

Mongolia Expat magazine

• MAY 2007 ISSUE
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MONGOLIAN WILDLIFE - THE BIG GAME ISSUE



Getting Out There
– Your Guide To Trekking,
Travelling & Culture
Across Mongolia
Seriously cool stuff for a
seriously wild country

*Siberian Elk*Brown Bear*Bactrian Camel*Wild Ass*Przewalski's Wild Horse*Wild Sheep*Goitered
Gazelle*Siberian Ibex*Snow Leopard*Gray Wolf

Wolf Hunting in Khentii

Ulaan Baatar Bar, Restaurant & Nightclub Listings

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Hi, I'm Chris Devonshire-Ellis, and welcome to the May issue of Mongolia Expat magazine ! In this issue we take a look at the Mongolian Big Game - and we mean animals you may find on photo-safaris, not for hunting - although we do also have a look at wolf hunting as the population is growing and causing issues in some parts of the country. "A Wolf Hunt In Khentii" being a piece that depicts the harsh realities of nomadic live in Mongolia. It's not always pretty and we make no apologies for depicting the reality of life. The animals however can be seen - with careful planning and eco-friendly tourism. So get out those zoom lenses !

As always, thanks to Ric and Tseren of Tseren Travel for their support - they've a great team in UB and if you're looking for a Mongolian adventure trip be sure to look them up.

Best wishes
Chris



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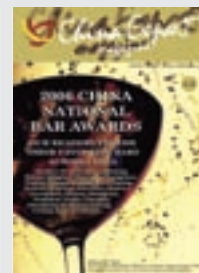


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MONGOLIAN WILDLIFE - THE BIG GAME

– By Chris Devonshire-Ellis

Mongolia has 136 mammal species, as well as almost 400 different types of birds and 76 species of fish. Central and Northern Mongolia, with its rich forest areas, are home to wolf, wild boar, elk, roe deer and brown bear, while the steppes and forest margins support marmot, muskrat, fox, steppe fox and sable. The Altai Mountains to the west are home to wolf and wild cats such as lynx and snow leopard, in addition to the world's largest wild sheep – the Argali – and Siberian Ibex. The Gobi desert and the eastern Mongolian steppe are inhabited by thousands of gazelles. The rarest animal in Mongolia – the Gobi bear is found in the south western part of the Gobi. Wild ass and wild Bactrian camels are found in the desert while Argali and Gobi Ibex also inhabit the rocky mountains within the Gobi region. The Przewalski's wild horse have been reintroduced to the country from captivity abroad after being extinct and are now increasing in numbers, while the tiger population appears to be extinct – although one or two tantalizing unconfirmed sightings seem to crop up each year.

SIBERIAN ELK (*Cervus canadensis*)



Siberian and American Elk, are the second largest species of deer in the world, after the moose (*Alces alces*). Elk are also referred to as "wapiti", which is from the Native American word waapiti, or "white rump" used by the Shawnee. Elk are widely distributed across North America and Eastern Asia. They should not be confused with the European animal also known as the elk, which is the moose of North America. Early European explorers to North America, who were familiar with the smaller Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) of Europe, believed that the much larger North American animal looked more like moose, which in Europe is called an elk. The renaming has become part of the common vocabulary of North Americans.

Until recently, the elk and the European Red Deer were considered the same species, but recent DNA evidence has demonstrated that they are different species. According to the study, another even more closely related species to the Elk than the Red Deer is the Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*) of Asia.

Elk are one of the largest mammals that inhabit North Asia (Southern Siberia, Mongolia), temperate Eastern Asia (including Manchuria, Ussuri Region, Northern China, and Korea), and much of North America. They have a unique mating ritual in which males perform posturing, antler wrestling and especially bugling, a loud series of screams designed to help attract females and to establish dominance over other males. Elk populations are currently increasing in North America, but population figures in Eastern Asia are not well established. In Mongolia, they may be seen in the Northern regions close to the Russian border.

BROWN BEAR (*Ursus arctos*)

The brown bear is a species of bear distributed throughout the Northern hemisphere. Weighing up to 130–700 kg (290–1,500 pounds), the larger races of brown bear tie with the Polar bear as the largest extant land carnivores. The grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), the Kodiak Bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*), and the Mexican brown bear are North American subspecies of the brown bear. However, DNA analysis has recently revealed that the identified subspecies of brown bears, both Eurasian and North American, are genetically quite homogeneous. It is sometimes referred to poetically as the bruin. They are omnivores and feed on a variety of plant parts, including berries, roots, and sprouts, fungi, fish, insects, and small mammals, especially ground squirrels. Contrary to popular mythology, brown bears are not particularly carnivorous as they derive up to 90% of their dietary food energy from vegetable matter. Their jaw structure has evolved to fit their dietary habits and it is longer and lacks strong, sharp canine teeth of true predators.



Bears eat an enormous number of moths during the summer, sometimes as many as 40,000 in a day, and may derive up to a third of their food energy from these insects. Locally, in areas of Russia and Alaska, brown bears feed mostly on spawning salmon, and the nutrition and abundance of this food accounts for the enormous size of the bears from these areas. Brown bears also occasionally prey on deer (*Odocoileus* spp.; *Dama* spp., *Capreolus* spp.), Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus* or American elk), moose (*Alces alces*) and American bison (*Bison bison*). When brown bears attack these animals, they tend to choose young calves or aged, sick adults because they are slow and weak. Brown bears retrace their own tracks and walk only on rocks while being hunted to avoid being traced.

BACTRIAN CAMEL **(*Camelus bactrianus*)**

The Bactrian Camel is a large even-toed ungulate native to the steppes of eastern Asia. The Bactrian camel has two humps on its back, in contrast to the Dromedary, also known as the Arabian Camel, which has one.

