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WWF Mongolia

In June, 1995, WWF Mongolia started its first conservation activity in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion for supporting the government to establish new National park. As a result, Khar-Us Lake included into National Park system. Some specific highlights of WWF Mongolia conservation successes for the past years include:



photo by Tsatsralt

- 33.6% of the total protected territories in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion was established as official Protected areas by initiative and support from WWF Mongolia
- WWF Mongolia has supported the development and implementation of the Management Plan for Khar-Us Nuur NP and Uvs Nuur PA.
- Conservation of priority species (Snow leopard, Argali sheep, Saiga antelope) has been supported and been implemented in accordance with approved National Programs and Management Plans for the conservation of the species.
- In order to stop poaching and illegal wildlife trade 2 mobile units IRVES were established and active since 2002.
- WWF Mongolia has invested approx. 3 mln euro for conservational activities in the Altai-Sayan for the past years since 1995.
- WWF Mongolia has focused on establishment of herders' conservation community groups with belief that conservation will not succeed without involvement of local herders.
- Well formalized partnership relation with the Government agencies and the other conservation partners
- First ever in Mongolia initiation of Integrated River Basin Management concept in Mongolia
- WWF Mongolia is an effective partner for the national policy level improvement and development of the environmental legislation.

WWF Russia

On 28th April 1998 first WWF Russia project in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion started. For 10 years of work more than \$2,5 millions were invested in the nature conservation of this beautiful place of Earth!



photo by Hartmut Junguis

Two of 10 world's greatest rivers – the Ob' and the Yenisei – spring here. Amazing big cat – the snow leopard – and the biggest wild sheep – argali – live in the mountains of Altai and Sayan. Six nature territories of the region are the UNESCO World Culture and Nature Heritage objects. The Altai-Sayan Ecoregion is one of the key Global 200 Ecoregions foreground for saving the biodiversity.

But the resource development of the Altai-Sayans (industrial and infrastructure projects, uncontrolled tourism, poaching, extensive agriculture etc.) and the global climate changes are the reasons for direct and sideway threats to biological and landscape diversity of the region. The protection of this unique nature place is one of the priorities for WWF.

For 10 years of work in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion:

- The comprehensive researches of the snow leopard and argali populations are conducted and the National Conservation Strategies of these species are developed
- The Katon-Karagai national park (600000 ha) was established in the Republic of Kazakhstan
- 5 nature parks with total area more than 500000 ha were created in the Republic of Altai (Russia)
- Krasnoyarski krai (Russia) made a "Gift to the Earth". 8 wildlife refuges and 1 nature park have been already created

UNDP/GEF project on the long-term conservation of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion with the total fund of 15.5 mln USD has started in 2006. WWF allocated 1 mln USD for the Russian part of the AS. Two projects funded by WWF NL and MAVA simultaneously have started in 2007 in both parts of the AS in Mongolia and Russia - "2012 Protected Areas Programme of Altai-Sayan ecoregion" and "Ensuring Long-Term Conservation of Biodiversity In The Trans-Boundary Areas of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion between Mongolia and Russia".

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WWF Russia

photo by WWF Russia

How to protect the livestock from the Snow leopard attacks?

This and other questions were discussed during the trip of Chaizu Kyrgys, the Altai-Sayan project leader, and the “Ubsunurskaya lowland” reserve staff to the far Mongun-Taiga district (kozuun) of Tyva Republic.

At night of the 5th April the snow leopard piled into the pound of the sheep herder encampment in Mugur-Shegetei village. The animal easily broke down the roof of the pound covered by dried dung and killed 74 sheep and goats. In several days another 4 lambs and 2 sheep died from the wounds given by the snow leopard. The predator came again but the herder had time to fix the pound and saved the livestock.

