

# Mongolia's Snow Leopards

Naturetrek Tour Report

30th July – 12th August 2025

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Snow Leopard



Grey Wolf



Hairy-footed Jerboa



Pallas's Sandgrouse

Tour report and photos by Luca Boscain

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Tour participants: Luca Boscain (Naturetrek Leader) and Bayanmunkh Dashnyam (Bina) (Local leader and naturalist) with 11 Naturetrek clients.

## Day 1

Wednesday 30th July

In flight from UK to Ulaanbaatar

## Day 2

Thursday 31st July

### Ulaanbaatar and surroundings

We all gathered at around 8 a.m. at the arrivals gate of Ulaanbaatar Airport: some of us had flown in from Heathrow, others from Manchester, while a few had spent the previous days in Mongolia's capital. Finally, Luca, our tour leader, arrived from Venice. Waiting for us was Bayanmunkh (known as "Bina") our local guide, who welcomed us and directed us to the currency exchange and mobile phone counters inside the airport.

A 45-minute transfer took us through the grey, polluted suburbs of Ulaanbaatar, heading westward to the Mongolica Hotel, where we checked in for the night. In the hotel garden, dozens of Azure Tits and White-crowned Penduline Tits flitted through the vegetation, requiring patience for decent views, while a female Amur Falcon soared overhead. In the late morning, we boarded the minibus and headed to a series of freshwater lakes known as Khun Nuur. A variety of ducks were present (unfortunately all in eclipse plumage), including a single Eurasian Teal and several Gadwall.

The sky was filled with dozens of Black Kites, but a group of Carrion Crows singled out a dark-morph Booted Eagle for mobbing. Among the waders, which occasionally flushed from one side of the lake to the other, we noted Northern Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper and Wood Sandpiper. We stopped at another lake, drawn by a Eurasian Spoonbill. Through the scopes, we soon picked out Ruddy Shelduck, Spotted Redshank and Black-winged Stilt, but the highlights were an Eastern Spot-billed Duck and an Asian Dowitcher, spotted by our guides.

We returned to the hotel for lunch at 12:30 p.m., enjoying a fresh salad, pumpkin soup, and beef meatballs.

After a short rest, some of us regrouped at 3:30 p.m. to explore on foot the patchwork of fences, hedges, ditches, and overgrazed meadows surrounding the hotel. Butterflies were abundant on the scarce flowers, including Asiatic species such as Lesser Bath White (*Pontia chloridice*), *Lycaena violacea*, *Hipparchia antonoe* and *Coenonympha amaryllis* (all Asian species with no English name), alongside more familiar European ones like Dryad, Brown Hairstreak, Lesser Marbled Fritillary and Silver-spotted Skipper.

Several flowers stood out: the spiralled deep purple-red blooms of Austral Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes australis*), the bright Chinese-pink (*Dianthus chinensis*), the delicate Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and the blue *Adenophora stenanthina*, a local bellflower. Bird activity was relatively quiet, although we added more Azure Tits, a soaring Cinereous Vulture and a flushed Pin-tailed Snipe.

With an early flight to Khovd scheduled for the next morning, we had dinner at 7 p.m., sampled the local Altai Gobi beer and soon retired for a well-earned rest.

## Day 3

Friday 1st August

### Khovd, Khar-Us lake and Jargalant massif

Today we had an early start, meeting at 4 a.m. to head to the airport. Surprisingly, the weather was drizzly, and we were treated to a magnificent double rainbow.

The flight from Ulaanbaatar to Khovd took about two hours, during which we admired the vast Mongolian landscape: from rugged hills dotted with patches of woodland to green river valleys, flanked by sandy dunes, forming lakes and meanders.

Due to the time zone change, we landed in Khovd, western Mongolia, just after 9 a.m. We split into five 4x4 vehicles and, with Khovd being our last town for a week, stopped at a supermarket to stock up on sweets, crisps, drinks, and anything else we might need. We then continued into the semi-desert. After a scenic viewpoint offering our first glimpse of the vast Khar Us Nuur, we passed through a striking canyon where hundreds of Common Swifts flew low along the cliffs. We also observed Isabelline Shrike, Eurasian Hoopoe and Isabelline Wheatear. Reaching the lakeside, with scattered reedbeds and patches of Fringed Water-lily (*Nymphaoides peltata*), we began scanning the water. Hundreds of ducks were present, including Red-crested and Common Pochard, three White-headed Ducks, Gadwall and Tufted Duck, along with dozens of Greylag Geese and a few Whooper Swans. Near the reeds, we encountered curious Bearded Reedlings, Paddyfield Warblers, and Great Reed Warblers. Particularly striking were flocks of hundreds of Sand Martins resting on bare ground or hawking insects over the water.

Heading south along the lake, we spotted several Common Cranes and Demoiselle Cranes grazing in the lush grass. At a small peninsula, while birding continued, a crew of cooks emerged from the desert to prepare lunch—one of Mongolia's magical touches. A mixed group of Caspian Terns, Pallas's Gulls, and Mongolian Gulls rested on the shore. Through the scopes, we saw plenty of Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Spoonbill, and Great Crested Grebe on the water.

As we enjoyed a sort of risotto, we took in the dramatic view: dark storm clouds on the horizon and noisy flocks of Caspian Terns wheeling overhead. Bina then pointed out four distant Swan Geese, a key target for many of us. We continued to Altai Ger Camp, officially named "Twin Leopards Camp", driving over two hours through an arid valley. Then came exciting news: a female Snow Leopard had been spotted high in the mountains. Despite the long day, we couldn't resist. Leaving the camp behind, we drove another hour along a bumpy track to over 3,100 m in barren alpine pastures. From a breath-taking viewpoint, we scanned a deep rocky valley. A pale shape was soon located near a killed goat, but it was awkwardly positioned. It took time to set up scopes in the right spot. The Snow Leopard was nearly invisible, lying in the grass with only its black ear tips and white-tipped tail occasionally twitching.

A Lammergeier and a Cinereous Vulture soared down the slope as shifting weather created stunning plays of rainbows, warm spotlights, and dark clouds across the layered sedimentary mountains. We were perhaps 600 metres from the cat, resting far below us. Eventually, it seemed to tire of the attention, stood up, and crossed the

meadow, perfectly revealing its rosettes and long tail. Some managed to capture its glance toward us before it vanished behind a rock.

We celebrated with hot soup beside the 4x4s for dinner, then drove back down to the camp. We finally claimed our attractive gers after 10 p.m., where we'd spend the next seven nights. Unlike previous years, we were spoiled: each ger had a private bathroom with a sink, chemical toilet, and a hot-water pressure shower ready upon our return from the field.

## Day 4

Saturday 2nd August

### Jargalant massif

Since early in the morning, the spotters on the mountain had reported the female Snow Leopard again. After breakfast at 7:30 a.m., we drove uphill to the Jargalant plateau. On the way, we stopped briefly to see several Chukars and a couple of Himalayan Griffons and Steppe Eagles circling in the sky, but also our first Long-tailed Squirrels (*Urocitellus undulates*), characterised by a grey back with whitish spots and rather russet-yellow face and underparts.

Today there was resplendent, lovely sunshine also over the alpine pastures, so a number of Tarbagan Marmots were lying outside their burrows. With the help of the spotters, we soon aimed the telescope in the direction of the Snow Leopard, lying down in the green at the bottom of the valley, more or less in the same spot as the day before. Once again, it had been challenging to find the right gap to see it properly among the rocks, since it was showing mainly the tail and part of the spotted body, raising its head just from time to time. Later it moved into the shade of some whitish rocks, rolling over on its back and showing the pure white belly, the legs and the tail upside down.