Nearly all of the estimated 1.4 million Bactrian Camels alive today are domesticated, but in October 2002 the estimated 950 remaining in the wild in northwest China and Mongolia were placed on the critically endangered species list. Bactrian Camels are over 2 meters (7 feet) tall at the hump and weigh in excess of 725 kg (1,600 lb). They are herbivores, eating grass, leaves, and grains, capable of drinking up to 120 litres (32 US gallons) of water at a time. Their mouths are extremely tough, allowing them to eat thorny desert plants.

They are supremely adapted to protect themselves against the desert heat and sand, with wide, padded feet and thick leathery pads on the knees and chest, nostrils that can

open and close, ears lined with protective hairs, and bushy eyebrows with two rows of long eyelashes. Thick fur and underwool keep the animal warm during cold desert nights and also insulate against daytime heat.

The Dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*) is the only other surviving camel, native to the Sahara desert, but today is extinct in the wild. By comparison, the Bactrian Camel is a stockier, hardier animal able to survive the scorching desert heat of northern Iran to the frozen winters in Tibet and the Mongolian Gobi.

The Dromedary is taller and faster, and with a rider it can maintain 8–9 mph for hours at a time. A loaded Bactrian Camel moves at about 2.5 mph. There is some evidence that the Bactrian Camel can be divided up into different subspecies. In particular, it has been discovered that a population of wild Bactrian Camel lives within a part of the Gashun Gobi region of the Gobi Desert. This population is distinct from domesticated herds both in genetic makeup and in behavior. However, the significance of those differences has not yet been demonstrated.

There are possibly as many as three regions in the genetic makeup that are distinctly different from domesticated camels and there is up to a 3% difference in the base genetic code. That is significant when it can be considered that the genetic difference between man and chimp is just 1.5%. However, with so few wild camels, it is unclear what the natural genetic diversity within a population would have been.

Another remarkable difference is the ability of these wild camels to drink saltwater slush, although it is not yet certain the camel can extract useful water from it. Domesticated camels do not attempt to drink salt water, though the reason is unknown.



MONGOLIAN WILD ASS
(*Equus hemionus hemionus*)



The Mongolian Wild Ass (also called Khulan) is a subspecies of the Onager. It may be synonymous with the Gobi Kulan or Dziggetai suspecies (*Equus hemionus luteus*). It is found in Mongolia and northern China, and was previously found in Kazakhstan before it became extinct due to hunting.

The Mongolian Wild Ass's distribution range was dramatically reduced during the 1990s. A 1994-1997 survey estimated its population size at 33,000 to 63,000 individuals over a continuous distribution range encompassing all of southern Mongolia. In 2003, a new survey found approximately 20,000 individuals over an area of 177,563 km² in southern Mongolia. Despite that, the subspecies lost about 50% of its former distribution range in Mongolia in the past 70 years.

The population is declining due to poaching and competition from grazing livestock and the conservation status of the species is evaluated as vulnerable. Since 1953, the Mongolian Wild Ass has been fully protected in Mongolia. The subspecies is also listed at appendix I of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and was added to appendix II of the Convention of Migratory Species in 2002. However, due to human population growth in conjunction with severe winters in the past years, the number of conflicts between herders and Mongolian Wild Ass's appear on the increase.

Poaching for meat appears to be an increasing problem in Mongolia. For some parts of the local population, wild ass and other wildlife meat seems to provide a substitute or even a cheap alternative to meat from domestic animals. In 2005, a national survey based on questionnaires, suggested that as many as 4,500 wild asses, about 20% of the whole population, may be poached each year. The Mongolian wild ass typically has a sandy-colored coat with lighter-colored legs and belly, a short erect black mane, a black spinal stripe, and a black tail tuft. Its neigh is shrill. Different races of this species vary in size, but all are smaller than the African ass. They were once widely distributed across Asia, but they have been crowded

out of their grazing lands by domestic livestock and have been hunted for their flesh and hides. Each race is now restricted to a very limited territory. Among them are the Persian ass, or Onager, of central Asia; the Mongolian ass, or Kulan, of NE Asia; the Tibetan ass, or Kiang, presently the most numerous Asian wild ass; and the Indian ass, or Ghorkhar. All are considered endangered, and the continued survival of the Onager and the Kulan is particularly threatened. The Syrian wild ass, of SW Asia, is probably already extinct.

PRZEWALSKI'S WILD HORSE (*Equus ferus przewalskii* or *Equus caballus przewalskii*)

Przewalski's Horse, also known as the Asian Wild Horse or Mongolian Wild Horse, or Takhi in Mongolia, is the closest living wild relative of the domestic Horse.

Most "wild" horses today, such as the American Mustang, are actually feral animals, horses that were once domesticated but escaped and reverted to an apparently wild status. The Przewalski's Horse, on the other hand, has never been successfully domesticated and remains a truly wild animal today. There were once several types of equid that had never been successfully domesticated, including the Tarpan, Onager, and others. However, most have become extinct, with the Przewalski's Horse the only remaining truly wild horse in the world.

Poliakov, who concluded that the animal was a wild horse species, gave it the official name *Equus przewalskii* (Poliakov 1881). However, authorities differ about the correct classification. Some hold it is a separate species, the last remnant of the wild horse *Equus ferus*, others hold it is a subspecies of *Equus caballus*. The question will only be answered with finality if or when the common ancestor from which domestic and Przewalski's horses diverged is determined. Although the Przewalski's horse has 66 chromosomes, compared to 64 in a domestic horse, the Przewalski's horse and the domestic horse are the only equids that cross-breed and produce fertile offspring, possessing 65 chromosomes.

As of a census taken in 2005, the world population of these horses was about 1,500, all descended from 31 horses that were in captivity in 1945, mostly descended from approximately 15 captured around 1900. A cooperative venture between the Zoological Society of London and Mongolian Scientists has resulted in successful reintroduction of these horses from zoos into their natural habitat in Mongolia, and as of 2005 there is a free-ranging population of 248 animals in the wild.



