

**IBA CODE:** MN066**IBA NAME:** MONGOL DAGUUR**Aimags(s):** DORNOD **Criteria:** A1, A3, A4i **Area:** 309,440 ha**Coordinates:** 49°43'N 115°15'E **Altitude:** 610-821 m

### Protection status

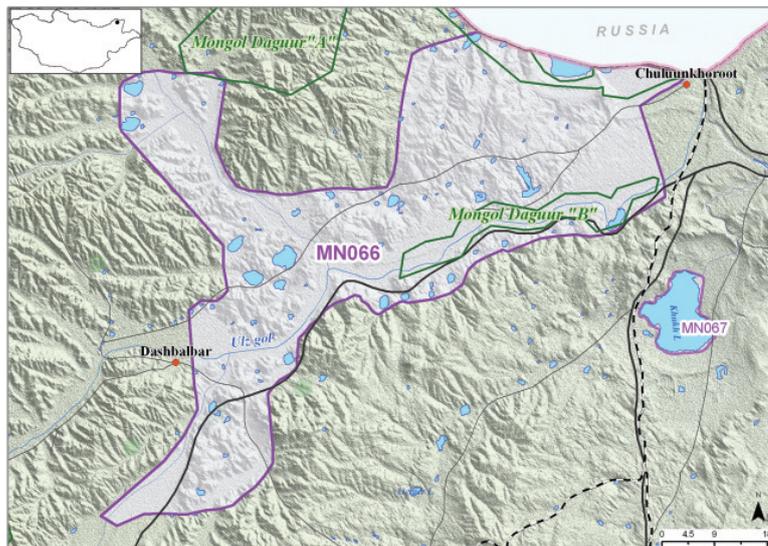
Partially protected by Mongol Daguur Strictly Protected Area (Parts A and B)

### Site description

Mongol Daguur is a flat plain with rolling hills lying in the Ulz River basin. It is an area of moist Daurian steppe (distinct from the rest of the Eastern Mongolian Steppe), with lakes and ponds of different sizes, rivers, streams and wetland areas including reed beds. The largest lakes at the site are Khaitiin Tsagaan (7.6 km<sup>2</sup>), Mongol Tsagaan (7.2 km<sup>2</sup>), Galuut (6.5 km<sup>2</sup>), Doroo (6.5 km<sup>2</sup>), Tari and Khokh. Most of these lakes are fed by rainwater, although some are fed by rivers and streams; their size and water levels vary depending upon rainfall. The main land use at the site is animal husbandry. In addition, a small amount of land is cultivated, with a more extensive area of cultivation now abandoned. The density of human settlement is low but it is higher near lakes and river valleys. The greatest threat to biodiversity at the site is steppe fires, which mainly originate from Russia. Steppe fires occur every year and cover very large areas. In 2000, the whole Mongol Daguur area was burnt by a fire started from Russia. The impact of livestock grazing and disturbance is increasing at important nesting areas due to a lack of management. There has also been recent mineral exploration, targeting gold. Over the last three years, the Ulz River has ceased to flow in several places, and, as a result, some small lakes have dried up. The water levels of many lakes at the site have fallen, presumably because of a warming climate. There were previously several large crop fields where cranes used to gather in large numbers but now most of these are abandoned. Illegal hunting of animals, especially Mongolian Gazelle *Procapra gutturosa*, is a problem throughout the year. A large proportion of the IBA is included within Mongol Daguur Ramsar Site, nominated in 1997.

### Importance for birds

Mongol Daguur is the only site in Mongolia where six species of crane can be observed together at same time. Mongol Daguur holds a significant proportion of the global breeding population of White-naped Crane *Grus vipio* (VU) and Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides* (EN). Other Globally Threatened species occurring at the site are Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* (CR), Hooded Crane *G. monacha* (VU), Red-crowned Crane *G. japonensis* (EN), Great Bustard *Otis tarda* (VU), Relict Gull *Larus relictus* (VU) and Marsh Grassbird *Locustella pryeri* (VU). The site also supports an assemblage of species restricted to the Eurasian steppe and desert biome. The larger lakes support tens of thousands of



moulting waterbirds in summer. Congregatory waterbirds occurring at the site in numbers exceeding 1% of their flyway populations include Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*, Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*, Common Crane *G. grus*, Hooded Crane *G. monacha*, Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo* and Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. Hundreds of Demoiselle Crane and White-naped Crane can be seen in many locations in Mongol Daguur. Because of the large number of cranes occurring there, the site was designated as an Important Crane Site in North-East Asia.

### Importance for other fauna and flora

Daurian Hedgehog *Mesechinus dauuricus*, which is a species listed in the *Red Data Book of Mongolia*, is very common at the site. In addition, Mongolian Gazelle *Procapra gutturosa* is found everywhere and can form herds of hundreds or thousands of animals. Siberian Marmot *Marmota sibirica* (EN), Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*, Corsac Fox *V. corsac* and Grey Wolf *Canis lupus* also occur.



Photo: N. Tseveenmyadag