weather) tried for Swinhoes Snipe with no luck.
- **Wed: 09-06** Birding around Terelj, again in the rain.
- **Thur: 10-06** Walked up “BBC mountain” early at Terelj and searched in vain the whole day, a total of 8 hours walking up to 2200 m. (good area starts at 1.800 m)
- **Fri: 11-06** Walked up “BBC mountain” at Terelj from 03.00 onwards, with no luck for me, the others flushed out a pair but I was walking too low to see anything on the fleeing birds. Later that day drove back to UB (about an hour and a half drive)
- **Sat: 12-06** Flew back from UB to Moscow and Dusseldorf.

Meters per day where the highest reached altitudes of that day and when interesting to know. Mongolian names are difficult to “transform” in English so can be spelt different. For the reports long names are shortened by capitals.



Camping and Henderson's Groundjays from the tent

Map Mongolia: <http://maps.google.co.uk/?hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=h&ll=47.100045,103.183594&spn=21.735117,38.320312&z=5>



Map of Mongolia with most of the visited birding area's mentioned. Green line done by plain, Red line done by car.

Legenda:

***AAAA** = New (Holarctic) Species (5)

AAAA = Good bird for the area or for myself

The list order is conform Palaeartic Birds by Beaman with the recent changes on the splitting and lumping issue mainly based on publications in the "important magazines". Subspecies is only mentioned when thought to be important and really visible in the field. The totals of birds per species are just a total of the birds I saw to give an idea how many of a species you encounter during a trip.

The weather was variable with weather types constantly moving in and out during the trip. Unfortunately bad weather with rain and sometimes dry dusty wind was quite common for several days during the trip. Temperatures were therefore low (sometimes still freezing). This was no reason to miss any species in the end but maybe some numbers were lower than on other trips.

Useful Addresses:

- **Mongolian Ornithological society** – info@mos.mn website:

http://www.mos.mn/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

- **Great Genghis Expeditions** – greatgenghis@magicnet.mn tel: 976-310455, the local agent who organised the trip. Director Terbish Khayankhyarvaa.

- **Photomongolia.blogspot.com** by ngansukh@gmail.com , Local person said to be willing to help seeing “BBC” in winter.

Useful Hotels:

- Hotel UB: Bayan Gol Hotel - ++976-11-312255
- Hotel Terej (BBC site): UB2 Hotel - ++976-99-774125



Travelling in Mongolia is not without problems, here the kitchen truck is in trouble, it took us (only) three hours to get it out by digging the kitchen tent under the car... Photo by Dave Williamson

THE BIRDSPECIES

001 BLACK-THROATED LOON – *gavia arctica*

05-06 6 ex, three pairs at SDN.

06-06 2 ex. at SDN.

Nice summer plumaged birds also heard calling.

002 GREAT CRESTED GREBE – *podiceps cristatus*

A total of 230 noted on several visited lakes during the trip often in loose colonies.

003 HORNED GREBE – *podiceps auritus*

A total of 12 birds seen on several visited lakes. All pairs in (immaculate) breeding plumage.

004 BLACK-NECKED GREBE – *podiceps nigricollis*

07-06 4 ex. at Gangalut lake, in summer plumage.

005 GREAT CORMORANT – *phalacrocorax carbo*

A few individual birds where seen and a large colony at the shore of BTN.

006 GREAT EGRET – *egretta alba*

A total of 5 birds seen at BTN with the Grey Herons.

007 GREY HERON – *ardea cinerea*

Quite common at suitable places, often sunbathing.

008 BLACK STORK – *ciconia nigra*

A total of 10 birds seen spread over the trip, some adults, some first years (away from suitable breeding habitat).

009 EURASIAN SPOONBILL – *platalea leucorodia*

A total of 134 birds seen at several lakes, the most at BTN.

010 WHOOPER SWAN – *cygnus cygnus*

A total of 145 seen at several lakes. Often on nests but also in small flocks of non breeding birds.

011 SWAN GOOSE – *anser cygnoides*

A total of 69 birds seen at various lakes, most common (40+) at BTN. Often pairs on a nest or small flocks.

Cracking Goose if you like that family.....

012 (EASTERN) GREYLAG GOOSE – *anser anser ssp: rubrirostris*

Quite common in non breeding flocks at the visited lakes, about 25 birds per day.

013 BAR-HEADED GOSSE – *anser indicus*

Seen daily in low numbers maximum 25 per day. All at the visited lakes and also in streams in the mountains. No birds on nests (yet) but small groups where seen.

014 RUDDY SHELDUCK – *tadorna ferruginea*

Common throughout the trip, often in the mountains at streams and rivers.

015 COMMON SHELDUCK – *tadorna tadorna*

Quite common at the visited lakes, often in small parties.

016 EURASIAN WIGEON – *anas penelope*

About 30 birds in usually one flock per lake was seen on every visited lake. Mainly first year birds.

017 FALCATED DUCK – *anas falcata*

05+06-06 2 males with the Eurasian Wigeons at SDN. Seen in flight and swimming. A not common duck in Mongolia.

018 GADWALL – *anas strepera*

Seen in low numbers on most visited lakes, with a maximum of 30 (01-06) on a day.

019 BAIKAL TEAL - *anas formosa*

02-06 1 male seen well between Eurasian Wigeon, grazing and swimming in the puddles at the shore of BTN.

