



'Savor Exciting Adventures in a Responsible Way'

5th floor, Lagshan Business Center, Prime Minister Amar Street,
8th khoroo, Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar 14200, Mongolia.

Tel: +976-95044662, +976-88064991

Email: soaring@expeditions.mn

Website: www.expeditions.mn

WILD CATS MONGOLIA

06 – 19 July 2025



This epic expedition ventures into the majestic Altai Mountains in Mongolia's far west in a quest for truly enigmatic Snow Leopards and Manuls along with other iconic wildlife, including Mongolian Saiga, Siberian Ibex, and more. After arrival in the capital Ulaanbaatar, fly to Mongolia's remote west in pursuit of the elusive Snow Leopards in the pristine wilderness of the Altai Mountains, which is home to roughly 20% of the world's estimated population. The area boasts some interesting Central Asian bird specialties like Altai Snowcock, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Mongolian & Altai Accentors, Henderson's Groundjay, Pallas's Gull, and more.

Highlights:

- The incredibly scenic Mongolian Altai with snow-capped peaks, alpine lakes, meadows, and rivers;
- Enigmatic Snow Leopards along with cryptic Manul as well as charismatic Mongolian Saiga, Siberian Ibex, Takhi Wild Horse, Black-tailed and Mongolian Gazelles, and more;
- Mongolian Altai Bird Specialties: Altai Snowcock, Lammergeier, Himalayan Vulture, Golden and Steppe Eagles, Saker and Amur Falcons, White-winged Redstart, White-winged Snowfinch, Mongolian Accentor & Grey-necked Bunting;
- Lakes and Rivers: Pallas's Fish Eagle, Swan Goose, Bar-headed Goose, Red-crested Pochard, Arctic Loon, Demoiselle Crane, Mongolian Gull, White-headed Duck, Pallas's Gull, Azure Tit, White-crowned Penduline-tit, White-headed Yellow Wagtail, Long-tailed Rosefinch;
- Steppes of Margaz Mountains: Amur Falcon, Saker Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Upland Buzzard, Steppe Eagle, Hill Pigeon, Mongolian Lark, Small Snowfinch;
- Stay in the community-based ger camp run by Mongolian nomads.

Outline Itinerary

Date	Week-Days	Days	Destinations	Targets	Travel hours
July 17	Thursday	1	Ulaanbaatar	Birding	
July 18	Friday	2	Fly Hovd, transfer to Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	Fly 2, drive 1-2
July 19	Saturday	3	Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	
July 20	Sunday	4	Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	
July 21	Monday	5	Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	
July 22	Tuesday	6	Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	
July 23	Wednesday	7	Altai Mountains	Snow Leopards	
July 24	Thursday	8	Altai Mountains to Homyn Tal	Snow Leopards	
July 25	Friday	9	Homyn Tal to Margaz Mountains	Takhi Wild Horse	Drive 4-5h
July 26	Saturday	10	Margaz Mountains	Manul	Drive 3-4h
July 27	Sunday	11	Margaz Mountains	Manul	
July 28	Monday	12	Margaz Mountains	Manul	
July 29	Tuesday	13	Transfer to Ulaangom, fly Ulaanbaatar		Drive 3-4h, fly 2 h
July 30	Wednesday	14	Fly Home		

Kindly find the tour map at [Wild Cats Mongolia](#).

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival & Transfer to Hotel

Welcome to Mongolia and transfer to the reserved hotel tucked in one of the birding hotspots in the suburbs of the capital. Our hotel is nestled on the Tuul river bank in riparian forest close to the airport, away from the bustling city center. We will drive through construction wastes in order to get the birding spots, however, walk among gorgeous willow trees and small freshwater streams and pools formed from an old gravel pit. ([Hotel](#))

Target birds: Mandarin & Falcated Ducks, Amur Falcon, Demoiselle Crane, Pacific Swift, Azure-winged Magpie, Azure Tit, White-crowned Penduline-tit, White-cheeked Starling, Red-throated Thrush, and Long-tailed Rosefinch.

Target mammals: Daurian Pika & Long-tailed Ground Squirrel.

Day 2-7: Mongolian Altai including Great Lakes

Transfer to the airport and fly to Hovd for about 2 hours. Then take a drive to the Mongolian Altai. Settle in the community-based ger camp which is located near the elusive cats. We will spend these days exploring the mountain for the 'ghost' cats and other exotic animals in this pristine natural environment. ([Community-based Ger Camp](#))

The mountain provides the main prey species of Snow Leopards including the Siberian Ibex, Mongolian Marmots, and the Altai Snowcock. The exotic bird species which are only found above the 3,000 m above sea level will be White-winged Redstart, Altai Accentor, and Water Pipit and more.

