

MONGOLIA

MAY 29 – JUNE 17, 2010

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TOUR REPORT
MONGOLIA
May 29–June 16, 2010

By Susan Myers

Mongolia is a country that sparks the imagination. The exploits of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan are renowned throughout the world, yet his homeland remains something of a mystery to this day. Our image of Mongolia is one of wide open spaces, rolling grasslands, harsh deserts, horsemen, and nomadic herders. This was VENT's first tour to Mongolia, and while we probably all had these pictures in our minds' eyes, none of us really knew what to expect. Our first port of call was, of course, the capital, Ulaanbaatar, a surprisingly sophisticated and bustling, albeit small, city surrounded by low rolling hills and crowned by a huge, blue sky. Although we used Ulaanbaatar as a staging post for our forays out into the Mongolian wilderness, we didn't have a lot of time to explore.

Our first destination was north of Ulaanbaatar, in the grasslands and larch forests of Terelj. Although only 55 kilometers from the capital (making it a very popular area for day-trippers), the area feels remote and wild. Even though the wildlife was somewhat shy and retiring, the forests were delightful. We enjoyed some excellent birds in the hill forests and in the riparian areas, the standout being the superb and much anticipated, not to mention cute, Azure Tit. Here we also had our first experience of living in a ger (yurt), which was much more comfortable than we expected. I, along with a few others, made the mistake of asking for a fire in the central furnace. It soon made me realize how effective these simple structures are at sheltering one from the weather. We sweltered!

Our next destination was the town of Bayankhongor—a town I have never heard of, in the middle of nowhere, and our stepping-stone for the legendary Gobi Desert. I can't put it any better than *Lonely Planet*: when you go to the Gobi, prepare to have your illusions shattered. The Gobi is certainly not the monotonous wasteland I was expecting. It's a varied, complex ecosystem of grasslands, sand dunes, glacial canyons, stunted saxaul forest, rugged mountains, and shallow saltwater lakes. After a short, comfortable flight we began our circuit, driving to the huge lake of Boon Tsagan Nuur, swinging south to another lake, Orog Nuur, and then further south (near the border with China) to the Gurvan Saikhan National Park, before heading eastward to Dalanzadgad, and returning to Ulaanbaatar after two weeks in the desert. The journey unfolded before us in an ever-changing tapestry of stunning images, always framed by a blue sky of startling intensity. As we traveled, at times far from the tourist trail, we encountered affable nomads with their herds of camels and other livestock, not to mention their remarkably friendly dogs that often came to greet us. We slept in tents and gers under brilliant, clear, star-studded skies, and enjoyed tasty and varied meals prepared by our wonderful cook—no mean feat out in the middle of nowhere! Our journey was frequently punctuated by stops for birds and other wildlife, photography, and simply for moments to savor this amazing place.

After an exceptionally harsh winter in which more than seven million head of livestock were lost, we found the wildlife to be scarcer than we were anticipating. No doubt, much of the wildlife also suffered as a result of the conditions prior to our visit. The combination of a summer drought followed by heavy snow and low winter temperatures is not unknown in Mongolia, where this phenomenon even has a name—a “zud.” Apparently, this is the worst that has been experienced in many years, with temperatures dropping more than 40 degrees Celsius below zero. *Reuters* quoted one local woman as saying, “I have seen many zuds that have caused the loss of numerous animals, but I have never seen a zud as bad as this one.” We had our work cut out for us! Nevertheless, we enjoyed some fabulous birding and natural history. There were numerous highlights, including a sensational Wallcreeper that repaid our patience by putting on a superb show; sightings of majestic Siberian ibex surveying their kingdom; large and varied congregations of waterbirds at the picturesque lakes; a plethora of small and exotic critters amongst the rocks and stubble; gorgeous Oriental Plovers in breeding plumage; and many beautiful and magnificent raptors. We searched through those Black-headed Gulls until we were cross-eyed, but just as the ax was about to fall, we found our quarry—the rare and poorly-known Relict Gull. Later, we had quite the adventure with Saxaul Sparrows, before finding them to be happily cooperative in a most unexpected place!