See for the site: <http://observado.org/waarneming/view/48560509>



Comments Axel Braunlich about this record:

Baikal Teal is indeed quite rare in Mongolia - there seem to be not many records (I haven't seen one despite spending almost 4 years in Mongolia - though most of them in the W). But I guess it must occur more often... it is most probably overlooked (huge distances at some wetlands, difficult to spot females/eclipse males among large aggregations of other ducks - sometimes flocks of tens of thousands of dabbling ducks are seen!, most bird tours visit Mongolia in June, outside the major duck migration seasons, wetlands in the E, e.g. the huge Buir Nuur, are seldom visited by birders etc.). A good record!

020 EURASIAN TEAL – *anas crecca*

Low numbers seen at various visited lakes with a maximum of 30 on a day (05-06)

021 MALLARD – *anas platyrhynchos*

One of the most common duck species recorded on the trip.

022 CHINESE SPOT-BILLED DUCK – *anas zonorhyncha*

31-05 4 ex. 2 pairs at Holboog Nur, not a common duck in Mongolia.

023 NORTHERN PINTAIL – *anas acuta*

A total of 8 birds seen on three days at visited lakes.

024 GARGANEY – *anas querquedula*

A total of 10 birds seen (mostly males) at three days at visited lakes, in small groups.

025 NORTHERN SHOVELER – *anas clypeata*

A total of 39 seen at the visited lakes.

026 RED-CRESTED POCHARD – *netta rufina*

A total of 14 birds seen at the various visited lakes.

027 COMMON POCHARD – *aythya farina*

Seen at most visited lakes, with a maximum of 50 ex. on a lake.

028 TUFTED DUCK – *aythya fuligula*

Common on all visited lakes with up to 75 ex a day.

029 STEJNEGER'S SCOTER – *melanitta stejnegeri*

05+06-06 a maximum of 18 ex. at SDN

07-06 6 ex. at Gangalut.

Nice views of little flocks of birds, many males with the “comma” shaped thick base of the bill and the white under the eye.

030 COMMON GOLDENEYE – *bucephala clangula*

Seen in low numbers on most lakes, with an exceptional 50 ex on 07-06, one female seen at a stream at Terelj on 09-06.

031 GOOSANDER – *mergus merganser*

A total of 19 birds seen spread over the trip, all on rivers passed during travelling.

032 CRESTED/ORIENTAL HONEY BUZZARD – *pernis ptilorhyncus*

27-06 7 ex, flying and migrating north at Yolyn Am.

29-06 1 ex. flying north at Ikh Bogd Ul

033 BLACK-EARED KITE – *milvus migrans ssp: lineatus* (?)

Seen daily in low numbers and small flocks. All looking like *lineatus*.

034 PALLAS'S FISH EAGLE – *haliaeetus leucoryphus*

01+02-06 a total of 5 birds, two adults and some very nice juveniles at the shores of BTN. The Juveniles where very one-coloured with a lot of long feathers on the head. Underwing pattern typical (a bit like Steppe Eagle with white parts on the outer secondaries). Great views.

035 WHITE-TAILED EAGLE – *haliaeetus albicilla*

04-06 1 adult at a stream and later on in a tree in a valley at the Khangai Mountains.

036 LAMMERGEIER – *gypaetus barbatus*

A total of 19 seen spread over the trip, very nice views. The adults where very pale. One nest visited.



One adult, near a nest (right of it) by Dave Williamson

037 HIMALAYAN GRIFFON VULTURE – *gyps himalayensis*

A total of 7 birds seen often mixed in with the Eurasian Blacks.

038 EURASIAN BLACK VULTURE – *aegypius monachus*

The commonest vulture and a total of 89 seen during the trip, also on the ground in small flocks.



Heat haze is always a problem for sharp pictures but these birds are too impressive to leave out.

039 (JAPANESE) BUZZARD – *buteo buteo ssp: japonicus*

05-06 1 ex. at SDN sitting on a fence.

06-06 1 ex. at SDN also sitting on a fence.

08-06 1 ex. at T.

040 UPLAND BUZZARD – *buteo hemilasius*

A total of 30 recorded mainly on the steppe. Always impressive, some very pale Long-legged Buzzard lookalikes..

041 STEPPE EAGLE = *aquila nipalensis*

A total of 14 birds seen spread over the trip, also at quite high passes.

042 GOLDEN EAGLE – *aquila chryseatos*

A total of 4 birds seen one on the ground near UB mobbed by Black(-eared) Kites.

043 BOOTED EAGLE – *hieraaetus pennatus*

A total of 4 birds seen, spread over the trip in forest area's. Both faze where seen (two of each)

044 LESSER KESTREL – *falco naumanni*

27-06 1 very nice male in flight at KE.

045 COMMON KESTREL – *falco tinnunculus*

A total of 4 birds seen spread over the trip.

046 AMUR FALCON – *falco tinnunculus*

25-06 3 ex, one male and two female, together along the Tuul river, near some nests they tried to occupy, built by other species.

05-06 2 ex, a pair along the way on the telegraph wires.

047 EURASIAN HOBBY – *falco subbuteo*

06-06 1 ex. seen near Terelj in a tree near a river.

048 SAKER FALCON – *falco cherrug*

A total of 6 birds, two near occupied nests. Some birds where very pale. A very powerful and impressive raptor, with some great views.

----- HAZEL GROUSE – *bonasia bonasia*

09-06 1 ex. heard responding toe the tape while searching for it, but nothing was seen.