The mountain provides a high opportunity to photograph the flying raptors including Himalayan and Bearded Vultures, Golden Eagle, Saker Falcon, and other unexpected migrants.

Target birds at Jargalant [Altai Mountains]: **Altai Snowcock**, Chukar Partridge, **Bearded**, Himalayan & Cinereous Vultures, Booted, Steppe & Golden Eagles, Upland Buzzard, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Little Owl, **Mongolian Ground-jay**, Red-billed Chough, Eurasian Crag Martin, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, **Wallcreeper**, Black Redstart, **White-winged Redstart**, Pied Wheatear, Rock Sparrow, **Water Pipit**, White-winged Snowfinch, **Altai** & Brown Accentors, Mongolian Finch, Brandt's Mountain-finch, Godlewski's Bunting & **Grey-necked Bunting**.

Target birds at Great Lakes' Depression: **Bar-headed**, Greylag & Swan Geese, **Red-crested Pochard**, **White-headed Duck**, Black-throated Loon, Black Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Long-legged Buzzard, **Demoiselle** & Common Cranes, Broad-billed, Sharp-tailed & Curlew Sandpipers, Temminck's, Long-toed & Red-necked Stints, Pintail Snipe, **Relict**, **Pallas's & Herring Gulls** (Mongolian), Gull-billed, Caspian, Little, Common, Whiskered & **White-winged Terns**, **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, **Isabelline & Steppe Grey Shrikes**, **Bearded Reedling**, Crested Lark, Great Reed, Paddyfield & Pallas's Grasshopper & Savi's Warblers, Desert Wheatear, White-headed Yellow & Citrine Wagtails and **Mongolian Finch**.

Target mammals at Jargalant [Altai Mountains]: Alpine Pika, Pallas's Pika, Tolai Hare, Mongolian Marmot, Long-tailed Ground Squirrel, Gobi Altai Mountain Vole, Mid-day Jird, Siberian Jerboa, Gobi Jerboa, Andrew's Three-toed Jerboa, Mongolian Three-toed Jerboa, Red Fox, Corsac Fox, Grey Wolf, Stoat, Manul, **Snow Leopard**, **Siberian Ibex**, Argali, and **Goitered Gazelle**.

Target mammals at Great Lakes' Depression: Long-eared Hedgehog, Pallid Ground Squirrel, Desert Hamster, Gobi Jerboa, Five-toed Pygmy Jerboa, Mongolian Three-toed Jerboa, **Corsac Fox**, Steppe Polecat, and **Mongolian Saiga**.

Day 8: Transfer to Homyn Tal National Park

In the morning, go on a game drive through a vast steppe and sand dunes while keeping an eye out for the Saiga Antelope to Khomyn Tal National Park. Khomyn Tal is a successful reintroduction site for the last wild horse living in the native environment. As a result of well-managed planning, there are now about 150 wild horses roaming in the area, where lies the panoramic steppes and sand dunes. ([Tourist Ger Camp](#)) (drive 4-5h)

En route, find the critically endangered at the world level Mongolian Saiga (*S. t. mongolica*), which has been pushed to a small patch of the area in western Mongolia. In the Great Lakes, we will search for White-headed Duck, Pallas's Sandgrouse, Henderson's Ground-Jay, Pallas's Grasshopper-Warbler, and White-headed Yellow Wagtail.

Target birds: Bar-headed Goose, **Daurian Partridge**, Bearded & Cinereous Vultures, Steppe & Golden Eagles, Lesser Kestrel, **Saker Falcon**, Greater Sandplover, **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, Isabelline & Steppe Grey Shrikes, **Mongolian Ground-jay**, Red-billed Cough, Azure Tit, **White-crowned Penduline-tit**, Crested Lark, **Red-throated Thrush**, Desert Wheatear, Rock Sparrow, Mongolian Finch, and **Long-tailed Rosefinch**.

Target mammals: Long-eared Hedgehog, Tolai Hare, Pallid Ground Squirrel, Desert Hamster, Mid-day Jird, Five-toed Pygmy Jerboa, Northern Three-toed Jerboa, Andrew's Three-toed Jerboa, Mongolian Three-toed Jerboa, Red Fox, Corsac Fox, **Grey Wolf**, **Takhi**, **Siberian Ibex**, **Mongolian Gazelle**, Goitered Gazelle, & Mongolian Saiga.