After a plate of spaghetti with Bolognese sauce, we dedicated some more time to spying on the leopard, since bird activity was quite low, excluding plenty of Black Kites, a Himalayan Vulture, a Steppe Eagle, a couple of Red-billed Choughs and a male Gldenstdt's Redstart that showed for a few seconds in flight. The leopard had now transferred to the shade of another rock, showing perfectly its entire head, body and very long, soft tail: a memorable sighting, even if slightly more distant than in the morning!

Happy, we drove to the other side of the valley to look for more mountain birds: the time of the day was the worst, with a lot of heat haze, but the local spotters surprised us once again, managing to discover a flock of Altai Snowcocks sitting in the shade of a boulder, probably more than a kilometre away.

Driving downhill, we had a last stop in the flowered canyon, to admire some Bronze Age petroglyphs with Ibex and Wapities and a few *Plebejus subsolanus* and Common Blue butterflies.

Back at the ger camp, we went straight to dinner at 6:30 p.m.

In the evening, Luca, Kenny and Cat went out for a first night exploration around the camp, finding very mobile Mongolian Jerboas (*Orientallactaga sibirica*) and more obliging Midday Jirds (*Meriones meridianus*).

## Day 5

Sunday 3rd August

### Tsenkheriin valley and Tsagaan Khaalga gorge

The breakfast was fixed at 6:30 a.m., then we went to explore the semi-desert valleys to the west of our ger camp early in the morning. Unfortunately the bird activity was not significant, with just an Isabelline Shrike, a young Desert Wheatear and several Isabelline Wheatears active among the stones and the scattered shrubs. We could instead enjoy the view of a herd of Domestic Camels and, in the telescope, 17 Goitered Gazelles that ran away quickly from us, despite our being more than a kilometre away. Walking along a sort of wadi, we looked hard for the Mongolian Ground Jay, but with no luck. Present in multitude, instead, were the cute Tuvan Toad-headed Agamas and even more abundant *Bryodema gebleri* locusts, jumping from the ground, buzzing and showing the dark and red wings in a very peculiar way.

We were almost at the base of the vast sediment cone that comes out from the Jargalant Khairkhan massif when Bina pointed out a much closer Goitered Gazelle on the left, which stopped for a few seconds to look in our direction, to the joy of the photographers, before starting to run again, with its erect black tail, beyond the horizon. We then drove shortly along a paved road through the Tsenkheriin flat valley to reach the Tsenkheriin stream side, and the first Pallas's Sandgrouse in flight parallel to the car was spotted by Cat.

Later Luca pointed out four Demoiselle Cranes pasturing in peace by some farmer gers and a white stupa. We came back for lunch to the ger camp, as always filled with large clicking grasshoppers with red wings, *Bryodema gebleri*, and followed a couple of hours of spare time to rest.

We met again at 4:30 p.m. to walk along a canyon starting just half a kilometre north of our camp, the Tsagaan Khaalga gorge. It was a fascinating place with running water among meadows of flowers, stony screes and two siding cliffs of rusty rocks. Several Baltic Hawkers (*Aeshna serrata*) were patrolling the stream, but the presence of water was a magnet also for the thirsty birds: flocks of tens of Rock Sparrows and pinkish Mongolian Finches were seen, coming to drink on the ground. The scattered bushes were also attractive for a few passerines on early migration: Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Spotted Flycatcher and an unexpected Greenish Warbler.

High in the sky were flying Western House Martins, of which we found a couple of nests, Crag Martins, Black Kites but also an immature Steppe Eagle and two rather tame Golden Eagles that circled almost overhead.

The last observations, before we turned back, were a welcome Common Rock Thrush and a couple of Sulphur-bellied Warblers hopping on the stones.

Supper offered tonight Chinese dumplings filled with meat or vegetables and a Russian salad.

## Day 6

Monday 4th August

### Dôrgôn lake and Čandman'

We had a very early start, meeting at 5a.m., to drive eastwards from the camp to the very vast and flat areas that surround Lake Dôrgôn. We stopped on the way for a few shots of the magnificent sunrise, then we left behind

the settlement of Čandman and took a track through the arid steppe. Herds of livestock were grazing on the green pastures, including horses, cattle and Domestic Camels, but we soon located our target: the odd Mongolian Saiga Antelopes. Intensively hunted in the past, then affected by an epizootic illness that decimated the remaining population, they now give encouraging signs of recovery, since we saw plenty of herds of dozens of antelopes just by scanning around with the telescopes. Unfortunately, none of them proved approachable, running away at an incredible speed.

Then we visited an artificial well set up for the domestic animals to drink from, hoping for Pallas's Sandgrouse that didn't show up, while the waterhole had been visited by hundreds of camels and horses, followed by several Isabelline Wheatears.

Two Upland Buzzards were sitting on the grass, while in the distance we could also notice Tarbagan Marmots and a single Corsac Fox, trotting in the haze among the camels.

Driving further on, we first stopped to see a Long-legged Buzzard perched on a stone wall, then we reached the shore of Lake Dôrgôn, where we saw impressive flocks of hundreds of Red-crested Pochards and three displaying Black-throated Divers, still in breeding plumage. A curious sighting was a chocolate-coloured turdid that turned out to be, most likely, just a dark mutation of an Isabelline Wheatear, showing a hint of pale supercilium and chin, black bridles and a mainly black tail.

At another stop along the lake, we could carefully scan hundreds of waders and terns: most of them were Greater Sandpipers, Kentish Plovers and Common Terns, but we also observed Ruddy Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint and Little Stint, Black-tailed Godwit, Black Tern and Little Tern. The best observation was most likely a juvenile Oriental Plover, looking like a yellowish Dotterel, noticed by Luca.

Another memorable sighting was at the lunch spot near the lake, where Bina pointed out three Pallas's Reed Buntings, one male of which was particularly tame and photographable, but we had there, by the reeds, also Paddyfield Warbler, White-winged Tern, Pale Martin and a young male Eastern Marsh Harrier.

To taste delicious noodles, sitting comfortably on chairs and admiring the lake and the open steppe behind, made us feel very privileged.

In the afternoon, we transferred to another waterhole, filled with nice dragonflies like Siberian Winter Damsel fly, Blue and Blue-tailed Damsel flies, *Aeshna soneharai* hawkers and *Sympetrum tibiale* darters, and then to the village of Čandman'. While the drivers were refilling the cars, we could go and spy on the interesting traditional wrestling matches that were taking place in a meadow near the service station. Tens of cars and hundreds of people had gathered around fighters with naked breasts and, not rarely, colourful jackets and underpants. The opponents crossed their arms one into the other, trying to drop the rival with their legs, and were then awarded a picturesque hat.

There was still time to climb a rocky hill and admire ancient petroglyphs, showing a range of animals from Ibex to Argali, Wapiti and a sort of dove, before coming back to the camp at 6:15 p.m.

After dinner, Luca went out with a more numerous group than usual to look for nightlife: a Midday Jird showed perfectly, while a Tolai Hare ran quickly behind the hill and only Cat and Kenny, who stayed around longer, got the bonus of a couple of tame Siberian Jerboas.

## Day 7

Tuesday 5th August

### Bumbat massif and Tsenkheriin valley

Today we had breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and then we went to explore the western side of the Bumbat massif, south of our ger camp. Driving down to the tarmac road, Bina spotted a Mongolian Ground-jay. We soon got out of the vehicles to relocate and approach a pair of these birds, which took quite a while, during which we could also see a lonely Pallid Ground Squirrel, a Desert Warbler and an unexpected Greater Sandplover, probably breeding in the area, since any wetland was very far away and it still had an evident dark breeding mask.

Then we went through some green pasture, maintained by a couple of water ditches. On the roof of a shepherds' winter hut were standing, side by side, Northern and Pied Wheatears, while a few tens of metres farther away were several Isabelline Wheatears and a single Desert one: four species of *Oenanthe* wheatears in the same place!