049 WILLOW PTARMIGAN – *lagopus lagopus ssp: kozlowae*

04-06 1 ex, seen in the scope and heard from the tent calling at the campsite just down from Holseyeyen Davaa.

050 BLACK GROUSE – *tetrao tetrix*

08-06 1 male flushed and seen very well in flight from above at T, while entering the forest for the other grouse.... which I missed...

***051 ALTAI SNOWCOCK – TETRAOGALLUS ALTAICUS**

27-056 2 ex, seen feeding (and calling) at G. The calling was not heard surprisingly. Obvious black thigh.
04-06 1 ex. seen and heard calling on a ridge at Holseyeyen Davaa.



The first we saw where feeding not to far, just one Snowcock to go from now on.

052 CHUKAR – alectoris chukar

30-05 2 ex, seen very well feeding around the boulders at Ikh Bogd Ul.

053 BAILLON'S CRAKE – porzana pusilla

31-05 1 male seen very well walking in the short vegetation at Holboog Nur.

054 EURASIAN COOT – fulica atra

A total of 13 was seen at various lakes.

055 WHITE-NAPED CRANE – grus vipio

30-05 1 ex seen quite close at the shore of ON.

07-06 6 ex. three pairs seen at Gangalut.

A big and very nice crane to see, maybe I saw the same birds in Japan this year in March???

056 DEMOISELLE CRANE – anthropoids virgo

A total 198 birds seen on the trip, in breeding pairs, in little nonbreeding flocks, mostly in the steppe area's near lakes but also in riverbeds in the mountains. The most impressive views were from inside my tent in the evening drinking coffee....There call is different from Common Crane more Barnacle Geese like.



One of the many seen

057 BLACK-WINGED STILT – himantopus himantopus

30-05 1 ex. at ON

31-05 30 ex. at Holboog Nur.

058 PIED AVOCET – recurvirostra avosetta

A total of 77 seen at various lakes breeding in colonies.

059 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER – charadrius dubius

A total of 28 recorded at various lakes, breeding birds.

060 KENTISH PLOVER – charadrius alexandrinus

31-05 Common at Holboog Nur.

01+02-06 Common at BTN.

061 GREATER SANDPLOVER – charadrius leschenaulti ssp: leschenaulti

A total of 17 seen spread over the desert area's, sometimes at lakes, the most on a day (10) were seen on 31-05.

062 ORIENTAL PLOVER – charadrius veredus

02-06 2 males seen displaying in the Gobi desert northern planes, after a few hours searching.

Not an easy bird to find, but after seeing it well we stopped looking for it. The display flight was impressive like a slow wing beating shearwater above the desert, showing the dark underwings.



Spooky headed Plover could be an other name..

063 PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER – pluvialis fulva

07-06 1 ex. a summer plumage bird at Gangalut. Nice views.

064 NORTHERN LAPWING – vanellus vanellus

Seen around most of the visited lakes, all breeding birds.

065 SANDERLING – calidris alba

31-05 2 ex. in breeding plumage at Holboog Nur.

066 RED-NECKED STINT – calidris ruficollis

07-06 1 adult in summer plumage at Gangalut seen very well. The bird was in fresh plumage with still quite pale grey fringes at the upperpart feathers but a very nice fresh red throat.

067 LITTLE STINT – calidris minuta

31-05 10 ex. together at Holboog Nur in breeding plumage.

068 LONG-TOED STINT – calidris subminuta

06-06 4 ex, in one little flock at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.



Nice to see it again after last autumn in The Netherlands..

069 CURLEW SANDPIPER – *calidris ferruginea*

31-05 2 ex, one in summer plumage at Holboog Nur.

070 DUNLIN – *calidris alpine*

31-05 4 ex, all in summer plumage at Holboog Nur.

071 BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER – *limicola falcinellus* ssp: *sibirica*

31-05 3 ex, together at Holboog Nur.

072 RUFF – *philomachus pugnax*

31-05 1 female at Holboog Nur

073 COMMON SNIPE – *gallinago gallinago*

31-05 1 ex. at Holboog Nur in display flight

06-06 1 ex. Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.

074 EURASIAN WOODCOCK – *scolopax rusticola*

08-06 1 ex. displaying (one time) at dusk at Terelj.

075 EASTERN BLACK-TAILED GODWIT – *limosa limosa* ssp: *melanuroides*

A total of 42 seen often in small breeding colonies. Also heard in song, which was very much the same in sound to our godwits. Looked smaller with less long bills and darker in plumage.

076 COMMON REDSHANK – *tringa totanus*

A total of 42 counted during the trip at various steppe lakes.

077 MARSH SANDPIPER – *tringa stagnatilis*

05-06 2 ex. a breeding par at Sangiyan Dalay Nur, sometimes in song.

07-06 2 ex. at Gangalut.

078 COMMON GREENSHANK – *tringa nebularia*

07-06 1 ex, with two Marsh Sandpipers at Gangalut.

079 GREEN SANDPIPER – *tringa ochropus*

27-05 1 ex. in a small stream at KE.

080 WOOD SANDPIPER – *tringa glareola*

06-06 3 ex. at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.

081 TEREK SANDPIPER – *xenus cinereus*

05-06 1 ex. seen well, calling and singing at SDN.

082 COMMON SANDPIPER – *actitis hypoleucos*

A total of 5 seen, most around UB at the stream and river and some in display flight.

083 RUDDY TURNSTONE – *arenaria interpres*

07-06 1 ex. at the shore of Gangalut.

