



**BIRDING TOUR MONGOLIA: BIRD SPECIALTIES IN TAIGA
AND GOBI**

7 - 21 JUNE 2019



White-naped Crane is one of our target species on this tour.

Welcome to our Birding Tour Mongolia, a birding and wildlife photography tour in some remote areas from the Siberian taiga through the high Altai Mountains to the Gobi Desert.

Mongolia is one of the hottest birding sites in Asia. You can see a wide variety of birds in different natural habitats during this trip, driving in excellent company and with professional guides through splendid landscapes from Siberian taiga forest to the steppe in the country made famous by the Great Genghis Khan. Take this opportunity to make your dreams come true, seeing raptors such as **Saker Falcon, Upland Buzzard, Amur Falcon, and Pallas's Fish Eagle**, but also **Siberian Rubythroat, Black-billed Capercaillie, Henderson's Ground Jay, and Altai Snowcock**.

Our targets in the different habitats are the following: In the Mongolian steppe **Demoiselle Crane, Saker Falcon, Amur Falcon, Mongolian Lark, Oriental Plover, and Upland Buzzard**, in the boreal forest of the taiga **Siberian Rubythroat, Red-flanked Bluetail, Pine Bunting, Black billed Capercaillie, and Chinese Bush Warbler**, in the wetlands **White-naped Crane, Asian Dowitcher, Swan Goose**, and migratory stints, and in the Gobi Desert **Altai Snowcock, Kozlov's Accentor, Henderson's Ground Jay, and Asian Desert Warbler**. In addition we might also see Gray Wolf, Mongolian Gazelle, Siberian Ibex, and Argali (mountain sheep).

Expect more than 200 species for the trip, depending on the season.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads or birding sites, and the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (15 days/14 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Ulaanbaatar

Your guide and driver will pick you up at the Chinggis Khaan International Airport after your arrival in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, and you will be transferred to your hotel. Take a rest if you want. After lunch (in case you arrive before lunch) we will visit the forest along the Tuul River and a gravel pond to see **Azure Tit, Azure-winged Magpie, White-crowned Penduline Tit**, and some waterfowl in the pond. We will have a welcome dinner at one of the most famous restaurants in Ulaanbaatar and then return to the hotel.

Overnight: Ulaanbaatar

Day 2. Khustain Nuruu National Park

After breakfast we will drive to Khustain Nuruu National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, where Przewalski's Horse (*Equus przewalskii*) was re-introduced in the country. The interesting bird species will be **Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Himalayan Vulture, Daurian Partridge, Amur Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Booted Eagle, Daurian Jackdaw, Black Stork, Isabelline Shrike, Mongolian Lark, and Meadow Bunting**. After

birding we will drive to a small spring, where the wild horses come to drink. In the late evening we'll be back at the park's restaurant and have a dinner with Mongolian cold beers.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Days 3 - 4. Ögii Lake

We will be birding early in the morning in Khustain Nuruu National Park.

After breakfast we'll head to the west to get to a steppe lake (Tsagaan), where you can see some ducks and shorebirds. The targets will be **White-naped Crane**, probably **Common Crane**, **Asian Dowitcher**, **Pallas's Reed Bunting**, **Citrine**, **White**, and **Western Yellow Wagtails**, and **Greylag Goose**. We will reach a freshwater lake, Ögii Lake, which is a Ramsar Site, in the evening.

In the morning, we will drive around the lake while watching birds. On the shoreline we may find **White-winged Tern**, **Common Tern** (*longipennis*), **Vega Gull**, **Common Ringed Plover**, **Bar-headed** and **Swan Geese**, and sometimes **Pallas's Fish Eagle** and **White-tailed Eagle**. On the western side of the lake you will find a river delta. There you'll see thousands of **Swan Geese**, also **Common Pochard** or perhaps **Tufted Duck**, and sometimes **Asian Dowitcher**. Near your ger camp we'll find nesting **Rock Sparrow**, **Pere David's Snowfinch**, and **Upland Buzzard**. **White-winged Scoter** and **Dalmatian Pelican** can be seen on the water.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Day 5. Kharkhorin (Karakorum)

After breakfast we'll drive to the town of Kharkhorin and visit Karakorum, the ruins of the former capital of the Mongol Empire after the death of Ghengis Khan. You can visit the Erdene Zuu monastery if you like. Both these sites are part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll be birding in the planted sea buckthorn shrubs near this town and possibly discover late migrants such as **Greenish** and **Yellow-browed Warblers**, a few flycatchers, etc.

Overnight: Kharkhorin

Day 6. Elsen Tasarkhai (sand dune)

After an early breakfast, we'll head to the next birdwatching site, where you can visit a small marshland and also a high mountain. If you want to ride horses and camels, this'll be the best place to do so on a sand dune and steppe, and you could visit a local family.

Overnight: field camp

Day 7. Ulaanbaatar

We'll return to the city of Ulaanbaatar, where we'll arrive in the afternoon. We'll be looking forward to some busy birding in the Gobi Desert for a few days.

Overnight: Ulaanbaatar

Days 8 – 9. Yolyn Am (high mountains)

Today we will take a flight to Dalanzadgad, from where we will drive to Yolyn Am, a deep and narrow gorge in the Gurvan Saikhan Mountains. We hope to see **Bearded Vulture** and **Himalayan Vulture** at close distance, **Kozlov's Accentor**, **Sulphur-bellied Warbler**, **Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch**, and **Wallcreeper**. We'll also search for **Altai Snowcock**, which is one of the more challenging species for the trip. We will have successful birding near Yolyn Am and at Mukhar Shiver to see **Barred Warbler** and **White-winged Snowfinch**.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Days 10 – 11. Khongoryn Els (sand dune and Saxaul forest)

We have a long drive today, but will make stops for any interesting birds or scenery along the way. We will arrive at our next location, the famous dunes of Khongoryn Els, located within the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park, in the afternoon. We could find all Gobi specials here, including **Desert Wheatear, Asian Desert Warbler, Henderson's Ground Jay, Saxaul Sparrow, Long-legged Buzzard, and Great Grey Shrike**. The remainder of the first day is free to relax, following the drive.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Day 12. Dalanzadgad

Today we'll drive back to Dalanzadgad and check into a ger camp near the town. We'll have some good refreshment after the long hours of driving through the Gobi Desert.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Days 13 – 14. Gorkhi Terelj National Park (Siberian boreal forest)

Today we'll fly back to Ulaanbaatar, from where we will drive directly to Gorkhi Terelj National Park and check into a tourist ger camp near the birding site. Here we will watch forest and forest/steppe birds, including **Oriental Cuckoo, Eurasian Hoopoe, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Siberian Stonechat, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Taiga Flycatcher, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Common Buzzard, and Blyth's Pipit**. There are two challenging species here, **Chinese Bush Warbler** and **Black-billed Capercaillie** depending on the season of your visit. The next morning we will drive to the east of our tourist camp to bird in riparian river forest, trying to find **Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Black Woodpecker, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Olive-backed Pipit, Common Rosefinch, and Taiga Flycatcher** in breeding plumage.

Overnight: tourist ger camp

Day 15. Departure

Today we will transfer back to Ulaanbaatar for you to take your flights back to your country.

Duration:	15 days
Group size:	4 - 8
Date:	7 – 21 June 2019
Start:	Ulaanbaatar
End:	Ulaanbaatar
Price:	US\$6930 per person sharing
Single supplement:	US\$722

Price includes:

3 nights in reserved hotel

1 night in tented camp near birding sites

10 nights in tourist ger camps
All transportations by 4WD, including petrol
English speaking birdwatching guide
Meals and bottled water
Camel and horse trek at your request
Organize city tour and shopping at your request
Entrance fees to all protected areas, museums, monasteries, and cultural events
All camping equipment (tent, kitchen, cooking equipment, cook etc.)
Road taxes
All expenses with nomadic families
Visa support invitation letter if necessary

Price excludes:

International flights
All types of insurance
Visa
Departure tax
Alcoholic drinks and items of a personal nature
Binoculars, telescope, and tripod
Sleeping bag
Extra luggage