After a short respite in Ulaanbaatar, it was on to greener pastures in the meadows and wetlands to the north. It was delightful to see trees again! Our adventurous driver transported us through improbably, and alternately, rocky and muddy tracks to search for waders and waterfowl. Our special treat here was finding pairs of gorgeous White-naped Cranes with chicks! It was thrilling to find a group of imposing Argali, with their impressive racks, grazing on the rocky hillsides. To finish off we made the remarkable trek over barely discernable roads (I think the word “road” dignifies these tracks way beyond what they deserve!) to the little-known Jalman Meadows in the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area. Our ger camp was located in a wide green meadow surrounded by rolling, forested hills. The birding was again a little slow, but we enjoyed this lovely camp with its marvelous scenery and, best of all, finished off our birding with an outstanding encounter with another trip favorite, the imposing Black Woodpecker.

Our first tour of Mongolia was a qualified success. We experienced so much—outstanding scenery, magnificent wildlife, lovely people, exotic ger camps, and a real sense of adventure. The food was outstanding, much to everyone’s surprise, and we have our excellent cook to thank for that! The accommodation in the ger camps was unfailingly comfortable, clean, and well-appointed. The roads were rough and the journeys long, but our drivers and vehicle were up to the task. The birding and naturalizing were not easy, but it was rewarding. Simply put, Mongolia is an amazing and unforgettable place.

My sincere thanks to Manaljav, Jan, Gaana, Baira, Shaggur, and Dzola for all their help. And many thanks to you all for your excellent company! I hope to see you again on another VENT tour!

Susan Myers

BIRD LIST

Anatidae Ducks

Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides*

quite common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur, also at Gun Galuut.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

quite common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur, also at Gun Galuut.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

quite common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

a few at both Boon Tsagan Nuur and Gun Galuut.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

seen almost daily in the first part of our Gobi Desert journey and then at Gun Galuut.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

a number of sightings at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur and Gun Galuut.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

many at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

seen at Thousand Birds Lake and Orog Nuur.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

up to six were recorded at Thousand Bird Lake only.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

common around Boon Tsagan Nuur, Orog Nuur and Gun Galuut.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck *Anas zonorhyncha*

just three seen at a small lake en route to Orog Nuur.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

a few were seen at Thousand Bird Lake and en route to Orog Nuur.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

in low numbers at Orog Nuur and Gun Galuut, but nice to see this smart bird in breeding plumage.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

recorded at Thousand Bird Lake and en route to Orog Nuur, one seen at Gun Galuut.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*

this gorgeous bird was seen well at Thousand Bird Lake and en route to Orog Nuur.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

recorded at Thousand Bird Lake and en route to Orog Nuur, also at Gun Galuut.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur, also at Gun Galuut.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

very common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and less so at Gun Galuut.

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*

two were recorded at Boon Tsagan Nuur, one at Gun Galuut.

Phasianidae *Quail, Pheasants*

Daurian Partridge *Perdix dauurica*
two birds were flushed and seen well in flight at Jalman Meadows.

Podicipedidae *Grebes*

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
large numbers at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*
just one seen en route to Orog Nuur, and then a few more at Gun Galuut.

Phalacrocoracidae *Cormorants*

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
very common at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Ardeidae *Hérons*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
common at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*
a total of three were recorded at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Chinese Pond-Heron *Ardeola bacchus*
two birds in breeding plumage at Khongoryn Els.

Threskionithidae *Ibis, Spoonbills*

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*
quite common and many in breeding plumage at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Ciconiidae *Storks*

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*
this attractive species was seen at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Gun Galuut only.

Accipitridae *Hawks, Eagles*

Oriental Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
one bird in beautiful plumage was seen in flight over the Mukhar Shivert valley.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus lineatus*
one of the most common and widespread species on the trip, we recorded this bird almost every day of the tour.

Pallas' Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
great looks at a total of four birds, two adults and two juveniles, at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*
this very glamorous species was recorded on a number of occasions at Terelj, Orog Nuur, the Yol Valley and at Jalman Meadows.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*
recorded regularly in low numbers from the Black Saxaul area through to the Yol Valley.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
one seen at Boon Tsagan Nuur and a few more in the Gun Galuut area.