084 RED-NECKED PHALAROPE – phalaropus lobatus

31-05 5 ex. in one flock at Holboog Nur.

06-06 2 ex. at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.

All in summer plumage.

085 GREAT BLACK HEADED GULL – larus ichthyaetus

01+02-06 40 ex. in a small colony at BTN, very nice close up views.

086 RELICT GULL – larus relictus

31-05 4 ex. Holboog Nur, three adult summers and one first summer.

01+02-06 10 ex. at a maximum at the gull colony on the shore of BTN, often displaying and calling

05+06-06 1 scruffy second summer bird at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.

Seen and studied very well, not too hard to pick out from the Common Black headed Gulls (bigger, whiter, more black head coming down further in the neck and more obvious white eyelids). Also the way of feeding is different walking with the neck stretched.



One of the birds of the trip.

087 COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL – croicocephalus ridibundus

Quite common at various visited lakes, often nonbreeding first summers.

088 BROWN HEADED GULL – croicocephalus brunnicephalus

01+02-06 a total of 15 ex at BTN, often found on wing pattern in flight.

089 MONGOLIAN GULL – larus mongolicus

Commonly seen, with a large colony at BTN (100+ ex). Also many young birds. I found the immature birds (first summers mostly) very whitish compared to other large white headed gull species in this plumage.

090 GULL-BILLED TERN – sterna nilotica

31-05 15 ex. at Orog Nuur at a small colony

01+02-06 a maximum of 25 seen at BTN.

091 CASPIAN TERN – sterna caspia

01+02-06 100+ ex in at colony mixed with Mongolian Gulls and Common Terns at BTN

092 COMMON TERN – sterna hirundo ssp: longipennis?

Seen almost daily at visited lakes, rivers and streams. All birds looked intermediate between our birds and longipennis.

093 LITTLE TERN – sterna albifrons

31-05 1 ex. at Holboog Nur.

01-06 2 ex. at BTN.

094 WHISKERED TERN – *chlidonias hybridus*

01+02-06 a maximum of 2 ex. at the shores of BTN.

095 BLACK TERN – *chlidonias niger*

05+06 2 ex. present at Sangiyan Dalay Nuur.

096 WHITE-WINGED TERN – *chlidonias leucopterus*

A total of 29 birds all in summer plumage in small flocks mainly on migration

097 PALLAS'S SANDGROUSE – *syrrhaptes paradoxus*

A total of 294 birds seen on five days of the trip. The most on a day where 200 (01-06). Also seen feeding (in front of my tent in the evening) and drinking where one male was observed “filling up” its belly feathers.



One of the many pairs seen on the trip by Dave Williamson

098 HILL PIGEON – *columba rupestris*

A total of 3 birds seen well in villages along the way. Not looked very careful for it between the look alike feral Rock Dove's so probably seen more.

099 ORIENTAL TURTLE DOVE – *streptopelia orientalis* ssp: *orientalis*

09-06 2 ex. seen well feeding with grey tail bands.

100 COMMON CUCKOO – *cuculus canorus*

Commonly hear and seen during the trip

101 ORIENTAL CUCKOO – *cuculus opatus*

08-06 6 ex. seen well mainly behind the hotel at Terelj

09-06 3 ex. at Terelj.

102 EURASIAN EAGLE OWL – *bubo bubo* ssp: *yenisseensis*

05-06 1 adult (quite pale and big) and 2 chicks in a hole at Orkon Falls

103 URAL OWL – *strix uralensis*

08-06 1 ex. fling past us (very close) while waiting for the Swinhoes Snipes (in vain). Great grey streaky with a large head, nice views

104 COMMON SWIFT – *apus apus* ssp: *pekinensis*

Quite common and seen in variable numbers on five days of the trip.

105 FORK-TAILED SWIFT – *apus pacificus*

The most common swift seen on all days except one in big (migrating) flocks.

106 EURASIAN HOOPOE – *upupa epops*

A total of 4 seen spread over the trip, often near settlements.

107 GREY-HEADED WOODPECKER – *picus canus*

09-06 1 female seen well along the river close to the hotel at T.

108 BLACK WOODPECKER – *dryocopus martius*

A total of 11 seen at T, the most common woodpecker there.

109 GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER – *dendrocopus major* ssp: *brevirostris*

08-06 1 ex. seen well at T, a few heard before this sighting.

110 WHITE-BACKED WOODPECKER – *dendrocopus leucotos*

09-06 1 ex. seen very well feeding in low trees.

111 LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER – *dendrocopus minor* ssp: *kamtschatkensis*

08-06 1 ex in the river forest behind the Hotel in T.

09-06 1 ex. in the river forest at T.

Very nice views. Their backs were very white like sugar powdered.

112 EURASIAN THREE TOED WOODPECKER – *picoides tridactylus*

10-06 1 male seen very well while searching for BBC at T., feeding.

113 MONGOLIAN LARK – *melanocorypha mongolica*

Common in the steppe area's north of the Gobi, with more than 50 a day.



Common in the steppe's and big by Dave Williamson

114 ASIAN SHORT-TOED LARK – *calandrella cheleensis*

Common often in the more sandy desert, often singing. Very pale birds often showing a little crest.

115 EURASIAN SKYLARK – *alauda arvensis* ssp: *kibortii*

30-05 3 ex. singing at ON

01-06 1 ex. singing at BTN

Not different from our birds.

116 HORNED LARK – *eremophila alpestris* ssp: *brandti*?

Common spread over the trip, in deserts and mountains.

