

ASIA / PACIFIC

LANDSCAPES OF DAURIA

Mongolia / Russian Federation



Dzeren Mongolian gazelles, Daursky State Nature Biosphere Reserve © IUCN / Wendy Strahm

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

LANDSCAPES OF DAURIA (MONGOLIA / RUSSIAN FEDERATION) – ID N° 1448 Rev

IUCN RECOMMENDATION TO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE: To inscribe the property under natural criteria (ix) and (x).

Key paragraphs of Operational Guidelines:

Paragraph 77: Nominated property meets World Heritage criteria.

Paragraph 78: Nominated property meets integrity, protection and management requirements.

Background note: The Landscapes of Dauria was nominated in 2014 as a contiguous transnational property, shared between Mongolia and the Russian Federation. The nominated property was evaluated by IUCN and considered by the World Heritage Committee as its 39th session in 2015. As detailed in the evaluation report for 39COM, IUCN recommended a deferral of the original nomination. While maintaining the full set of technical IUCN recommendations, the Committee decided to refer the nomination (Decision 39COM 8B.4) requesting the State Party to address a range of issues concerning the component parts and boundaries of the nominated property to better justify the stated Outstanding Universal Value. Several other requests were made including the need for better joint management planning; strengthened transnational collaboration; and improved resourcing of the Mongolian parts of the property. Stronger assurances were also sought from Mongolia on protection of the nominated property from any mining activity (exploration and operations). At the invitation of the States Parties, one of IUCN's field evaluators from the 2014 mission, attended a technical workshop in October 2015 and was able to review proposals and provide additional advice on meeting the Committee's concerns. The Committee's attention is drawn to IUCN's previous evaluation of the Landscapes of Dauria to avoid repetition.

1. DOCUMENTATION

a) Date nomination received by IUCN: Original nomination received 18 March 2014. Referral document received 24 March 2016.

b) Additional information officially requested from and provided by the States Parties: IUCN actively engaged and interacted with the two States Parties following the 2014 evaluation and has maintained an open dialogue with both to provide support in addressing the Committee's requests. A progress report was sent to both States Parties on 21 December 2016, following the IUCN World Heritage Panel. The letter asked for additional information on a range of issues including how management coordination and transnational cooperation would be improved using the platform of the Chinese-Mongolia-Russian Daurian International Protected Areas (DIPA) initiative. Additional clarity was sought on management of threats such as fire, hunting, poaching and mining; more detailed information on resource mobilization; and measures to coordinate the management and monitoring of key species across the transnational system. Finally, a request was made to confirm that communal/customary protection regimes within the nominated property were adequate to guarantee the protection of the stated Outstanding Universal Value. A response was received from the States Parties on 27 February 2017.

c) Additional literature consulted: An extensive set of references was consulted during the original evaluation of the Landscapes of Dauria and are not repeated here. Some additional references included:

Strahm, W. 2015. *Report on the mission concerning the Dauria nomination*. Undertaken 14 to 19 October 2015. WCS (2008). *Ugtam Uul Nature Reserve Site Assessment 27 June-3 July 2008*. Ulaanbaatar. Wilson, R.A. (2000). *Conservation and the complexity of temperate grasslands: A view from Ugtam Uul Nature Reserve, Mongolia*. Available at: http://tallgrassontario.org/Publications/Mongol_Paper.pdf

d) Consultations: 11 desk reviews were received at the time of the original nomination. IUCN consulted with the original field evaluators, one of whom participated in the October 2015 workshop and field visit and met with representatives of both the Russian and Mongolian States Parties and various advisors, scientists and other stakeholders as well as selected site management staff.

e) Field Visit: Original field mission undertaken by Wendy Strahm and Maja Vasiljević, 2-11 September 2014

f) Date of IUCN approval of this report: May 2017

2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES

As was noted in IUCN's original evaluation, the Landscapes of Dauria, situated in Central Asia, is a transboundary nomination between the Russian Federation and Mongolia designed to represent an outstanding example of about 15% of the "Daurian Steppe Ecoregion", which covers an area of over one million square kilometres and is located primarily in

eastern Mongolia, extending into Russian Siberia and north-eastern China. Composed of Daurian forest steppe and Mongolian-Manchurian grassland, the Daurian Steppe Ecoregion constitutes one of the best-preserved examples of Eurasian steppe which supports one of the last truly mass ungulate migrations in Central Asia, that of the Mongolian Gazelle (locally called dzeren). Its wetlands and rivers are of critical importance to a number of migratory bird species, and are particularly rich in biodiversity due to cyclical changes in climate.

