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Birds of the Shatan River Basin, Mongolia

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ABSTRACT

In our study we recorded 149 species of birds belonging to 97 genera and 36 families in 15 orders. These bird species compose 32% of Mongolian registered bird fauna. Of these 149 species, 54% are passeriformes. Our observation was held in three different habitats: mountains ranging with rocks and forest (88 species), river basins (45 species), and an area around human habitation, specifically train stations outside towns (16 species). Of our studied bird species, 11 are enlisted in the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list as endangered, vulnerable, or near threatened species, and 144 are known as least concerned. Also 20 species are listed in Annexes I and II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and 15 species are listed in Annexes I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species.

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Introduction

In some areas of Mongolia, the landscape has been changed dramatically in recent years following mining activity and the development of agriculture. Researchers are aiming to observe and document the changes on biodiversity of such areas.

Undergraduate students from the Departments of Biology and Geography, Mongolian National University of Education, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia have been doing summer field studies in the past 10 years, with the basic goal to practice on animal and plant identification and their systematics.

Here we unite and process the data gathered by our observations and registration during the past 10 years.

Materials and methods

The study area is located in Batsumber Soum, Tov province (N48.52117, E107.83190), 120 km north of Ulaanbaatar. Geomorphology it belongs to the Tuul River basin and Orkhon-Selenge basin. The maximum altitude is 1300–1700 m; mean altitude is between 50 m and 800 m. Surface soil is composed of imperial granite and mafic rock minerals of the Paleozoic era. The highest

point is Tsogt-Undur mountain (1628 m), located west of our camp site, and the lowest point is in the meeting point of Shatan and Kharaa river (1200 m; [Figure 1](#)). Common habitats of birds are mixed forest (trees are larch and birch) on the shady side of the Mountain, and water meadows of Kharaa, Ulgii, and Shatan rivers.

Our study area also included Khan Kentii Natural Park, where various mammal and bird species are found ([Punsalpaamuu et al 2012](#)).

Here we report the bird species observation data gathered from 2nd July 2014 to 7th July 2014, as well as in earlier years. This report has information about bird species ([Appendix 1](#)) and their breeding. The observation areas covers 68 km² land. June and July were chosen as the best time for matching the birds breeding and feeding, with easier observation compared to other seasons.

We use common itinerary observing method. The equipment and devices used were: Nikon action 6.5° binoculars (Nikon, Tokyo, Japan); bore scope GL8806 Inspect Camera (QY, Guangdong, China); GPS Garmin map 62 (Garmin, Taiwan), Canon EOS rebel T1i with 300 mm lens (Canon, Tokyo, Japan); MS office; GIS 9.3 (Esri, New York, NY, USA); and a guide book of birds.

We observed and documented birds in four different habitats: water meadow, mixed forest, rocky mountain, and human-settled area ([Figure 2](#)), and each species was documented with its number. In some cases, some species track and scat were documented as well, concerning their way to stay hidden in their habitat. We also divided all observed species by International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List Global and Regional status, and international convention annexes ([Gombobaatar and Monks 2012](#)).