117 PALE MARTIN – *riparia diluta*

A total of 48 seen spread over the trip, the best where at a colony right under your feet at BTN.

118 EURASIAN CRAG MARTIN – *hirundo rupestris*

A total of 11 seen spread over the trip in typical habitats.

119 BARN SWALLOW – *hirundo rustica* ssp: *tytleri*

A total of 27 seen on migration. All birds had very obvious rufous underparts.

120 COMMON HOUSE MARTIN – *delichon urbica* ssp: *lagopoda*

A total of 25 birds seen, with the most (20) on 05-06. The birds seemed less contrasting as the familiar birds I see at home.

121 RICHARD'S PIPIT – *anthus richardii* ssp: *dauuricus*

A total of 13 seen spread over four days, mostly migrating birds.

122 BLYTH'S PIPIT – *anthus godlewskii*

A total of 36 seen on six days. Mostly found on song (pipit like but hard to reproduce) and often heard the (familiar) call, "chep, chep". Seen well on the ground and I found them quite easy to ID with the all buff underparts etc. Great to learn this species a bit more.

123 OLIVE-BACKED PIPT – anthus hodgsoni ssp: yunnanensis

Common in the taiga forest and a few on migration. Some birds had grey backs but the streaking on the mantle was the same to the green backed birds.

124 TREE PIPIT – anthus trivialis

31-05 2 ex. at Holboog Nur, both migrants.

125 WATER PIPIT – anthus spinoletta ssp: blakistoni

A total of 22 seen all on the alpine meadow's visited.

126 EASTERN GREY-HEADED WAGTAIL – motacilla flava ssp: macronyx

A total of 5 probably migrants seen spread over the trip,

127 CITRINE WAGTAIL – motacilla cinerea ssp: citreola

A total of 19 noted at marshy areas and rivers, nice views, often in breeding pairs.

128 GREY WAGTAIL – motacilla cinerea

A total of 19 seen mostly at streams and rivers in the mountains.

129 BAIKAL WAGTAIL – motacilla alba ssp: baicalensis

A total of 13 seen al in the Northern part of the country and most likely all breeding birds.

130 BROWN ACCENTOR – prunella fulvescens

Quite common in the mountain area's up to the top. The most common accentor.

***131 KOZLOV'S ACCENTOR – PRUNELLA KOSLOWI**

26-05 4 ex. at G. Seen at very close range after the rain stopped, quite large, even short song parts where heard.



A true endemic, with records in the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia, but is this really China?

132 ALTAI ACCENTOR – prunella himalayana

29-06 12 ex. seen at IBU together in small groups or fighting pairs. Sometimes not too easy to distinguish from Alpine, The upperparts (very heavily streaked) and reddish streaked underparts with a white throat will do the trick.

133 ALPINE ACCENTOR – prunella collaris

26+27-06 a total of 10 seen at G.

29-06 1 ex. at IBU.

134 SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT – lucinia calliope

25-06 1 female at the Tuul river.

26-06 1 male a migrant at G. Nice views.

09-06 1 male heard in song at T.

135 BLUETHROAT – luscini svecica

25-06 2 ex. migrants at the Tuul river.

136 NORTHERN RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL – tarsiger cyanurus

10-06 5 first year males, all singing but not blue so made of a first year age.

137 EVERMANN'S REDSTART – phoenicurus erythronota

04-06 2 ex. a pair, with a splendid male at a stop in the Khangai Mountains. The male was softly singing first low down from the top of scrub, later on high in the conifers. Great views. Not an easy (breeding) bird to find in Mongolia.

138 BLACK REDSTART – phoenicurus ochruros ssp: phoenicuroides

26-05 Common at G seen very well, the red-bellied race, very good views.

139 COMMON REDSTART – phoenicurus phoenicurus

26-05 3 ex. at G, migrants and associated with the numerous Black Redstarts in the rocky area's

05-06 1 ex. at Orkon Falls

Seen almost daily in T, singing and all breeding birds.

140 DAURIAN REDSTART – phoenicurus aureus

24-05 3 ex. around UB.

26-05 1 male at G., a migrant.

A total of 3 birds seen at T most likely breeding birds.

141 GULDENSTADT'S REDSTART – phoenicurus erythrogaster

29-05 2 ex a pair at IBU almost at the top (3200). Very nice views.

142 SIBERIAN STONECHAT – saxicola maura ssp: stenjnegeri?

03+04-07 10 ex, all pairs quite high up in the mountains at Holseyeyen Davaa.

***143 HODGSON'S BUSCHCHAT – SAXICOLA INSIGNIS**

29-05 2 ex. A pair seen well (after hours searching) at the upper top of IBU (3200 m). They were building a nest. The male was singing. A big chat. The white throat with the orange brick red breast are very obvious. The female was large with a white wingpatch but not obvious as the male was. They were feeding in the snow in an area without any high vegetation (they winter in tall grass!!).



The best bird of the trip if you look at ranking as rare with Birdlife standards.

144 ISABELLINE WHEATEAR – oenanthe isabellina

The most common to abundant wheatear of the trip, seen on most days. Often singing with long whistles and imitating other species, like Altai Snowcock.

145 NORTHERN WHEATEAR – oenanthe oenanthe

Quite common in the mountains, quite pale birds.

146 PIED WHEATEAR – oenanthe pleschanka

A total of 11 seen spread over five days during the trip in dry rocky area's

147 DESERT WHEATEAR – oenanthe deserti

A total of 10 seen in the sandy parts of desert in the southern (first) part of the trip, often nice males.