Day 9-12: Margaz Mountains

In the afternoon, continue the game drive through a vast steppe and sand dunes to Margaz Mountains. Based at our comfortable community-based ger camp run by friendly and hospitable Mongolian nomads/rangers, we spend these days exploring the mountain to accomplish our ultimate goal to enjoy the wild 'cats' and other exotic animals in this pristine wilderness – awe-inspiring granite rock tors and mountains, tranquil and verdant steppes, and massive dunes. ([Community-based Ger Camp](#))

Target birds: Bar-headed, Greylag & Swan Geese, Falcated Duck, Eastern Spot-billed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, **White-winged Scoter**, Chukar Partridge, Black-throated Loon, Eurasian Spoonbill, Bearded, Himalayan & Cinereous Vultures, Booted, Steppe & Golden Eagles, **Pallas's Fish Eagle**, White-tailed Eagle, Upland Buzzard, Long-legged Buzzard, Lesser Kestrel, **Saker Falcon**, Demoiselle & Common Cranes, **Oriental Plover**, **Asian Dowitcher**, Pintail Snipe, Relict, Pallas's & Herring Gulls (Mongolian), Gull-billed, Caspian, Little, Whiskered & **White-winged Terns**, **Pallas's Sandgrouse**, Little Owl, European Nightjar, Isabelline & Steppe Grey Shrikes, Mongolian Ground-jay, Red-billed Cough, **Crested, Horned, Mongolian & Asian Short-toed Larks**, Lesser Whitethroat,

Asian Desert Warbler, Black Redstart, Common Rock Thrush, Northern, Isabelline, Desert & Pied Wheatears, Rock Sparrow, White-winged Snowfinch, **Pere David's Snowfinch**, **Brown & Mongolian Accentors**, and Mongolian Finch.

Target mammals: **Long-eared Hedgehog**, Pallas's Pika, Tolai Hare, Mongolian Marmot, Long-tailed Ground Squirrel, Pallid Ground Squirrel, Desert Hamster, Mongolian Hamster, **Mongolian Mountain Vole**, Brandt's Vole, Mid-day Jird, Siberian Jerboa, Gobi Jerboa, Five-toed Pygmy Jerboa, Thick-tailed Pygmy Jerboa, Northern Three-toed Jerboa, Andrew's Three-toed Jerboa, Mongolian Three-toed Jerboa, Red Fox, **Corsac Fox**, **Grey Wolf**, Least Weasel, **Steppe Polecat**, **Manul**, Snow Leopard, Siberian Ibex, Argali, Mongolian Gazelle, and Asian Wapiti.

Day 13: Fly Ulaanbaatar

Return flight to Ulaanbaatar and go shopping for world's best cashmere. (3-star hotel, B-L-D)

Day 14: Fly Home

Transfer to the airport according to your flight schedule.

Trip details

Important notes

As Snow Leopards proved to be quite elusive animals, we might spend all day searching along with local trackers. The chance of observation for Snow Leopards is 80% and the Pallas's Cat is 90%. We might not get closer to the cat than 500m. Please do not wander around the mountain without asking your guides as there stands a danger from wildlife. We do not promise decent photographs. Indeed, the photography tours are run in the colder seasons when the marmots are in hibernation.

A short documentary about Mongolia's Snow Leopards that we produced in cooperation with Mur Wildlife Awareness Initiative and Mongolia's largest TV Channel MNB World:

[Silently Hunting - Snow Leopard - YouTube](#)

Dates

The suggested dates: **06 – 19 July 2025**. Please book your international flights accordingly. Please check with us when you book the flight, tour dates may change due to the schedule of domestic flights.

Costs

The price is US Dollars and is **per person** rate based on double occupancy. The single supplement is an extra 420 US\$. The cost includes all transport by 4WD car occupied by 3-4 clients and accommodation in Mongolia and local flights, local guides and cook, trackers, road tolls, and entry fees to national parks and protected areas, and drinking water.

Pax 4-6
3980

International Flights

Soaring Expeditions does not book international flights and is happy to give you a choice to book your favorite airlines or the shortest flights.

Physical Rating

Moderate

We designed this trip to involve the least possible strenuous walks and treks throughout the trip. Depending on the sighting, we might ask you to walk a maximum of 2 km on comparatively flat terrain. The average altitude is between 1,500 – 3,200 MAMSL.