The veteran of work possessive the state awards for the hard stock-breeder job weepingly talked that he had never dealt with such a robbery on the part of animals. In the depth of despair he told that the local administration leaders had come and drawn up a statement of fact but nobody had known how to help the herder. At the meeting with the Mongun-Taiga district administration Chaizu Kyrgys told about potential measures of protection of the livestock from the predators' attacks which are practicable for local communities – for example, the creation of the compensatory herd or the livestock insurance. Currently there is a livestock insurance program under the guidance of the Ministry of Agriculture of Tyva Republic which provides payments not only in case of livestock death of the predator's attacks but also in case of mortality. It's possible to restore the livestock insurance schemes under the Altai-Sayan project.

Mongolian Saiga antelope

Saiga calves are in conservation

The Mongolian saiga (*Saiga tatarica mongolica*) is an endemic species to Mongolia. Before the starts of this century, both of the two subspecies were very abundant in Mongolia, unfortunately *Saiga tatarica tatarica* was never seen again in Mongolia since 1950s. The breeding season can be significantly influenced by weather conditions, late fattening and moulting. Lambs are born after a gestation period of 140 to 145 days. The Mongolian saiga give a birth starting first ten days of June to first ten days of next month but this period fluctuates by 1-3 weeks due to the year's climate condition and vegetation. According to many years' survey, it is determined that giving twin birth by Mongolian female saiga is up to 18 percent (Dulamtsere, Amgalan 1994). Calves are hidden away until they can follow the mother. The mothers move around with their calves, alone or in small groups. Lactation lasts about 3 to 4 months and from the first 10 days after birth calves start to feed on fresh plants. During the breeding time females concentrate on specific breeding territories, where tens, hundreds, and in Kalmykia and Central Asia sometimes thousands of females gather simultaneously. Wildlife biologist S.Dulamtsere and L.Amgalan (1994) located three main breeding sites, Shargiin Gobi, south of the Darvi mountain range and Khuisiin Gobi. In this summer, 2008, the female saigas started to give a birth in second ten days of June. In Sharga and Khuisiin Gobi there were good vegetation which grew earlier in the spring whereby precipitation there. The vegetation such as wild onion, feather grass and saltwort in the areas started to dry by around 8th of June.



photo by B.Chimeddorj

This year the saiga birth delivery period was approximate, and first newborn was observed in front foothills of Bayan-Undur Mountain seen by us on June 12. For Shargiin Gobi birth delivery time had no specific change from Khuisiin Gobi but first newborn was observed by us on 13 June.

In Shargiin Gobi, the saigas are giving a birth in 3 separate locations, in 800 in Khuren Gol-Tsangilakh, lower part of Khatnii Khudag-Duguin Dalan, Makht-Burgasnii Am and Baga Darvi mountain foothills. In Khuisiin Gobi, the saigas were giving a birth with even spread in areas of Bayan-Undur Mountain foothills, Khar Den-Shar Buurug-Bultgeriin Us and Taliin Khairkhan Ovoo-Davkhariin Us-Bayan Gol with few numbers.

WWF Mongolia

photo by G.Badamsambuu

Pilot compensation scheme for livestock predation by the Snow leopard

WWF Mongolia has initiated the Compensation scheme for livestock predation by the Snow leopard in order to reduce the retaliation kill rate for Snow leopards.

The Compensation Scheme is implementing initially in buffer zone of the Turgun Mountain SPA. The experience can be scaled up depending on the success rate. In the initial phase, following issues will be addressed;

- Update the Garag documentary on Snow leopards with this type of info
- Discussion of the Herder households enrolled into the compensation scheme
- Publish awareness raising and information brochures on the Compensation Scheme
- Sign the Contracts/Agreements by herders for enrollment into the Scheme

WWF Mongolia's multi-year conservation and research activities ever since 1997 targeting Snow leopards have been carried out on the proposed site. The site was featured in 2 filming that took place in 2004 and 2007. The area is the snow leopard's core habitat according to scientific findings and there is an overlap and habitat competition with livestock from 6-8 herder families. The multi-year report on livestock predation confirms that loss of livestock reaches 10 heads per annum. For now, 2 families loss is affirmed by criterias and documentation as noted in MoU and they have received 6 sheep as compensation.