The property nominated in 2014 was a contiguous, albeit unusually configured, design including a nominated area of 859,102 ha and a buffer zone of some 310,719 ha. Following the Committee's recommendation, the States Parties have added further areas to the nominated property to augment the diversity of ecosystem types representative of the larger Daurian Steppe Ecoregion as it transitions from the circumboreal taiga forest biome to temperate continental grassland biome and ultimately to desert. Whilst the majority of the area proposed for nomination has not changed from the 2014 configuration, several new areas have been added to include greater representation of forest steppe. These additions also add migration route areas important for Mongolian Gazelle¹ (*Procapra gutturosa* - LC) as well as increasing breeding and resting areas for threatened bird species. As a result, the property is now proposed as a transnational serial property of four component parts, and nominated under natural criteria (ix) and (x). The size of the revised nominated area has increased by just over 6% to an area of 912,624 ha according to the nomination dossier. A buffer zone of 307,317 ha surrounds most, but not all of the nominated area. Table 1 shows the reconfigured nominated property.

Protected area / buffer zone	Area (ha)	
	Nominated Property	WH Buffer Zone
Russian Federation		
Daursky SNBR	49,765 ²	128,888
Daursky SNBR buffer zone	117,690	
Valley of Dzeren FNR	111,568	
Sub-total area in Russian Federation	279,023	128,888
Mongolia		
Mongol Daguur SPA "A"	87,780	178,429
Mongol Daguur SPA "B"	15,236	
Mongol Daguur SPA buffer zone	484,425	
Ugtam Nature Refuge	46,160	
Sub-total area in Mongolia	633,601	178,429
Total	912,624 ha	307,317 ha

Table 1. Components of the Landscape of Dauria nominated property

¹ These codes reflect the conservation status of each species as recorded in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species at the time of the evaluation; for more information please visit <http://www.iucnredlist.org>

² These figures are presented by the nominating State Parties; however, IUCN was not able to fully understand how the areas were calculated

In the Russian Federation, the nomination continues to propose inclusion of the core and buffer zones of most of the Daursky State Nature Biosphere Reserve (SNBR) and the Valley of Dzeren Federal Nature Refuge (FNR). A small additional forest-steppe component within Daursky SNBR has been added (with a surrounding buffer zone) and is located in the southern outskirts of the Tsasuchey'sky Bor pine forest area, characterized by the endemic form of the Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris* - LC), known locally as Krylov Pine. The referral documentation notes this as an area of 300 ha, however, IUCN believes this figure needs to be clarified. The addition of this forested area to the property provides an example of flora and fauna typical of the Tsasuchey'sky pine forest and the adjacent steppes.

In Mongolia, the two strictly protected core zones of the Mongol Daguur Special Protected Area (SPA) as well as a large part of its buffer zone continue to be included within the nominated area. An additional 46,160 ha including forest steppe ecosystems has been added in the form of Ugtam Nature Refuge (NR)³, located primarily on the right bank of the Uldza River and comprising inundated steppe and wooded steppe areas, including tracts of pine, birch and aspen communities. There is no buffer zone identified for the Ugtam NR. The nomination points out that Ugtam NR is included in the Dauria International Protected Area (DIPA) thus ensuring its full integration with other areas coordinated under the umbrella of DIPA. The biodiversity values of Ugtam NR are representative of Daguur-Manchurian forest steppe zones. There are 236 vascular plant species with the greatest flora diversity observed in the steppe ecosystems (103 species) followed by meadow communities and deciduous forests. The nomination notes a lack of detailed studies in Ugtam NR, but 34 mammal, 266 bird, three amphibian, three reptile and seven fish species have been recorded. Ugtam NR contains a variety of habitats and the presence of water gives it more diverse mega-fauna than the surrounding steppe. 22 people, in five households of Dashbalbar and Bayandun soum, live inside the NR boundaries and practice traditional grazing (5,200 head of livestock).

Also in Mongolia, the Chuh Nuur (lake) and the surrounding areas have been added to the nominated area. This area includes the lake, Uldza River floodplain and swampy lowland areas south of the lake. The nomination notes this region is an important breeding ground for three crane species, namely White-naped Crane (*Antigone vipio* - VU), Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo* - LC), and Common Crane (*Grus grus* - LC), and plays a crucial role as a resting place for migratory birds. The dossier focuses on the avifaunal values of the Chuh Nuur area, noting that over 10,000 waterfowl and semi-aquatic birds use this site, with at least eight globally threatened bird species recorded here during breeding and migration seasons. Among these species, the White-naped Crane and Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoid* - VU) breed here every

³ The nomination dossier refers to this protected area as both Ugtam Nature Refuge and Ugtam Nature Reserve. In this evaluation, Nature Refuge (NR) is used.

year. This area, previously included within the proposed buffer zone of the property, was visited by the IUCN evaluation mission in 2014 and noted as an area of high biodiversity value that needs to be carefully managed in tandem with the local community which is developing ecotourism around the lake.

Further detailed description of the natural values of the remainder of the nominated property may be found in IUCN's 2015 evaluation.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

The globally important values of the Landscapes of Dauria, as nominated in 2014, were discussed in depth within IUCN's previous evaluation and will not be repeated here. IUCN concluded that the "various analyses make a strong case of the potential for a property in the Daurian ecoregion overall to meet World Heritage criteria. However, the justification of the relative importance of the biodiversity values of the nominated property in comparison with other protected areas in the Daurian ecoregion is not clear". IUCN further considered "that the global biodiversity significance of the Daurian region should be framed around its importance for conserving an excellent example of Daurian steppe and its characteristic wildlife...". IUCN specifically highlighted the lack of forest steppe ecosystems as seriously undermining these claims at that time.

In IUCN's view, the additional areas proposed for inscription positively add previously missing elements of Outstanding Universal Value, to those existing in the original nomination. The chosen component parts appear to be in good condition with relatively low threats, and strengthen the case to meet natural criteria (ix) and (x). Areas of additional forest steppe have been added in the Russian Tsasuchey sky component of Daursky SNBR and in the larger Ugtam NR in Mongolia. A critical area for birdlife, which was noted in IUCN's 2015 evaluation, has been added in the Chuh Lake area of the Mongol Daguur SPA. Taken together, the serial property has better encompassed values which demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value around the transition of the ecosystem complex from the circumboreal taiga forest biome to the temperate continental grassland biome, and the gradient of climate conditions from cold humid taiga forest climate to strong continental semi-arid steppe climate. The nominated property includes a wider diversity of ecosystems and species adapted to the extreme cyclic changes of life conditions (wet and dry periods) and has enhanced ecological functionality. The addition of the Chuh Nuur component augments the large number of lakes and wetlands thus reinforcing the property's global importance as a key resting place for more than 3 million migrating birds within the East Asia - Australasian flyway, including 16 globally endangered bird species observed in the property. Although the overall migration route of Mongolian Gazelle is more extensive than the nominated property, the additions nevertheless add important new areas along the migratory routes of this emblematic species in Central Asia.

4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Protection

IUCN's previous evaluation noted the adequate legal protection afforded to Daursky SNBR, Valley of Dzeren FNR and Mongol Daguur SPA under a range of state legislation, decrees, resolutions and executive orders. The additional 300 ha Tsasuchey sky component is also under the umbrella of the Daursky SNBR protection regime. The nomination notes that Ugtam NR in Mongolia is controlled by the "Administration of Strictly Protected Nature Areas of the Eastern Mongolian Province" and enjoys similar protection to that of the Mongol Daguur SPA.

IUCN recalls its concerns over the protection regime which exists across significant areas of the nominated property where it corresponds to the designated buffer zones of protected areas and/or areas subject to communal/customary protection. The Chuh Nuur area which has been 'excised' from the former World Heritage buffer zone and now included within the nominated area lies within the large buffer zone of Mongol Daguur SPA and is subject to communal ownership under a cooperative of ten families (the "Chuh Lake Herder Association"). IUCN requested additional information from the States Parties to understand better the protective measures and management systems which apply in the areas in Mongolia to ensure they meet the requirements of Paragraphs 110 and 111 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The Mongolian State Party's response outlines a range of legal instruments which apply to local community activities in these areas. Aspects of the Mongolian national law on environmental protection aims to prevent "environmental disorder and to conserve and manage from harmful activities on following natural resources: land (including soil), underground (including all resources), water, flora, fauna, atmosphere". The law further promotes participatory approaches to nature conservation. Further details have been provided of various positive community conservation programmes which are in place with support from international organizations and local NGOs. Some community training activities are also carried out. Whilst grazing is a key livelihood, there are some communities (around Chuh Nuur) who are pursuing ecotourism opportunities linked to bird watching. Mongolia has furthermore identified prohibited activities within the Mongol Daguur SPA reiterating that hunting is not allowed. Strong EIAs for any threatening activities or developments proposed in buffer zones are also required. Finally, both States Parties have indicated that in Russia and Mongolia international law supersedes national law, thus if the nominated area is inscribed as World Heritage, the Convention will confer additional protection to what is already in place.

Based on the supplementary information, and whilst noting the variability in protection regimes across the areas comprising the nominated property, IUCN considers that the communal/customary regimes provide adequate protection to ensure the protection of the site's Outstanding Universal Value. This also

considers the generally relatively low current threat levels which have been confirmed within the nominated property and its buffer zone.

IUCN considers that the protection status meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

4.2 Boundaries

IUCN recalls the findings of its 2015 evaluation that the main natural values of the nominated property reside in its large area of mostly intact steppe interspersed by hills and a large number of wetlands. While grasslands and wetlands were well-represented in the original nomination, the transition from forest to steppe, and the presence of Daurian “forest steppe” was very poorly represented within the area nominated at the time. Only small relicts of forest steppe were included. At the time, IUCN concluded that while the vistas of vast grasslands within the property were very impressive, evidence of the suite of transitional features which makes the Daurian ecoregion unique was lacking. The chief shortcoming of the original nomination was that it did not encompass the area necessary to demonstrate 1) the transition of the ecosystem complex from the circumboreal taiga forest biome to the temperate continental grassland biome, 2) the cyclic changing gradient of climate conditions from cold humid taiga forest climate to strong continental semiarid steppe climate, and 3) different ecosystems and species adapted to the extreme cyclic changes of life conditions (wet and dry periods).

In response to the Committee’s decision, the States Parties have carefully considered several other suggestions which arose from the original IUCN evaluation including Onon-Baji National Park and Yakhiin-Nuur Nature Refuge (both in Mongolia). However, the addition of these areas was not considered feasible due to them either existing in different ecological systems, and/or having integrity issues such as mining threats, and/or not being integrated into the coordination systems established under DIPA. The IUCN field evaluator, in October 2015, was able to discuss with the States Parties the rationale for additions to the originally nominated property and the factors behind rejecting other areas.

IUCN considers that the areas now included in the nominated property have added important areas of forest steppe which was previously very limited. The Tsasucheyksy Bor area of Daursky SBNR is small (300 ha) but is in good condition and is the only part that comes under the special protection of the Daursky Reserve management. Regrettably, larger forested areas in this area were quite recently burnt (70% of the forested areas) with damaged trees logged to provide fire wood. Although regenerating, the disturbed integrity of these areas makes them unsuitable at this time to include in the nominated area. However, when conditions improve, there is room to consider the addition of further areas of forest steppe to this serial nomination.

The addition of Ugtam NR (Mongolia), part of the Torrey Lake river basin, is a significant area of just over 46,000 ha which also adds forest steppe. It is free of any mining impact and is on the migration route of Mongolian Gazelle. The protected area also possesses good biodiversity values, especially for birdlife including breeding White-naped Crane in the Uldza river and breeding Great Bustard (*Otis tarda* - VU).

Over 7,300 ha of the Chuh Nuur area in Mongolia has also been proposed within the nominated area. The nomination dossier reports that Chuh Nuur is one of the key sites for the conservation of migratory, breeding, and moulting waterfowl and semi-aquatic bird species. It is of outstanding value for the conservation of breeding White-naped Crane and ducks which undergo seasonal moulting in the area. The dossier provides good evidence of the wetland values of this area arguing its significance for up to 10,000 waterfowl and semi-aquatic birds using the site at the same time, with at least eight globally threatened birds being recorded at the site. The IUCN evaluator did not visit this site during the short field visit of October 2015, but based on the documentary evidence, the area appears to add important values to the nominated property.

Whilst satisfied that a pragmatic approach has been taken to reviewing the site’s configuration, IUCN considers there is potential in future to further expand this serial site and build a stronger, more cohesive property that extends the diversity of transition-zone ecosystems and biotopes of what is a very large ecoregion.

IUCN considers that the boundaries of the nominated property meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

4.3 Management

IUCN previously concluded that the respective management plans for different protected areas in both the Russian Federation and Mongolia satisfied the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*. Additional areas added to the nominated property are also covered by the existing management systems and plans.

IUCN raised concerns about the coordination arrangements across the transnational property which, although covered under the umbrella of the high level DIPA framework, lacked a more detailed joint management plan at operational level. The IUCN evaluator obtained some further information on this during the 2015 field visit and the States Parties have provided a greater level of detail in supplementary information. Management of DIPA is organised through the Joint Commission, a high-level forum that meets occasionally, and Working Groups comprised of staff of protected areas that meet once or twice every year. The Joint Commission assists with international projects, approves Working Groups plans and supports their work financially. Supplementary information from the States Parties has stressed that

the DIPA framework, operating as it does at trinational level, respects and enshrines the independence of national level protected area planning systems. The States Parties have indicated, consistent with this, a desire to pursue a system with separate management plans and a system of Memorandums of Understanding as the more effective way to achieve greater consistency and cohesion across the site's management.

Disparities in funding between the different component parts of the property are also an issue which was noted in IUCN's previous evaluation. The States Parties have provided additional figures on 2015-2017 government and NGO/donor financing. This confirms an almost 10-fold difference in government funding between Russia and Mongolia, offset to some extent by more NGO/donor funding being directed toward the Mongolian side. While there are some jointly funded initiatives, the DIPA framework stipulates that funding is the responsibility of each side.

In assessing these arrangements, IUCN considers it would be counter to the effectiveness of the DIPA to try and impose another layer of joint management planning. DIPA has an established record of successful transboundary cooperation and a reasonably well-developed hierarchy of cooperative structures that allows both top-down and bottom-up cooperation. Despite good intentions there remain, nevertheless, significant gaps in capacity between Russia and Mongolia which warrant ongoing attention. These capacity differences are often the root cause of weak and inconsistent management approaches across the different components of the nominated property. As was noted in IUCN's previous evaluation, strengthened operational-level cooperation is needed to better address transboundary threats and overcome capacity imbalances including in the areas of fire management, buffer zone planning and management, and control of hunting and poaching.

Although management capacity remains low, particularly on the Mongolian side, the current threats to the nominated property are also generally low. This situation, however, may not last as there are a range of potential threats which could rapidly overtake existing management capacity. IUCN recommends increasing resourcing and capacity in anticipation of future management needs across the nominated property as a whole.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

4.4 Community

IUCN previously evaluated the community aspects of the nomination noting several outreach programmes and the generally low population pressure in this region, particularly on the Mongolian side. Issues related to communal / customary protection have been addressed elsewhere in this evaluation.

4.5 Threats

A range of threats to the nominated property were discussed in IUCN's previous evaluation and the overall threat level has not changed appreciably. IUCN's assessment of threats has also not changed although it is worth stressing that many of the issues raised pertained to potentially escalating threats such as fire, mining, grazing and increasing tourism. Several threats are discussed below in light of additional information and/or issues linked to the proposed additions to the nominated property.

