

Snow Leopards of Mongolia

Mammal-Watching

A Greentours Trip Report

13th – 25th September 2019

Led by Ian Green and Sandor Konyhas

Day 1 September 11th Departure

Most of us took-off in the morning from Heathrow, and all met up in Moscow for the onward flight to Ulaan Baator.

Day 2 September 12th to Ulaan Baator

We land at seven in Ulaan Baator headed for the hotel in the city centre, and rested. We took lunch in an idyllic spot in the countryside, or at least that's what the shopping mall restaurant would have us believe with the stone-bedded stream and astro-turf next to our table! The meal though was wonderful and featured a huge range of dishes.

For the afternoon we popped down to the Tuul River. No mammals but the birding was quite good. Within moments of crossing the road by the bridge we'd racked up Siberian Rubythroat, Azure Tit and a bagful of Daurian Redstarts and Little Buntings. The latter two species were quite common and the male Daurian Redstarts were a picture. The Siberian Rubythroat though was seen only briefly. The Azure Tits were joined by Great Tits and there was a real abundance of Magpies. A dark phase Booted Eagle was enjoyed. Old mans beard seedheads told of *Clematis tangutica* that must have looked great a month earlier.

Day 3 September 13th Tuul River, Khovd and to Jargalant Mountain

A relaxed start this morning with breakfast at eight in the hotel. We left at nine and drove forty minutes out of town to what is known as the 'Golf Course'. Couldn't see a golf course anywhere though! We spent a couple of hours birding here – no mammals noted. The birds were quite excellent though. Prime amongst them were the lovely little Azure Tits which were quite common and so gorgeous. There were also considerable groups of White-crowned Penduline Tits. Great Spotted Woodpecker was noted and a nice surprise was at least three Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers. There were a few passerines in the trees – Daurian Redstart, Yellow-browed Warblers, and in some riverside willowery there were Dusky Warblers. Our first Saker flew by

and seconds later we spotted two Amur Falcons. A Goosander was on the river and a surprise was a fly-by Nutcracker.

We went for lunch in the same restaurant that we'd visited the day before. We had plenty of time to enjoy the excellent dishes before we headed off to the airport. Our flight was delayed somewhat. The twin-prop took to the air in warm sunshine and the two and a half hour flight to Khovd passed serenely and flying at only 6600m we were able to see the landscape below us superbly well. It was an endless sea of steppe stretching across ridges and hills, some of them really quite high with extensive snow covering the mountains on the south side. We flew over lakes of intense azure surrounded by fields of barchan dunes, we passed braided river channels and only very occasionally did we see signs of humanity – the odd track, occasional ger, and once or twice, buildings! We passed a mighty massif – Jargalant – our target – just before dropping past a huge lake (Khar-Us) with steep-sided black hills and into Khovd. Walking from the aircraft into the building the blue sky was turning to dark.

We met our drivers and headed out into the arid steppes between us and Jargalant Mountain.

It was late when we reached our gers laid out in a semi-circle before us. Ger doors have to face south. It was dark so we could not see the scene, only the welcoming lights.... We sank gratefully into our chairs and ate dinner in a lovely warm ger before sloping off to bed.

Day 4 September 14th Jargalant Mountain

We awoke to see just what a spectacular situation our ger camp was in. To the south the arid steppe descended to a wide valley dotted with lakes and sand dune systems amid the wide grasslands. Beyond rose another range of mountains, these dotted with snow, and the shining white peaks of yet-higher mountains were beyond. To our north lay the many-layered Jargalant, dry and one moment craggy one moment smooth and rolling. To our east the land soon rose again to Jargalant's sister mountain whose many folded terrain looked fabulous in the morning sun. Our gers were on a flat piece of land below the main rise of the mountain and the gravelly semi-desert around us was now extremely dry. Hardly a twig showed on the little ridges, in the low gullies some vegetation grew. We saw Pallas's Pikas almost straight away, and there proved to be several of them right by the gers, and so many just a little further. Isabelline and Desert Wheatears flew in soon after the sun rose and there were Black Redstarts too. Mongolian Finches flew over but didn't stop. An Upland Buzzard flew past and far away we saw perched Steppe Eagle and Black Vulture. An Isabelline Shrike perched just after the last ger where there was also a Lesser Whitethroat.

After breakfast we headed up onto the mountain. There had been no positive news from the horse team who spot the Snow Leopards but the weather was good so we headed uphill with hope. We stopped by a rock in a canyon where ancients had etched various animals on smooth rocks. We could see ibex, deer, dogs and other less obviously decipherable figures.

The vehicles topped a long valley and we found ourselves literally on top of the mountain, the track undulating towards a sudden defile facing west. As we approached we could see that this

was a tremendously spectacular landform. Snow lay over some of the mountain top and indeed it was very cold as we stepped from the vehicles – only 4°C – but made cooler by what elsewhere might have been a breeze but on these ridges felt considerably more! Out of the wind it was quite pleasant in the full sunshine. We scanned... and we scanned... and though we found no Snow Leopards during the day we did find some wonderful wildlife and above all spent much of the day in superb warm sunshine amongst the most incredibly wild and beautiful landscapes. Deep valleys cut into the mountain, the rocky bones showing through on the slopes, sometimes ochre, sometimes greyish, greenish or even maroon in places. There were vast rolling hills tinged yellow by the little remaining autumn vegetation, there were craggy tops, and little streams still ran in the deep valleys. We started to see Marmots, indeed we found quite a few over the next few hours, but none of the hoped for larger mammals. There two local ‘watchers’ helping to find the Snow Leopard could see four Ibex from their perch lower down the valley but we couldn’t! Raptors were seen regularly. Golden Eagles soared past on several occasions and we saw several Lammergeiers including two adults playing together and a couple of youngsters too. Upland Buzzards was seen and there were Saker Falcon occasionally too. Plain Mountain Finches flew past in little groups and there was a fine pair of White-winged Snowfinches. There was also a Brown Accentor and some brief sightings of Guldenstadt’s Redstarts which culminated in a far better behaved male who posed on a rock near the lunch spread. My was that a lunch spread with a view. Other birds noted included Cuckoo on the way up, and Hill Pigeon.

We returned to the ger camp by late afternoon with enough time to relax, shower, or wander around before dinner. Just near the camp some of us encountered a Stoat. He was fearless and ignored us completely weaving a complex series of gymnastic manoeuvres through the pika colonies along a little gully. A true ninja-Stoat. He would pirouette into one hole leap out of another and perform little dances into others. Pikas sat around staring at this strange apparition – something they should clearly not do for too long! The whole spectacle allowed us great photography in glorious evening light.