The horse is named after Russian General Nikolai Przhevalsky (1839–1888). (The spelling of the horse breed as “Przewalski” derives from the Polish spelling of the name). He was an explorer and naturalist who described the horse in 1881, after having gone on an expedition to find it, based on rumours of its existence. Many of these horses were captured around 1900 by Carl Hagenbeck and placed in zoos. As noted above, about twelve to fifteen reproduced and formed today’s population.

The native population declined in the 20th century due to a combination of factors, with the wild population in Mongolia dying out in the 1960s. The last herd was sighted in 1967 and the last individual horse in 1969. Expeditions after this failed to locate any horses, and the species was designated “extinct in the wild” for over 30 years.

After 1945 only two captive populations in zoos remained: in Munich and in Prague Zoo. The most valuable group in Askania Nova was shot by German soldiers during occupation for food and the group in the USA had died.

In 1977, the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski Horse was founded by Jan and Inge Bouman, which started a program of exchange between captive populations in zoos throughout the world to reduce inbreeding, and later starting a breeding program of its own. In 1992, sixteen horses were released into the wild in Mongolia, followed by additional animals later on. These reintroduced horses successfully reproduced, and the status of the animal was changed from “extinct in the wild” to “endangered” in 2005. The area to which they were reintroduced became Hustai National Park in 1998 which can be visited just two jeep days away from Ulaan Baatar.

WILD SHEEP (*Ovis ammon*)

The argali, or the mountain sheep is a globally endangered wild sheep, which roams the highlands of Central Asia (Himalaya, Tibet, Altay). It is also the biggest wild sheep, standing as high as 120 cm and weighing as much as 140 kg. The Pamir argali (also called Marco Polo sheep, for they were first described by that traveler) may attain more than 6 feet in length.

The general coloration varies between each animal, from a lightish yellow to a dark grey-brown. The face is lighter. Argalis have a whitish rump patch, although there is much variation between subspecies in terms of size and borders.



Adult males carry two enormous corkscrew-like horns, which can reach 190 cm / 6.3 feet when measured along the spiral. Females also bear horns, although these are much smaller, rarely exceeding 30 cm / 1 foot in length. Reported population densities range from 1.0-1.2 animals per square kilometer. Seasonal migrations have been reported for some populations (especially the males), while there is a general trend to live at higher elevations in the summertime. With relatively long legs, argalis are fast runners and may flee from predators, although refuge is often taken on steep mountain slopes. The primary vocalizations are an alarm whistle and a warning hiss made by blowing air through the nostrils. When competing, males rear up on their hind legs and, leaning forward, race towards their opponent, crashing horns in the process.

Argalis live in herds between 2 and 100 animals, segregated by sex, except during breeding season. Migrating herds, especially males, have been reported. With long legs, herds can travel quickly from place to place. Argalis tend to live at higher elevations during the summer.

Argalis are considered endangered or threatened throughout their entire range, due to habitat loss from overgrazing of domestic sheep and hunting. They are hunted for both their meat and their horns, used in traditional Chinese medicine. Legal hunting of trophies has also added to the mortality.

GOITERED GAZELLE (*Gazella subgutturosa hilleriana*)

The Goitered, Black-tailed or Persian gazelle is a gazelle found in a large area of central Asia, including part of Iran and southern west Pakistan in the western end of the range, as well as the Gobi desert. The specific name means “full below the throat” and refers to the male having an enlargement of the neck and throat during the mating season. This is not a true goiter, which is caused by the enlargement of the thyroid gland.

The Goitered gazelle inhabits sands and gravel plains and limestone plateau. It runs at high speed, without the leaping, bounding gait seen in other gazelle species. Throughout much of their range, Goitered gazelles undergo seasonal migrations. Herds cover 10–30 km per day in the winter, with these distances being reduced to about 1–3 km in summer. In contrast to most other gazelles, goitered gazelles possess horns only in males. These gazelles inhabit desert areas from Palestine to Northern China and have become severely reduced in numbers by hunting.



The goitered gazelle, *Gazella subgutturosa*, inhabits desert and sub-desert steppes of the Arabian peninsula and southwestern Asia to northern China and Mongolia. Four subspecies are recognized by Groves (1985), two of which are presently maintained in captivity in North America. The Arabian sand gazelle *G. s. marica*, was once common in the Arabian peninsula, ranging north through eastern Jordan and Iraq, where its range integrated with that of *G. s. subgutturosa*, commonly known as the Persian or goitered gazelle. Persian gazelles once ranged from eastern Turkey through Iran, Pakistan and Soviet Central Asia. There are two forms which are the Xinjiang goitered gazelle, *G. s. yarkandensis*, found in the deserts of the Tarim Basin, Xinjiang, China, and the Mongolian goitered gazelle *G. s. hilleriana*, native to the Gobi and Caidam and can be seen in herds of up to 20,000 in Eastern Mongolia.

SIBERIAN IBEX (*Capra sibirica*)



The coat coloration varies widely across this ibex's range. The general color of the coat is a light tan, with the undersides lighter. In winter, mature males become much darker, with varying patches of white on the neck and back. Both sexes have a dark beard beneath the chin, although it is much less pronounced in females. Unlike the Nubian and Walie ibexes, the Siberian ibex does not display the contrasting black and white markings on its legs. Both sexes carry horns, and while in females they are small and slightly arched towards the rear, in males they grow into massive arcs which curl over the back and may even loop back on themselves. A male's horns also have several large knobs on their frontal surface. Principally a diurnal animal, the Siberian ibex has alternating periods of resting and activity throughout the day. Although the Siberian ibex lives at high elevations, and often climb up to the vegetation line at 5,000 meters / 16,000 feet, as a rule they seek out lower slopes during the winter. These slopes are generally steep and southward facing, areas where snow has difficulty covering in large amounts over large stretches of time. However, when the snow cover is heavy, Siberian ibex must find food by pawing away at the snow with their forelegs in order to reach the vegetation concealed below. If threatened, Siberian ibex flee to steep, rocky cliffs.