Driving along a stony slope, we flushed a Little Owl from a stone wall, then we entered the deep Buillast valley. The dry riverbed was hosting scattered bushes, such as the red-berried Small-leaved Honeysuckle (*Lonicera microphylla*) or *Caragana bungei*, that became taller and more abundant, increasing progressively with altitude.

Here and there we stopped to observe Hoopoes, Isabelline Shrikes, a pair of Lammergeiers and five females of Siberian Ibex, that were looking at us from the top of a rocky mountain.

At the end of the gorge, there was a proper stream running and we found lovely groves of willows and Laurel-leaved Poplars (*Populus laurifolia*). The meadows were also richer than lower down, especially those with Aging Chive (*Allium senescens*), Altai Onion (*Allium altaicum*) and Siberian Catmint (*Nepeta sibirica*), extremely popular among hundreds of butterflies. It was really a heaven for insects, since we noticed Small Tortoiseshell, Dark Green Fritillary, Eastern Bath White, Eastern Pale Clouded Yellow (*Colias erate*), *Hipparchia antonoe*, unknown *Plebejus* blues with obvious 5-6 blue ocelli and a couple of Common Swallowtails. The lunch was prepared by the crew in the shade of the trees, all surrounded by fascinating mountains, cliffs and alpine pastures.

Later we went on foot, descending a bit along the valley: Thick-billed Warbler, Common Rosefinch and Spotted Flycatcher were the highlights among the birds, while among the butterflies were Damon Blue (*Polyommatus damone*), *Polygonia interposita* and possible worn *Polyommatus aloisi*, with pale blue upperwings.

After an early dinner at 6 p.m., we went out again to have a walk among the sand dunes of the Tsenkheriin valley. We arrived there after a magnificent sunset that tinged the mountains behind red, the clouds in the sky pink and... six amazing Pallas's Sandgrouses on the ground, made deep orange by the sunshine! The walk was rather unproductive, but those in the two cars that kept exploring after 10 p.m. had better fortune, encountering several tame Hairy-footed Jerboas, an Andrews's Three-toed Jerboa, Siberian Jerboa and a Tolai Hare. We recorded also several bats, difficult to identify despite the spectrogram with peaks at about 35 and 20 kHz: maybe Stubbe's Pipistrelle (*Hypsugo stubbei*) and Gobi Serotine (*Eptesicus gobiensis*) - impossible to be certain.

## Day 8

## Wednesday 6th August

### Tsagaan khaalga gorge and Jargalant Khairkhan

Only a few of us joined Bina and Luca for a pre-breakfast walk to go once again to the Tsagaan Khaalga gorge. We had more sightings there of Mongolian Finch, Arctic Warbler, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Rock Thrush, etc., but we could also add several Grey-necked Buntings and a juvenile Barred Warbler, both new species for the trip. We came back for breakfast at 9 a.m., gathering with the rest of the group.

Later we drove to the Jargalant massif, encountering two young Red Foxes on the way. We made a couple of stops to look for other mammals, and the second was very successful, since in open pastures we could finally enjoy proper views in the telescopes of Pallas's Pika, Long-tailed Ground Squirrel and Tarbagan Marmot, eating flowers and lying in the sunshine.

We had lunch at a viewpoint from where we could look into the valley where we had seen the Snow Leopard, a few days ago. Today there were dozens of Snowfinches, two Steppe Eagles, a G黚denst鋎t's Redstart and two different flocks of Altai Snowcock, one flushed just below us and the other sitting in the shade on the opposite mountain, showing well the white belly in the distance.

In the afternoon, we visited two more viewpoints facing fascinating wild valleys, with screes, cliffs and dry pastures, seeing some more Snowfinches, a baby Brown Accentor, Twites and a male Common Rosefinch. Even though the grass was generally yellow and overgrazed by livestock, there were still a few interesting flowers around, such as Darwin's Horehound (*Lagopsis darwiniana*), Danes' Dwarf Gentian (*Comastoma tenellum*), Yellowish Edelweiss (*Leontopodium ochroleucum*) and Spiny Pennywort (*Orostachys spinosa*).

Then came the news that the spotters had found one, and possibly two, Snow Leopards. So we drove as fast as possible, along bumpy meadows, to 3,200 m. There we walked a couple of hundred metres along a grassy slope to a spectacular viewpoint: a Snow Leopard, two years old, was lying in the shade maybe 800–900 m away from us, on the other side of the valley, while its mother had not been observed anymore. We admired it through the telescopes for a good hour and a half, during which, after the initial rest, the leopard moved along the slope, trying an ambush on a marmot, stopping to poop and then climbing meadows and rocks. Pete also managed to photograph three birds that turned out to be Altai Accentors: another amazing high-altitude species. The leopard ended up finding another chilling-out spot in the shade of a boulder. The sun falling behind the mountains, together with the cold wind, convinced us to leave the field and retire for another outdoor meal by the cars, in the golden light of the sunset.

The drive back took almost two hours (during which some of us had a glimpse of a European Nightjar): we were all tired but euphoric for the privilege of seeing a second Snow Leopard in a week!



## Day 9

Thursday 7th August

### Jargalant southern slopes and Čandman'/Kholboo lake

After a leisurely breakfast at 7:30 a.m., we went to explore the southern slopes of the Jargalant massif. We first stopped at a viewpoint facing a rocky valley full of peaks, crevices and screes: it was where two years ago a Pallas's Cat had been spotted. But once again the absolute lack of micromammals was against us and we couldn't see much. We found instead a cute Pallid Ground Squirrel lower down, along a dry valley, together with an unexpected adult male Barred Warbler in a spiny *Caragana* shrub.

A spring with a bit of running water, in the foothills of the mountain, was a magnet for animals: plenty of horses were meeting there to drink, but we also noticed Rock Sparrows, Mongolian Finches and a Swallowtail. In the grass, among the horse droppings, a nice Blyth's Pipit was walking, with a fine bill and orangey flanks.

Together with the livestock, a few nomads were living here in isolated white gers: one of them, with a big smile, kindly brought two irresistible baby goats to some of the ladies in the group for a photo.

The subsequent scanning of two rocky gorges was once again unsuccessful for the sought-after cat, but Pete and Kenny each spotted a Saker Falcon, one in flight and the other sitting on the summit of the highest peak.

After a welcome coffee break, we watched the Pallid Ground Squirrels for the second time, before going back to the ger camp for lunch. We tried today the famous *khuushuur*, Bina's favourite dish: large flat fried dumplings filled with meat or vegetables.

In the afternoon the group split in two: Kenny and Cat joined Luca, going birding by a lake in the Tsenkheriin valley, while most of the group went with Bina to attend the hundredth anniversary of the town festival in Čandman'. Here, besides the traditional wrestling matches, there were three horse races of 20 km each and archery contests. We were the only foreigners present and could mix with the local population, all dressed and adorned for the occasion.

The birders, by the small Kholboo lake, also had a good time, since it was teeming with waterbirds. Among the commonest species, there were several Spoonbills, Common and Demoiselle Cranes and, through the scope, they spotted a Garganey, a Pintail and a single Ferruginous Duck. In the rushes, there were also noticeable Dark Spreadwings, Southern and Banded Darters.

We all met at 7 p.m. for dinner and to thank very much all the staff of the "Twin Leopards Camp", from the five drivers who moved us always safely, despite the harsh terrain, to the cooks and the cleaners, not forgetting the eagle-eyed spotters who found the Snow Leopards for us three times.

## Day 10

Friday 8th August

### Hovd, Ulaanbaatar and Hustai NP

At 4:30 a.m., with just the first light of day on the horizon, we had to pack and say goodbye to the Altai ger camp. A two-hour drive to Hovd included, as a bonus, a magnificent sunrise that first coloured the attractive clouds pink,

and then the surrounding mountain ranges golden, some of them, approaching Hovd, with ice caps visible in the distance, reaching altitudes of 4,000 m.