Accommodation

We will stay in the 3-star hotels in Ulaanbaatar. These hotels might be just below the international standard, but clean and comfortable. We will stay in a community-based ger camp when we explore

Altai in pursuit of the Snow Leopards. The campsite is real heaven located on the mountain slope, facing the sublime scenery in all directions. The average altitude of the camp and its surroundings is 2,000 m above sea level. The camp provides clean and comfortable traditional Mongolian gers with two beds in it. The gers will be heated by a stove. The toilet with European style and shower house will be secured in the secluded area. There will be a place to wash hands and face in your ger.

Food and meals

13 breakfasts, 13 lunches, and 13 dinners are included in the price, which covers all the main meals during your stay in Mongolia. Our cook in the community-based camp will cater to your special food requirements. Please let us know your dietary requirements in advance so that we can prepare the supplies accordingly. However, the meals at the camp might lack a variety compared to the European standards. There will always be hot drinks and snacks.

Weather

Mongolia is the 'Land of Blue Sky', the nickname comes from the number of sunny days throughout the year in the country – two-thirds of the year. Temperatures should be relatively moderate and skies are usually brilliantly clear. The days will usually be sunny and cool, and pleasant. Nights will be considerably cooler after the sunset. The temperature should be lower in the mountains and rain/snowfall is possible. As there is no weather station in the mountain we visit for the tour, the following is the climate data collected at Hovd town during 2005–2015. However, Ulaanbaatar weather was collected during 1985–2015. Source: timeanddate.com.

Geology

The Altai were formed during the great orogenic (mountain-building) upthrusts occurring between 500 and 300 million years ago and were worn down, over geologic time, into a peneplain (a gently undulating plateau with generally accordant summit heights). Beginning in the Quaternary Period (within the past 2.6 million years), new upheavals thrust up magnificent peaks of considerable size. Earthquakes are still common in the region along a fault zone in the Earth's crust; among the most recent quakes is the one that occurred near Lake Zaysan in 1990. Quaternary glaciation scoured the mountains, carving them into rugged shapes, and changed valleys from a V- to a U-shaped cross-section; river erosion has also been intensive and has left its marks on the landscape. (Britannica)

Electricity and Power Sources

We have limited electric power in the community-based ger camp, which provides electrical power (220 Kv) between 18:00 – 21:00 with the help of a generator. The common socket type is type E. The recently built buildings have the combination of Type G and Type E. Please see the details of socket types at <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/>.

How to book the tour

The payment should be done in wire transfer according to our invoice. The deposit payment of 1,500 US\$ should be transferred at the time of booking in order to secure your place on the tour. Before you make the final due payment, you should check if the number of participants has reached the minimum limit. All our trip payments should be made in US Dollars.

Cancellations and Refunds

If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, please notify us as soon as possible. The cancellation fee after you've made your deposit can range up to the entire trip cost, based upon the number of days prior to your trip that we receive your cancellation notice. We regret we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, we strongly urge you to consider purchasing travel insurance at the time of booking.

<i>DATE OF CANCELLATION</i>	<i>CANCELLATION FEE</i>
90 or more days prior to your trip	Only deposit payment/person
89 to 60 days prior	40% of the trip price/person
59 to 30 days prior	70% of the trip price/person
29 to 0 days prior to your trip	100% of the trip price/person

Contact Us

If you have any queries related to the tour, please contact us at soaring@expeditions.mn. For more awe-inspiring tours, visit our website www.expeditions.mn.

Taxonomical Check List of the Birds

The list provides the potential birds that could be seen during the whole trip. As our trip date coincides with late migrations, we might miss some early migrants. Hope you understand that the birds do not stay in a place for a long time because of the season. However, we have tried to include the most potential birds on the list. The taxonomic order and nomenclature follow the Howard and Moore 4th edition (incl. corrigenda vol. 1-2). See the list in the Microsoft EXCEL file.

Photographs taken along this itinerary



Spot the elusive Snow Leopard in this picture. This individual has been watched for over an hour during our tour in July 2022, the animal walked around and dragged its kill to a secluded area.



This manul has been photographed at Margaz Mountains in March 2023.



Mongolian Saiga *Saiga tatarica mongolicus* will be seen near Great Lakes



The Homyn Tal is the best place to observe Takhi Wild Horses at close distance



Pallas's Sandgrouse (*Syrrhaptes paradoxus*) is one of the most sought-after species in Mongolia



Henderson's Ground-Jay



Altai Snowcock



The internationally bird important Bayan Nuur is the best site to see the endangered Pallas's Fish Eagle



View from our camp at Jargalant [Altai Mountains]



View of the Bayan Nuur and Bor Khyar Sand Dune at Santmargaz sum



Campsite at Jargalant [Altai Mountains]



Shower room