Western Marsh-Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
we saw one bird at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Eurasian Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
just one bird recorded at Jalman Meadows.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*
we saw two birds in flight near Juulchin Gobi 2.

Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*
quite common with regular sightings throughout.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
we recorded this species regularly in low numbers near Boon Tsagan Nuur, Gun Galuut and Jalman Meadows.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
recorded in the Yol Valley and Jalman Meadows.

Falconidae Falcons

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*
this charming species was seen regularly in good numbers in the Gobi Desert and at Gun Galuut.

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
one at Boon Tsagan Nuur, two at Black Saxaul.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*
just one female was seen perched on a wire en route to the Black Saxaul.

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*
seen a few times in the Gobi, and one seen en route to Jalman Meadows.

Rallidae Rails

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*
over ten birds were recorded at a small lake en route to Orog Nuur.

Gruidae Cranes

Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*
happily, this glamorous species was seen often almost throughout, anywhere near water.

White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*
about ten were recorded at Gun Galuut, one pair with chicks.

Charadriidae Plovers

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
seen in good numbers at Orog Nuur, Yol Valley and Gun Galuut.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
one seen in flight at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
a few seen at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
common at all wetland sites.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*
common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*
a few seen in breeding plumage in the grasslands of the Gobi.

Recurvirostridae Stilts, Avocets

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
two birds seen at the Thousand Birds Lake.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
seen well at Thousand Birds Lake and at Gun Galuut.

Scolopacidae Snipe, Sandpipers

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
two recorded at Gun Galuut.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
one at Orog Nuur.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
one recorded at a small lake en route to Orog Nuur.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
recorded at all wetland sites.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
a handful of sightings at Thousand Birds Lake and at Gun Galuut.

Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*
Rich and Dean flushed a small group of birds from long grass at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura*
two or three recorded at Orog Nuur.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
common and vocal at Orog Nuur, where they put on a great show for us roding around us throughout our stay there.

Glareolidae Pratincoles

Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum*
just one was seen at a creek crossing near Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Laridae Gulls

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

very common (infuriatingly so when looking for Relict Gulls!) at all wetland sites.

Great Black-headed (Pallas') Gull *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus*

this impressive gull was seen in good numbers at Boon Tsagan Nuur, many in breeding plumage.

Relict Gull *Ichthyaetus relictus*

after much hard searching we found one bird at a small lake en route to Orog Nuur; interestingly it was being harassed by the neighbouring Black-headed Gulls.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* (Mongolian Gull *L. mongolicus*)

common at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* (East Siberian Gull *Larus vegae*)

very common at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Gun Galuut.

Sternidae Terns

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

good views of a handful of birds at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Thousand Birds Lake.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

looking very handsome in breeding plumage at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

in lower numbers than the other terns at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

one bird seen over a small river en route to Gun Galuut.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

very common around all wetland areas.

Pteroclididae Sandgrouse

Pallas' Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes paradoxus*

seen almost daily in low numbers in the Gobi Desert.

Columbidae Pigeons

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

ubiquitous around human habitation.

Hill Pigeon *Columba rupestris*

a few seen at Boon Tsagan Nuur, the Juulchin Gobi area and at Gun Galuut.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

quite a few in the gardens of Juulchin Gobi 1.

Cuculidae Old World Cuckoos

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

frequently heard, seen at Terelj and Jalman Meadows.

Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*

great views of one bird at Terelj.

Strigidae Typical Owls

Little Owl *Athene noctua*
one very cute bird seen briefly at Gun Galuut.

Apodidae Swifts

Common Swift *Apus apus*
lived up to its name and common almost throughout.

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*
less common than the previous species but still recorded regularly.

Upupidae Hoopoes

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
regularly recorded in low numbers throughout.

Picidae Woodpeckers

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
recorded at Terelj and Jalman Meadows.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*
seen and heard at Terelj and Jalman Meadows.

Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*
sensational looks at a sensational bird at Jalman Meadows.