After check-in, we had our packed breakfast outside the airport: in the vegetation a couple of fledged Isabelline Shrikes were moving about, along with tens of Siberian Winter Damselflies. The aircraft took off a bit late, but by 11:30 a.m. we were in UB, where we found five new drivers, each with a posher black 4x4 vehicle than the week before. We had lunch at the Mongolica hotel: in the garden there were once again the Azure Tits, but no new birds and the only addition to the trip list was a familiar Small Copper.

Then we drove two hours westwards along a busy asphalt road that crossed endless grasslands and pastures, seeing from time to time a Steppe Eagle, sitting in a ploughed field, or an Upland Buzzard, perched on a post. When we turned left onto a dusty road, the landscape suddenly became more interesting, with taller grass, fascinating rocky hills and an increasing number of burrows inhabited by well-fed Tarbagan Marmots. By the northern entrance of Hustai National Park, a crowded village had grown with scattered buildings, gers and coaches, filled with tourists. We stopped there to have a look at the visitor centre and the souvenir shop, with several interesting books about the local wildlife, but luckily our destination for the following three nights was much more remote and exclusive, being on the southern edge of the national park.

To get there, we went through a valley surrounded by pastures and low mountains, where we soon found a herd of Przewalski's Horses drinking and having mud baths in a stream. A juvenile Golden Eagle flew over while, a few hundred metres further on, we stopped again to admire a mixed herd of Wapiti, with females, youngsters and two magnificent antlered stags.

We continued in convoy, stopping from time to time for a photo and looking around, enchanted by the quantity of wild horses, Wapiti and marmots appearing on the surrounding plateaus. Noticeable were also two young Corsac Foxes, teasing marmots almost their own size, or the passerines in a scattered grove that included Pine, Rustic and Meadow Buntings.

In the distance, dark clouds even gave birth to far-off lightning, while the interplay of afternoon warm spotlights and cloud shadows made the landscape continuously change, until we reached the "Khustai Eco Camp" at almost 8 p.m. We took possession of our finely decorated gers, home for the next three nights, and went straight to dinner.

Here there were only clean shared showers and toilets, few plugs to recharge and no phone signal, so we had to adapt: the other side of the coin was being the only group sleeping so close to the national park, the Tuul riverbed and the hunting grounds of the Wolves.

## Day 11

**Saturday 9th August**

### Hustai National Park and surroundings

We met at 6 a.m. to drive eastwards into the southern edge of Hustai National Park, hoping to see some mammals. We tried hard to scan with telescopes each rocky hill or grassy valley, but we had no luck with the Pallas's Cat. We reached instead a wonderful viewpoint, surrounded by strange granitic pinnacles. From there the scanning was

more productive, since we soon located a large herd of more than a hundred Mongolian Gazelles, several Wapitis, two Przewalski's Horses and a juvenile Golden Eagle. But the most unexpected sighting was when Luca spotted three male Argalis grazing peacefully on the top of a mountain. This large wild sheep, heavily hunted almost to extinction, used to be just an occasional presence in the national park, but it has established a resident population only in the last few years.

Happy with the observations, we came back to the camp for breakfast, leaving again leisurely at 10 a.m. This time we drove through the barren grassland down to the Tuul riverbed. Here the meadows were overgrazed, but the presence of many Prunial-shoot Willow (*Salix rorida*) groves and of the running water could allow the presence of some different birds. We observed in fact a Black Stork, an Upland Buzzard and huge flocks of Carrion Crows. Particularly interesting were also, along the vegetation of the river shore, a Mongolian Toad and a couple of Siberian Wood Frogs plus a few floating flowers such as Floating Marsh-Marigold (*Caltha natans*), Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*) and *Halerpestes sarmentosa*. Among the butterflies, only a few Dryads were flying, while we noticed Emerald and Scarce Emerald Damselflies, Common Hawker and Black Darter, among plenty of other dragonflies.

After lunch with delicious noodles, we had a couple of hours of siesta. Some of us went for a walk around the camp, being surprised by the unbelievable density of grasshoppers, often tens jumping away with each step, including mainly *Oedaleus decorus* and *Bryodemella holdereri*, but also the much juicier *Deracantha onos*. Later we went to visit one of the most important Mongolian burial sites, Ungot, with 32 stones lifted up during the Turkish Khanate of the 6th–8th century AD. Some of them were carved with more obvious human appearance, with eyes, nose and arms. Nearby a few Mongolian Larks were moving about.

In the distance a thunderstorm was forming that drew a temporary rainbow and left a few raindrops also where we were. Then we continued climbing the foothills of the barren mountains behind, stopping to scan without much luck. We had to reach richer pastures, not overgrazed by domestic animals and with deep blue Dwarf Porcelain-Flowered Gentians (*Gentiana decumbens*), to encounter another big herd of Mongolian Gazelles, a Wapiti and, once again, nine Argalis—females and calves—that, having seen us, climbed to the ridge of a mountain in back light, giving a last photo opportunity silhouetted against the sky, before disappearing. Argalis twice in a day, what luck!

In the evening the night vision devices allowed us to spot Siberian Jerboas, Tolai Hares and a probable Corsac Fox, wandering around the gers of our camp.

## Day 12

## Sunday 10th August

### Hustai National Park

This morning we left while it was still dark, in order to reach the granite rocks viewpoint of the day before at sunrise, and hoping to intercept the pack of Wolves on the way back to the mountains: often the carnivores follow the numerous herds of Wapitis that descend to the Tuul River to feed and drink during the night. The Wapitis and the Przewalski's Horses on the move were there, but we weren't able to spot the Wolves, of which we could only hear a couple of howlings from the bottom of the valley. Despite this, the sunrise that flooded progressively

the clouds, the peaks, the rocky outcrops and, finally, the lowlands with a bright orange light, was something memorable.

Driving back, the sky got grizzly, with a few raindrops, and we noticed, in order, several Cinereous Vultures, a Golden Eagle and a Saker Falcon on the trackside, but we also stopped by a gorge with Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*) groves and funny shaped rocks all around. Walking on the quartz rubble, we saw some Argalis, Pied Wheatears and a Common Rock Thrush on the top of the boulders, we flushed a family of Daurian Partridges and Bina pointed out a Brown Shrike and some distant Meadow Buntings, perched on the branches of a tree.

After breakfast, we left the camp at 10:30 a.m. to explore an eastern valley of Hustai National Park. Increasing the altitude, we passed from a semi-desert steppe into much greener and attractive pastures, with late flowers such as Northern Edelweiss (*Leontopodium leontopodioides*), Dwarf Statice (*Goniolimon speciosum*), Spiny Pennywort, Chinese-pink, Mongolian Bluebeard (*Caryopteris mongholica*), *Allium bidentatum* and *Adenophora stenanthina*.

The landscape, with just a path through the grassy mountains and a "Simpsons sky", was just the typical postcard from Mongolia, to which we added the many burrows of the Tarbagan Marmots and the antlers of two different herds of Wapiti stags, silhouetting against the sky on the top of two rocky peaks.

It was now lunchtime when we went through a windy pass to descend into another valley, much drier than the one before, with just a line of green Siberian Elms in the middle of a sandy riverbed. We had a brief walk there, but there were no passerines and the best observation was a dispute on the ground between a Steppe Eagle, holding a snake in its claws, and a much larger Cinereous Vulture.