148 RUFOUS-TAILED ROCK THRUSH – monticola saxatilis

A total of 7 birds seen spread over the trip in the rocky and not to high parts of the visited mountains.



One of the nice males by Dave Williamson

149 NAUMANN'S THRUSH – turdus naumanni

26-05 2 ex. at G and the ger camp at KE we were staying, migrants

27-05 1 ex. at the ger camp we were staying.

31-05 1 ex. along the way also a migrant.

Nice close up views.

***150 RED THROATED THRUSH – TURDUS RUFICOLLIS**

03-06 1 male seen very well at Holseyeyen Davaa

08-06 1 immature male seen well in the woods behind the hotel at T.

09-06 3 ex, of which one pair seen very well at T.

As Blackthroated, with a yellow side of the base of the bill. The red is deep brick/bordeaux red.

Also heard singing from the forest, quite different from the thrush like songs I know but hard to describe.

151 PALLAS'S GRASHOPPER WARBLER – locustella certhiola

06-06 2 ex, both migrants seen very well in short reeds and at ditches of the lake SDN. All the features seen but these adults where off course less contrasting as the immatures we see in autumn.



Look at the worn tertialtips, cracking studies of this migrant.

152 PADDYFIELD WARBLER – *acrocephalus agricola* ssp: *capistrata*

30-05 Common and tenth seen singing up in the reeds at ON.

03-06 one migrant seen very well in the morning at the river Tuyn

I tried to “learn” the song, but it is difficult with only a whistle which is quite characteristic. Obvious birds with a lot of eyebrow. The dark eyebrow border at the top was hard to see. Less “tea with milk” than the autumn birds in our region.

153 THICK-BILLED WARBLER – *acrocephalus aedon*

03-06 2 ex. in the morning at the river Tuyn.

06-06 1 ex at SDN, a migrant near the tents and trucks looking for shelter with other migrants and entering the tents! (no trees and bushes)

09-06 1 ex. at T probably a breeding bird.

Very nice and eyeball views.

154 ASIAN DESERT WARBLER – *sylvia nana*

30+31-05 a maximum of 5 ex. breeding birds, singing at a bushy area near Orog Nuur.

01-06 1 ex singing and showing well at Adginn Tsagaan Nuur.

Nice to here there song and seeing there display flight.

155 BARRED WARBLER – *sylvia nisoria*

30-05 1 male, showing very nice in a lower down rocky valley at IBU and responding to the tape.

156 LESSER WHITETHROAT – *sylvia curruca* ssp: *blythi* + *halimodendri* or *telengitica*?

24-05 1 ex. in UB, a pale bird (*halimodendri*?)

30-05 1 ex. at a bushy area near Orog Nuur, a dark bird (*blythi*?)

03-06 1 ex. a dark bird, at the river Tuyn.

09-06 1 ex. a dark bird at T.

Still waiting for the “real” article about these taxa to put a name on them.

157 COMMON WHITETHROAT – *sylvia communis* ssp: *volgensis*

07-06 1 male at T in a scrubby area, showing well, quite pale grey and less warm coloured than our birds.

158 TWO-BARRED WARBLER – *phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*

03-06 1 ex. at the river Tuyn.

A total of 4 seen at T in the forest, also heard singing (quite obvious rattle as a song phrase).

159 ARCTIC WARBLER – *phylloscopus borealis*

A total of 29 seen spread over five days, with one day of 25 (25-05) a big fall of migrants.

160 PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER – *phylloscopus proregulus*

A total of 16 seen and most common as a breeder in the T. area. Some migrants where seen just on the bare desert ground and giving cracking views.

161 YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER – *phylloscopus inornatus*

25-05 1 ex. in a flock of phyllo's at Songino Khayr Khan.

08-06 many heard in the woods as in a big flock, all calling just before dark, as if they would take of for migration.

162 HUME'S LEAF WARBLER – *phylloscopus humei*

03+04-06 6 ex. most likely migrants coming in at Holveyeyen Davaa.

05-06 1 ex. at Orkon Falls.

163 RADDE'S WARBLER – *phylloscopus schwarzi*

30-05 1 ex. a migrant in the low desert bushes near Orog Nur. Good views, the buff/shammy coloured undertail and the bill (shorter and thicker than Dusky) put us on to the bird.

164 DUSKY WARBLER – *phylloscopus fuscatus*

A total of 25 birds seen spread over the trip al migrants. The most common phyllo encountered, also as a migrant in the bare desert.

165 SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF – *phylloscopus collybita* ssp: *tristis*

03-06 1 ex. a migrant in the morning in the bushes along the river Tuyn. A "classic" bird with some phyllosc showing well, very grey.

166 DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER – *muscipapa siberica*

24-05 1 ex. a migrant at the Tuul river.

25-05 3 ex. along the Tuul river.

A total of 3 seen in the forest behind the hotel at T. breeding bird.

167 ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER – *muscipapa dauurica*

A total of 8 seen during the trip, mainly migrants, but one breeding pair in the forest behind the hotel in T.

168 SPOTTED FLYCATCHER – *muscipapa striata* ssp: *mongola*

05-06 2 ex. seen well at Orkon Falls

169 TAIGA FLYCATCHER – *ficedula albicilla*

A total of 8 birds seen spread over the trip, mostly migrants, but maybe the birds seen in T where breeders? Some nice adult males along them.