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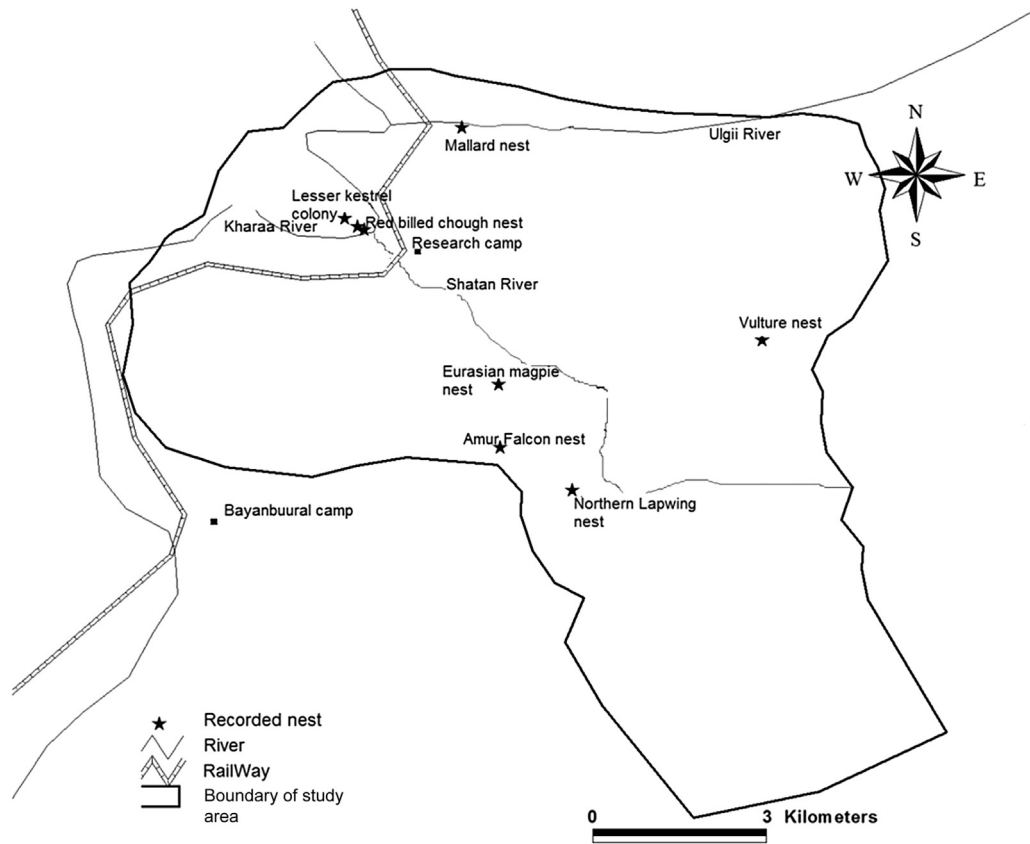


Figure 1. Study area and marked nests.

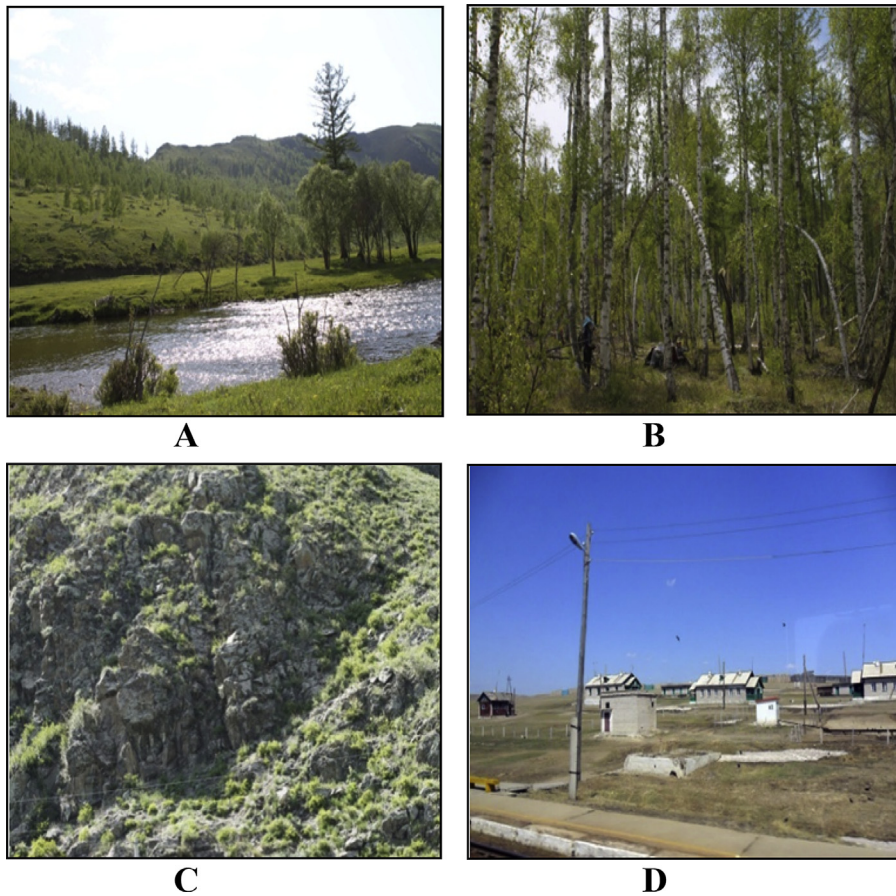


Figure 2. Bird habitats in study area: A, water meadow; B, mixed forest; C, mountain slope, rocky area; D, human habitation, specifically near the train station.

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