Fire continues to be a threat and the addition of more forest steppe potentially heightens this risk. As has been seen in the Tsasucheytsky area of Daursky SNBR, these forests are vulnerable to fire damage and post fire recovery is slow. Fire frequency appears to be increasing with reports of multiple fires in single years. Ignition is mainly caused by human activity but increased frequency and intensity may also be climate-change related. Further information was provided by the States Parties on the joint "forest fire protection agreement" signed in 2016. This reveals good levels of cooperation and communication but fire control is essentially the responsibility of each State Party. Further cooperation is encouraged in the areas of early fire detection, first response and reciprocal firefighting access rights.

Mining activity in the wider region is undergoing rapid growth. According to Russian law, mining is not allowed in Special Protected Area buffer zones, while in Mongolia, it is allowed with approval of the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism of Mongolia provided written assurances (letter of 12 June 2015) that the property, if inscribed on the World Heritage List, would be "preserved... from mining and natural resource exploitation." These assurances from the State Party of Mongolia are welcome, as is the advice that international law supersedes national law. However, IUCN remains concerned about this threat which continues to affect several World Heritage sites in this region and indeed worldwide. It was concerning to be advised that several of the areas being considered for addition to the nominated property were discounted, in part, due to mining activity/impact concerns. Continued vigilance will be necessary to guard against the potential impacts of mining in the property should it be inscribed on the World Heritage list.

Poaching is a further issue on which additional information was provided by the States Parties. It is acknowledged that in Mongolia the effectiveness of anti-poaching measures remains challenging due to resourcing limitations. Only two cases of poaching were detected on the Mongolian side in 2014-15: illegal hunting of the Tarbagan Marmot (*Marmota sibirica* - EN) which is reported to be low - but this may also be an indicator of weak enforcement capacity. Actions, through the DIPA framework, to progressively address traditional spring hunting are welcome and will hopefully reinforce measures to combat poaching which since the mid-90s have delivered good results. As with overall management resourcing, more effort

will be needed to increase budgets and staffing for the Mongolian protected areas to improve the control of poaching.

As previously evaluated, tourism pressure on the nominated property is currently low. However, there is potential for tourism to grow and, if carefully managed, to benefit local communities. The addition of the Chuh Nuur area, located not far from the township of Dashbalbar, includes some tourist chalets which were built in 1985. The lake and surrounding land is under communal ownership and managed through a family-based cooperative with plans for ecotourism development. Careful planning for sustainable tourism needs to be undertaken with the involvement of local people.

Additional information was also received on positive joint initiatives to overcome the problem of unprotected electrical lines, both inside and outside the protected area, which electrocute large numbers of birds, in particular raptors. The States Parties report an inventory of dangerous powerlines on the Mongolian side has been undertaken and that no dangerous powerlines for birds remain within the nominated area and buffer zone on the Russian side. Further, that several kilometres of powerlines in neighbouring areas have been equipped with bird protection devices in an effort to stem this threat.

In summary, whilst a number of threats and concerns about management capacity persist, IUCN considers that improvements to the site's configuration have added important values and improved the property's integrity. IUCN appreciates the responsiveness and willingness of both States Parties to openly address areas of concern and welcomes the various coordinated management measures which have been reported.

In conclusion, IUCN considers the integrity, protection and management of the nominated property meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.1 Consideration in relation to serial properties

a) What is the justification for the serial approach?

The property as now nominated is a serial configuration of four components. The framing of the nomination as an exceptional representative of the much larger Daurian Steppe Ecosystem (>1 million km²) and transitional elements which go from taiga to steppe to desert lends itself to a serial approach. The vastness of this system means that a series of components is practically the best way to collectively express its Outstanding Universal Value.

b) Are the separate component parts of the nominated property functionally linked in relation to the requirements of the Operational Guidelines?

Although the nominated property is a serial site, the boundaries are such that most of the property

(866,464 ha) is contiguous and thus has strong connectivity and functional links. The buffer zone envelops the largest of the nominated component areas which cross between both Russia and Mongolia. The buffer zone also includes the Chuh Nuur component further adding to the physical connectivity. Two of the isolated components are smaller: the Tsasucheysky component of Daursky SNBR lies to the north but is part of the same ecoregion and sits within the biosphere reserve; the Ugtam NR to the west is connected to the rest of the property through the Uldza River system as well as being part of the Mongolian Gazelle migratory route.

c) Is there an effective overall management framework for all the component parts of the nominated property?

