

# 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: 19 March 2004)

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## 3. Country: Mongolia

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

Lakes in the Khurkh-Khuiten river valley

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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):

“A” portion- N48<sup>0</sup>19”, E110<sup>0</sup>22”

“B” portion- N48<sup>0</sup>16”, E110<sup>0</sup>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.

The lakes in the *Khurkh-Khuiten* river valleys are located in the Bayn-Adraga, Binder, Batshireet and Umne-delger *Soums* (counties) of Khentii *aimag* (provinces). The Khentii *aimag*'s center Undurkhaan town located 331 km east from Ulaanbaatar. The wetland sites (portion A and B) are located at about 100 km to north from Undurkhaan town, about 20 km south from Binder *soum* center, 45 km south-west of Bayn-Adraga *soum* center, and about 40 km south-east of Batshireet *soum* center.

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## 8. Elevation: (average and/or max. & min.) 1000-1100 m a.s.l.

"A" portion: Territory of *Batshireet* and *Binder soums* including about 10 small lakes the *Bayan Burd of Hurkh* river valleys, the *Uvur Burd, Hulsts, Duut and Binder*, the highest point is 1292.2 m.

"B" portion- *Ikh Barchgait* mountain /1361.1 m/, the lowest point is 1091.1 m where river valley exist.

## 9. Area: (in hectares) 42,940 ha (total area)

"A" portion has 266.5 sq.km (26,650) area in the *Khurck* river valley

"B" has 162.9 sq.km (16,290) area in the *Khuiten* river valley.

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## 10. Overview:

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

The *Khurkh and Khuiten* river basin is situated in the transition zone between Mongolian forest and steppe zone. Thus, the wetlands are habitat of many threatened and endangered species from the southern forest taiga, central Asian steppe, and Western Asia and forest steppe of *Daguur-Manjuria*. The Lakes and its surrounding wetlands are one of important breeding and resting places for a great variety of water birds.

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## 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

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## 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.

Lakes in the *Khurkh and Khuiten* river basin and its surrounding wetlands show special features of forest steppe. As a tributary of the *Onon* river, which belongs to the Pacific Ocean Basin, it plays an important role in regulating water regimes. The *Khurkh and Khuiten* river basin and its wetlands are featured as a unique combination of flora and fauna of *Daguur-Manjuur* steppe region. It is a habitat of variable species from Central Asian steppe, and East Asia.

### Criterion 2.

Variety of species listed under the Mongolian and international red Books exist in the areas. 4 Very Rare species, 11 Rare species; 11 species are listed in the Red Book of Mongolia (1997);

11 species listed in the Red Book of Asia (2001); 6 species listed in the “CITES” Appendix I (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora); 24 species listed in the “CITES” Appendix II (CITES Handbook, 2001); Also, 3 species listed in the Appendix I and 25 species in Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

**Criterion 6.** The following bird species supported by the wetland represent 1% or more of the relevant biogeographic population: Great Crested Grebe - *Podiceps cristatus* more than 250 (1%), Swan Goose - *Anser cygnoides* >600 (1%), Whooper Swan - *Cygnus Cygnus* >300 (1.5%), Bean Goose - *Anser fabalis* – 1934 (3.5%), Ruddy Shelduck - *Tadorna ferruginea* – 1570 (3%), White-naped Crane - *Grus vipio* – 465 or (11.6%), Euraisian Crane – *Grus Grus* – 361 (3.2%), Demoiselle Crane – *Anthropoides virgo* – 1,000 (1.1%), Black Stork - *Ciconia nigra* -15 (15%) (Table 2: [Birds of Khurkh-Khuiten.xls](#)).

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**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 Lakes in the Khurkh-Khuiten river 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.

The wetland area has bio-geographical unique features, where Central Asian steppe and the Siberian taiga transition zone.