After dinner several of us went out on a Jerboa walk. Most of us connected well with the Northern Three-toed Jerboas below the camp though none of them came that close to us. Some came up to the higher ground to look for another jerboa and after initially failing we did eventually find one then a little later one gave great views and allowed us to confirm that it is the Gobi Jerboa, which is the large-eared Jerboa without white in front of the black on the tail tuft. Later Little Owl sat on one of the gers and Eagle Owl called.

Day 5 September 15th Jargalant – the Western Valley

Some of us walked over to the edge of the canyon this morning noting several Pied Wheatears, Black Redstarts and Yellow-browed Warblers. Others fossicked with the camp Pallas’s Pikas. Breakfast completed we heard that there was no news from up on the mountain so we came up with a plan – this was though immediately changed as we left camp in the opposite direction – no urgency though, nothing on the Snow Leopards from above.

So the day was spent heading first down to the arid plain below and then round the mountain before heading up the Western Valley, the same that we'd been at the top of the day before. This allowed us, at least initially, to respond to possible sightings from the high ground. None were had though. Still the day was thoroughly memorable from both the wildlife and the landscape point of view.

We headed downhill soon stopping as Sorenson had spotted a small group of Black-tailed (Goitred) Gazelles running down ahead of us. Past, and outside the national park, current hunting of these animals means that they are extremely wary and don't usually allow close approach. We saw another group as we descended and then a rather odd-looking vulture caused some confusion – this an immature Lammergeier. It landed in the steppe a hundred metres off the track. We crossed a wide gravel talus slope that was extremely barren and then reached the valley floor which was here very sandy with scattered vegetation. We drove fast through this for a while but soon we stopped for a group of Saiga. There were nine of them, very distant though. After a brief dalliance with two Finnish and one Japanese Palaeontologists (who had the day before discovered 'elephant' remains in the rocks there) we headed up into the western valley. As ever on Jargalant this took us up into a truly wonderful wilderness. The steep slopes either side rocky, scree or just steep with such a variety of landform. The valley floor sometimes narrow sometimes wider and all the while views ahead to the high ground we'd been on yesterday. We occasionally saw the two horsemen who were on top looking for the Snow Leopards – on the radio they reported no luck. Our hopes were raised when we noticed half a dozen Black Vultures and a Lammergeier circling over an area up there but it turned out it was merely the horsemen's tent that they were interested in! We scanned for a long while with no luck. Upland Buzzard and Saker Falcon were noted and Sandor showed us some Blyth's Pipits. The flora held a deal of interest. There was the unusual *Lagopsis darwiniana*, in the sage family with spikes of pinky-purple bracted blooms, the tiny flowers within being yellowish. It was first described as recently as 2007. *Allium altaicum*'s thick hollow stems were noticeable on the scree as were the grossly inflated seedpods of some kind of *Corydalis*. The sea lavender *Goniolimon speciosum* bloomed on the valley floor alongside the strawberry blite *Chenopodium foliosum*, white *Silene repens*, and *Orostachys malacophylla* – the latter had finished flowering. The yellow daisy was *Inula britannica*! We enjoyed an excellent slightly curried lunch cooked on the spot – delicious! Then after tea and biscuits we walked up the valley a bit. There were numerous maroon-winged crickets stridulating away and erupting from the vegetation like spectacular clockwork toys. Painted Ladies, Idas Blues (or similar), Small Tortoiseshells and Clouded Yellows were noted. On the far side of the valley floor was a little spring and we went to look at the birds flying in to drink. There was a very active flock of Rock Sparrows that buzzed back and forth stopping every now and again to drink for a few seconds. Later there was a lovely flock of Mongolian Finches too. Up the valley we watched Ravens, Golden Eagles and the vultures – Lammergeiers soared passed every now and again. We reached our turning point and heard rocks falling... sure enough it was some Ibex. Six males – one of them with big horns and three with quite sizeable adornments. We watched these for some time before starting back down to the vehicles.

We left at around half four and made our way down to the plain stopping for a Little Owl as we went. Down on the plain we stopped again for the ungulates. Backed by a large herd of Bactrian

Camels were two Back-tailed Gazelles and several Saiga too. This time the light was excellent and there was no heat haze so though they were still somewhat distant we had excellent views. There were some more of both species over to the left as well. Onwards we saw Steppe Eagle, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel before we rolled up at camp around seven.

After dinner several of the group went out Jerboa-ing whilst Peter and I went to put out our trap cameras. We saw little in the way of mammals – Northern Three-toed Jerboa and Tolai Hare – but Peter's thermal imaging scope was ace at picking out roosting birds in the *Caragana* bushes. We had great views of Brown Accentor and Twite as it approached midnight.

Day 6 September 16th Jargalant – Snow Leopard!

Most of us were just going for breakfast when the rumour started to spread. News had come in that the horsemen had spotted a Snow Leopard. We hastily guzzled some tea and downed our eggs and were out in the 4wds and heading up the mountain.

We drove uphill purposefully hardly glancing at the Upland Buzzard that didn't want to move from the road nor the Altai Mountain Weasel that raced across the track in front of the lead vehicle. We reached the area we'd been a couple of days previously but then continued driving right over what seemed the very top of the mountain. The track, indeed if there was one, undiscernible and the tundra landscape streaked with snow. There was plenty of tracks of the horsemen's mounts showing how much ground they'd been covering in their attempt to find our quarry. Eventually they pulled up and we hurried over to the horsemen and soon they were trying to train our scopes on the Snow Leopard. The Snow Leopard was in view but it was a long way off and difficult to discern at least where it was right now. It was snuggled up on the corner of the rock and looked hardly more than a rather soft looking pale grey lump. As we looked through our 'scopes the initial euphoria at seeing such a wonderful creature was perhaps replaced by a little disappointment. It took a while for all to get a look at the cat through the 'scopes. However we soon all felt much better when she got up and started walking around her rocky pinnacle, sometimes going to one side and sitting in full view on the rock, sometimes going to the top of an area of snow and scent-marking, but always returning to the same little spot where she laid down and sat there looking back over towards us. When she walked about we could see this amazing cat well – her (most of us decided at the time but were later to find it was a male) long heavy tail, her lovely pale grey-white pelage, and this covered in large darker grey rosettes. There was a gingerish wash to some parts of her coat.

