



Bayangol District, 6th khoroo, Micro District 10, Room No. 305

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia



From left to right: Federico Marrone, Alessandra Sicilia, Giulia Visconti and Martina Oddo, the eco-volunteers. Next Claudio Augugliaro who generously assisted this eco-volunteer camp and followed by Choikhand Janchivlamdan, GI Director and front Sambuu, local guide.

The year of 2012 has been a very productive for our NGO. In fact we extend our activity and presence towards the rural community of Mongolia.

The first year we started the eco-volunteer camp in the rural area to conduct our field research and contribute the local community. Our camp organised for August, it was held in Bayan Onjuul soum at Tov Province, a buffer zone closest to the Hustai National Park. The eco-volunteers were engaged and interacted with local people and experienced of herding lifestyle. From the local community there were five individuals (from three different families) who assisted us in daily basis for cooking, driving, and other domestic work. They also provided us two local guides, a translator, and two traditional nomadic felt tents (it is called as GER) to rent for lodging. The aim of eco-volunteer camp was to provide the opportunity to find the insights of the crucial points between contradicting and coupling conservation and livelihood of nomads, and to promote participation and awareness raising of local people for conservation at grassroot level. Thanks to the excellent qualification of our eco-volunteers, we accomplished the main task of our mission. Their scientific knowledge and training was appreciated by the local people and they shared the quality time during small group training and field study.

The local people were interested in sampling and teaching about their own living environment and biodiversity. On the other hand the eco-volunteers had great experience for being a part of with nomadic community in open steppe. The eco-volunteers impressed the knowledge and the parataxonomy skills of the local people (which known and nominated in Mongolian some crustaceans species) and the nomads approach their environment.



Here, the eco-volunteer Federico Marrone, researcher on inland water crustaceans from the University of Palermo (Italy), was showing some crustaceans specimens collected in a temporary pond to local people.

Besides these activities we aimed to involve the eco-volunteers for our biodiversity conservation action in the field. The main activity in Bayan Onjuul was focused on the monitoring of species belong Artiodactyla order. In fact, this species are target for hunting and trade (as trophy and wool) at the local and international level. An area like Bayan Onjuul, which is located just next the national park (Hustai National Park), could be attractive for many national and international poachers.

During the field, we tracked the presense/absence of the species in the area, recorded: the species name, number of specimens for herds and geographical coordinates.

The species of ungulates for which we collected the data are: Argali (*Ovis ammon*), Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Siberian Ibex (*Capra sibirica*) and Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*). Majority of these species became rare throughout their areal distribution.



Argali (*Ovis ammon*).

Remaining time of the field, we observed the conflict between herders and predators species. This conflict draws our attention to further study.

In order to understand this critical issue and find potential solution, we prepared the questionnaire for local communities. We made twenty five interviews with the herders around the field study areas, and got very significant information in this regard.



In this picture a family interviewed, Claudio Augugliaro (on the left) who assisted to J. Choikhand in the interviews.

In particular herders denounced a serious conflict with wolves, which increased the number of attacks to the cattle. They added probably due to the increased number of livestock is the key factor for wolves attack. According to the interviews, we got the impacts of wolf that caused significant damage to herders' livestock (which have only cash/income value for their livelihood), and occurred a serious threat for humans by attacking. In the case of attacking human, wolves' fault can't be proved. Our NGO realised that there is an urgent need to find a suitable solution and appropriate balance between helping herders' livelihood and saving wolves from the indiscriminate persecution.

When we start our activity, it was focused on water conservation as our priority. We also continued the work on water conservation and its management by herders group. Mongolian society outside of the Capital City Ulaanbaatar is still remained as family of herder groups and lives in the traditional GER. Out of large urban settlements, only small portion of rural population live at the semi-rural centre (called Sum centre). Water supply for herders and animals is made through simple dug well. Generally these wells have an average depth of 3-5m. According to the report of the "National Water Authority

of Mongolia", there is 38.700 such kind of wells recorded in 2006 throughout Mongolia.

Due to the lack of strategic planning and health and safety standards dug wells were served in both ecological degradation and needs of drinking water sources of rural Mongolia. According to our observation, dug wells were built and used inappropriate materials (like truck's tires).



Herders collect the drinking water for them and their cattle.

In our last concern, rural wells were found exceeding the limits of minimum requirement of health and safety standards. In addition there is a risk of pollution for the ground water that caused by the physiological waste of large number of livestock accumulated on the surface of the dug wells. Those wastes can penetrate into the ground and further polluting water sources by Nitrogen compounds. During the field survey we found a calf fell down into one of those dug wells and local users can not use the water for many days. Furthermore, there is a notable waste of fresh water during the animal watering due to the tub damages. It needs an urgent action to resolve this situation and increase the efficient usage of fresh water sources. It would be our next work. Based on these findings, our further activities will be formulated for the benefits of the global environmental protection. Taking this opportunity, we would like to welcome potential partners and funders to work with us and wishes the best of success and prosperity for our colleagues and friends of the network.