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

Lakes in the Khurkh-Khuiten river basin belongs to Euro-Asian steppe’s bird region, Mongol Daruur’s provinces and Euro-Asian larch forest region, Khentii provinces, since here occurs White-naped Crane-*Grus vipio*, Black-winged Stilt-*Himantopus himantopus*, Asian Dowitcher-*Limnodromus semipalmatus*, Winter Wren-*Troglodytes troglodytes*, Siberian Blue Robin-*Luscinia cyana* etc (Bold A. 1990).

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**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.

As far as geological composition concerned, the mountains surrounding the lake are composed of residue stones such as sand and shock stones from Permian and Jurassic geological ages. River valley is composed of sand and gravel. Numerous water and marsh birds concentrate at two sites of the lake. “B” portion contains a large number of lakes along the *Khuiten* river basin such as the *Kunck* lake, *Ulaan Undur* lake, *Khulsts* lake, *Ulaan toirom*, and *Ick Burd*. “A” portion has groups of lakes along the *Baynburd* lake, *Binder* lake and *Khirck* river valley. About hydrological condition of these lakes is not yet studied.

It has a high density of ground water network. The *Khurkh* River, the largest tributary of *Onon* River flows along with enormous small rivers. The *Khurkh* River is a main tributary of *Onon* River and it is 190 km long, and catchment area is 6150 sq.km. The *Khurkh* River is fed by Rivers *Shuusiin*, *Zuun Bayan gol*, *Bayngol* and springs *Uliastai bulag*, and *Melhiitiin bulag*. The area also contains *Ulaan toirom*, *Ulaan Unduriin* Lake, *Bayanburd* Lake, *Khuck* Lake, *Khulst* Lake, *Ick Burd* Lake, *Khulstiin Burd* Lake, and *Khulst toirom*. The river valley is 15-20 km wide along the mid and end portion, and completely separated from the forests and flow to the steppe

and ended in small lakes in the valley. The mineralization content in the *Khurkh* River is as low as the *Onon* River and it's related to lakes. The mineralization is 273.4 mg/l. The *Khurck* river valley is commingly distributed by permafrost and underground water resources play important role in feeding the lakes. Floods happen during the times when mountain snow melts and rainfalls during summer

### 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).

Areas surrounding the *Khurch-Khuiten* river basin are comprised from the *Khentii* Mountain. The northern *Khurkh* River contains mountains namely the *Ereen tolgoi* /1262.1/, *Ulaan* mountain /1244.8/, *Delger* mountain /1251.4/, *Burgast tolgoi* /1265.8/, *Binderya and Baga Delger* mountain /1251.4/, *Burgast tolgoi* /1265.9/, *Baynburd ovoo* /1133.0/, *Melhiitiin* mountain /1142.2/, *Tsagaan tolgoi* /1159.2/. The northern *Khuiten* valley has the *Shine bulag Uzuur tolgoi* /1323.5/, *Ulaan Under Tolgoi* /1341.8/, *Ick Bachgait* mountain /1361.1/, *Tasarhai tolgoi* /1174.0/, and *Buural tolgoi* /1206.1/. Those medium height mountains contain inclining slopes, and almost no stones, and barely not elevated rocks. Along the *Khurck* river, there is a 10 km wide valley. The bottom of the valley is not smooth containing old river beds, small lakes and elevated ground.

The climate is humid cold. Winter and summer are cool, with high precipitation and snowfall. A sum of +10°C temperature is low, and totalled to around 1667°C. Mean annual temperature is – 0.5°C. Mean annual precipitation is 400-500 mm. Mean warm season temperature is 19.6 ° C, while –16.3 ° C mean cool season temperature. Ice forms from November to April. Wind speed in the valleys between mountains is not speedy, not over 1-2.6 m/sec, and the highest speed is 10-14 m/sec. Snowfall reaches to 5-12 cm. Snow starts falling from November and melts from April. Seasonal and permafrost exists in the surrounding wetlands in the river basin and mountain slopes. Black, black brown and brown soils dominated in the area and valley and marshy soils are commonly distributed as well.