I should emphasise that these views were great through a 'scope and those using either cameras or binoculars would not have fared as well. We spent the rest of the morning watching her and she was in view, or at least some of her was in view for much of that time. At one point she took a dislike to the Ravens sitting on the rock above and leapt acrobatically at them!

Meanwhile there was much else to keep us occupied, not least our fantastic position. We were almost on top of the mountain looking down on the Snow Leopard and indeed just about

everything else. The views all around were truly spectacular with the great Eastern Altai ridge away across the valley to our right, Jargalant's sister mountain to our left and the deep defile of 'Snow Leopard' Valley in front. Black Vultures, Lammergeiers and Ravens circled around below us! In fact all day there were numbers of all of these about. Four Lammergeiers in the air at once! Golden Eagles passed by (below!) regularly and so too did one or two Steppe Eagles.

Peter spotted a superb male Ibex not so very far from the Snow Leopard, and soon we'd clocked up six male Ibex there, probably the same group we'd seen yesterday afternoon. Nearer at hand Guldenstadt's Redstarts were the main item, one rock had five fabulous males chasing each other around it. Brown Accentor, Mongolian Finches and a male Common Redstart were seen too. Some Wolf dung was found and the horsemen had some fabulous Ibex horns that they'd found in the last few days. I popped down the slope a little and saw nine Altai Snowcock waddling across the mountainside.

Lunch was tasty and much enjoyed in the full sunshine. We made sure someone kept a eye on the Snow Leopard as we ate! In the afternoon several of us decided to go down a ridge where we'd get a much closer view of the cat. Unfortunately the descent down to the ridge proved rather tricky and only I made it down there. A pity as the views of the Snow Leopard were much better having halved the distance. Having said that she was out of view much of the time. I was able to find out why she was there – she had a kill, a sheep. She came down to it and I watched spellbound for fifteen minutes as she moved the carcass here and there, turned it over, tried to drag it closer to rock, and she also fed, tearing into the belly section. Meanwhile Ravens were going crazy in the air whistling around my head (and others higher up) showing their virtuoso flying skills. Two young Lammergeiers joined in and started doing 'handbrake' turns with the Ravens and they got so excited they actually started calling! Heading uphill I found some fresh and very smelly Snow Leopard poo and watched a flock of Hill Pigeons fly past. A yak carcass had Black Vultures on it.

After tea and biscuits it was time to descend through unrelentingly superb scenery to the ger camp.

After dinner several of us went up the canyon on a night walk which was largely unsuccessful except for a Red Fox and a thermal imaging view of a Lammergeier roosting on a cliff face.

Day 7 September 17th Jargalant Mountain (Level 10) & the Eastern Valley

We awoke to a cloudy morning, though the cloud was high and the light was bright. This morning we had decided to split the group. I accompanied half the group returning to the top of the mountain in the hope that the Snow Leopard was still around and Sandor headed round the other side of the mountain with the rest of the group into the Eastern/Northern Valley.

My group headed up on the now familiar track right to the top of the mountain. Nothing interrupted our progress today – it was very clear this morning that very many migrant birds had left during the night, presumably catching a lift on the evening's northerly wind. We arrived at the

scene of yesterday's triumph and took a look at the rock – of course, no Snow Leopard. However we were not to be dissuaded from our task and so we headed over to the right hand ridge and walked down to a (little) closer viewpoint and took up station observing yesterday's sighting point. Nothing. Ravens, Black Vultures, Lammergeiers and even a Steppe Eagle swirled overhead. After a while we started to lose concentration – the wind was bitter and temperature judging by the crispy surface on the snow patches hardly above zero – and to scan the ridges for other wildlife and so it was that only Sheila was looking when the Snow Leopard obligingly walked across the rock in full view. So, we knew she was there. We waited a good while and she didn't reappear so we surmised that she might well be staying out of the wind and staying with her prey. We had noted a Lammergeier interested but not landing and Ravens still watched from some metres away so we thought she must still be keeping them off her kill.

We headed back to the vehicles and had a nice warm tea or coffee which was much needed. Then most of us headed for the left hand ridge heading to the spot that I'd been the afternoon before. This would allow us to see her prey. However the descent was not easy. It was around a thousand feet and in places we had to walk across scree, though there were good animal tracks across the latter. Even from the top we could see she was active around her prey but the wind was strong up there so we wanted to get down out of the wind and of course much closer. This we managed though she had by then settled down. Her head was fully in view and her front leg but such is the Snow Leopards camouflage that even though we were much closer than yesterday it took one or two of us a moment to work out the difference between rock and Snow Leopard! We continued to watch her as she turned her head this way and that, sometimes looking in apparent concentration uphill, sometimes snoozing, and sometimes following those pesky Ravens. Debbie, aided by Rema and Alta, descended by an indecently direct route to join us, quite an experience by all accounts! Unfortunately the Snow Leopard didn't play ball and removed itself to somewhere private well before she arrived. And so a standoff. We knew she was just centimetres out of sight and her prey we could see. Up to ten Ravens came and had a look, sometimes hopping over to have a look at the prey and exiting immediately as if scolded from some demon within the rocks!

After the best part of two hours we were all ready to give up feeling rather chilly and jaded. Some departed uphill but three of us stayed just a little more. Suddenly an ear from behind the rock, then a face, a tail.... The Snow Leopard messed around for a minute or so teasing us with glimpses, before suddenly it moved into full view. Wow! At last we could enjoy the beauty of this animal from a reasonable range (750m?) to the full. It turned to look over at us and we could see what a broad and strong head it had – so a male. He snaked his beautiful thick long tail back and forth and then settled down for us to admire. He heard the people above us and looked over but seemed unperturbed just looking in the direction of the sound. We tried to get photos.... Cameras not working, not focussing....! Then all of a sudden this most beautiful of cats rolled on his back and waited for someone to tickle his tummy! Male confirmed... he lolled around like this for a while, yawning and squirming before he obviously heard some of the comments from across the valley and decided he'd better regain the sphinx position.

We had a wonderful twenty minutes with this cat, looking in the prime of his life, stretching and yawning one more time, before disappearing back behind the rocks. Time to tackle the long walk

back uphill. En route though we stopped for snowcock feathers and dung and for Snow Leopard dung too. There was also scat of a mustelid of some sort, and on the way down we'd seen Wolf dung.

