

Mongolian Gobi

10-23 August 2013

John Pilgrim & Conrad Savy

Itinerary

(7-9 August: a short work trip, near Khanbogd in Omnogovi Aimag)

10-13 August: three nights in Ikh Nart Nature Reserve

14-17 August: nights in Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park

18-20 August: south of Gobi Gurvansaikhan (Zurumtai area; Hurmen; to c. 80km north of the Chinese border)

21-23 August: two nights at Hustai Nuruu National Park (with Purevsuren Tsolmonjav)

Train travel to, and accommodation in, Ikh Nart was arranged by.

All travel arrangements from 14-20 August were arranged by the wonderful Khumbaa Tumendelger (Tumen) and Oyunaa Bavuu (Oyunaa) of Tumen Ecological Tourism Company (websites: <http://gobiecotour.mn>; <https://www.facebook.com/GobiEcoTour>).

Some small mammals were trapped, or hand-caught, to aid identification. We also missed a Steppe Polecat *Mustela eversmanii*, seen late at night by the side of the road south of Dalanzadgad by Tumen on 20th.

1. **Long-eared Hedgehog *Hemiechnus auritus*** – one just south of Dalanzadgad on 20th.
2. **Daurian Hedgehog *Mesechinus dauuricus*** – one in Hustai Nuruu on 21st.
3. **Corsac Fox *Vulpes corsac*** – one at Ikh Nart on 10th; then singles/pairs infrequently south of Hurmen.
4. **Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*** – uncommon throughout.
5. **Wild Cat *Felis silvestris*** – one watched hunting for some time at Ikh Nart on the morning of 13th.
6. **Pallas's Cat *Otocolobus manul*** – one watched hunting briefly by JP at Ikh Nart in the early morning of 11th, after a night of rain, before it appeared to see us and ran off.
7. **Snow Leopard *Panthera uncia*** – seen twice briefly by JP and Tumen in Gobi Gurvansaikhan on 16th, after we staked out a hillside where a mother and cubs had been seen a week before.
8. **European Marbled Polecat *Vormela peregusna*** – one watched for a prolonged period on 18th, south of Hurmen, was a highlight of the trip. It was initially following a Corsac Fox around, occasionally biting its tail, and when we came too close in the car, it threat-displayed at us!
9. **Przewalski's Horse *Equus ferus*** – common in Hustai Nuruu.
10. **Asiatic Wild Ass *Equus hemionus*** – a total of 87 in several groups, from the road from Khanbogd to Gashuun Sukhait, on 8th.
11. **Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*** – uncommon at Hustai Nuruu.
12. **Siberian Ibex *Capra sibirica*** – single figures throughout throughout rocky areas of the Gobi, including 7 at Ikh Nart on 11th, with some great views in the research camp valley.
13. **Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*** – small numbers throughout the Gobi, with >20 in the Zurumtai area on 18th.
14. **Argali *Ovis ammon*** – c.12 at Ikh Nart on 11th, including some very close views; 4 at Yolyn Am, Gobi Gurvansaikhan on 15th.

15. **Mongolian Gazelle** *Procapra gutturosa* – just one mother and calf in Hustai Nuruu on 22nd.
16. **Mongolian Marmot** *Marmota sibirica* – common in Hustai Nuruu.
17. **Alashan Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus alashanicus* – common in the plains around Gobi Gurvansaikhan.
18. **Daurian Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus dauricus* – one in Hustai Nuruu on 22nd.
19. **Red-cheeked Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus erythrogenys* – small numbers south of Hurmen.
20. **Long-tailed Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus undulatus* – common at Hustai Nuruu.
21. **Balikun Jerboa** *Allactaga balikunica* – fairly common south of Hurmen, but exact abundance unclear owing to confusion with the next species when not in the hand.
22. **Gobi Jerboa** *Allactaga bullata* – fairly common south of Hurmen, but exact abundance unclear owing to confusion with the next species when not in the hand.
23. **Siberian Jerboa** *Allactaga sibirica* – uncommon south of Hurmen; small numbers at Hustai Nuruu.
24. **Northern Three-toed Jerboa** *Dipus sagitta* – several at Ikh Nart on 11th; then common south of Hurmen.
25. **Long-eared Jerboa** *Euchoreutes naso* – two seen very well, after a lot of searching, c. 80km north of the Chinese border on 20th.
26. **Thick-tailed Pygmy Jerboa** *Salpingotus crassicauda* – two on 18th, south of Hurmen.
27. **Andrews's Three-toed Jerboa** *Stylodipus andrewsi* – common south of Hurmen.
28. **Mid-day Gerbil** *Meriones meridianus* – probably this species once at Ikh Nart; uncommon around, and south of, Gobi Gurvansaikhan.
29. **Mongolian Gerbil** *Meriones unguiculatus* – common around, and south of, Gobi Gurvansaikhan (more so than the previous species).
30. **Great Gerbil** *Rhombomys opimus* – colonies common in and around Saxaul forest anywhere south of Gobi Gurvansaikhan.
31. **Daurian Pika** *Ochotona dauurica* – common at Gobi Gurvansaikhan.
32. **Pallas's Pika** *Ochotona pallasii* – abundant at Ikh Nart; also probably common at Gobi Gurvansaikhan but we were never fully confident about identification from the former species.
33. **Tolai Hare** *Lepus tolai* – singles regularly, including west of Khanbogd, south of Gobi Gurvansaikhan, and at Hustai Nuruu.