WILDLIFE MONITORING

WWF Mongolia

WWF Mongolia is celebrating success with capturing and collaring of 8 argali sheep lambs for determine movement of argali population through state borders in trans-boundary area neighboring with Russia. This area is well-known among conservationists as the core breeding and ram habitat that had been taken under local protection at the local community initiative that was supported by WWF Mongolia.



Photo by Yo.Onon

Border Troops turned to become unofficial rangers

As a result of regular cooperation and intensive training provided by WWF Mongolia, border troops of

border posts of 1 and 2 of Border Military Unit #245 in Uvs Province participate in monitoring and patrolling efforts of WWF Mongolia within their respective section of the national border. Thus, military personnels collect information on wildlife movements and diffusions in accordance with approved methodology and even positions it into GIS for WWF Mongolia data base.



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia conducted training for Russian colleagues in methods of argali capture and radio telemetry monitoring to determine the most important wildlife corridors in the border regions. Hopefully, these methods will then be adapted to Mungun Taiga PA.



Two inspectors of the “Ubsunurskaya lowland” reserve (Republic of Tyva) sallied out to the near-border Uvs aimag of Mongolia to take part in the altaian wild sheep population monitoring supported by WWF Russia and WWF

Mongolia.

Together with the Mongolian colleagues from the “Uvs” reserve the inspectors participated in the trainings on the satellite signal detections. Besides they caught the argali lambs and set radio probes for keeping track of the migrations. The Mongolian colleagues delivered the telemetry equipment for the “Ubsunurskaya lowland” reserve. First field projects on the argali radio monitoring started in Mongolia in 2005 when six sheep were caught. The attendances showed that the argali migrated from Mongolia to Tyva and the radio signals are worse detected from Mongolia. That’s why the liability of the argali monitoring in the Tyva Republic appeared. The information received during the radio monitoring will be kept in the databank on the animals migrations.

TRADITIONAL CONSERVATION

WWF MPO'S partnership in royal worship ceremony of the Sutai Mountain

Sutai Mountain is one of snow-capped and naturally attractive mountains of the Mongol Altai mountain range.

On June 17-18th a special ceremony for the mountain was held and Sutai became one of the Royal worshipped mountains of Mongolia.



WWF MPO's role during the worship was to call people towards “environmentally friendly” worship. In order to strengthen people's respectful approach to nature WWF MPO had the Sutai san (blessing book) translated from Tibetan language into Mongolian and published and spread to

local people. Also during *photo by B.Chimeddorj* the Royal rite ceremony many worshippers from both aimags as well as from other places gathered near the mountain for few days. As you know, where people are there is waste. So as an experienced conservation NGO in Mongolia WWF MPO paid special attention to the pollution. We prepared the “*Letter to the public on not polluting area during these days*”, distributed waste collecting bags and passed our message successfully to the public. As a result of our work waste was disposed in special-made garbage place instead of being left everywhere!

The Altaiski State Nature Reserve is ready to become biospheric

WWF Russia considers that the biosphere status of the Altaiski Reserve will allow to combine the conservation and the socio-economic development of surrounding grounds together with the interests of local communities

The administration of the reserve has already prepared the form for assignment to the russian and international UNESCO committees for getting the biosphere status. The modern world has been searching for a long time the answer to the question: “How to secure the conservation of biological diversity and nature resources on a par with its sustainable usage?”. On the one hand the conservation of biodiversity is provided by the establishment of new protected areas (PA). On the other hand the severe reservation conditions of the PAs do not contribute to the dialogue and cooperation with the local communities over the questions of the use of natural resources and conservation. The get-out of this dilemma was found in the establishment of the biosphere reservations – a kind of PAs where the conservation and the socio-economic development of surrounding grounds are provided simultaneously. The Altaiski State Nature Reserve has already implemented some projects in this direction. In 2007 a number of cooperation agreements with many indigenous communities of Altai were contracted. The community boards which include the representatives of the “Korbu” indigenous people community, the residents of the Yailu and Bele villages (located on the territory of the reserve) were established. The agreement about creation of the Coordination Council under the Altaiski State Nature Reserve was stroked up with the Minister of Nature Resources of the Altai Republic and the heads of the Ulaganskiy and Turochakskiy districts of the Republic. Today the Altaiski State Nature Reserve participates in the development of the Law on Teletskoe Lake. All that allows to resolve together the socio-economic questions concerned to the people living on the reserved territory and to work out strategy of sustainable cooperation that combines the development of the region and the nature conservation.

