

IBA CODE: MN033

IBA NAME: ERKHEL LAKE

Aimag(s): KHOVSGOL **Criteria:** A1, A3, A4i **Area:** 3,537 ha

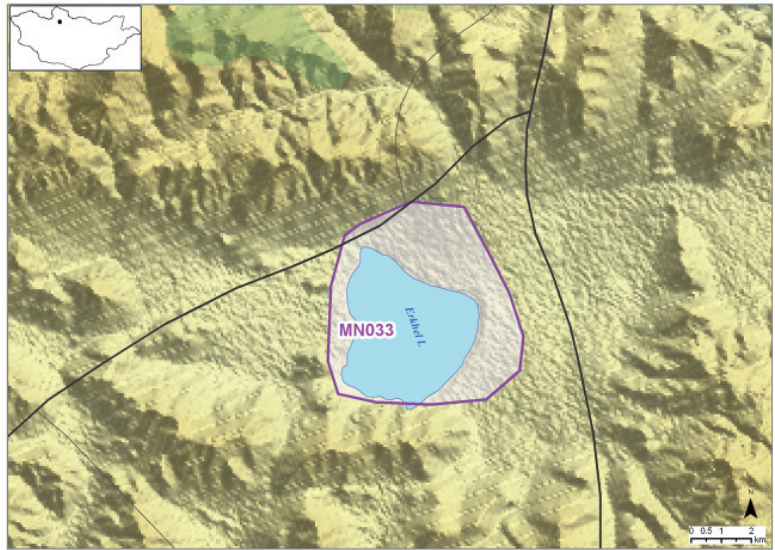
Coordinates: 49°56'N 99°56'E **Altitude:** 1,544-1,850 m

Protection status

Unprotected

Site description

Erkhel Lake is a saline lake surrounded by grassy steppe in Alag-Erdene soum. Freshwater springs feed the lake on the northwestern side, and the bay and islands in this area are favoured by waterbirds. There is no cultivation in the area, and the land is used for nomadic animal husbandry. Salt and soda from the lake are used as mineral additives for local livestock. Consecutive outbreaks of avian influenza were reported from the site in 2005 and 2006.



Importance for birds

Globally Threatened species that occur at the site are Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (EN), Lesser Kestrel *F. naumanni* (VU) and Great Bustard *Otis tarda* (VU). The site supports an assemblage of species restricted to the Eurasian steppe and desert biome. Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* and Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* occur in numbers exceeding the 1% of their flyway populations. Good numbers of Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* and Bar-headed Geese *Anser indicus* moult at the site. Several raptor species were observed passing

through the site during southward migration in September 2006, including Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*, Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (EN), Eurasian Hobby *F. subbuteo*, Common Kestrel *F. tinnunculus* and Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*. Further raptor observation is needed.

Importance for other fauna and flora

The site is not known to be important for other fauna and flora.



Photo: N. Tseveenmyadag