Back up at the top we found Elaine had just been watching the Snow Leopard wandering around the rock and then she'd seen it run up and down the grassy ridge behind. Once again we'd been lucky enough to spend much of our day up in the mountain in the company of the Snow Leopard. Superb!

Back at the ger camp those that had returned from the day out on the northeast slopes of the mountain were enjoying the antics of the Stoat again. This time it made a kill and danced the Stoat dance of death over its victim – what a crazy beast this is!

Day 8 September 18th Durgun Lake and Steppe

Dawn broke with some cloud but this soon cleared to a warm sunny day. After breakfast we left at 08.30 and drove downwards to an area of steppe and a large lake. Isabelline and Desert Wheatears vacated the track as we drove and once on a wide dark gravelly plain we started seeing large flocks of Horned Larks. Jargalant rose always to our left, some snow visible on the peaks.

We stopped to look for Henderson's Ground Jay in some rolling steppe but could not find it instead seeing Red Fox. Now we drove out over the plain. We started to encounter livestock in some abundance. We started with lots of horses, then moved through goats to a big herd of camels photographing them with the mountain background. They all looked fabulous in the autumn tinted steppe with the folded snowy mountains and now brilliant blue skies behind. We drove on and eventually spotted some Saiga. We watched them from a distance. They are extremely shy animals and in such an open flat landscape they can see you coming as soon as you are over the horizon – and they make themselves scarce from both vehicles and people on foot, so they are not at all easy to get close to. We saw several small groups in this area but could not close to any of them of course. We stopped by a stone enclosure and watched some through the 'scopes. We wandered around here a bit, photographing the Desert Wheatears on the enclosure, and the Toad-headed Agamas in the steppe. These are both very well camouflaged and extremely beautiful. There was a deal of confusion when your leaders thought they heard waders in the sky above and then thought that the sound was emanating from Mole Crickets below. Peter and Sheila independently came up with the answer – it was in fact the dark-winged crickets we'd seen flying up in front of the vehicles as we drove that were making the strange noise. We found a Pallas's Sandgrouse feather here, it was the nearest we would get to one all day!

We drove on seeing more Saiga. Now we were close to Durgun Lake and we stopped a little back from the shore and walked to it as the team drove on down to the lake to prepare the lunch. Several Saiga were visible and one was quite close and this one performed well for the next fifteen minutes walking back and forth and generally giving us a chance to study this antelope's strange

structure and photograph it. Painted Ladies were common and we saw more of the agamas and a Eurasian Nightjar was flushed. Sandor spotted a Northern Harrier behind us.

Bird life was rather scarce on the lake though there were some surprises. Almost the first birds we saw was a bunch of Black-throated Divers offshore. And there were several more groups too. With Cormorants on a sand bar were two Red-breasted Mergansers. Mongolian Gulls and Pallas's Gull flew over. On the water were Shoveler, Teal, Red-crested Pochard, Coot and a few Great Crested Grebes. Goldeneyes were there too and Black-necked Grebes were seen. There was a dead Pacific Golden Plover on the beach and along said beach we saw Buff-bellied Pipit and White Wagtails. The team made us an excellent lunch which we ate sat on the beach on chairs looking like a bunch of English beach-goers!

We explored another larger swathe of steppe after lunch looking for Pallas's Sandgrouse and Saiga. This area of steppe is some four hundred kilometres long and is home to under six thousand Saiga so you can imagine finding them is not so simple even given the huge visibility. We did find several more groups – in the end our total for the day was over 50 – and we finished with a nice singleton female who actually allowed quite close approach. The steppe here had an intriguing flora with a little clump forming plant dominating. It was in full flower, each plant having either orange, yellow, green, maroon or even crimson blooms. The other plant that formed the sparse vegetation here was *Allium mongolicum*.

We left the steppe behind and re-entered the black gravels. Black Vultures sat watching us go past. There were more memorable livestock scenes including plenty of horses. Then we stopped by a slope with well-spaced bushes. We failed to spot our quarry – Henderson's Ground Jay. We moved to another area and again failed to find them, and another.... Just one brief call was all we got! There was a nice flock of Mongolian Finches along the way.

Then it was back to base arriving at six with a little time to prepare for the evening's entertainment. We were to hear the only professional female throat singer in western Mongolia and a local lad from the village school too. What a wonderful performance it was too. We learnt a little about the history of throat singing and the instruments they were using too, and also learnt that the local village by Jargalant Mountain was famous in Mongolia as being the 'home' of throat singing. We were all enthralled by the extraordinary and beautiful, sounds emanating from these two musicians. It ended with several of the drivers and camp staff joining them in a rendition of a popular local folk song. A great evening with a wonderful meal too.

Day 9 September 19th Khovd and to Ulaan Baator

After a clear cool night we woke early for breakfast as the sun rose above the mountain to our east. Then we were on our way at seven thirty having said farewell to all at the camp who had looked after us so well. Derek showed us photos of a Pere David's Snowfinch he'd got right by the camp – the rest of us a mite jealous. We descended to the area we'd looked for the Henderson's Ground Jays yesterday and lo! and behold there they were, two fine birds performed well for us. They ran

up a slope from the valley in front of us but stopped and dithered on the ridge allowing all to catch up with them. Then they and us went into the next little valley where we had further good views of them. All the while Mongolian Finches flew in and around us.

We next explored a spring, checking out the fenced well-vegetated area and thought there were a few birds that flew in and landed when we first got there we couldn't locate them and had to be satisfied with the many Painted Ladies present and the unusual looking lemon-coloured Dandelion that flowered in the wettest ground.

Then we headed down to the valley and across to the main road stopping only for a superb trackside group of Pallas's Sandgrouse.

Then into Khovd and we checked in for our flight and then enjoyed a fine lunch (though the chicken was so overcooked I reckon they'd been cooking it since the last visit) in the Steppe Hotel's restaurant. Our first internet and telephone connection for most of a week kept some of us busy!

We arrived more or less on time into Ulaan Baator and were met by Osku and Saihnaa and were soon in the landcruisers for the next stage of our tour. We stopped off at a supermarket (a real giant one!) on the edge of the capital to stock up on whatever and then were on out of town onto the quitter roads to Hustai. We arrived as the sun set and settled into our rather more upmarket gers before having a fine dinner in the restaurant. This is a permanent camp and thus a step up from the 'erected-just-for-us' Jargalant one. The gers have solid floors, electricity and lighting, and even little heaters, though these were not necessary this year.