Tour-guides for nature protection finished their trainings

20 graduates from tour-guides training courses received their diplomas and will start working in the near future

The final session of the courses was held in the nature park “Uch-Enmek” (Republic of Altai) from 19th till 30th May. During these two weeks the students honed their practical skills in the accident prevention and took active part in sports. Also they participated in the practical part of the international program “Leave No Trace” about the ethical attitude to nature. The finals showed a very high level of student’s background: they presented developed excursions as well as proved the ability to guide the tourists and fascinatingly tell them about nature, history and culture of Altai and teach the tourists careful and regardful treatment to the local traditions. One of the graduates said:

- Now we are not just tour-guides, we are guides of the ancient knowledges of Altai. These courses were organized by the Fund for the Sustainable Development of Altai (FSDA) with financial support of UNDP/GEF project and WWF Russia.

The State Nature Reserve “STOLBY” will get a new outdoors visit - center!

WWF will finance the reparation of old visit-center, the construction of three cognitive grounds and the purchase of modern equipment for ecological education activities. This project plays an important role for the “Stolby” Reserve and nearby Krasnoyarsk-city. The existing visit-center is the first thing that meets the guests of the reserve. The goal of the visit-center is to provide the tourists with the information about itineraries, main landmarks, history and rules of visiting. Besides the visit-center is the place for different exhibitions, conferencing, round tables etc. But the total lack of technical equipment and the decay of the visit-centre’s building do not satisfy the modern requirements.



Photo by Veprintsev

Under the project of creating an outdoors visit-center it is planned to equip a whole complex of scientific-educational grounds:

- regional ground (information about history and activities of the reserve)
- ecological ground (installation of feed boxes and nesting places, information about animals and birds of the reserve)
- scientific ground (weather station and phonological point)

These grounds will allow studying natural processes and demonstrating them.

The Altaiski State Nature Reserve will get 4 more visit – centers by November 2008!

WWF Russia will finance the construction of the visit-center in Artybash village and three visit-points within the Teletskoe Lake basin

So along with the existing visit-center in Yailu village the Altaiski State Nature Reserve will create a common network of the ecological visit-centers and visit-points. The main idea of the project is to show not only the reserve but also people who were close to nature during lifetime. It’s important to habituate the guests of the visit-centers with the amazing examples of living and work of the reserve’s staff, with the unique historical events, facts and related stories. - We think it’s necessary to use historical facilities of the reserve in the design of new visit-centers, - said Svetlana Schigreva, head of the ecological education department. - It’s important to form a feeling of patriotism, respect and responsibility towards the reserve, its staff and their work besides the excitement about nature’s wonders.

Before the year 2007 the Altaiski State Nature Reserve had no visit-centers. But the unique Teletskoe Lake and the reserve itself always attracted an enormous number of tourists because of the advanced tourist infrastructure near the reserve. Lately there is a tendency to the growth of the tourist flows: more than 20 thousands tourists had visited the reserve in 2007! New visit-centers and visit-points will allow to attract at least 50 thousands ecological tourists.

People of Uvs province had good position and local legislation for Tourism development

Aimags government and Citizen representatives of Uvs aimag cooperate with WWF Mongolia on Tourism Development Program

Program Mission: to establish a quality life in which local people live in harmony with nature by developing sustainable eco-tourism in a World heritage area. Program goals:

- To develop eco-tourism that is effective for local economics and its people by identifying tour zones based on tour resources and current infrastructure and supporting environmentally friendly products and services
- To develop infrastructure for tourism in an environmentally friendly way and homologous to the demand of local people and tourists
- To increase livelihood of local people by developing community-based tourism which is homologous to local life, culture and traditions with help of other stakeholders.
- To strengthen capacity building of a skillful cadre that can provide tourists with quality services.