170 WILLOW TIT – *parus montanus* ssp: *baicalensis*

A total of 3 birds seen spread over the days at T.

171 AZURE TIT – *parus cyanus* ssp: *tianschanicus*

24-05 2 ex a pair in the willow's along the Tuul river, close up views, the birds where moulting so not crispy white as we know from winter pictures. Nice views of the tail pattern.

172 GREAT TIT – *parus major* ssp: *kapustini*

Seen and heard near UB and more common at the T area.

173 EURASIAN NUTHATCH – *sitta europaea* ssp: *asiatica*

A total of 7 seen at T, very nice views, with white underparts.

174 WALLCREEPER – *tichodroma muraria*

26-05 2 ex. at G. nice views eventually, also calling in a gorge.

***175 WHITE-CROWNED PENDULINE TIT – REMIZ CORONATUS**

24-05 2 birds in the willows at the river Tuul near UB. Not a very impressive lifer at first. The birds appeared smaller (billed) and paler than pendulinus (p). The birds where in fresh plumage so the black did not meet at the back of the head. The black on the head was more narrow than on p. and the crown appeared more white.

Striking where the far more pale wing covers and tertials than on p. The call was, for me, the same as p.

176 BROWN SHRIKE – *lanius cristatus* ssp: *cristatus*

A total of 24 seen spread over the trip in all visited places except T. All birds where probably migrants, sitting in the only tree for miles to see (every tree or bush in the desert hosted a shrike), a lot of migrants fly in and the shrikes fed on these poor birds, nature is hard..

177 DAURIAN SHRIKE – *lanius isabellinus* ssp: *isabellinus*

A total of 29 seen on four days (between 27 and 31-05). All breeding birds in bushes and Saxaul. The birds appeared very pale almost resembling karelini type birds of Turkestan Shrike. The underparts were pale buff coloured in good light. This was the reason to ID them as Daurian, but these birds were by far the palest Daurians I have seen.

178 STEPPE GREY SHRIKE - *lanius pallidirostris*

A total of 5 birds seen in the same area's as the Daurian Shrike's. The bills of these adults were all black, the lores had some smudges of black but less obvious than the black lores of Great Grey.

179 EURASIAN MAGPIE – *pica pica* ssp: *leucoptera*

Quite common during the trip, the birds appeared quite long tailed.

180 HENDERSON'S GROUND JAY – *podoces hendersoni*

30+31-05 2 ex. in total, at a bushy area near Oroq Nuur

01-06 5 ex. a small group at a saxaul area along the way near Adginn Tsagaan Nuur.

Very nice prolonged views. We saw them feeding on the ground and sitting up on bushes. Also close up flight views were noted.

181 SPOTTED NUTCRACKER – *nucifraga caryocatactes* ssp: *macrorhynchos*

A total of 5 seen at T., also heard well.

182 RED-BILLED CHOUGH – *pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

One of the most common birds of the trip and seen on most days.

183 DAURIAN JACKDAW – *corvus dauuricus*

A total of 230 written down and also very common on 10-06 at T. Many flocks, with many immatures, often more immatures than adults.

184 (ORIENTAL) ROOK – *corvus frugilegus* ssp: *pastinator*

Quite common around UB in flocks.

185 (ORIENTAL) CARRION CROW – *corvus corone* ssp: *orientalis*

A total of 32 seen spread over many days (so low number per day encountered).

186 COMMON RAVEN – *corvus corax*

Quite common in low numbers (maximum 10) on a day during the whole trip.

187 WHITE-CHEEKED STARLING – *sturnus cineraceus*

07-06 2 ex. near nests on the way up to T. along a river crossed.

188 SAXAUL SPARROW – *passer ammodendri*

27-05 2 ex., a pair in the evening at KE showing well eventually near a nest in a pipe (of a fence). The male was cracking (as they are), one of the birds of the trip.

189 HOUSE SPARROW – *passer domesticus*

Common in villages.

190 EURASIAN TREE SPARROW – *passer montanus*

Quite common in villages together with House Sparrow's

191 ROCK SPARROW – *petronia petronia*

30-05 1 ex. at IBU.

02+03-06 15 ex in a colony at the river Tuyn.

07-06 1 ex. at Gangalut very close up views with the yellow throat

192 PERE DAVID'S SNOWFINCH – *montifringilla davidiana*

30-05 6 ex. on the way down and at our camping site at IBU.

Nice views of this last year's lifer.

193 WHITE-WINGED SNOWFINCH – *montifringilla nivalis* ssp: *groumgrzimaili*

27-05 2 ex. at Yolyn Am

30-05 1 ex. at IBU.

Not very different than the European race.

194 TWITE – *carduelis flavirostris* ssp: *altaica*

26-05 2 ex. at Yolyn Am.

Both of the typical grey central Asian form(s).

195 COMMON CROSSBILL – *loxia curvirostra* ssp:??

10-06 2 ex. flew over calling.

196 BRANDT'S MOUNTAIN FINCH – *leucosticte brandti* ssp: *margaritacea*

29-05 1 ex. on the Hodgson's site at IBU. The bird seems paler than the birds I saw in Tibet.

197 MONGOLIAN FINCH – *bucanetes mongolicus*

28-05 1 female at a settlement driving into the mountains at IBU.

30-05 4 ex. along the way down from IBU.

03-06 2 ex. along the river Tuyn.

198 COMMON ROSEFINCH – *carpodacus erythrinus*

A total of 34 seen spread over the trip, mostly migrants. Maybe breeders at Orkon Falls because these (10) were singing a lot.