Siberian Ibex produce 1 or 2 offspring, and live up to 16 years, in both maternal and bachelor herds, feeding on grasses, leaves and the shoots of bushes and trees. They are prey for Wolf,

snow leopard, lynx, wolverine, brown bear, fox, golden eagle, humans and are commonly found in the alpine meadows and crags across Central Asia.

SNOW LEOPARD (*Uncia uncia*, or *Panthera uncia*)

The snow leopard, sometimes known as the ounce, is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of central and south Asia. The taxonomic position of this species has been subject to change. In the past, many taxonomists included the snow leopard in the genus *Panthera*, with several of the other largest felids, but later it was placed in its own genus, *Uncia*. However, most recent molecular studies place the species firmly within the genus *Panthera*, although the exact position remains unclear. Along with the clouded leopard, it represents an intermediate between so-called big cats and smaller species, as it cannot roar, despite possessing a cartilaginous hyoid apparatus which is thought essential in allowing the big cats to roar. Despite its name, the snow leopard is not related to the leopard, "*Panthera pardus*", and is thought by some to be more closely related to the cheetah, "*Acinonyx jubatus*". Both cats share similar physical characteristics, such as round skulls, long legs and large counter-balancing tails. The cheetah, like the snow leopard, is also incapable of roaring, a trait only known in the Pantherine cats.

Well known for its beautiful fur, the snow leopard has a soft grey coat with ringed spots and rosettes of black on brown. The fur turns white in the winter. Its tail is heavy with fur and the bottom of its paws are covered with fur for protection against snow and cold. The life span of a snow leopard is normally 15-18 years, but in captivity they can live up to 20 years.

Weighing up to 75 kilograms, the snow leopard can be distinguished from other similar species by its proportionately longer tail, which helps it maintain its balance on the rugged terrain and unstable surfaces of its habitat. The snow leopard's tail also doubles as a warmth cover and is used to cover its nose and mouth in very cold conditions. The male's head is usually much squarer and wider than that of the female. Its big furry feet act as snowshoes, like those of the lynx. In summer, snow leopards usually live above the tree-line on mountainous meadows and in rocky regions at an altitude of up to 6000 m. In winter, they come down into the forests at an altitude of about 2000 m. They lead largely solitary lives,



although mothers can rear cubs for extended periods of time in cave dens in the mountains.

Snow leopards have grey-and-white fur with numerous rosettes on the flanks and spots on the head and neck, similar to jaguars. Their tails are striped. They are opportunistic feeders, eating whatever meat they can find; they often kill animals three times their size, including domestic livestock. Snow leopards ambush prey from above when possible, as they can jump as far as 15 meters. Their agility often proves helpful when ambushing prey and traversing through mountains. Their diet consists of ibex, bharal, markhor, urial, boars, as well as marmots and other small rodents. Snow leopards' habitat in central and south Asia, a rugged mountainous region of approximately 1,230,000 square kilometers, extends through 12 countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The total estimated wild population of the snow leopard is between 3,500 and 7,000 individuals, of which about 750 live in Mongolia.

GRAY WOLF (*Canis lupus lupus*)



The Gray Wolf (also known as the Timber Wolf) is a mammal in the order Carnivora. The Gray Wolf shares a common ancestry with the domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), as evidenced by DNA sequencing and genetic drift studies. Gray wolves were once abundant and distributed over much of North America, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Today, for a variety of human-related reasons including widespread habitat destruction and excessive hunting, wolves inhabit only a very limited portion of their former range. Though listed as a species of least concern for extinction worldwide, for some regions including the Continental United States, the species is listed as endangered or threatened.

The Gray Wolf, being a keystone predator, is an important part of the ecosystems to which it typically belongs. The wide range of habitats in which wolves can thrive reflects their adaptability as a species, and includes temperate forests, mountains, tundra, taiga, and grasslands. In much of the world, with the exception of Northern regions, they are listed as endangered. They continue to be hunted in many areas of the world as perceived threats to livestock and humans, as well as for sport. The weight and size of the Gray Wolf can vary enormously worldwide, though both tend to increase proportionally with higher latitudes. Generally speaking, height varies from 0.6–0.9 meters (26–36 inches) at the shoulder, and weight can range anywhere from 23–59 kilograms (50–130 pounds), making wolves the largest among all wild canids. Although rarely encountered, extreme specimens reaching over 77 kg (170 lb) have been recorded in Alaska and Canada, and the heaviest wild wolf on record,


which was killed in Alaska in 1939, weighed 80 kg (175 lb). The smallest wolves come from the Arabian Wolf subspecies, the females of which may weigh as little as 10 kg (22 lb) at maturity. Females in a given population typically weigh about 20% less than their male counterparts. Wolves can measure anywhere from 1.3–2 meters (4.5–6.5 feet) from nose to tail tip; the tail itself accounts for approximately one quarter of overall body length.

Wolves are built for stamina, possessing features designed for long-distance travel. Narrow chests and powerful backs and legs facilitate efficient locomotion. They are capable of covering several miles trotting at about a 10 km/h (6 mph) pace, and have been known to reach speeds approaching 65 km/h (40 mph) during a chase (wolves only run fast when testing potential prey). While thus sprinting, wolves can cover up to 5 meters (16 ft) per bound.