We had a late lunch at 2 p.m., finally back at the camp, with the typical *khuushuur*, before having some spare time to refresh our strengths. In the afternoon, we went through the eastern valley of the national park. Along the barren slopes there were plenty of burrows and many of them were inhabited by tens of irresistible Tarbagan Marmots and a few Long-tailed Squirrels. By the main viewpoint for the wild horses, there was a spring, fenced in order to keep it clean from the animals: there we could notice the pressure of the grazing herbivores on the habitat, since if the grass outside was a few centimetres tall, inside the enclosed area it was almost half a metre, with plants rare or not even seen outside, like Great Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*), Meadow Crane's-bill (*Geranium pratense*) and Yellow Avenas (*Geum aleppicum*). Over this tiny heaven, tens of Dryads and a Brown Hairstreak were flying, and some of us saw also a young Citrine Wagtail.

Later we climbed to over 1600 m of altitude with the cars, reaching a much greener area with scattered Siberian Birches (*Betula platyphylla*), Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa*) clumps and stone fields. Scanning around with the telescopes, we found here and there numerous Przewalski's Horses and Wapitis. On the way back, these large animals showed better, being spotted often on the track side, but the best sightings were a pair of Daurian Partridges and two Golden Eagles, dealing with a prey on the ground, observed a couple of metres away from a much smaller, but equally hungry, Steppe Eagle.

In the evening, after supper, some Mongolian Toads started to move among the gers and the bathrooms of the camp: a few minutes later a violent thunderstorm started, bringing rain and strong wind that made our gers shake in an alarming way. We were just passing through this harsh land for a couple of weeks, but we could truly experience the difficulties and the issues of the nomad life in the Mongolian steppe.

## Day 13

Monday 11th August

### Hustai National Park, Lun lake and Ulaanbaatar

After breakfast, we said goodbye to our second ger camp at 7 a.m. and set off once again through Hustai National Park. After the previous night's rain, the Tarbagan Marmots and Long-tailed Squirrels were clearly enjoying the sunshine. We found several occupied dens with three or five cubs, not far from the track, and were able to admire and photograph them properly—so cute!

We had just passed the horse viewpoint when we received a radio message from car no. 4: “Wolf on the left!” We quickly reversed the entire convoy and scanned the valley ahead. Numerous Cinereous Vultures were sitting on the ground and, just when we had almost given up hope, a reddish Mongolian Wolf emerged from behind a pancake-pile-shaped rock. Everyone in the group was able to watch it galloping through the telescopes.

After passing the park entrance, Bina spotted some small squirrels on the right. It was worth stopping, as their small size, pale yellowish colour and short tail allowed us to identify them as Daurian Ground Squirrels. The next stops, not far from the sand dunes of Moltsog Els, included a cultivated field where we saw diurnal Mongolian Jirds chilling outside their burrows, and a post on which a magnificent Saker Falcon was perched. Surprisingly, it didn't fly away and posed for the photographers.

The transfer to the next birding site took almost an hour. We stopped among the tussocks for coffee or tea, and both Pere David's Snowfinches and Pallas's Reed Buntings were spotted on the ground. Walking a couple of hundred metres further, we reached the shore of Lun Lake. Two White-tailed Eagles were sitting in a distant meadow, while an Eastern Marsh Harrier and Common Kestrels were hunting overhead. Pied Avocets, Ruddy Shelducks and Spotted Redshanks were feeding in the water, but the nearest muddy shore offered the best excitement. There weren't many waders, but there was a great variety of species, some very rare by European standards: Red-necked Stint, Long-toed Stint, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, Citrine Wagtail, and more common Black-winged Stilts, Temminck's Stint and Little Stint were all seen.

We made another short stop at the northern edge of the marsh. Despite considerable heat haze, we could still make out three distant White-naped Cranes and hundreds of Pacific Golden Plovers and Northern Lapwings moving through the green grass, occasionally disturbed by the passage of an Eastern Marsh Harrier.

It was now lunchtime, so we drove to a popular service station near the Tuul River, where we observed several Demoiselle Cranes and dozens of active nests of the rusty-bellied Barn Swallows of the *tytleri* subspecies. The transfer from there to our hotel in central Ulaanbaatar took more than three hours, as we were stuck in a traffic jam for almost two hours. We arrived at 6 p.m. and had a little spare time to explore a nearby souvenir shop and visit the main square, where the wider-than-tall bronze statue of Genghis Khan stared grimly down at us.

In the evening, we celebrated with a variety of grilled meats and tasty salads, thanking Bina warmly for looking after us with such knowledge, patience and efficiency. He handled every issue that arose during the trip with a smile and did a truly amazing job!

## Day 14

Tuesday 12th August

### Ulaanbaatar

We gathered at 6 a.m. to catch the minibus to Chinggis Khaan Airport. The transfer took about 40 minutes, during which we watched the golden morning light spilling down the skyscrapers and apartment blocks of the city. At one point, two Daurian Jackdaws briefly flew overhead, while Red-billed Choughs and Upland Buzzards were waking up on rooftops or telegraph poles.

The plane took off with almost a 50-minute delay, but it wasn't a problem since we had a long stopover in Istanbul. Those seated by the windows caught a final view of the grassy open spaces dotted with round white gers.

баяртай, Монгол улс! (Goodbye Mongolia!)

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## Species lists

### Mammals

S = signs		July – August 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Tarbagan Marmot	<i>Marmota sibirica</i>		1	8		2		3		30	5	35	120		
Daurian Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus dauricus</i>												2		
Pallid Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus pallidicauda</i>						1		4						
Long-tailed Ground Squirrel	<i>Urocitellus undulatus</i>			20				10		3		3	7		
Siberian Jerboa	<i>Orientallactaga sibirica</i>			3		2	1		5		1	1			
Andrews's Three-toed Jerboa	<i>Stylodipus andrewsi</i>						1?								
Hairy-footed Jerboa	<i>Dipus sagitta</i>						5				1?				
Zaisan Molevole	<i>Ellobius tancrei</i>			s	s	s	s	s	s						
Midday Jird	<i>Meriones meridianus</i>			10		5		1	10						
Mongolian Jird	<i>Meriones unguiculatus</i>												7		
Pallas's Pika	<i>Ochotona pallasi</i>		2	1				3							
Tolai Hare	<i>Lepus tolai</i>		1	1		1		1			3		1		
Long-eared Hedgehog	<i>Hemiechinus auritus</i>					d	d								
Gobi Serotine	<i>Eptesicus gobiensis</i>						1?								
Stubbe's Pipistrelle	<i>Hypsugo</i> cfr. <i>stubbei</i>						3?								
Eurasian Particolored Bat	<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>				1?							h?			
Snow Leopard	<i>Panthera uncia</i>		1	1				1							
Corsac Fox	<i>Vulpes corsac</i>					1				2	1				
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>			1				2							
(Himalayan) Grey Wolf	<i>Canis lupus chanco</i>											h	1		
Przewalski's Horse	<i>Equus (ferus) przewalskii</i>									37	2	46	20		
(Altai) Wapiti	<i>Cervus canadensis sibiricus</i>									31	15	60	5		
Goitred Gazelle	<i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>				18										
Mongolian Gazelle	<i>Procapra gutturosa</i>										205				
(Mongolian) Saiga Antelope	<i>Saiga tatarica mongolica</i>		1			330									
(Altai) Siberian Ibex	<i>Capra sibirica alaiana</i>						5								

S = signs		July – August 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
(Altai) Argali	<i>Ovis ammon ammon</i>										12	4			



Lycaena violacea



Pied Wheatear



Dwarf Porcelain-flowered Gentian



Austral Ladies'-tresses



## Birds

N = Near endemic		July – August 2025												
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(Eastern) Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser rubrirostris</i>		300		10	30			300	20			10	
Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>		4											
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>		15			1			8		2		15	
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	3	1			3			2				10	
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>												1	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>		6			3			2					
Garganey	<i>Spatula querquedula</i>		50						1					
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	10	10			2								
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>								1					
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	1	10			2			20				4	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	20	100			5			100					
Eastern Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	1												
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		100			###			30					
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		10			20								
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	35	30			2								
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>								1					
White-headed Duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>		3											
Daurian Partridge	<i>Perdix dauurica</i>											20		
Altai Snowcock - N	<i>Tetraogallus altaicus</i>			8				12						
Chukar Partridge	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>			20	20		5	10	h	2				
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>		1				1	1						
(Eastern) Common Swift	<i>Apus apus pekinensis</i>	2	300	10	8		2	25					2	
Pacific Swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	100								5				
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		1	1										
Pallas's Sandgrouse	<i>Syrrhaptes paradoxus</i>				1	3	6							
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i> var. <i>domestica</i>	50				1				40			20	5
Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba</i> cfr. <i>rupestris</i>			1										
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	5				1				2				
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>					h								
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		2											

Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	5	15			20			50					
White-naped Crane	<i>Antigone vipio</i>												3	
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>		6						7					
Demoiselle Crane	<i>Grus virgo</i>	1	3		4				8				8	
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	5	20			10			15					
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	3	5			10			20				10	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>												12	
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>												300	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>	1	7						1				1	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	3	10			1			30				200	
Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>					50			5					
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Anarhynchus leschenaultii</i>					100	1							
Oriental Plover	<i>Anarhynchus veredus</i>					1								
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	1				1								
Asian Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	1												
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago cfr. gallinago</i>	1				1								
Pin-tailed Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	1	1											
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>												3	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1					1		1		2		2	
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	3											5	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	5	1			2			3		h		1	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	2	1			5	1		5		1		1	
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	2	20			2			3					
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					1								
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>												1	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		1			5								
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>					2							1	
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>												2	
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>												1	
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>					1							1	
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>					1								1
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		150			1								
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>		2			5			10					
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>					1								

Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	5	5			35			2				h	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	5	15			2			15					
Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaelus ichthyaelus</i>		30											
Mongolian (Vega) Gull - N	<i>Larus (vegae) mongolicus</i>	1	10			25				1				
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>					3								
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>										1			
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	5	100			30				3	5		1	
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1	55			25			25				6	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		20			5			15				1	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	25	5			3			5		2		10	
Bearded Vulture	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>		1	2			3	2				2		
Himalayan Vulture	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>			3										
Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	3	5	3	2		2	3	2	4	10	35	40	
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1												
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				2					1	1	6	1	
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>			3	1		2	2		6	2	3	6	
Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		5											
Eastern Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus spilonotus</i>					1							3	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	50	100	20	10	30	10	15	10	70	10	10	30	1
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>												3	
Upland Buzzard	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>					2	1			5	3		7	2
Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>					2		1						
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>						1							
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		2			1	2	2	4	7	2	1	5	
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>	1								2?				
Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i>								2			1	1	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>				1					1	2	2	4	
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>											3		
Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>		3		1		7	4	2	4	2			
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	10				1				5	5	15	10	
Mongolian Ground Jay - N	<i>Podoces hendersoni</i>						2							
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	8	h	2				2		1	24	17	15	3
Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus dauuricus</i>													2
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	100											200	

Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	h	10	2		15	1	6	4	10	3	3	5	2
(Eastern) Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone orientalis</i>	20	3							1	600		10	10
Azure Tit	<i>Cyanistes cyanus</i>	30								2				
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	3								3				
White-crowned Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz coronatus</i>	5												
Bearded Reedling	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>		2			h								
Shore/Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	1	2	10		5		6	10	1	1			
Mongolian Lark - N	<i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i>										5		2	
Asian Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala cheleensis</i>		1			10			5	3	1		10	
Pale Martin	<i>Riparia diluta</i>					2?			5					
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>		2000		15	20			20				5	
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>			1	3		2	4	1					
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		20		1	100			30				2	
(Tytler's) Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica tyleri</i>	100					1			5			50	
Common House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>				20			5					1?	
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus</i> cfr. <i>borealis</i>						1							
(Siberian) Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus</i> cfr. <i>collybita tristis</i>				1									
Sulphur-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>				2			3						
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>						1	1						
Paddyfield Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus agricola</i>		2			1								
Great Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>		1											
Thick-billed Warbler	<i>Arundinax aedon</i>						1							
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>				1		3	3			1			
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>				1	1	2	3				1		
Asian Desert Warbler	<i>Curruca nana</i>						1							
Barred Warbler	<i>Curruca nisoria</i>								1					
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		50											
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				1		1							
Güldenstädt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogaster</i>			1				1						
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		2	2	1		3	10	1					
Common Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>				1			1				1		
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>				1		1	1						
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	1	1	2	10	20	20		20	5	15	10	20	
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	2	5	5		3	2	20					1	

Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>						3	1		1	1	8	1	
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>		1		70	5		20	50					
White-winged Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>		20					35						
Pere David's Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda davidiana</i>												2	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	100				1				20	50		10	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	50	50			4				10	30	20	100	
Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>							2						
Altai Accentor	<i>Prunella himalayana</i>							3						
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	2	20						2	h		1		
(Masked) White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba personata</i>		2			3								
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	1					h						2	
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>											1	3	
(White-headed) Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		10		1	10			10					
Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>								1		1			
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>		2					6						
Mongolian Finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>				10			10	4					
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	1					1	1						
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>							10						
Grey-necked Bunting	<i>Emberiza buchanani</i>							3						
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>									2		3		
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>									1				
Pallas's Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza pallasi</i>					3							2	
Rustic Bunting	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>									1				

## Reptiles &amp; amphibians

d = dead			July – August 2025											
<b>Common name</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
Mongolian Toad	<i>Strauchbufo raddei</i>										3	5		
Siberian Wood Frog	<i>Rana amurensis</i>										3	1		
Tuvan Toad-headed Agama	<i>Phrynocephalus versicolor</i>		5		20	30			10					
Mongolia Racerunner	<i>Eremias argus</i>										1	1		

Steppe Ratsnake	<i>Elaphe dione</i>												1?		
Halys Pit Viper	<i>Gloydius halys</i>							d							

## Invertebrates

		July – August 2025													
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Scarce Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	1									1				
Dark Spreadwing	<i>Lestes macrostigma</i>								5						
Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	5									10				
Siberian Winter Damsel	<i>Sympecma paedisca</i>					2				100					
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	2	50			50			10		10				
A damselfly	<i>Coenagrion ecornutum</i>	1													
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>					10									
Common Hawker	<i>Aeshna juncea</i>	5?									3				
Baltic Hawker	<i>Aeshna serrata</i>		5?	3?	10										
A hawker	<i>Aeshna soneharai</i>					10	50								
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>					5									
Black Darter	<i>Sympetrum danae</i>										3				
Spotted Darter	<i>Sympetrum depressiusculum</i>		1				1								
Southern Darter	<i>Sympetrum meridionale</i>								1						
Banded Darter	<i>Sympetrum pedemontanum</i>	1				1			20		5		3		
A darter	<i>Sympetrum tibiale</i>		10			100									
Vagrant Darter	<i>Sympetrum vulgatum imitans</i>	2			2		200	1?	3?	3?	30	10	10?		
Swallowtail	<i>Papilio machaon</i>						3	2	3		1				
A Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias</i> cfr. <i>erate</i>	3	1	1		20	3	1	10						
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	5	3?			10	5			1	5	1			
Lesser Bath White	<i>Pontia chloridice</i>	2		2					5						
Eastern Bath White	<i>Pontia edusa</i>					2	20			1					
Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>	3										3			
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>									1					

		July – August 2025												
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
a copper sp.	<i>Lycaena violacea</i>	1												
Short-tailed Blue	<i>Cupido argiades</i>	1												
Reverdin's Blue	<i>Plebejus</i> cfr. <i>argyrognomon</i>	1								1	5		2	
A blue	<i>Plebejus</i> cfr. <i>subsolanus</i>			3										
A blue	<i>Plebejus</i> spp.					1	50		20					
A blue	<i>Polyommatus aloisi</i>						2?							
Damon Blue	<i>Polyommatus damone</i>						2							
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus</i> cfr. <i>icarus</i>			2	1	20	1		10					
Dark Green Fritillary	<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>						50							
Hungarian Glider	<i>Neptis rivularis</i>	1												
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>					1								
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>						1							
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>		2d	5	2		300	5	1		1			
A comma	<i>Polygonia interposita</i>						3				1			
Lesser Marbled Fritillary	<i>Brenthis ino</i>	3												
Queen of Spain Fritillary	<i>Issoria lathonia</i>						3							
A grayling	<i>Hipparchia autonoe</i>	10		1			30	2	2		1			
Nevada Grayling	<i>Pseudochazara hippolyte</i>							1						
Dryad	<i>Minios dryas</i>	20								50	20	100	20	
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	1												
A heath	<i>Coenonympha amaryllis</i>	10					5							
Silver-spotted Skipper	<i>Hesperia comma</i>	1												
Large Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus</i> cfr. <i>alveus</i>	1												
A wave moth	<i>Scopula ochraceata</i>	1												
Gypsy Moth	<i>Lymantria dispar</i>						5							
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>						3		1					
A tiger moth	<i>Arctia flavia</i>				d									
A red underwing moth	<i>Catocala helena</i>											1		
A red underwing moth	<i>Catocala puerpera</i>								1					

		July – August 2025												
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Great Brocade	<i>Eurois occulta</i>	1												
A noctuid moth	<i>Euxoa conspicua</i>		1			1								
A noctuid moth	cfr. <i>Spaelotis</i> sp.										1?			
Misc Insects														
A katydid	<i>Deracantha onos</i>										2	1		
Grey Bush-cricket	<i>Platycleis</i> cfr. <i>intermedia</i>									1				
A grasshopper	<i>Angaracris barabensis</i>	1										1		
Eastern Banded Grasshopper	<i>Arcyptera microptera</i>										1			
A grasshopper	<i>Bryodema gebleri</i>	10	20	100	200	20	200	20	100					
A grasshopper	<i>Bryodemella holdereri</i>						100	2?	5?		100		20?	
Speckled Buzzing Grasshopper	<i>Bryodemella tuberculata</i>						1							
A grasshopper	<i>Calliptamus abbreviatus</i>						2							
A grasshopper	<i>Eclipophleps</i> sp.			1							5?	2?		
A grasshopper	<i>Oedaleus decorus</i>						5			1	###	###	100	
A grasshopper	<i>Zichya baranovi</i>				1	1	2				5	1		
Lake Pondskater	<i>Aquarius paludum</i>										10			
A beefly	<i>Anastoechus</i> spp.	1							2	10				
A fly	<i>Nowickia</i> sp.						1							
A beefly	<i>Villa</i> spp.	1							5					
A wasp	cfr. <i>Bembix</i> sp.					100								
A bumblebee	<i>Bombus</i> cfr. <i>asiaticus</i>			3?			20							
A bumblebee	<i>Bombus</i> cfr. <i>biroi</i>						1							
A bumblebee	<i>Bombus</i> cfr. <i>mongolensis</i>	2												
Hercules Carpenter Ant	<i>Camponotus</i> cfr. <i>herculeanus</i>										5			
A wasp	<i>Cerceris</i> sp.										1			
A wasp	<i>Euodynerus</i> sp.						1							
A wasp	<i>Scolia hirta unifasciata</i>					2	1							
A wasp	<i>Sphex flavipennis</i>						1							



		July – August 2025												
Common name	Scientific name	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A darkling beetle	<i>Blaps</i> sp.										1			
A longhorn beetle	<i>Eodorcadion</i> sp.												1	
A leaf beetle	<i>Galeruca</i> sp.			1										
Variegated Lady Beetle	<i>Hippodamia variegata</i>								1					
A blister beetle	<i>Mylabris mongolica</i>	2												
A blister beetle	<i>Mylabris</i> cfr. <i>sibirica</i>											1		
A rhino beetle	<i>Pentodon quadridens</i>						1							

## Plants

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
<b>Monocots</b>			
Altai Onion	<i>Allium altaicum</i>	6	Buillast valley
A garlic	<i>Allium bidentatum</i>	10	Hustai NP
A garlic	<i>Allium leucocephalum</i>	11	Hustai NP
Branchy Onion	<i>Allium ramosum</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Aging Chive	<i>Allium senescens</i>	6	Buillast valley
Common Club-rush	<i>Schoenoplectus lacustris</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Austral Ladies'-tresses	<i>Spiranthes australis</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Nineawn Pappusgrass	<i>Enneapogon desvauxii</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.
Chee Grass	<i>Neotrinia splendens</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Green Bristle Grass	<i>Setaria viridis</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
A needle grass	<i>Stipa krylovii</i>	10	Hustai NP
Unbranched Bur-reed	<i>Sparganium</i> cfr. <i>emersum</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
<b>Dicots</b>			
Redroot Amaranth	<i>Amaranthus</i> cfr. <i>retroflexus</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Short-leaf Anabasis	<i>Anabasis brevifolia</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.
A goosefoot	<i>Chenopodium karoii</i>	8	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Grubovia dasyphylla</i>	6	Buillast valley
A saltlover	<i>Halogeton arachnoideus</i>	8	Kholboo lake
Leafy Jointed Glasswort	<i>Kalidium foliatum</i>	5	Dôrgôn lake
Acicular Thorowax	<i>Bupleurum bicaule</i>	10	Hustai NP
Red Thorowax	<i>Bupleurum scorzonifolium</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel
Caraway	<i>Carum carvi</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
-	cfr. <i>Stenocoelium athamantoides</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Water Parsnip	<i>Sium suave</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Siberian swallow-wort	<i>Cynanchum thesioides</i>	6	Buillast valley (in fruit)
-	<i>Ajania fruticulosa</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Artemisia adamsii</i>	10	Hustai NP
-	<i>Artemisia</i> cfr. <i>commutata</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Fringed Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
Tarragon	<i>Artemisia glauca</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Artemisia macrocephala</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Mongolian Wormwood	<i>Artemisia mongolica</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel
Danyang Aster	<i>Aster altaicus</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
An aster	<i>Aster hispidus</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Greater Bur-marigold	<i>Bidens radiata</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Three-parted Beggarticks	<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	5	Dôrgôn lake
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Ground Thistle	<i>Cirsium esculentum</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
-	<i>Crepidiastrum</i> cfr. <i>akagii</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
A globe thistle	<i>Echinops integrifolius</i>	6	Buillast valley
-	<i>Klasea centauroides</i>	12	Moltsog Els (gone over)

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
Hoary Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea erucifolia</i>	11	Hustai NP
Tatarian Blue Lettuce	<i>Lactuca tatarica</i>	6	Buillast valley
Northern Edelweiss	<i>Leontopodium leontopodioides</i>	11	Hustai NP
Yellowish Edelweiss	<i>Leontopodium ochroleucum</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Neopallasia pectinata</i>	6	Buillast valley
Meadow Fleabane	<i>Pentanema britannica</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Meadow Saussurea	<i>Saussurea amara</i>	10	Hustai NP
Price's Saw-wort	<i>Saussurea pricei</i>	2	Jargalant Mts.
A saw-wort	<i>Saussurea salsa</i>	5	Dôrgôn lake
A ragwort	<i>Senecio dubitabilis</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.
Siberian Birch	<i>Betula platyphylla</i>	9	Hustai NP
Bay Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis laxa</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Siberian Sea-rosemary	<i>Tournefortia sibirica</i>	6	Tsenkheriin valley
Brown Mustard	<i>Brassica juncea</i>	12	Ulaanbaatar
-	<i>Dontostemon integrifolius</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
A pepperweed	<i>Lepidium</i> sp.	5	Dôrgôn lake
Himalayan Alyssum	<i>Ptilotrichum canescens</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
An alyssum	<i>Stevenia tenuifolia</i>	10	Hustai NP
A bellflower	<i>Adenophora stenanthina</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Small-leaved Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera microphylla</i>	6	Buillast valley (in fruit)
Chinese Pink	<i>Dianthus chinensis</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Fescue Sandwort	<i>Eremogone capillaris</i>	10	Hustai NP
A sandwort	<i>Eremogone meyeri</i>	2	Jargalant Mts.
Siberian Catchfly	<i>Silene amoena</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Marsh Grass-of-Parnassus	<i>Parnassia palustris</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	10	Hustai NP
Spiny Pennywort	<i>Orostachys spinosa</i>	11	Hustai NP
A roseroot	<i>Rhodiola coccinea</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
Foursplit Roseroot	<i>Rhodiola quadrifida</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Sea-buckthorn	<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel (in fruit)
A spurge	<i>Euphorbia</i> sp.	2	Khar-Us lake
A milkvetch	<i>Astragalus laguroides</i>	6	Buillast valley (in seed)
Laxmann's Milkvetch	<i>Astragalus laxmannii</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
A caragana	<i>Caragana bungei</i>	2	Jargalant Mts. (in seed)
Pygmy Caragana	<i>Caragana pygmaea</i>	10	Hustai NP
Chinese Liquorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza uralensis</i>	6	Tsenkheriin valley
A sweetvetch	<i>Hedysarum ferganense</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
A sweetvetch	<i>Hedysarum setigerum</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
Sickle Alfalfa	<i>Medicago falcata</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel
A medick	<i>Medicago ruthenica</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Daghestan Sweet-clover	<i>Melilotus suaveolens</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel
A crazyweed	<i>Oxytropis tragacanthoides</i>	4	Jargalant Mts. (leaves)
Austrian Peaweed	<i>Sphaerophysa salsula</i>	6	Tsenkheriin valley
Lanceleaf Thermopsis	<i>Thermopsis lanceolata</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel (in seed)
Lupine Clover	<i>Trifolium lupinaster</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Tufted Vetch	<i>Vicia cracca</i>	11	Hustai NP
Danes' Dwarf Gentian	<i>Comastoma tenellum</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
Dwarf Porcelain-flowered Gentian	<i>Gentiana decumbens</i>	9	Hustai NP
Meadow Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Siberian Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium sibiricum</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Stephan's Stork's-bill	<i>Erodium stephanianum</i>	12	Moltsog Els
Siberian Currant	<i>Ribes diacantha</i>	10	Hustai NP
Mongolian Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris mongholica</i>	11	Hustai NP
Fetid Dragonhead	<i>Dracocephalum foetidum</i>	1	Khun lake
A dragonhead	<i>Dracocephalum peregrinum</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Lagochilus ilicifolius</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Darwin's Horehound	<i>Lagopsis darwiniana</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Siberian Mother-wort	<i>Leonurus sibiricus</i>	10	Hustai NP
A catmint	<i>Lophanthus chinensis</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
A catmint	<i>Nepeta annua</i>	4	Jargalant Mts.
Siberian Catmint	<i>Nepeta sibirica</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Panzerina lanata</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Fringed Water-lily	<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
-	<i>Nitraria sibirica</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Red Bartsia	<i>Odontites vulgaris</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
A lousewort	<i>Pedicularis</i> cfr. <i>moschata</i>	2	Jargalant Mts.
Ice Poppy	<i>Oreomecon crocea</i> agg.	2	Jargalant Mts.
Narrow-fruited Water-starwort	<i>Callitriche palustris</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
A toadflax	<i>Linaria acutiloba</i>	11	Hustai NP
A toadflax	<i>Linaria</i> sp. nov.	7	Jargalant Mts.
Chinese Plantain	<i>Plantago depressa</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	5	Čandman'
Saliniferous Plantain	<i>Plantago salsa</i>	8	Kholboo lake
Blue Water-speedwell	<i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Dwarf Statice	<i>Goniolimon speciosum</i>	11	Hustai NP
A sea-lavender	<i>Limonium flexuosum</i>	11	Hustai NP
-	<i>Atraphaxis frutescens</i>	3	Jargalant Mts. (in seed)
Alpine Bistort	<i>Bistorta vivipara</i>	7	Jargalant Mts.
Waterpepper	<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Pale Smartweed	<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	5	Dörgön lake
Arrow-leaved Tearthumb	<i>Persicaria sagittata</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
A knotgrass	<i>Polygonum sericeum</i>	9	Hustai NP
A dock	<i>Rumex</i> sp.	11	Hustai NP
Lehmann's Rockjasmine	<i>Androsace lehmanniana</i>	2	Jargalant Mts.
Floating Marsh-marigold	<i>Caltha natans</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Orange-peel Clematis	<i>Clematis tangutica</i>	6	Buillast valley
A larkspur	<i>Delphinium</i> sp.	3	Jargalant Mts.
-	<i>Halerpestes sarmentosa</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Cursed Crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot	<i>Ranunculus</i> cfr. <i>trichophyllus</i>	10	Tuul riverbed
Common Silverweed	<i>Argentina anserina</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
Dark-fruited Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster melanocarpus</i>	11	Hustai NP (in fruit)
Red Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus sanguinea</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Shrubby Cinquefoil	<i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i>	11	Hustai NP
Yellow Avens	<i>Geum aleppicum</i>	11	Hustai NP
Siberian Crabapple	<i>Malus baccata</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel (in fruit)
A cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla chamaeleo</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
A cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla conferta</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First or best location
Ganyanco	<i>Potentilla longifolia</i>	12	Moltsog Els (in seed)
Snow Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla</i> cfr. <i>nivea</i>	3	Jargalant Mts. (gone over)
Bushy Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla supina paradoxa</i>	8	Kholboo lake
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel (in fruit)
A plumbtree	<i>Prunus pedunculata</i>	10	Hustai NP
Great Burnet	<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	9	Mongolica Hotel
Fork-leaved Cinquefoil	<i>Sibbaldianthe bifurca</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Lady's Bedstraw	<i>Galium verum</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Dahurian Haplophyllum	<i>Haplophyllum dauricum</i>	10	Hustai NP
Laurel-leaved Poplar	<i>Populus laurifolia</i>	6	Buillast valley
Mongolian Poplar	<i>Populus suaveolens</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
Prunian-shoot Willow	<i>Salix rorida</i>	1	Mongolica Hotel
A figwort	<i>Scrophularia incisa</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.
Black Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	11	Hustai NP
A tamarisk	<i>Reaumuria songarica</i>	5	Dörgön lake
Siberian Elm	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	11	Hustai NP
Siberian Hemp-nettle	<i>Urtica cannabina</i>	3	Jargalant Mts.

## Lichens

Common name	Scientific name	Day	First of best location
Golden Moonglow Lichen	<i>Dimelaena oreina</i>	10	Hustai NP
Varying Rim Lichen	<i>Lecanora argopholis</i>	10	Hustai NP
Gold Cobblestone Lichen	<i>Pleopsidium flavum</i>	10	Hustai NP
Orange Rock Posy	<i>Rhizoplaca chrysoleuca</i>	10	Hustai NP
Elegant Sunburst Lichen	<i>Rusavskia elegans</i>	2	Khar-Us lake
A rock-shield lichen	<i>Xanthoparmelia stenophylla</i> f. <i>vagans</i>	11	Hustai NP