Day 10 September 20th Hustai

It was bright and clear as we met up by the edge of the property at six-thirty. We took a walk into the dune system behind the camp and soon found a selection of birds. Most prominent amongst them were the Hen Harriers. There were seven of these, all females or first year birds. Their preferred targets this morning seemed to be Magpies though these were clearly only fair game if they weren't flying! We watched rather bewildered as two cornered Magpies suffered multiple Harrier-abuse for many minutes until another Magpie flew in through the harriers and once that one had landed the harriers all disappeared. Clearly three was unfair... At one point an Upland Buzzard nearly spoiled the intriguing charade as it bombed in from one side nearly taking a harrier and magpie as it went through! There were many small birds in the *Ulmus sibirica* bushes scattered through the dunes. We saw Daurian Redstarts, Little Buntings and Tree Sparrows in some numbers as well as lots of White-crowned Penduline Tits. A female Merlin flew through. There were other species too. A couple of Lapland Buntings were noted and quite a few Pine Buntings were seen. A Chaffinch was a surprise and then there were Dusky Warblers, Red-throated Thrush, Richard's Pipit and a fabulous male Siberian Rubythroat seen just briefly. The only mammal was a Mongolian Jird. The flora must have been rather beautiful a couple of months earlier. The *Asparagus dahurica* was now in seed but *Scabiosa comosa* was still in good bloom.

Then we were out into the national park which starts fifteen minutes drive from the camp. An Upland Buzzard sat on a roadside pylon allowing photography. Once gate formalities had been completed it was into the rolling grasslands of Hustai. Immediately we started to see Marmots. They were plentiful and sometimes close to the road so we stopped to photograph a few. There were a few of the altogether slimmer Long-tailed Ground Squirrels soon after we entered the path but a little further up there was another species too, the Daurian Ground Squirrel. At one point we had both species in view, on one side of the road, one the other. A rather macabre scene was found shortly after. Was the ground squirrel grooming another? No, it was nibbling away at the carcass of a Daurian Pika. This was happening at the entrance to the Pika's burrow. There were piles of Pika hay scattered around. We watched as the squirrel seemed to take bits out of the back end of the pika and then walked over to take a look at the dead pika. A weird scene and one that we found difficult to interpret. Overhead Golden Eagles, Kestrels, Steppe Eagles and Black Vultures soared. An Eastern Buzzard suddenly swooped and caught a small vole, taking it up onto a perch and dismembering it with indecent haste.

It wasn't long before we found our first Przewalski's Horse, the original wild horse. The reintroduction programme here is proving successful and the horses, initially rather tame, are now thoroughly wild. Our first was a stallion high on a ridge. Soon after we found more on the surrounding hillsides. Also quite a few Red Deer. Further along were Hen Harriers... Marmots were ever present and we stopped to photograph them. We also stopped to scan for Przewalski's Horses and we found a goodly number, perhaps forty or so during the morning, though most were quite distant. Then it was back to the resort for lunch passing roadsides plants such as *Gentiana squarrosa* and Henbane.

In the afternoon we headed back into the park. We stopped to scan and located our first Mongolian Gazelles on the steppe far above us. Nice to see, but we could do with being closer so we drove a little further coming to a quick halt as a Corsac Fox was spotted running across the hillside. It weaved its way across the grassland evading most of us before disappearing over the ridge. So we moved a little further and then started to walk closer to where we thought Gazelles might be. It was a wonderful walk across pristine Mongolian steppe with wonderful animals ahead and birds around us and abundant Grasshoppers flying about us and clicking their red-hued wings. We passed asters (actually *Heteroppapus* probably *altaicus*) and minuartias still in flower and all about was the aroma of artemisia. We soon found ourselves much closer to the herd of Gazelle and some judicious dead ground use allowed us to get where we could see them well – though the distance for photography was still challenging. There were (we later counted) 248 of them up on the slope, still not concerned by our presence. Vanessa immediately spotted an imposter in their midst – a Corsac Fox. For the next hour or so we watched intrigued as this fox hunted from within the Gazelle herd. Sometimes it was right within the group of gazelles sometimes on the edge but it was clearly using the herd for its own means. This was rather emphasised later by the appearance of two more Corsac Foxes as the gazelle started to move. Amazingly there were two more Corsac Foxes in the slopes below us too – making five in total. The gazelles suddenly started to move as the evening wore on and Michel who had walked carefully ahead was able to garner fabulous photos as they started to head downhill eventually passing quite close to the group on their way down to the river far below. As all this was going on

we were able to watch Brandt's Voles, Marmots and even Mongolia Birds in the grasslands around us. Little Owls perched on rocks and Small Tortoiseshells flew past. I walked back down to the cars through a canyon noting Pallas's Warbler, Daurian Redstarts and Little Buntings as I went and Mongolian Short-toed Larks flew over.

Then it was back to the resort for another slap-up meal – they do really good food here.

Day 11 September 21st Hustai

All but one of us took a very early option this morning heading with Osku into the park at 05.00. Our aim was to look for Wolves. We spotlighted a little on the way in but there was little action, just some Red Deer and nearing our destination a fox. That all changed when we pulled up well up a mountain by two of the great granite towers, for on the first for a pair of bright green eyes shone back at my torch. A brief look with the binoculars confirmed that it was a Pallas's Cat. Of course with five landcruisers pulling up on its front lawn it wasn't going to hang around. We saw it quickly slide round the back of the rock. Osku and I raced round there expecting it to have disappeared downhill but no there it was – a lovely if brief view before it melted again behind the rock. Now all the rest of the vehicles were arriving and there was no way it was going to come out so all were met with the news that there was a Pallas's Cat in the rocks next to them but that we couldn't see. It was still dark. We kept an eye on the rock all morning but all it yielded was Daurian Redstarts, Rock Sparrows and a fine Meadow Bunting.