Wolf paws are able to tread easily on a wide variety of terrains, especially snow. There is a slight webbing between each toe, which allows wolves to move over snow more easily than comparatively hampered prey. Wolves are digitigrade, so the relative largeness of their feet helps to better distribute their weight on snowy surfaces. The front paws are larger than the hind paws, and have a fifth digit, a dewclaw, that is absent on hind paws. Bristled hairs and blunt claws enhance grip on slippery surfaces, and special blood vessels keep paw pads from freezing. Scent glands located between a wolf's toes leave trace chemical markers behind, helping the wolf to effectively navigate over large expanses while concurrently keeping others informed of its whereabouts.

A wolf sometimes seems heavier than it actually is due to its bulky coat, which is made of two layers. The first layer consists of tough guard hairs designed to repel water and dirt. The second is a dense, water-resistant undercoat that insulates the wolf. Wolves have distinct winter and summer pelages that alternate in spring and autumn. Females tend to keep their winter coats further into the spring than males.

Wolves have stout, blocky muzzles that help distinguish them from coyotes and dogs. Wolves also differ in certain skull dimensions, having a smaller orbital angle, for example, than dogs (>53 degrees for dogs compared to <45 degrees for wolves) and a comparatively larger brain capacity. Larger paw size, yellow eyes, longer legs, and bigger teeth further distinguish adult wolves from other canids, particularly dogs. Also, precaudal glands at the base of the tail are present in wolves but not in dogs.

Wolves and most larger dogs share identical dentition; the maxilla has six incisors, two canines, eight premolars, and four molars. The mandible has six incisors, two canines, eight premolars, and six molars. The fourth upper premolars and first lower molars constitute the carnassial teeth, which are essential tools for shearing flesh. The long canine teeth are also important, in that they are designed to hold and subdue the prey. Powered by 1500 lb/sq. inch of pressure, a wolf's teeth are its main weapons as well as its primary tools. Therefore, any injury to the jaw line or teeth could devastate a wolf, dooming it to starvation or incompetence. Mongolia's wolf population has been increasing and they are often culled. 

Wolf Hunting In Khentii

Wolves are on the increase in Mongolia and are often found attacking livestock and horses, which they then kill indiscriminately in a blood lust, far more than they can actually need. For this reason culls are undertaken locally in many locations across the country when valuable animals get taken. While at Mongolia Expat we do not generally condone hunting, and especially of endangered species, the wolf is best kept to manageable numbers. In this article, by "Peter", we have a first hand account of a wolf hunt, Mongolian style.

Mongolia is overrun by wolves. They are a serious menace to stock. Mongolians hunt them all the time and the State Department Store is full of their skins. Therefore it must be a relatively easy task to track them down and shoot them? Wrong.

On a cold October Friday afternoon I set off from Ulaanbaatar for Tsenhermandal just across the provincial border in Khentii. There I was to meet my Mongolian friend who I had been unwise enough to tell I wanted to go wolf hunting. After cruising along the amazing new Japanese road through the grim coal town of Baganuur, I arrived. A brief reunion and off we set. I had not expected it to be quite so quick.

An hour and a half to the south of the main road, in the middle of nowhere, I found myself lying in a snow filled ditch with a very fine German hunting rifle, gazing at the side of a valley bathed in evening sunlight. Half an hour passed before I heard the whooping sound of the beaters. Two other guns were to the left and right of me but I could not see them. Suddenly high on the crest of the valley to the left six shadows moved quickly across the face of the hill towards us. So it was easy. But then they turned and swept the other way. There was something not quite right. They were deer. All the same to my companions, but not while I was lying in a now wet (I had forgotten that if you lie in snow it melts) cold ditch.

The light had gone so off we set to drive the back route to Ondorhaan. Our external searchlights probing the dark for a fox or a wolf, I concluded it must be worthwhile. Once caught in the light, the wolf presumably froze and waited to be shot. We didn't see one in that hour and a half, so I never found out. But from what I now know, I would guess that shooting a wolf in the dark is a bit like hoping England will win the Ashes.

A short sleep in Ondorhaan before we set off at 5 am to travel north towards the Russian border. After three hours we arrived at a herder's ger. Our arrival was eagerly awaited, but we were late; the sun was already up. No time to eat - we set off in two vehicles crashing across the steppe, guns everywhere, some held together with string. There were four in my vehicle. The windows were open. I became obsessed with checking my safety catch. A river lay across our path. No hesitation, no check on the condition of the ice, no reduction of speed. Our objective was to get to the top of the highest hill and watch for wolves returning home after a night's hunting. So there I stood in the coldest place on earth, if not the universe, my binoculars freezing to my eyebrows, searching the surrounding countryside. Nothing, we were too late. The sun was too high. They had returned to their lairs.

So off we set again across the steppe. A fox was spotted and pursued. Mongolians believe if you ignore a fox you will never catch a wolf, and so it was chased hither and thither. I had no idea they could run so fast, doubling back, always heading for the hills and the rough terrain as if it understood the limitations of a Land Cruiser. Eventually tired and exhausted it was shot. I felt rather sad about it all.



Eventually we stopped on the crest of a hill looking down into a small valley. The relative shelter of the valley had enabled a grove of silver birch to take hold. The trees were full of snow. We took up our positions behind rocks and stunted trees while the beaters worked their way down the other side, whooping and firing guns. No wolf, just some startled pigeons. This we did all day in a dozen valleys. At one point we passed a ger where three wolf pelts were stretched out on the ground. No Land Cruisers there, just horses. 'Ah!' said my companion 'but they watch them for days before shooting them'.

With fading light we returned to our ger, tired with only a fox to show for our efforts. An evening meal of boiled horse meat and rough bread with a thick layer of cream. The wife cooked with consummate skill. The ger was no tourist camp but it was warm and snug with eleven of us lying on the floor around the fire. Outside the stock lay in absolute silence in the inky black. On venturing to the loo I found myself in a herd of goats before I noticed them.

Again an early start, but this time we were at the top of the hill before the sun came up. Raw cold, all eyes scanned the surrounding county side. The focal point was the frozen river. Suddenly a pack of six wolves were spotted making their way home along the river. But they were too far away. Then one turned back, still hungry after the scent of a kill they'd made somewhere. It would prove a fatal mistake.

Once down on the level all view was lost, but clearly the driver knew where he was heading. After a mad dash across terrain I would take at a very slow pace, we rounded a low hill and there he was. Going like the wind and heading for the hills. This time he made it and we had to follow, my safety catch firmly on. Once more we plunged down to the flat steppe at a crazy angle and at 40, 50 Kilometres an hour. But this time the tactic was to keep him on the flat. Shots were fired out of the windows, shell cases flying everywhere, cracking off the windscreen. At last he turned sharply away from us and we stopped. Shots rang out. No hit, but he panicked, turned across our line of fire and was winged. He hardly paused and ran on as fast as ever. Another mad chase until he was hit again and went down. Another shot and it was over. Some vodka to celebrate, and calm the nerves, and the dead wolf was thrown onto the roof. People appeared from nowhere to admire our handiwork (and share the vodka). It was 7 am.

On the way back we found their kill - a freshly killed horse, the work of the pack of six, now five. It's tail was cut off by our team, and the poor disembowelled creature just left to feed the carrion of the steppe. All day we repeated the lying in valleys routine and found only one other wolf. But he ran away from the guns. Sensible creature. [ME](#)

ULAAN BAATAR LISTINGS

This section of Mongolia Expat is a free listings section of bars, restaurants and nightclubs in Ulaan Baatar. Things change, and places close and new places open, so check before you go. If you think you should be listed in this section please contact editor@mongoliaexpat.com with details.

BARS



pints brewing away. A variety of light and dark beers are on tap and there is a good German themed menu.

Isimuss

Just opposite the Wrestling Stadium on Peace Avenue East
Tel: 461146

Worth the visit just to take in the huge statue of Stalin – which used to be opposite the Central library – that now graces this Soviet themed bar. Well cool, and Uncle Joe even suggests a smirk as young buxom beauties cavort around his feet.

Khan Brau, German Beer Garden

Chingisiin Orgon Choloo
Tel 326 626
The German bier garden by excellence. Klaus, the owner of Khan Brau is usually spotted at the regular's table. He will entertain you with his tales of Mongolia while you drink a pint of his excellent home brewed bier and listen to the live Mongolian band. Situated just across from the National Theatre, it is a favourite hang out of the German community of Ulaan Baatar.

Dave's Place

Sukhbaatar Square
Tel 99798185
Dave is the archetypal British pub landlord, and will look after you in his small bar in the basement of the Cultural Palace – or in the summer, on his impressive veranda right on Sukhbaatar Square. Homebase of the UB Yaks, the local rugby team as well as the final target of the Mongol Rally, this bar is popular all year round. Thursday's feature a well attended pub quiz. In winter it is cosy with assorted British regulars there most nights. Typical British menu and beers on tap.

Crystal Lounge

Peace Avenue, just across from the State Dept Store
Ulaan Baatars first lounge bar is a classy, minimalist, all white bar with an eclectic selection of spirits, liquors and wines. The place to come if you want to splash 700USD on a bottle of Cristal. However, cocktails are reasonably priced and it's an inventive menu. Probably not the type of place to turn up at in desert boots and rucksack, so pack your guccis if you want to get in.

Canuckz, Canadian Pub

Embassy area in front of the German Embassy – Negdsen Undestnii Gudamj
Welcome to Tyler and Canuckz new pub. Opened by a Canadian Hockey player and English Teacher, this is a home from home for Canadians in UB. The main room has been decorated by the students of the art college. Normal range of imported beers and a limited but good menu.

The Steppe Inn

British Embassy
Fridays only, from 6pm, sited in the British Embassy, this is the longest running bar in UB. You need to be a British national and / or invited by a member to get in. To be on the safe side it is better to call the Embassy to ask for permission to attend: Tel: 458 036. Pints are pulled by the Ambassador which is an excellent way to deploy Her Majesties diplomats.

Ulaan Baatar has a wealth of bars and there are many to choose from. Here we feature some of the best known and well established, but new bars open up regularly, so ask around for what's hot and where's new. Most bars open 'til late – UB is a late night party city.

Budweiser Bar

Sukhbataar Square, West Side
The original Czech Budweiser, not the pale American imitation, this bar is sited right on Sukhbataar Square and is a good venue to go for the real beer and fried lamb and chicken. Good value.

Ikh Mongol

Seoul Street, next to the State Circus
This large venue is German in style and look with a big central room and various smaller rooms at the back. With a very large outdoor terrace overlooking the circus, it gets very busy during the summer months. Ikh Mongol is a fun place to spend the Oktoberfest as well as those cold winter nights. With their own brews on tap, there is plenty of choice in both drinks and food – German inspired – this is a happening place with live Mongolian bands on the busy nights and a DJ after hours.

Dublin

Seoul Street, on the corner with the circus
The Dublin is a small pub on the corner facing the circus, this extremely popular locale serves Irish and international beers in a clean, comfortable and safe environment, while the service is swift and efficient. A typical Irish style expat bar, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Grand Khan Irish Pub

Seoul Street, Next to the National Theatre
This is by far the largest and most popular bar in town. This large glass structure houses the Irish bar on the ground floor and the VIP rooms as well as a beauty centre on the first floor. The bar itself is large and commercial in its look but always full of expats and wealthy Mongolians, great for meetings or groups, the level of service is professional and the quality constant. In summer there is a large terrace and a stage for the live band. Situated just across from the Prime Minister's residence and next to the National Theatre it is easily accessible by foot from anywhere in the city centre. Who knows? You may see the PM himself in for a pint.