### 16. Hydrological values:

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

These lakes belong to the Pacific Ocean Drainage Basin in Mongolia, which is covering mostly eastern part of Mongolia. The wetland has 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 • Ip 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.

## M, L, N, Tp, W

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### 18. General ecological features:

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

Vegetation is composed of mainly steppe plant species and forests in the northern slopes of the mountains. In terms of vegetation and geographical zones, it includes in the *Khentii* mountain taiga zone, and *Daguur*-steppe mountain forest steppe zone. Main plant species are Siberian Larch-*Larix sibirica*, *Betula platyphlla*, *Carex lanceolata*, *Vicia venosa*, *V.unijuga*, *Rhododendron dahuricum*, *Carex lanceolata*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Fragaria orientalis*, *Poa attenuata*, *Festuca lenensis*, *F.sibirica*, *Helictotrichon schellianum*, *Carex pediformis*, *Filifolium sibiricum*, *Scabiosa comosa*, *Salix ledebouriana*, *Geranium pratense*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Agropyron repens* etc.

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### 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 are some rare plants in the wetlands. The following plant species are included in the Mongolian Red Book: Marsh Saxifrage-*Saxifraga hirculus*, Pink Peony-*Paeonia anomala*, White Peony-*Paeonia lactiflora* and Common Valerian-*Valeriana officinalis*.

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### 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.*

Presently 54 species of mammals from 6 orders are recorded in the site. Among them Daurian Hedgehog (*Erinaceus dauricus*) listed under Mongolian Red Book (1997), Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), Manul (*Felis manul*) listed under the Appendix II of CITES (2001).

There are 167 species of birds of 91 genera from 37 families of 15 orders, inhabiting the *Khurkh-Khuiten* Valley Lake territories. And, 26 species of them live permanently there, 141 bird species migrating. 92 species of migrating birds lay eggs, 35 species of birds pass by, 3 species of birds come for wintering, 6 species of birds happen to be encountered and 5 species of birds have undefined residence (Fomin V. E., Bold A. 1991, Tseveenmyadag N. 1998, Tseveenmaydag N., 2002, Tseveenmyadag N, 2003, Tseveenmyadag N, Bold A. etc 2000). In the table 1 (*Excel file: Table1-2 Birds of Khurkh-Khuiten.xls*), shown the names of the birds in Latin, and English and the international documents and acts, protecting these birds, classified by *Stepanyan* L.C. (1990).

The 2.5 x 4 area in the *Khurkh-Khiuten* wetlands contains 5-12 pair of White-naped Crane-*Grus vipio*, and their nests are located 200-1000 m far from each other. Apart from those species, there are other species Common Crane-*Grus grus* lay eggs every year, and 1.2-1.6 pair bird density per km square. The region is a breeding habitat of variety of rare and common bird species that highlights the importance of the inclusion in Ramsar convention.

The lakes is a dwelling space for variety of fish species (Haitej sculpin-*Mesocottus haitej*, Khadary whitefish-*Coregonus chadary*) that could not be found from nowhere else from Mongolia (Baasanjav G., 2001, Baasanjav G., and Tsend-Ayush Ya., 2001.). Taimen-*Hucho taimen*, Haitej sculpin -*Mesocottus haitej*, Lamprey Eel-*Lampertra jaronical* from fish species, River crayfishes-*Cambaroides dauricus* from Agnathans species, Molluscs-*Dahurinaia dahurical*, River mussels-*Middendorffinaia mongolica* from Molluscs species, Siberian Salamander-*Salamandrella keyserlingii*, Asiatic Grass Frog-*Rana chensinensis* from Amphibians species are listed under Mongolian Red book (1997) is found from this area.

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**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.

There is no information on social and cultural values. However, the wetland has some potential for eco-tourism and scientific research.

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**22. Land tenure/ownership:**

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

The wetland and the surrounding areas are state owned.