We started scanning the landscape as the sky lightened - now it was light enough to appreciate the beautiful landscape we were in. We spent the next two and a half hours in a magical place all the while surrounded by the bugling, ranting and even 'howling' of rutting Red Deer stags. It was quite an experience! We were however here to search for Wolves so busily scanned the slopes, none more so than the ranger who was determined to find them. We had hoped that if we didn't see them then we might hear them but though many of the deer sounds could easily have been mistaken for the Wolves there were none of the latter calling. All the scanning revealed so many other animals. There were tens of Red Deer everywhere (more than one hundred in total) we looked including many magnificent stags. There were stags with harems and stags without, and occasionally we witnessed stags with hinds or hinds looking for stags. Przewalski's Horses were scattered about the slopes in some numbers too. A big surprise was two Argali, both young males with small curling horns, standing proudly on the hilltop above us. We watched them for some time before they melted away. Far below on the floodplain of the Tuul River we could see large numbers of Mongolian Gazelle – hundreds of them. At one point some start running and we excitedly try to see why but we couldn't. Sandor spotted a Corsac Fox down there. Suddenly there it was – a Wolf – always the most wonderful animal to see. This one was sauntering across a sunlight ridge and then as we watched it, it calmly sat down in the sun and regarded us. Of course it was a long way away but in the fabulous morning light it looked great. After a while it got up and walked back down into the valley behind disappearing from sight. There were a number of Przewalski's Horses grazing here and it was then we noticed a second Wolf, this a much greyer and more thickly-furred animal, and it was standing in the middle of the group of horses being

completely ignored by them. We watched it for some time before it too disappeared. During this pre-breakfast session we saw thirteen species of mammal – including Tolai Hare, Brandt's Vole, Tarbagan Marmot, Daurian Ground Squirrel, and David spotted a Siberian Jerboa just before it got light. Meanwhile at our feet David had spotted an unlikely thing – a pasque flower – in bloom in September. This turned out to be *Pulsatilla turczaninovii*. Also here was the unusual Rosacean *Chamaerhodos altaicus*, a plant that formed a neat cushion of trilobed leaves beset with little pink flowers - perfect for the alpine house. There were the usual raptors about – Golden Eagle, Steppe Eagles, Upland Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and Black Vulture in the skies and nearer at hand Shorelarks and Chough. We returned quite exhilarated by 09.30 and partook of a very large and much needed breakfast!

After breakfast some of us ventured into the dunes. These are best done early in the morning but even after breakfast yielded some great sightings. The Mongolian Jirds were particularly busy and were easily photographable and there were a few Tolai Hares. Buntings were varied and quite common – we saw quite a number of Little Buntings and there were also a few each of Lapland, Pine and Pallas's Reed Bunting and I went on to find feathers of the latter. Hen Harriers and Upland Buzzards were common and a male Japanese Sparrowhawk flew over. Tree Sparrows were as usual very common but in the elms we could also find lots of Daurian Redstarts as well as a few Pallas's Warblers and White-crowned Penduline Tits. We spotted Asparagus in fruit and the strange spikes of *Orostachys spinosa* coming into creamy bloom. A wonderful lilac-legged jumping Spider was spotted. There were also plenty of *Scabious comosa* in bloom, attracting *Plebejus argus*. As Sandor went back to the resort he spotted an Asian Short-toed Lark.

In the afternoon we headed down to the same area we had been in during the morning, picking our ranger up on the way. Our aim was to stake out the Pallas's Cat 'tor'. We did this for a couple of hours until it got dark but to no avail, the cat didn't come back. Meantime we had only a hillside of Brandt's Voles for company but they did their best, all a-stand when we first got there – it looked quite crowded further up the slope – and nearer they were scurrying hither and thither. Shorelarks and Rock Sparrows were up on the rocks. A Corsac Fox had been spotted en route and another headed up the slope and later we found two more – probably we're talking three individuals.

Dusk descended and we could no longer see the cat tor easily so we left. I spot-lighted on the way home, there being no eye-shine visible all the way home apart from one animal. A Wolf! Just twenty metres off the road we jumped out and the Wolf sauntered away, halted by our Wolf Howls! It looked back at us as if it couldn't believe we could even be trying to Wolf Howl! So we had half a minute perfect view of this Wolf before it ambled off. Then it was back to the resort for a slightly late dinner.

Day 12 September 22nd Lun Wetland, and back to Ulaan Baator

Some of the group went into the dunes pre-breakfast. Lapland Bunting was flushed and Hen Harriers continued their unfathomable escapades with the local Magpies. Eurasian Skylarks flew over regularly. Initially the bushes seemed somewhat quiet before the sun started to warm them and then it became a bit busy! There were Dusky Warblers and Pallas's Leaf Warblers, and there were lots of Daurian Redstarts, but mainly it was about buntings! There were a lot of them. Little Buntings were scattered hither and thither and there were almost as many Pallas's Reed Buntings too. There were also quite a number of Pine Buntings in various plumages. There were two other buntings as well, one with a largely greyish head with the breast mottled orange-chestnut and the other like a larger version of the Little Bunting – Chestnut-eared Bunting? Then it was back for breakfast. A superbly lit Little Owl was within the grounds and a Northern Grey Shrike was on the wires by the resort and a Kestrel was unhappy it was there!

We headed back towards the main road and shortly after spent some time in some arable fields. There were quite a number of Mongolian Larks here and we eventually got a good look at them. Jirds were standing at the entrance to their burrows. With the Mongolian Larks were a number of Asian Short-toed Larks and Mongolian Short-toed Larks, Shorelarks and Skylarks were also seen. Lapland Buntings and Rock Sparrows were common and there were a few Pere David's Snowfinches. Painted Ladies were everywhere on the last flowers of Oil-seed Rape.

We next visited the Lun wetlands. Here a shallow valley with several meandering river channels is covered in wet steppe. We parked the vehicles by a roadside vantage point and looked out. Below us jirds scurried about some dry grassland. We were staggered by the number of Spoonbills. There must have been three hundred or more in one group and we could see other groups – perhaps a thousand in total. Grey Herons were not the largely solitary birds we tend to see – here there were several hundred gathered in groups of thirty or forty birds. A nice surprise was a group of Swan Geese and with them Common Teal, Shoveler and Pintail. There was a large group of Black Storks over to the right. Red-throated Pipits flew about the marshy slight salty grassland. Sandor found a spot where we could get a look at our first Cranes so we drove for a few minutes to look at them. Two superb White-naped Cranes. These were initially rather heat-hazed but later, when we drove out into the valley, they were quite stunning. It was at this point that we noticed some unusual action going on to our right. Some distance away a huge eagle that was either a White-tailed Eagle or a Pallas's Fish Eagle was attacking a Black Stork. It was an immature eagle and even prolonged views later as it flew over us whilst we were stopped in a petrol station left us confused. Most features were like White-tailed but the tail was like Pallas's... Back to the action though. The Black Stork must have been one of a large group of them for the rest – fifty or so - were now in the sky getting a grandstand view of the eagle attempting to kill their compatriot. Repeatedly the eagle flew at the stork which each time either ducked or ducked down with its bill raised towards the eagle. I think the eagle must have hurt the stork in its initial attack but all later attempts to finish it off failed and the eagle eventually left.

