

IBA CODE: MN055 **IBA NAME:** KHAN-KHENTII STRICTLY PROTECTED AREA

Aimag(s): KHENTII, SELENGE, TOV **Criteria:** A1, A3 **Area:** 1,234,755 ha

Coordinates: 48°48'N 108°10'E **Altitude:** 969-2,799 m

Protection status

Fully protected by Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area

Site description

This site, which is contiguous with Gorkhi-Terelj National Park (MN056), is an area of great natural beauty lying between the Daurian steppes and the Siberian taiga. Altitudinal variation at the site is significant, leading to the development of different habitats, including boreal forest (taiga), forest-steppe, steppe and tundra (on mountain peaks). The area is rich in rivers and streams, including tributaries of the Onon, Kherlen and Tuul Rivers. Many fine riparian forests are distributed along rivers, while deciduous and coniferous forests occupy large areas at high elevations. Over 30% of Mongolia's forest resources are found in the Khentii Mountains. The site has been held in high esteem by Mongolians for centuries. A state ceremony is held every year for Burkhan Khaldun Mountain, which has been a sacred site since the time of Chinggis Khan. Pine nut collection has become a major threat to biodiversity, because thousands of nut collectors damage large number of trees every year and are presumed to be the cause of forest fires. Every year, forest fires destroy many hectares of forest. Poaching for animals, including globally and nationally threatened species, is widespread. The impacts of mining and timber extraction are also of major concern.

Importance for birds

The avifauna of the site is very species rich, due to its large area and the diversity of habitats present. Globally Threatened species include Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* (VU), Eastern Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca* (VU), Pallas's Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (VU), Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* (EN), Lesser Kestrel *F. naumanni* (VU), White-naped Crane *Grus vipio* (VU) and Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* (VU). Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (NT) also occurs. The site supports an assemblage of species restricted to the boreal forest (taiga) biome, including Black-billed Capercaillie *Tetrao parvirostris*, Ural Owl *Strix uralensis*, Northern Hawk Owl *Surnia ulula*, Eurasian Pygmy-owl *Glucidium passerinum* and Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans*.

Importance for other fauna and flora

Over 50 species of mammal, five reptiles, four amphibians and 30 fish have been recorded at the site, together with more than 200 insect species. The mammal list for the site

includes Siberian Musk Deer *Moschus moschiferus* (VU), Wolverine *Gulo gulo* (NT), Eurasian Lynx *Lynx lynx*, Pallas's Cat *Felis manul* (NT) and Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* (NT). The site also supports a number of species listed in the *Red Data Book of Mongolia*, such as European Elk *Alces alces*, Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*, Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* and Taimen *Hucho taimen*.

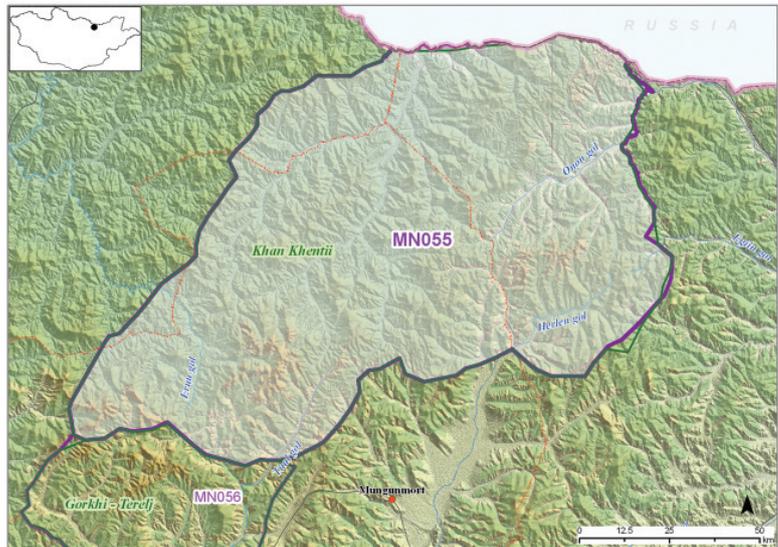


Photo: B.Nyambayar