Laniidae True Shrikes

Rufous-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
recorded almost daily in the Gobi Desert.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
a number nesting around the gardens of Juulchin Gobi 1.

Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor*
seen daily from Orog Nuur to the Yol Valley in low numbers.

Oriolidae Orioles

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
a single spectacular bird was seen at Juulchin Gobi 1.

Corvidae Crows

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*
quite common in the northern areas.

Mongolian Ground-Jay *Podoces hendersoni*
we struggled at first to find this much sought-after bird but eventually had great looks on two occasions.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
seen daily in good numbers in the northern areas.

Daurian Jackdaw *Corvus dauuricus*
quite common in the northern areas.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

a small group was seen en route from Jalman Meadows.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

common and recorded almost throughout.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

recorded every day, bar one, of the tour.

Alaudidae Larks

Mongolian Lark *Melanocorypha mongolica*

after almost despairing of this bird we found it to be quite common at Gun Galuut, a very distinctive species.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

just one seen at Jalman Meadows.

Asian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cheleensis*

one of the most common birds in the Gobi Desert.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

a few seen at Orog Nuur.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

one recorded at Gun Galuut.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

common and recorded almost daily.

Hirundinidae Swallows

Pale Sand Martin *Riparia diluta*

very common around Boon Tsagan Nuur and Orog Nuur.

Eurasian Crag-Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

many seen in the Yol Valley and Mukhar Shivert, where we watched them collecting nesting material.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

recorded at a number of sites.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica*

a few seen in the Yol Valley.

Paridae Titmice

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

many seen in beech and larch forest at Terelj.

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

not surprisingly, seen in willows at Terelj.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

two were recorded in pine forest at Terelj.

Great Tit *Parus major*

quite common in the Terelj area.

Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus*

just two birds records in riparian forest on the Tuul River.

Sittidae *Nuthatches*

Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*
two birds recorded at Terelj.

Tichodromidae *Wallcreeper*

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*
undoubtedly one of the best birds of the trip, after a brief view of one bird in the Yol Valley our patience paid off when it came back twice and foraged on rocks right in front of us.

Phylloscopidae *Leaf Warblers*

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
a number of sightings at various sites throughout.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*
we found this species to be quite vocal at Jalman Meadows.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*
this distinctive and handsome warbler was seen well near the Tuul River and at Juulchin Gobi 1.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*
probably the most common warbler we encountered.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*
many seen in the Terelj area.

Two-barred Warbler *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus*
one seen at Terelj, one in the gardens at Juulchin Gobi 1.

Acrocephalidae *Reed Warblers & allies*

Blyth's Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
one seen in reeds at a small lake en route to Orog Nuur.

Oriental Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus orientalis*
seen in the same lake as the above species.

Thick-billed Warbler *Acrocephalus aedon*
also recorded at this lake as well as Juulchin Gobi 1.

Megaluridae *Grassbirds & allies*

Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*
amazing looks at this normally very shy bird at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*
two birds put on a great show in long grass at Orog Nuur.

Sylviidae *Old World Warblers*

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*
this very attractive bird was seen in surprising numbers, and very well, at Mukhar Shivert.

Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*
spotted attending a nest in the Black Saxaul forest.

Greater Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
a few sightings at Terelj, Yol Valley and Jalman Meadows.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*
a number were seen at Terelj.

Muscicapidae Old World Flycatchers

Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*
possibly vagrant to the area, one seen en route to Terelj.

Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibirica*
two recorded in forest at Terelj.

Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*
common around Terelj; also recorded at Juulchin Gobi and Mukhar Shivert.

Siberian Rubythroat *Luscinia calliope*
lovely looks at one in the Terelj area, also recorded at Jalman Meadows.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
common in the Yol Valley and Mukhar Shivert.

Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*
common in the Terelj area.

White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*
one seen near Terelj.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
not common but recorded at a number of sites – Terelj, Yol Valley, Gun Galuut and Jalman Meadows.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*
just one seen at Terelj.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*
a couple seen near UB, and then quite common in the southern part of the Gobi Desert.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*
one of the most common birds of the trip, recorded almost daily.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maura*
one male in beautiful plumage at Jalman Meadows.

Turdidae Thrushes

Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*
thanks to Rich for spotting this beauty on the cliffs behind our lodge at Terelj.

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*
brief views of a single foraging bird at Terelj.

Sturnidae Starlings

White-cheeked Starling *Sturnus cineraceus*
amazingly just one bird seen on the Tuul River.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
three birds seen briefly near a small lake en route to Orog Nuur.

Prunellidae Accentors

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris*
a few were seen in the Yol Valley and at Mukhar Shivert.

Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens*
quite common in the Yol Valley.

Mongolian Accentor *Prunella koslowi*
this rather dull bird was seen a few times at close range in the Yol Valley.

Motacillidae Wagtails, Pipits

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
a number of sightings throughout.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
a few birds seen at Orog Nuur.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
two at Terelj.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*
recorded at Boon Tsagan Nuur and Juulchin Gobi 2.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*
many at Orog Nuur, also at Jalman Meadows.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
common and vocal in the northern forests.

Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
one bird was seen in the Yol Valley. Another vagrant to the area?

Emberizidae Buntings, Sparrows, Seedeaters & allies

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*
this attractive bunting was recorded a few times at Terelj and Jalman Meadows.

Meadow Bunting *Emberiza cioides*
one seen briefly near Jalman Meadows.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*
a female bird was noted a few times collecting nesting material at Juulchin Gobi 1.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
a few in breeding plumage in the Yol Valley.

Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*
two or three in wet meadows at Jalman.

Fringillidae Finch. Tanagers. etc

Mongolian Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus*
only recorded on two days at Three Camels and Orog Nuur.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
a number of sightings at Terelj and the Yol Valley.

Beautiful Rosefinch *Carpodacus pulcherrimus*
a few seen in the Yol Valley.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*
up to six recorded in the Yol Valley.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
a total of four were seen at Terelj.

Dicruridae Drongos

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
one was seen foraging in grassland on the edge of the garden at Juulchin Gobi 1.

Passeridae Sparrows

Saxaul Sparrow *Passer ammodendri*
after almost despairing we found two birds without any fuss at all at Khongoryn Els.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
common around UB.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
recorded almost every day of the tour.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*
just one was seen at Boon Tsagan Nuur.

White-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla nivalis*
common and confiding in the Yol Valley.

Pere David's Snowfinch *Montifringilla davidiana*
common and confiding in the Yol Valley.

MAMMAL LIST

Tolai Hare *Lepus tolai*
seen at various places as we travelled.

Pallas's Pika *Ochotona pallasii*
very common in the mountainous areas of the Gobi Desert.

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus*
seen in the Terelj area.

Eurasian Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*
this is the squirrel we saw in the Terelj beech forest; this one was still in its winter pelage – smoky grey with black ear tufts.

Mongolian Marmot *Marmota sibirica*
a number were seen in the Jalman Meadows area.

Red-cheeked Sousek *Spermophilus erythrogenys*
this was the ground squirrel we encountered most often in the Gobi Desert.

Long-tailed Souselik *Spermophilus undulates*
seen often in the northern areas.

Alashan Souselik *Spermophilus alashanicus*
this was the ground squirrel we saw in the Yol Valley and Mukhar Shivert.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*
one seen at Jalman.

Corsac Fox *Vulpes corsac*
a very attractive animal seen on a couple of occasions.

Eastern Roe Deer *Capreolus pygargus*
heard in the Jalman meadows.

Goitred Gazelle *Procapra gutturosa*
two seen in the Gobi Desert.

Siberian Ibex *Capra sibirica*
very exciting to see this majestic animal a couple of times in the mountainous areas of the Gobi Desert.

Argali *Ovis ammon*
great looks, with some expert help from Camouflage Girl, at another fabulous mammal in the Gun Galuut hills.

Whiskered Bat *Myotis mystacinus*
fascinating to find this diminutive mammal in sparse and low vegetation in the desert near Baan Tsagan Nuur.

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<http://picasaweb.google.com/birdtourleader>