199 CHINESE BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH – *carpodacus davidianus*

26-05 5 ex. at Yolyn Am, pairs and solitary males, great close up views while looking for Kozlov's Accentor.

200 HAWFINCH – *coccothraustes coccothraustes* ssp: *coccothraustes*

A total of 7 in a loose flock in the forest behind the hotel at T. Quite grey birds.

201 BLACK-FACED BUNTING – *emberiza spodocephala* ssp: *oligoxantha, or spodocephala?*

A total of 10 birds seen, six of them most likely migrants, encountered in the desert and along the steppe lakes (even in my tent..) and four singing in the T area. Because of the migrants not sure about the subspecies.

202 PINE BUNTING – *emberiza leucocephalos*

08-06 10 ex. spread over the day, all singing males in the forest edges of T. The song is the same (for my ear) as Yellowhammer but there (flight) call is quite different and less two syllabic.

203 GODLEWSKI'S BUNTING – *emberiza godlewskii*

26-05 6 ex, seen very well at Yolyn Am

30-05 1 ex. at IBU.

Nice brown head stripes.

204 MEADOW BUNTING – *emberiza cioides* ssp: *cioides*

25-05 20 ex. in small groups and with singing males at Bogd Khan NP and later Songino Khayr Khan near UB.

205 GREY-NECKED BUNTING – *emberiza buchanani*

30-05 3 singing males when driving down from IBU. Nice scope views with the dark red scapulars forming a line.

206 LITTLE BUNTING – *emberiza pusilla*

A total of 8 migrants seen spread over the trip with the most observations in the southern desert.

207 YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING – *emberiza aureola*

25-05 1 female feeding on the ground and showing well at the shores of the Tuul river.

208 COMMON REED BUNTING – *emberiza schoeniclus* ssp: *harterti*

30-05 1 singing male at Orog Nuur, quite big bill

209 PALLAS'S REED BUNTING – *emberiza pallasi* ssp: *lydiae* +?

03-06 1 male seen well at Holveyeyen Davaa at 2700 m, ssp: *lydiae* (which is restricted to alpine mountain scrub)

06-06 15 ex. at a protected grassy area near Sangiyan Dalay Nuur, nicely singing males with a typical buzzing song, great views, ssp: *lydiae* or migrants of *pallasi*?

MAMMALS

Daurian Pika *Ochotona dauurica*: A single animal showed in riverine shrub near the capital.

Northern Pika *Ochotona hyperborea*: Several of these cuties obliged at length on scree areas in the Terelj taiga.

Pallas's Pika *Ochotona pallasi*: The common pika of the Gobi Altai. This adorable cuddly animal performed splendidly.

Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus*: A couple of encounters with this widespread species.

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai*: Several observations in the steppe.

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*: Several encounters with almost black-coloured animals in the northern forests.

Tarbagan Marmot (Siberian/Mongolian Marmot) *Marmota sibirica*: These cuddly creatures are still fairly common in the steppes. They were previously considered as a form of Bobak Marmot.

Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel (Red-cheeked Souslik) *Spermophilus erythrogenys*: These are the shorter-tailed sousliks of the foothills of the Gobi Altai. We could not detect red cheeks though.

Long-tailed Ground Squirrel (Long-tailed Souslik) *Spermophilus undulatus*: These were the sousliks seen in the steppes.

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus*: Several performed very well in the Ulaan Baatar neighbourhood and in the Terelj taiga. Often very approachable. This is the only Old World representative of the genus *Tamias* (25 species).

Andrew's Three-toed Jerboa (Mongolian Jerboa) *Stylodipus andrewsi*: 30-05 Great views of this endearing critter on our evening walk at the Henderson's Ground Jay spot. A real gem!



A very tame mammal walking right up to our boots at one time

Mid-day Jird (Mid-day Gerbil) *Meriones meridianus*: This one showed quite well, just after dawn at the Henderson's Ground Jay spot.

False Zokor (Steppe Zokor) *Myospalax aspalax*: The mounds of this inveterate digger were an obvious feature of the river valleys at Terelj.

Corsac Fox *Vulpes corsac*: 05-06 A splendid observation of a hunting animal in the northern steppes.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*: Three sightings of this well-known species.

Grey Wolf *Canis lupus*: Scat of this powerful animal was found high up on Capercaillie mountain.

Eurasian Wild Boar *Sus scrofa*: The obvious diggings of this widespread species were seen in the terelj taiga.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*: We bumped into a nice female in the Terelj taiga.

Goitred Gazelle (Black-tailed Gazelle) *Gazella subgutturosa*: 28-05 Four of these light-footed animals showed well in the southern semi-desert.

Mongolian Gazelle (White-tailed Gazelle) *Procapra gutturosa*: 27-05 Several small groups performed well on our wanderings through the southern semi-desert. It is still common in eastern Mongolia, but is only rarely seen further west. It is not a real Gazelle in se (different genus) and its nearest relatives are the Tibetan and Przewalski's Gazelles of Tibet and China. The Duff & Lawson checklist place it in the genus *Gazella*.

Siberian Ibex (Asiatic Ibex) *Capra sibirica*: Fairly common in the Gobi Altai, where we saw some impressive males.

Argali *Ovis ammon*: Good scope views of six of these impressive wild sheep in the Gobi Altai mountains.



Two extremes, lovely sand dunes and snowy mountains, four season's in a day is not rare in Mongolia