Chinggis Brewery and Pub Sukhbataaryn Gudamj

A pub sited right next to Ulaan Baatars Chinggis Brewery – how cool is that? Talk about the freshest beer in town – glass walls between the pub and the brewery mean you can see your future

RESTAURANTS



City Coffee

Chingisiin Orgon Choloo
Tel 329 077
City Coffee is located next to Khan Brau. It is a cafe, a bakery, internet and library. They also have some good dishes – mainly Chinese, and a selection of beers and coffees.

Orange Café

By the German Embassy
Orange is a warm relaxing place, with a German menu and imported magazines
There is another Orange café next to the Natural History Museum

Millie's Café

Marco Polo Building, the café faces the Monastery of Choijin Lama.
Tel 330 338
Millie's is an Institution for expats in UB and its perfect location attracts tourists too. Millie's is well known not only because of the location but also for their excellent shakes and smoothies, chocolate cake or the Apple pie, or to enjoy a great breakfast while glancing through their wide selection of magazines. Just next door is the Xanadu bookstore, it's a mandatory stop to stock up on English language Mongolian guides, books, and novels.

Sachers, German Bakery

Peace Avenue and a branch behind the Trade and Development bank (our favourite of the two)
Tel 324 734
An appealing German bakery with a charming cozy atmosphere. Fresh flowers on the tables
Drinks: Coffee, Café Latte, Tea, chocolate; Soft drink: Juice, milkshake; All day Breakfasts Classic German and non –German pastries : apple strudel, quarchle strudel, pineapple pie, bretzle, donut bagels, freshly baked. Also open in the evening, doubling up as a wine bar.

Chez Bernard, European

Peace Avenue 27
Tel 324 622
Chez Bernard is located on central Peace Avenue. It offers a nice, warm atmosphere and is a back packers favorite, with its notice board used to find travel mates to go to the countryside, second hand gear and so on. Mainly frequented by tourists.

Mongolian Restaurants

World Restaurant

Located behind the London Pub this restaurant serves proper Mongolian food while a reasonable try is made of occidental dishes but they are of varying quality. Big mirrors and world maps decorate this local. Tuya the owner speaks French and would be happy to assist you in any way.

New Mongolia

Behind the State Department Store, you will recognize the restaurant from the sign outside
Tel : 88828999.
Inexpensive but excellent Mongolian, Asian and Central European dishes.

Nomad Legend

Located on the left side of the central museum.
Mongolian Food at a reasonable price.
Tel: 330633.

City Nomads

West side of Sukhbataar square next to the Golomt bank.
Tel : 327700
A buffet restaurant offering good Mongolian dishes and a favourite with expats and locals.

History Club

Juulchin street, near Channel 25 building,
Tel: 311732
Newly open Mongolian restaurant. They serve European dishes and Mongolian traditional food prepared by a professional Mongolian chef.

Ikh Mongol restaurant

Left side of State Circus
Tel: 340450.
Great warm atmosphere, English speaking staff and very traditional Mongolian dishes, you've never tried before! A popular restaurant.

Taliin Mongol restaurant

Chingeltei district, 4th horoo trade street CIA building, 2nd floor
Tel: 319451
Serving traditional Mongolian food, with an excellent barbecue

Modern Nomads

Baga Toiruu north. Just opposite to Chinggis Club.
Tel 318 744 – Reservation recommended the place is always packed!
<http://www.modernnomads.mn/>

If you feel like trying Mongolian Food but do not feel like going to those small street restaurants this is your place - offering high-quality traditional Mongolian dishes". Selection of wine. Nice atmosphere, an outdoor terrace and a favourite of locals and expats.

Western Restaurants

Chinggis Brewery Area – Sukhbataaryn Gudamj

(to the North of Sukhbaatar Square)

Bella - Italian restaurant

Good English Pleasant atmosphere – Piano concert in summer

Very well established and authentic Italian restaurant, with wide selection of pasta and regional Italian dishes and French and Italian wines.

Bora Bora

Just down from the State Department Store towards the Circus on the left hand side, this white minimalist trendy joint does good cheap Italian and Japanese style food.

Los Bandidos, Mexican Indian Restaurant

Baga toiruu ikh surguuliin gudamj
Tel 314167. 99194618. 99095746
A unique combination of Mexican and Indian foods – and very good they are too !

Chinggis Restaurant (Korean)

Huge wood panelled dining room, perfect for groups!
Concert and live band, and an excellent Teppanyaki buffet
French & Australian wines

The Gate Restaurant and Pub

Tel : 11332009
Nice atmosphere, elegant setting. Very friendly staff
Great for business lunch or to spoil yourself, this restaurant was recently chosen to host the Mongolian music awards, and is often regarded as having the best burgers in town. Add to that great desserts and an exhaustive wine list French, Italian, Australian, Chile.. and a cocktails master.

Choijin Lama Monastery Area

(to the South of Sukhbaatar Square)

The Silk Road restaurant

Jamiyan Guunii Gudamj, Close to the Monastery
Tel 9191 4455
A charming, well located restaurant with an open terrace facing the Temple. Good for Mediterranean style cuisine and a great chilled out atmosphere.

La Veranda, European Style

Above Silk Road. Same location, Jamiyan Guunii Gudamj
Great view over the Monastery. Great atmosphere, relaxing place with big sofa, perfect for a date.
The cuisine is good, they have a good selection of wines...and they have that view....

Circus Area

(Just south of the State Department Store)

Marco Polo, Italian restaurant

Seoul Street 27
Tel 325 240
Wood fired Pizza oven in the entrance, with a warm atmosphere, perfect for winter lunch and dinner. You will enjoy the outdoor terrace during summer. Voted best pizzas by many of UB residents. Beware of same named Strip Bar upstairs if you're with kids, but that doesn't open until midnight.

UB Deli

Seoul Street 48
Tel 325 240
The UB Deli serves gourmet sandwiches with salads, pasta and pizza. It has a cosy and comfortable atmosphere. Managed by Lee Cashell the American entrepreneur, the UB Deli has become a popular location for parties and meetings while the English speaking staff is always happy to help with tips and info about Mongolia.

California



Seoul Street. Same street same side as Marco Polo but a bit further along.
Tel 319 031
Nice atmosphere, US styled bar / diner, with red leather bench seating, and an enclosed front terrace. Great steak and salads, western / American dishes but Mongolian dishes as well. Good selection of wines. Reservation recommended the place is often packed. Very popular with the American community.

Emerald Bay

Tserendorjiin Gudamj - the street leading from the State Department Store to the Circus. Opposite to Michele's Bakery. Located above a disc shop, Emerald Bay restaurant offers a small outdoor terrace and great Greek and Mediterranean food

Other Locations

Le Bistrot Français, French Food

Surguuliin Gudamj
Tel (976) 11 32 00 22
More info on their website – in French only - <http://www.bistrot-mongolia.mn/links.html>

Styled as a traditional French Bistrot, Guy the owner manages to import the traditional French Bistrot Atmosphere, with small coffee tables in the entrance, a bar as in every bistrot, French magazines, and traditional French cuisine, with a good selection of wines. A popular place.

Hazara, Indian Restaurant

Behind the Wrestling Palace
Tel 9919 5701
East of the city centre, Hazara, is UB's first Indian restaurant and is a long term expat favourite for their North Indian dishes. They have their own tandoori oven. Recommended by local expats as the best Indian in UB.

Night Clubs



There are a growing number of night clubs in Ulaan Baatar where the city gets up, out and has a good time, dancing to the latest hip hop and cool tunes out of the US or Europe. UB increasingly has a growing selection of upmarket clubs and you can buy anything here from beer on tap to bottles of Krug. Again, places change and go in and out of fashion so check before you turn up. These listed however represent some of the most popular and reliable.

River Sounds

Olympiin Orgon Choloo – south of Sukhbaatar Square
River sounds is one of the most established and best located night clubs in UB. Just south of Sukhbaatar square along Olympic avenue it is easily recognizable by its neon lights spelling out it's name. The inside is modern with a large dance floor surrounded by sofas and chairs. A variety of bands and artists play on Friday and Saturday nights to offer a very wide variety of musical styles. A cover charge is applicable. The River Sounds crowd is generally slightly older than most of the other clubs, it is a favourite spot with the consultants and executives from the expat community.

Strings

Strings is modeled after the Hard Rock Café in Beijing, and is also one of the most popular night clubs of the moment. It's a little hard to find at the back of a little alley way slightly outside of the city centre. It is set on two floors with a large central stage where a live band plays on most nights. Strings is popular with the local Mongolian youth, usually packed on Friday's and Saturday's. Some of the younger expats attend but generally it's a crowded and entertaining venue. The upstairs seating is quieter and has its own bar which is not as busy at the main bar downstairs.

Flux

An enormous night club set just to the south of Sukhbaatar square with bright red neon lights. The inside of the club has a feel of the American 70's while the local crowd dances away on the heavy house music. Popular with locals and worth a visit.

The Oasis Club and Lounge

The Oasis club is the newest and swankiest lounge club in Ulaan Baatar, it is an entirely new and unique concept in Mongolia with a trendy, relaxed and cool interior design which allows you to pose or be more modest, settling down into deep

sofas. They play the latest tunes from the UK and France and is a firm favourite with the expats in UB. Christophe, the French manager of the bar is usually found behind it serving his unique cocktail creations and various alcohols he has travelled the world to find. The Oasis Club and Lounge is situated in the courtyard just behind the popular UB Delicatessen restaurant. In summer there is vast and comfortable seating in the lounge own courtyard with a BBQ and fountains to set the town. An extremely popular venue for the weary travellers after a long tour in the Gobi seeking peace and relaxation from the hustle and bustle of Ulaan Baatar.

Hollywood

Zaluus Youth & Cultural Center, Zaluuchuudyn Orgon Choloo
Located near the Indian Embassy, this small club is pretty cool and popular with the locals. Relatively upmarket with a Hollywood movie theme, the film inspired décor is interesting and it plays the latest tunes.

Muse

Maral Tavern Bldg, Baga Toiruu
Very popular with the new yuppie Mongolians who have just discovered the fun that can be had dancing and dressing up for the occasion. This small venue gets quickly packed but can form the basis of a great night out.

Face

Juulchin Gudamj
Always busy, very popular with the young Mongolians and expats, very black and dark interior decoration with large mirrors and lots of flashing lights. A place to dance rather than relax.

UB Palace

Chingunjavijn Gudamj
The UB palace is a large entertainment complex with several venues within it. It is located north of Peace Avenue on the east side of the 1st micro-district. It plays different music styles to suit all tastes. Plenty of cheap drinks and bar fines for heaving up on the dance floor.

Berlin

Baruun Selbe 14/1
Loud techno joint popular with locals and Russian expats and travelers, open until 5am.

Marco Polo Club

Seoul Street 27
Somewhat notorious, the Marco Polo club is situated above the pizza restaurant of the same name; the club is accessed by a discreet door to the rear of the restaurant, with a cover charge to gain entry. The club was UB's first strip joint and is reasonably classy, with sashaying ladies in various state of undress suggestively dancing along the lounge. 5,000 tg tips tucked in suspenders and underwear will usually result in speedier removal, but no touching.

Seoul Hotel Nightclub

Peace Avenue, to the west of the State Department Store
Another popular strip club, with various assorted views of some spectacular Mongolian hills and valleys.

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