Tourism zones of Uvs province

Based on the survey datas (geography, tourism resource, PAs, specifics and rules of PA etc) the followings are defined as eco-tourism zones.

- Eco-tourism in homelands of rare animals
- Eco-tourism in resort places
- Eco-tourism in historical places
- Eco-tourism with specific interest

Uvs province shared their experience with others

Mongolian Tourism association organized an “ITM-2008” exhibition and Uvs province participated in it with financial support of WWF MPO. They



introduced the Aimag Tourism Development Program and community groups of Community-based Tourism network to the other 124 organizations participated in the exhibition. ‘This exhibition was very important and useful for us. Because we somehow could reach our goal to introduce our tourism policy and to find and liaise with partners who can work with us in the sector of sustainable eco-tourism’ – said Mr.Ganbold, the head of Agriculture and Environment Policy Department of Uvs province.

One month-campaign on environmental crime precaution

In April 2008, the law enforcement agencies of Mongolia focused on illegal Wildlife trade, highlighting related topics up for discussion Environmental crimes and prevention of Environmental crimes. Corporate order of Minister for Nature and Environment and Minister of Justice was approved to establish working group for mobile training for Border and Customs officers and inspectors in National Border points and to strengthen public awareness activity. According to the order WWF Mongolia with National committee on Crime Prevention, General Customs Office, Border Defence Force, General Police Office, CITES Authority and SSIA organized mobile training in 4 Border points and 4 provincial centres with great success. In total more than 180 law enforcement officers participated in 6 trainings. In addition 17 provinces were engaged in a month-long Awareness Raising Campaign on Improved Law Enforcement against Illegal Wildlife Trade and Poaching. The Uvs province has established MoU and developed Action plan to improve Law Enforcement actions on Crime against natural resources. According to this MoU, 4 areas were free of illegal mining in May. Within this month-campaign WWF Mongolia organized and financed a lot of public awareness activities such as a photo competition among public, a drawing competition among secondary school students, role playing by kids, TV forum including all stakeholders, open public awareness event at the main square and raw material trade market, relevant messages displayed by street banners, TV documentary series, illegal wildlife trade survey, etc together with other organizations like Environmental Agency, Police, and business bodies.



The accomplishment of this year campaign is that more local business and media are interested in conservation and involved in the public awareness activities. For instance, State Best Photo expressed cooperation with the “Memory of whole life” contest by giving a 50% discount on photo processing to the participants and rewarded the winners of “Nature wonders” classification!

Project “Local perspectives on hunting and poaching” finished in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion

Preliminary findings allowed to make some recommendations for conservation activities optimization



With the intention of developing a model program to reduce illegal hunting by creating new protected areas and stimulating alternative income-generating activities, WWF’s Altai-Sayan Ecoregion office commissioned a study to assess local attitudes to wild animals (especially endangered species such as snow leopard, argali sheep), hunting, poaching, and nature protection among people living on the Russian side of the transboundary region.

The emic definitions of poaching and proper hunting have nothing to do with legal permissions or the lack of them. For a number of reasons (bureaucratic hassles, expense, inconvenience), the majority of those who hunt do not have any permissions or registered guns, yet they feel that hunting is their birthright and does not constitute poaching. Some people noted that it is exactly those who have all necessary permissions (including inspectors, border guards, and police) who are the “real poachers” and pose the greatest threat to wild animals.

While people are generally supportive to the idea of protected areas, the closer they live to existing protected areas, the less supportive they are. The term “nature reserve” (zapovednik) is often interpreted by local people as an exclusive private hunting ground for the rich and politically well-connected. The overwhelming majority of people agreed that tourism should be developed further, but most oppose hunting tourism. Such hunting is viewed as violation of local customs. The experts have already formulated some recommendations based on this information for the conservationists. In particular, control over wildlife resources should devolve down to the local level through the development of community-based wildlife management institutions. Issuing of hunting permits and gun registrations should occur locally, and mechanisms should be established in such a way that they will guarantee the revenues generated by issuing licenses, gun registrations, and fines for illegal hunting remain within the local community. In Altai this process is already under way with the re-establishment of an association of hunters.