Back in the nearer marsh there was a large group of Spoonbills and sitting with them an equally large group of Spotted Redshanks. There were also a number of Common Snipe and some Black-tailed Godwits. Coots, Shoveler, Gadwall, Great Crested Grebe and many Pintail were there. A pair of Whooper Swans reminded us we were quite far north. Dragonflies were abundant and there were Emperor types as well as many *Sympetrums*. Red-billed Cough hung around the edge of the village posing for more than one camera and the number of Barn Swallows on the wires was incredible. A fine male Citrine Wagtail was around the feet of a calf. It was time for lunch! This was taken in a large roadside eatery by the river bridge. A motorway service station! By the bridge was another Citrine Wagtail and a Mongolian Gull and a huge flock of Rooks. On the other side of the bridge were a few Bar-headed Geese. Growing in the marsh was the pretty pink *Saussura pricei*.

Now it was time to head to Ulaan Baator and the excellent Corporate Hotel. En route we passed so many Black Vultures, and quite a few Eastern Buzzards, Sakers and Steppe Eagles. Uugan took us out to dinner in the city centre just ten minutes away. Here we ate in a very good Indian Restaurant directly opposite the Parliament Building. Then to sleep...

Day 13 September 23rd Departure

07.00 flights meant we had to be up early – it was a four-thirty departure from the airport. The journey to the airport was stress-free and we were soon at the rather slow check-in. There was though no rush as the flight was delayed one and half hours...

It had been a memorable trip with prime objective of seeing Snow Leopard achieved and excellent views of the animal obtained by those that spent the second day with this lovely cat culminating in watching it roll onto its back and wait for one of us to fly across the gorge and tickle its tummy! The landscapes of both Jargalant and Hustai were just wonderful in particular the setting of the ger camp on the former. The abundance of Przewalski's Horses and Red Deer in Hustai was impressive and we all enjoyed the large herd of Mongolian Gazelle there a lot too. The Corsac Foxes using the Gazelles to help them catch their dinner and just what were the Wolves doing wandering around amongst the Przewalski's Horses? Jerboas hopping around the camp, Jargalant's crazy ninja-Stoat who visited the camp area each evening for a spot of hunt-dancing, Saiga speeding across the steppes and the many cute pikas, jirds and voles we encountered, all provided great memories, as did the rich variety of rather special birds we saw, notably the duelling eagle and black stork and the fun-loving young Lammergeiers of Jargalant. Dare I mentioned the Pallas's Cat? Up there almost with any of this were the remarkable Throat Singers who visited the ger camp on jargalant.

Systematic List Number 1 Mammals

Tarbagan Marmot	<i>Marmota sibirica</i>	several at high altitude on Jargalant but very common in Hustai
Daurian Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus dauricus</i>	frequent around Hustai where commoner than the next species
Long-tailed Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus undulatus</i>	two seen by the drivers by the ger camp on Jargalant and a few seen near the entrance at Hustai
Siberian Jerboa	<i>Allactaga sibirica</i>	1 seen by David in Hustai
Gobi Jerboa	<i>Allactaga bullata</i>	a few by the ger camp on Jargalant - photographs show them as having a tail tuft not bordered white forward of the black and having differently shaped ears and head from previous species
Northern Three-toed Jerboa	<i>Dipus sagitta</i>	several by the ger camp on Jargalant
Brandt's Vole	<i>Lasiopodomys brandtii</i>	abundant at Hustai
Midday Jird	<i>Meriones meridianus</i>	scattered at Jargalant – some people had them coming into their gers!
Mongolian Jird	<i>Meriones unguiculatus</i>	common at Hustai
Daurian Pika	<i>Ochotona dauurica</i>	one being eaten by a Long-tailed Ground Squirrel was a bit odd! Also noted later at Hustai
Pallas's Pika	<i>Ochotona pallasi</i>	very common at Jargalant
Tolai Hare	<i>Lepus tolai</i>	frequent everywhere
Snow Leopard	<i>Panthera uncia</i>	1 male on Jargalant Mountain. Watched over a two day period where it was in view quite a bit of the time. Watched scent-marking, eating its prey, chasing Ravens and even rolling on its back and asking for its tummy to be tickled! The first day's distant views were much surpassed by those that came down the ridge on the second day
Pallas's Cat	<i>Otocolobus manul</i>	1 seen just before dawn by those in the front vehicle on the early morning trip into Hustai
Corsac Fox	<i>Vulpes corsac</i>	5 the first day in Hustai, 4 the second. Interesting behaviour noted where these foxes were clearly 'inserting' themselves into the Mongolian Gazelle herds presumably as an aid to hunting.
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	singles twice in Jargalant Mountain
Grey Wolf	<i>Lupus lupus</i>	2 seen distantly but well in amongst a group of Przewalski's Horse! Later the same day one seen just after dark just 15m from the track.

Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	1 visited the pika colonies by the ger camp every evening at about the same time – 18.30. A real ninja-stoat this one danced his way through the colonies mesmerising the pikas. With success one evening too!
Altai Mountain Weasel	<i>Mustela altaica</i>	One seen briefly by those in the front vehicle near the top of Jargalant Mountain
Przewalski's Horse	<i>Equus ferus przewalskii</i>	many groups seen in Hustai on all three days
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	locally abundant in Hustai – their calls were one of the highlights of the trip.
Goitred Gazelle	<i>Gazella subgutturosa</i>	c.15 on the lower western slopes of Jargalant Mountain
Mongolian Gazelle	<i>Procapra gutturosa</i>	248 the first day and c.300 the second day in Hustai
Saiga	<i>Saiga tatarica</i>	c.20 on the plains west of Jargalant the way in to Jargalant, c.50 close to Durgan Lake
Siberian Ibex	<i>Capra sibirica</i>	a total of only 15 seen on Jargalant Mountain on 3 days
Argali	<i>Ovis ammon</i>	2 in Hustai

