



Photos: Haroldo Castro

## Hustai National Park Takhi re-introduction

*Hustai National Park is the site of a unique re-introduction scheme of Przewalskii's horse (*Equus przewalskii*), called "takhi" by Mongolians. It became extinct in the wild in 1969 and, since 1992, have been successfully re-introduced to Hustai from zoos around the world. This has been an international effort monitored by The Foundation for the Przewalskii Horse, based in the Netherlands and MACNE (Mongolian Association for Conservation of Nature and the Environment). The national park is rolling steppe mountains with rather large patches of birch and aspen forests. There are also visible remains of neolithic graves. In addition, red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) and wolf (*Canis lupus*) have increased quite a bit during the last few years, as well as Mongolian gazelle. Species present in Hustai but usually not seen include Lynx, Argali Sheep and Roe Deer.*

### Brief Outline Itinerary

Hustai National Park is located around Hustai (Birch) Mountain, north of the Tuul River some 2-3 hours drive west of Ulaanbaatar. You will be transferred by vehicle and when in Hustai there will be some shorter hikes supported by pack-horse.

#### Day 1: To Hustai

A.m. Pick up at your hotel in Ulaanbaatar and drive southwesterly along the Tuul River and its riverine forest meadows. At Altanbulag village a statue of a takhi has been raised in honor of their re-introduction and the creation of Hustai National Park. Two-thirds of the national park is located on Altanbulag's territory. The Dutch project has also assisted in setting up a cheese factory here, which is part of a community project to enhance the local economy. It sells high quality "Dutch Gouda cheese". We will continue, crossing the Tuul River, and drive into Hustai National Park through the Tariat Valley. We will make our way to the Hustai Ger Camp, operated by MACNE, on the northern borderline of the Hustai. In the evening we will take a game drive with a high probability of seeing some of the free roaming herds of the takhi. During the day they usually stay high in the mountains and are rather difficult to see, whereas very early and late in the day they usually come down into the valleys for water and to graze. Overnight in gers.

at the ger camp we will return to Ulaanbaatar by the tarmac road.

## Practicalities

**Transport:** This journey is supported by a jeep or minibus to and from Hustai National Park, as well as packhorse to carry some of the necessities of the trek.

**Staff:** Mongolian English-speaking local guide will accompany you at all times.

**Meals:** The meals will be provided at the ger camp, or as picnics.

**Overnights:** The gers have 2-4 beds in each, and they are furnished with beds, stools and a table. WC and showers are in communal shower blocks.

**Combinations:** This journey extends very well to Arburd Sands Ger Camp (see separate itinerary). You may transfer to Arburd Sands, instead of back to Ulaanbaatar at a total additional cost USD 50.

### PRICE ex Ulaanbaatar:

**USD 480 per person (2/6 members)**

Single Supplement: **USD 30 per night.**

Additional night at the camp: **USD 100**

Transport supplement by Japanese jeep: **USD 180 per vehicle**

**Includes:** Leadership, all meals outside Ulaanbaatar. Two overnights in ger camp. All local transport and transfers to/from Ulaanbaatar.

**Excludes:** Imported drinks. Transfers and hotel nights in Ulaanbaatar.

**DATES ex Ulaanbaatar:** Daily.

Reservations:



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### Day 2: Hustai trek

Today we will make a trek through the varied habitats of Hustai National Park. Starting out from the ger camp we will hike the ridges with views over the distant Moltsog Sands as well as the partly forested Hustai Mountains. We will trek up a gully to incredible look-out points, while having a reasonable chance to see red deer, black vultures and other numerous raptors such as eagles and falcons. We will reach the backcountry camp at Moilt, which consists of simple houses. These have recently been somewhat refurbished by MACNE to provide basic accommodation. The camp is located in an excellent spot next to the core area and is well suited for wildlife viewing on foot in the late evening. Transfer back to camp by vehicle and overnight in gers.

### Day 3: To Ulaanbaatar

A vehicle picks us up and we now drive across the steppe towards the Tuul River. We will eventually reach the remarkable Neolithic graves of Öngüt, of the 6th or 7th century A.D. We will thereafter make our way to the Tuul River and its willows for some birding. Red-footed falcons are relatively easy to see here. After a lunch



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