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

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

There is no crop production or industry near by the wetlands. The general form of land use is nomadic and animal husbandry by local herders.

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

In the surroundings of the wetlands within 20-45 km located 3 soum centers. The general form of land use is nomadic and animal husbandry in the surrounding areas. Livestock mainly consist of sheep, goats, cattle and horses. Industry is not developed in the basin. From the river valleys, grass prepared as fodder for livestock during winter. And also timber is prepared from the forests for fuel. There are a lot of opportunities to develop tourism, carry out research works as well as fishing and observing of birds. There is also a small farm producing milk from dietary products of local people.

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**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:

Due to climate change during the last years lake area is reducing, which is becoming main ecological concern in the area. In generally, many livestock graze around the lake, which are resulting in overgrazing of pasture land, as well as pollution the lake water by livestock (During the hot days many livestock stay in the lake, and rivers).

No negative activities are being carried out, except pasture land use. There are no people and animals around the area, when birds lay eggs and shed feathers. Therefore, it is quite calm place for the wildlife.

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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.

No conservation measures are being taken at present time.

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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 the future following actions need to take in this area: research works on natural condition, reserves, biodiversity, lakes, rivers and birds; conservation of watery and boggy places; bio-technical action to create a pleasant condition for birds to breed. The wetlands and its surrounding area are included in one of the selected areas (potential places) of natural importance in Mongolia to be considered for protection in future. (Biodiversity assessment and conservation planning in Mongolia, 2002).

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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.

No specific research project is implemented. The Academy of Science conducted general studies on animals, plants, forests and lakes. Further in-depth project needs to be implemented.

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**28. Current conservation education:**

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

No specific project is proposed.

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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.

Currently, there are no tourist camps and sanatoriums. Only in summer time travelers and tourists come here to relax fishing and observe birds.

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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:** Binder, Bayan-Adarga, Batshireet and Umnudelger *soums* of Khentii *aimag*

**Functional:** The *Soum's* Governor Office in the *soum's* centers.

Also: Government of Khentii Aimag, Under-khaan town.

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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 are belonging to the Department of Nature and Environment of the Khentii aimag,

Chairman G.Dolgorsuren

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Phone: 976 01562 26521

Soum's Governor Office in Umnudelger soum of Khentii aimag. Ch.Nyamdoo

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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.

1. **Baasanjav G., and Tsend-Ayush Ya., 2001**, Fish of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (in Mongolian). P.69-74
2. **Baasanjav G. 2001**. Species composition and ecology of fish in the Dornod Mongolia. UB, 64-69.
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4. **Biodiversity assessment and conservation planning in Mongolia. 2002**, Publishing, UB. (in Mongolian and English)
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19. **Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdlifeInternational Red Data Book. 2001.** Cambridge, UK: Birdlife International. Part A, B 3038 s.
20. **Tseveenmyadag N. 1998,** Waterbirds of Eastern Mongolia. Proceedings of International Workshop on Wetland conservation in Mongolia and North-East Asia. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. s.149-156.
21. **Tseveenmaydag N., 2002,** A comprehensive report of 7 field works for 1977-2002 in the Khurkh-Khuiten valley and its surrounding areas.
22. **Tseveenmyadag N, 2003.** The birds of Onon-Baljin National Park of the Mongolia. The ornithological observation in Siberia and Mongolia. Ulan-Ude.Buryat State University Press, vol.3:80-91.
23. **Tseveenmaydag N., A. Bold, B.E. Fomin, B.A. Ostapenko. 2000,** Birds in Onon, Ulz, Khalk river basin. In: research articles of Institute of Biology. UB.,22:153-160. (in Mongolian)
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29. **Voronov, A.G. 1963.** Biogeography (based on biology). Moscow. [In Russian]
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31. **Wetlands International 2002 .** Waterfowl Population Estimates-Third Edition. Wetlands International Global SeriesNo12 Wageningen, The Netherlands

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