Systematic List Number 2

Birds

Altai Snowcock	<i>Tetraogallus altaicus</i>	8 on Jargalant (leader only), feathers found most days up on the mountain too
Chukar	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	12 near the ger camp on Jargalant Mountain
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	c.20 Durgun Lake
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	wetlands
Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>	Durgun Lake
Whooper swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	4 at the Lun wetland
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>	6 at the Lun wetland
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	wetlands
Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>	several at the Lun wetlands
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	feathers at Durgun Lake
Ruddy shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	wetlands
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	Lun wetland
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Lun wetland
Northern shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	wetlands
Northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Lun wetland
Common teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	wetlands
Red-crested pochard	<i>Rhodonessa rufina</i>	wetlands
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Lun wetland
Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Durgun Lake
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Durgun Lake
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Durgun Lake – 2 females and a male
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Tuul River
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	wetlands
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	wetlands – large numbers at Lun wetlands
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	c.1000 Lun wetlands
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	1 Tuul River and c.100 Lun wetland
Black-eared Kite	<i>Milvus lineatus</i>	throughout, sometimes abundant
Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	up to 12 daily on Jargalant Mountain
Black Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	widespread
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	several daily in the dunes behind Hustai ger camp
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	scattered records
Japanese Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter gularis</i>	1 over the dunes behind Hustai ger camp
Eastern Buzzard	<i>Buteo japonicus</i>	frequent in Hustai area
Upland Buzzard	<i>Buteo hemilasius</i>	daily, sometimes in large numbers
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1 Tuul River
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	widespread generally in low numbers
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	a few daily on Jargalant Mountain also some at Hustai
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	1 Lun wetland – the identity of this bird is somewhat in doubt as it showed some features of Pallas's Fish Eagle
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	scattered
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	2 on the top of Jargalant Mountain
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>	2 at the Golf Course by the Tuul River

Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	one through the dunes at Hustai
Saker	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	wonderful to see this bird almost daily
Demoiselle Crane	<i>Grus virgo</i>	c40 migrating through the Lun wetlands
White-naped Crane	<i>Grus vipio</i>	2 at Lun wetlands was a highlight
Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	wetlands
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Lun wetland
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Lun wetland
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Lun wetland
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	feathers at Durgun Lake
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lun wetland
Pallas' Gull	<i>Larus ichthyæetus</i>	Durgun Lake
Mongolian Gull	<i>Larus mongolicus</i>	wetlands
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Lun wetland
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	scattered
Eurasian Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	only heard by the ger camp on Jargalant
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	feathers in dunes behind Hustai ger camp
European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europæus</i>	1 by Durgun Lake
Pallas' Sandgrouse	<i>Syrhaptes paradoxus</i>	c.20 past the ger camp on Jargalant and c.15 seen very well by some on the plains west of Jargalant
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	scattered – not Jargalant
Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>	a couple of flocks on Jargalant
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1 on Jargalant and a dead one in the dunes at Hustai
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	1 at the Golf Course by the Tuul River, also feathers in the dunes at Hustai
Lesser Spotted Woodpcker	<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>	3 at the Golf Course by the Tuul River
Daurian Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	1 by the ger camp, Jargalant
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	feathers in the dunes at Hustai
Northern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	1 at the camp at Hustai
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	locally abundant Ulaan Baator and Hustai
Henderson's Ground-jay	<i>Podoces hendersoni</i>	2 noted in a valley below the ger camp on Jargalant Mountain
Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	1 was a surprise at the Golf Course, UB
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrhhorax pyrrhonorax</i>	widespread
Daurian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus dauuricus</i>	several seen in the Ulaan Baator area
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	steppes between UB and Hustai, also Lun
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	scattered – but mainly near UB
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	recorded daily
Azure Tit	<i>Cyanistes cyanus</i>	Tuul River in UB and also the Golf Course where there were many
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Tuul River in UB and also the Golf Course
White-crowned Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz coronatus</i>	Tuul River and the Golf Course in UB, daily at Hustai where large numbers in the dunes
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	frequent over the dunes at Hustai
Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	widespread and abundant
Mongolian Lark	<i>Melanocorypha mongolica</i>	scattered in Hustai area
Asian Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala cheleensis</i>	Hustai area
Mongolian Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella dukhunensis</i>	scattered around Hustai

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	scattered – noted on 3 days
Eurasian Crag Martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>	Jargalant Mountain
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>	Jargalant Mountain
Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	widespread – much the commonest phyllosc
Pallas's leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	scattered throughout
Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	scattered throughout
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	a couple of records
White-cheeked Starling	<i>Sturnus cinereus</i>	1 at the Golf Course, UB
Red-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	1 in the dunes behind Hustai
Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>	1 in trees by Chandmani village
Naumann's Thrush	<i>Turdus naumanni</i>	a nice set of tail feathers in the dunes by Hustai
Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	1 at the Golf Course, UB
Siberian Rubythroat	<i>Luscinia calliope</i>	a fine male Tuul River in UB, and another, briefly, in the dunes at Hustai
Red-flanked Bluetail	<i>Luscinia cyanura</i>	scattered throughout – noted on 4 days.
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>	locally frequent on Jargalant
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	a couple of records on Jargalant
Daurian Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i>	locally common at Tuul River in UB and Hustai
Guldenstadt's Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogaster</i>	frequent at highest elevations on Jargalant
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Jargalant
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellinus</i>	frequent on Jargalant
Desert Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	frequent on Jargalant
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	Jargalant – noted on 2 days
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	UB and Hustai
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	UB, Khovd and Hustai
Rock Sparrow	<i>Petronia petronia</i>	locally frequent, some flocks
White-winged Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	Jargalant - noted on 2 days
Pere David's Snowfinch	<i>Pyrgilauda davidiana</i>	a fine adult photographed by Derek at the ger camp on Jargalant and also a flock near Hustai
Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>	Jargalant – noted on 3 days
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	throughout
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	Lun wetland
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Golf Course by the Tuul River and on Jargalant
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	1 Hustai
Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>	scattered on Jargalant
Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	Lun wetland
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	Durgun Lake
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1 in the dunes at Hustai
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	Jargalant – noted on 3 days
Plain Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	a small flock on first day on top of Jargalant
Mongolian Finch	<i>Bucanetes mongolicus</i>	Jargalant where very common
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>	frequent in the dunes at Hustai
Meadow Bunting	<i>Emberiza cioides</i>	1 photographed by Derek in Hustai
Little Bunting	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	locally common – noted on 4 days
Pallas's reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza pallasii</i>	frequent in the dunes at Hustai
Lapland Bunting	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	frequent at Hustai and Lun wetland