WWF Russia

WWF and OXFAM – joint project on local communities' development in the Altai-Sayans

The director of the OXFAM-Russia Nicolas Colloff and the expert of the Small Business Fund (Russia) Viktor Glushkov visited Republic of Tuva under joint project with WWF Russia

OXFAM and WWF's Altai-Sayan office will implement the project on the support of local communities within the protected areas and the local communities' partnership. First point of the project is Chaa-Hol' district (kozuun) of Tyva. The representatives of OXFAM and WWF met the administration of Chaa-Hol' district. The local authorities were ready for the meeting and made some offers including the development of national works (smithery, woodwork, stone carving, tailoring of national suites). The realization of this project will essentially affect the improvement of socio-economic situation in the district and will facilitate the reduction of pressure on nature resources. The revision of hunting policy is necessary for reducing poaching in the Altai-Sayans.

WWF Mongolia



The queen flower *Nymphaea candida J. etc* of Khar Us Nuur National Park is saved by the herder's community group!

Bolbootiin tohoi, an armlet of Chonokharaikh river, is very famous not only in Khovd province but also in whole Mongolia. In this small place a beautiful endemic flower *Nymphaea candida J.etc* grows adding beauty to the surrounding nature. But last years river water level goes down and stopped to flow to the armlet and the very rare

flower was in danger.

But now the plant is saved by a local herders community. Khamtin Khuch community members are now gating the armlet by a water hoist aggregate. First local herders attended to a parliament member and asked for a water hoist aggregate in order to irrigate hay making area. But then the community members had an idea to save the glory of the area using that water hoist aggregate and were very happy! By the way, the community group was established by rural development project of WWF MPO. Now they always communicate with WWF MPO and share information about their conservation and self-development work experiences.



The community groups have assembled under an appeal "Let's develop together"

WWF MPO has supported an experience sharing meeting of more than 10 community groups from Uvs and Khovd provinces. They gathered at tourist camp of Yamaat herders community group of Bohmoron sum, Uvs province, to share their experiences evaluating their first half year work and planning for the next half. Argalt Kharig community group was selected as the best functioning group and awarded by wool combing machine. The most attractable conservation activity was done by Tsakhir community group members. They have counted black-tail gazelle of their area and found 38! Also they noticed that gazelles were in danger of being thirsty because of river water shoal. So they collected water in a trough and left for wild animals. Fortunately, gazelles visited their trough and slaked! Good to hear about it, isn't it?

A new hot topic in the Altai-Sayan ecoregion: RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

WWF Mongolia has started "brand new but also huge work" called River basin council and Integrated River Basin Management.

On May 2nd, 2008, WWF MPO organized a workshop on establishing the Khovd and Buyant river basin council facilitated by the Water authority and Citizen Representatives of Khural and Aimag governor's Office of the Khovd aimag. The workshop was held in Khovd aimag center and about 200 delegates from 9 *sums* (a *sum* is a middle-size administrative unit in Mongolia) of 3 aimags, Khovd, Uvs and Bayan-Ulgii, participated. They criticized the current water management and discussed how to solve the problems and improve water management.

As a result of the workshop everybody agreed that in order to run both river water management areas expediently there needs to be a river basin council established by the Law of Water. Also the participants developed a recommendation to the public, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This workshop is the first initiative in all Mongolia and participants wish it would be a good example for residents of other river basins.



WORLD HERITAGE in YOUTH'S HAND



WWF MPO believes that our next generation should be prepared today to lead the earth towards sustainability and has several beneficial projects for kids in the Mongolian eco region. One of them was a training-meeting entitled "World heritage in Youth's hands" held in March 24-26th in Uvs aimag center. The aim of the training was to improve involvement by local people, teachers and youth in nature conservation and strengthen the kids clubs' activity. In total 50 teachers from 17 local schools and 29 students participated in the training and conference. During this activity they shared their work experiences and learned from each other. They also received information about what governmental and non-governmental conservational organizations have done and are planning to do and discussed how to cooperate with them. The participants said that it was very educational and encouraging training but also that it needs to be conducted regularly.

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature