

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS)

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7, as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.*

Note for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Bureau. Compilers are strongly urged to provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of maps.

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

1 February, 2003 (Updated: 18 March 2004)

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3. Country: Mongolia

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Lake Uvs and its surrounding wetlands. ("Nuur" stands for lake in Mongolian)

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## 5. Map of site included:

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps.

a) hard copy (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): yes  -or- no

b) digital (electronic) format (optional): yes  -or- no

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6. Geographical coordinates (latitude/longitude): N50° 20'; E 92° 45'

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## 7. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s), and the location of the nearest large town.

Uvs Lake is situated in the far western region of the country, in the territory of Uvs Aimag (“Aimag” stands for province in Mongolian). It is 1,592 km to the west from Ulaanbaatar city, about 30 km to the east of Ulaangom town, which is Uvs Aimag’s center. 7 *Soum* (count) centers are located around the lake within 10 to 60 km from the lake

**8. Elevation:** (average and/or max. & min.)  
759 m above sea level

**9. Area:** (in hectares) 585,000 ha

**10. Overview:**

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

Uvs Lake is the largest saline lake in Mongolia and creates unique wetlands in the Great Lakes Depression. With its reed beds and freshwater river deltas it provides significant nesting and resting areas for numerous migratory species. The Uvs lake basin belongs to the Altai-Sayan part of the 200 eco-regions, identified by the WWF that should be protected internationally. The Lake Basin has unique feature to represent the country’s entire natural zones and geographical belts from wetlands to high mountain glaciers. Also, the basin is one of the largest centers of the Euro-Asian biodiversity.

**11. Ramsar Criteria:**

Circle or underline each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11).

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8

**12. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 11. above:**

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

**Criterion 1.** The Uvs lake basin and surrounding wetland is the largest Eurasian cool zone, which has a unique natural and geological feature that harmonises desert-like steppe landscape with wetland. The basin belongs to the Altai-Sayan part of the 200 eco-regions identified by the WWF that should be protected internationally. Uvs lake, the northern boundary of the Great Lakes Basin, has various natural environments, such as large wetlands, reed belts, river deltas with forests, steppe and sand dunes etc.

**Criterion 2** The site supports such endangered birds, such as *White-headed Duck (Oxyura leucocephala)*, *Swan Goose (Anser cygnoides)* both included as endangered into the Red List of IUCN (see Table 1, 2. Birds of Uvs Lake.xls). In addition, 15 species are registered in the Mongolian Red Book (Red Book of Mongolia, 1997), 16 species in the Asian Red Book (Threatened birds of Asia, 2001), 8 species in the CITES Appendix I, 33 species in CITES Appendix II (CITES Handbook, 2001); 4 and 37 species in the Appendix I and II of the Convention on Protection of Migratory Fauna, respectively.

**Criterion 3** The area of the lake support biodiversity unique in this desert-like steppe landscape. Some bird species are included in the International and Mongolian Red Books, as well as waterfowls, which spend warm seasons in the Siberia tundra and taiga are inhabit here.

**Criterion 5** Uvs Lake is regularly supports more than 20,000 waterfowls each year. During 1977-2001 years bird surveys were conducted in different parts of the lake in different seasons by Institute of Biology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. By these researches

determined that only in small parts of the lake about 50,000 birds were counted at one time (in 1983 and 1985 years).

**Criterion 6.** The site supports the following species whose populations exceed 1% of the relevant biogeographic population (see Table 2): Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) 2000 (8%), Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelicanus crepus*) 2 (2%), Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) 3610 (3.6%), Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) 620 (9%), Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) 14 (14%), Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) 1,500 (2%), Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*) 640 (1.3%), Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) 50,000 (50%), Gray Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – 2,513 (1.9%), Great Black-headed Gull (*Larus ichthyaetus*) – 1,200 (1.2%), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) – 5,986 (5.9%).

**Criterion 7.** the Lake supports number of endemic fish species, such as *Oreoleuciscus potanini*, *Oreoleuciscus pewzowi*, *Oreoleuciscus humilis*.( Baasanjav G., and Tsend-Ayush Ya., 2001,)

**13. Biogeography** (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

**a) biogeographic region:**

By general bio-geographical classification Mongolia belongs to the Holarctical region (Voronov, A.G. 1963, 1985, Lame, 1966) and Uvs Lake basin is a region with flora and fauna influenced by European type from north-west, by Siberian type from north, by Central Asian type from the south.

Uvs lake region is belonging to Central Asian Mountainous-desert's bird region, since here occurs *Pelecanus crispus*, *Oxyura leucocephala*, *Circus pygargus*, *Columba palumbus*, *Larus ichthyaetus*, *Rhodostethia rosea*, *Gelochelidon nilotica* etc.

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

A.Bold, in 1990 based on previous works, conducted bird classification of Mongolia, by which determined 4 regions: 1) Central Asian Mountainous-desert, 2) Euro-Asian larch forest, 3) Euro-Asian steppe and 4) China-Manjuriian bird regions. These 4 regions are sub-divided into 12 provinces.

**14. Physical features of the site:**

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

The largest lake in Mongolia in terms of surface area, with a length of 84 km and a width of 79 km, and an average depth of 11.9 m. Maximum depth is 20 m. The lake water has an average salinity of 12.6 g/l with variations in some areas due to excessive precipitation and evaporation. Its pH is about 9 and ionic composition includes Na<sup>+</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, SO<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>, Mg<sup>++</sup>, Ca<sup>++</sup>, HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, CO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and K<sup>+</sup>. Transparency ranges between 0.3 m-6.0 m. During the last years, water level is rising (about 1.5 m from 1980s to 1990s) due to global warming and influence of glacier melt in the high mountains. (N.Batnasan, 1998, 2002). The Uvs Lake basin has an extreme continental climate, located in the center of the Central Asian anticyclone. Annual mean air temperature in the Uvs Lake basin is arranging from -3.7°C to -4.4°C, coldest in January (-49.6°C) and the warmest in July (36.6°C). Precipitation is highest in June to August, but overall low during the year (205 mm). The water temperature reaches 23-25°C near the banks in July, 18-20°C in the center. The winters are long and cold and keep the Uvs Lake

covered with ice from mid of November until mid of May. Ice cover is week and some times not freezes in the center of the lake.

**15. Physical features of the catchment area:**

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, general land use, and climate (including climate type).

Total catchments area is 71,100 sq.km. (J. Tserensodnom, 2000). The lake is surrounded by desert steppe landscape. Lake Basin is surrounded by the Mongolian Altai in the west, the Tagna Mountain in the north, the Khangai Mountain range in the east and the Khan-Khukhii Mountain in the south. The lake has no outlets and main tributary rivers are Tes, Nariin and Kharkhiraа, which originates from the Khangai and Kharkhiraа-Tyrgen Mountains. The rivers form a vast area of marsh in the northeast and west of the lake. The lake is located in a basin with large areas of sand dunes at the northern most limit of the Gobi region (semi-arid zone). The valley of the Tes and Naryn rivers north of the Lake is salty and humid. The soil base is saline, and the next layer is salty brown soil. Some brown soil has spread over the area of the rivers that flow from the Kahrkhiraа, Turgen and Tagnyn mountains. Climate is extreme continental, coldest in January reaching above -40°C, and hot summer with maximums reaching up to 40°C. This area is known as coldest place in Mongolia.

**16. Hydrological values:**

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

The Uvs lake belongs to the Internal Drainage basin in Mongolia and is therefore of fundamental importance for the ground water recharge of the area.

**17. Wetland Types**

**a) presence:**

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar “Classification System for Wetland Type” present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K •  
Zk(a)

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp • Ts • U •  
Va •  
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

**b) dominance:**

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

Q, L, M, Tp, W, N

**18. General ecological features:**

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site.

The principle habitats occurring whit Uvs lake SPA desert steppe, saline steppe, salt marsh, fresh water marsh, and riparian zones. With the water rise over the last years of 1.5 m some areas marsh

have been inundated and other areas have been opened to the existing marsh. The Tes and Torkhilog river deltas are dominated by willow and reeds.

**19. Noteworthy flora:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

There is lack of detailed information on noteworthy flora in the wetland. However, in the Uvs lake basin almost all kinds of vegetation of the moderate belt can be found: steppes and swamps, meadows and solonchak soils, bushes and agricultural lands, as well as communities of salt-tolerant and xerophilous plants of clay, stony and sandy deserts, forest-steppes on mountain slopes, various forests, and, higher - mountainous tundras and bare rocks.

**20. Noteworthy fauna:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 12. Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

There are some endemic fish species: *Oreoleuciscus pewzowi*, *O.potanini*, *O.humilis* and *Thymallus brevirostrus* are found in Uvs lake and inflowing rivers. In wetlands, exists re-introduced *Caster fiber* (Beaver) from Bulgan River and *Ondatra zibethicus* (Wild boar) from Khar-Us Lake. In the surrounding reed beds and river deltas exists *Capreolus pygargus*, *Sus scrofa*, *Canus lupus* etc.

Presently, 261 birds species have been registered in Uvs lake and its surroundings, and 46 species among them are resident and 215 are migratory. As for the styles of inhabiting of migratory birds, 144 species lay eggs, 25 species pass through, 10 species spend winter season and 9 species are observed accidentally in the area, and for another 27 species it has not been identified the style of inhabiting yet. (Tugarinov, A.Ya. 1916, Piechoki R. 1968, Piechocki R., Stubbe M., *et al* 1981, Fomin B. E., Bold A. 1991, Bold A., Tseveenmyadag N., 1991, Zabelin, V.I. 1993). See table 1. [\(Excel file: Table1-2 Birds of Uvs Lake.xls\)](#)

A total of 52 species of birds of the Uvs lake are registered in the Mongolian Laws, Red Book, and International conventions e.g. 5 species in very rare class and 11 species in rare class of the Mongolian Law on Fauna (Environmental Laws of Mongolia, 1999).

**21. Social and cultural values:**

e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values.

The Uvs lake belongs into 7 soums of Uvs aimag. The local population is engaged in traditional herding practices with good history of respect for nature. Tourism is not well developed at this point, but has good perspective in future. The main natural resources of Uvs lake are mineral water, fish and waterfowls.

**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

- (a) within the Ramsar site:
- (b) in the surrounding area:

The wetland and the surrounding areas are state owned. The management of the entire wetlands and its surrounding areas are belongs to Uvs Nuur Strictly Protected Area, under the Ministry of Nature and the Environment.

**23. Current land (including water) use:**

**(a) within the Ramsar site:**

There are 5 soum's some herder families are living along the lake shorelines. The herder families mainly use some parts of the wetland for pastureland and livestock watering. There are few places used as hay making purposes (reserve grasses for winter). All 5 surrounded Soum centers are not located within the proposed wetland area (see Map).

**(b) in the surroundings/catchment:**

Within the surrounding areas of the wetland, mainly used for livestock pastureland and 2 Soum's center and Aimag centre are located within 30 km to the wetland. There are some places with irrigated agriculture along the river Kharkhiraa, Tyrgen and Sagil flowing from the glaciated mountings in the west of the lake.

The following is some statistical data (Mongolia-1999: Statistical Book, 2000) of the surrounding 5 Soums:

**Tes soum;**

Population	6505 people
In center	800 people
In countryside	5705 people
Total family	1551./in center 171, in countryside 1380/
Agriculture	plant potato in 0.5 hectare
Number of livestock	160.5 thousand
Hay field for a year	14000 tone

• **Davst soum**

Population	1943 people.
Total family	424 families
In center	134 families
In countryside	290 families
Number of livestock	45.9 thousand
Agriculture	plant vegetable in 2.7 hectare
Hay field for a year	2943 hectare

• **Malchin soum**

Population	2919 people
Total family	711 families
In center	205 families
In countryside	506 families
Number of livestock	88.1 thousand
Hay field for a year	563.1 hectare
Agriculture	plant vegetable in 10.0 hectare

• **Naranbulag soum**

Population	4626 people
Total family	1071 families
In center	247 families
In countryside	824 families
Number of livestock	123.0 thousand
Agriculture	plant potato in 4.5 hectare, crop in 50 hectare

• **Tarialan soum**

Population	5053 people
In center	1618 people
In countryside	3055 people
Total family	1134
Agriculture	plant potato in 4.5 hectare, crop in 1008 hectare
Number of livestock	96.5 thousand

All Soums have secondary schools, hospitals, kinder garden's complex building, communication branches and cultural clubs in their center.

**24. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land (including water) use and development projects:**

(a) within the Ramsar site:

(b) in the surrounding area:

There is no quantifiable information on adverse affects to the ecological character of the wetland and its surroundings. In generally, many herders from the 5 Soums are living in or close to the Uvs lake wetland areas. Livestock grazing always exist within the wetland. The human improper activities such as cutting the willows along the river bank for fuel and overgrazing of pastureland by livestock are influencing negatively for the environment and increasing threats to destroying ecological balance within and surrounding of the proposed Ramsar site. More grass is growing along the Tes, Nariin river valleys and rural people prepare hays from these areas for winter. In future, increase of livestock numbers might cause overgrazing of the plant communities around the lake or disturbance of water birds.

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**25. Conservation measures taken:**

List national category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it is being implemented.

As a result of research work within Uvs Lake basin, in 1993 established Uvs Lake Basin Strictly Protected Areas (SPA), including 4 specific areas (Uvs Lake, Mountains Turgen and Tsagaan Shuvuut, and sand dune Altain Els), which cover 712.5 thousand hectares. Furthermore, it was registered by UNESCO as biosphere reserve in 1998. The Uvs lake basin SPA is divided into following protected areas with effective organizational purposes: Strictly protected area 55.5%, protected area 13.9%, and restricted area 30.6%.

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**26. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

In future, planning to establish joint trans-boundary protected areas in co-operation with Russia. Uvs Lake and its basin, including the Torhilog and Tes river wetlands is considered as one cluster for the trans-boundary protected areas, covering 308.6 sq km.

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**27. Current scientific research and facilities:**

e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

There are no current research projects and field station within the wetland. However, there are some studies on morphology and biology of the lakes. (J. Tserensodnom, 1971, 2000, A. Dulmaa and B.Nansalmaa, 1977). The first study was started in the late 19 century. Mongolian-Russian joint study on Uvs lake experiment has been conducted for a several years during 1980s, 1990s and organized scientific conferences published some materials. (Global change and Uvs Nuur, 1999).

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**28. Current conservation education:**

e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

There are no educational facilities, e.g. visiting centers, observation hides etc. However, there are some basic information booklets on Uvs Lake Basin SPA. The management plan of Uvs lake protected area is under the preparation by the SPA Administration Office.

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**29. Current recreation and tourism:**

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

A recreation area has been set up on the south west side of the lake for camping, picnic and swimming. When funding is secured bird watching towers will be built. This lake has very good potential to attract additional bird watching tour.

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**30. Jurisdiction:**

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

**Territorial:** 7 *Soums* (Tyrgen, Sagil, Davst, Tes, Malchin, Naranbulag and Tarialan) of Uvs *Aimag* are surrounded by the lake.

**Functional:** Ministry of Nature and the Environment, Government House No.3, Baga toiruu 44, Ulaanbaatar 11, MONGOLIA . Administration of the Uvs lake and its surrounding area is under the Division on Management of Special Protected Areas of the Ministry of Nature and the Environment.

Within the Uvs Lake Basin SPA, all activities are conducted under the Mongolian Environmental law, Mongolian State Administration law and Mongolian law on SPA.

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**31. Management authority:**

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Local management of the wetland and its surrounding areas falls into responsibility of the Ministry for Nature and Environment, Uvs Lake Basin Special Protected Areas Administration in Ulaangom town.

Director M.Ankhbayar  
Ulaangom, Uvs *Aimag* (province)  
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**32. Bibliographical references:**

scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 13 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

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22. **Tugarinov, A.Ya. 1916.** Materials for ornithofauna of north-western part of Mongolia (Tannu-Ola mountains and Uvs lake). Īrnith. Info. 2:77-90 and 3:140-154. [In Russian]
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