This issue has been discussed above under 4.3 Management. There is a long history of transboundary cooperation which is well developed. The DIPAs trilateral cooperation provides a workable coordination framework which guides management of the property through the respective management systems and jurisdictions of the two countries, linking their individual protected area management plans.

6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The **Landscapes of Dauria** has been nominated under natural criteria (ix) and (x).

Criterion (ix): Ecosystems/communities and ecological/biological processes

The Landscapes of Dauria contains substantial and relatively undisturbed areas of different types of steppe, ranging from grassland to forest, as well as many lakes and wetlands. All these habitats host a diversity of species and communities characteristic of the northern part of the vast Daurian Steppe ecoregion. Cyclic climate changes with distinct wet and dry periods lead to high species and ecosystem diversity which is globally significant and offers outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes. The nominated property also includes key natural habitats for many animal species during their annual migration, some of which also breed in the area. The high diversity of ecosystems, biotopes and their transition-zones in the nominated property is indicative of the many evolutionary adaptive processes undergone by species living in this unique area.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion.

Criterion (x): Biodiversity and threatened species

The nominated transboundary serial property conserves an excellent example of Daurian steppe and its characteristic wildlife including a number of globally threatened bird species (White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane, Swan Goose, Relict Gull, Great Bustard and Saker Falcon) as well as the endangered Tarbagan Marmot. It also provides essential breeding and resting habitat for birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, with up to 3 million birds in spring and 6 million

in autumn using the area during migration. The nominated property also provides critical summer grounds and autumn migration routes of the emblematic Mongolian Gazelle.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following draft decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/17/41.COM/8B.ADD and WHC/17/41.COM/INF.8B2.ADD;

2. Inscribes the **Landscapes of Dauria (Mongolia / Russian Federation)** on the World Heritage List under criteria (ix) and (x).

3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

Shared by Mongolia and the Russian Federation, the “Landscapes of Dauria” is a transboundary serial World Heritage property of four component parts. It is an outstanding example of the Daurian steppe ecosystem, which covers over 1 million square kilometers, extending from Eastern Mongolia to Russian Siberia and into North-Eastern China. The serial property covers a total of 912,624 ha and comprises several protected areas in the northern part of the Daurian steppe ecoregion which occupy large areas of the transition from taiga to desert, including various steppe ecosystems. The inscribed property includes the nationally designated core and buffer zones of most of the Daurian State Nature Biosphere Reserve and the Valley of Dzeren Federal Nature Refuge (Russian Federation), as well as the core zone and a large part of the buffer zone of the Mongol Daguur Special Protected Area and the Ugtam Nature Refuge (Mongolia). Most of this property is then surrounded by a World Heritage buffer zone of 307,317 ha, which overlaps with Ramsar sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in both countries (Mongol Daguur in Mongolia and Torrey Lakes in the Russian Federation).

The main natural value of the property resides in its intact steppe systems (including forest steppe), interspersed with wet meadows and floodplains, at the convergence of three floristic provinces belonging to three floristic regions. This exceptional ecological context results in a diverse combination of ecological complexes which derive from the cyclic climatic and hydrological variations over the year. The property provides key habitats for rare fauna species such as the White-naped Crane, the Great Bustard and millions of other vulnerable, endangered or threatened species of migratory birds. The property is also an important area on the migration route of the Mongolian Gazelle

(Dzeren) and the only place where this species is known to breed in the Russian Federation. The property also provides sanctuary to both endangered Tabargan and Mongolian Marmots, as well as to the near-threatened Pallas Cat.

Criteria

Criterion (ix)

The Landscapes of Dauria World Heritage site contains substantial and relatively undisturbed areas of different types of steppe, ranging from grassland to forest, as well as many lakes and wetlands. All these habitats host a diversity of species and communities characteristic of the northern part of the vast Daurian Steppe ecoregion. Cyclic climate changes with distinct wet and dry periods lead to high species and ecosystem diversity which is globally significant and offers outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes. The property also includes key natural habitats for many animal species during their annual migration, some of which also breed in the area. The high diversity of ecosystems, biotopes and their transition-zones in the property is indicative of the many evolutionary adaptive processes undergone by species living in this unique area.

Criterion (x)

The transboundary serial property conserves an excellent example of Daurian steppe and its characteristic wildlife including a number of globally threatened bird species (White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane, Swan Goose, Relict Gull, Great Bustard and Saker Falcon) as well as the endangered Tarbagan Marmot. It also provides essential breeding and resting habitat for birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, with up to 3 million birds in spring and 6 million in autumn using the area during migration. The property also provides critical summer grounds and autumn migration routes of the emblematic Mongolian Gazelle.

Integrity

The property contains grassland and forest steppe landscapes which have suffered little from human disturbance. It includes intact breeding and resting grounds for migratory bird species of international importance as well as significant parts of Mongolian Gazelle migration routes. The selection of component parts provides an appropriate representation of the scope of biodiversity of the Daurian Steppe, although there is potential to further extend the series to include other significant protected areas. The property is in a good condition thanks to its size, low human pressure and the absence of impacting uses and activities, such as mining. While grazing, as well as poaching and fire to some extent, could potentially affect the integrity of the property, current practice at the time of inscription is consistent with the property's Outstanding Universal Value. The States Parties should however strengthen their action and cooperation in the future, in order to maintain the long term integrity of the property and minimize threats.

Protection and management requirements

The property is under the highest level of protection afforded by the national laws of both countries, on Special Protected Areas (1994) and on Buffer Zones (1998) in the case of Mongolia, and on Special Protected Areas (1995) in the Russian Federation. The legal status of all types of protected area making up the property provides, in principle, an appropriate conservation regime of this unique ecosystem complex.

The property is also a good example of transboundary ecosystem cooperation, shared between governmental, scientific and non-governmental institutions. It has, since 1994, operated under the framework of the China-Mongolia-Russian International Protected Area Agreement (DIPA). This agreement provides a forum for the States Parties to discuss, on a regular basis, all issues in relation to the preservation of the property and its management, at both political and operational levels.

Regarding hunting and poaching which may potentially impact the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the States Parties have committed to set up additional “zones of peace” and to reduce the hunting season in the surroundings of the property. They also regularly adopt joint working plans in order to minimize fire and poaching risks and have increased their capacities with external support from international NGOs and foreign countries. Both countries develop joint monitoring activities for Mongolian Gazelle and migratory birds, through the DIPA process, to improve their knowledge and optimize the management of natural resources which are key attributes of the property’s Outstanding Universal Value. There is a commitment to full protection of the property from possible threats from mining and other extractive industries which will be important to maintain into the future. The law in Mongolia does not prohibit mining in the protective zones of Special Protected Areas, however, the State Party of Mongolia has committed to ban mining inside the World Heritage property on the basis of the primacy of international agreements and designations.

Whilst protection and management measures are seen as meeting World Heritage requirements at the time of inscription, it is critical that both States Parties continue and strengthen their efforts in the long-term, in order to prevent impact on the property from significant threats such as changes to hydrology, climate change, illegal hunting, grazing pressure and fire damage. They should also develop coordinated management plans at the property level, with special emphasis on the buffer zones, focused on addressing the main risks to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

4. Requests the State Party of Mongolia, in line with the position of the World Heritage Committee on the incompatibility of mining with World Heritage site status, to ensure that no mining exploration and exploitation activities take place within the inscribed property.

5. Encourages both State Parties to strengthen their coordination in the transboundary management of wildlife populations, such as Mongolian Gazelles and migratory birds which depend on ecological continuity between the protected areas making up the property, and to improve their coordinated capacities to prevent and minimize the effects of hunting, poaching and other threats to the integrity of the property.

6. Further encourages both States Parties, and in particular the State Party of Mongolia, to strengthen its resources and capacities allocated to the management of the protected areas in the World Heritage property.

7. Commends both States Parties for their commitment to the protection of the wider Daurian Steppe ecosystems and encourages them to consider, possibly jointly with China, future expansion of the transboundary World Heritage property in order to cover additional areas of forest steppe as well as critical habitats for migratory birds and those associated with the migration of the Mongolian Gazelle.

Map 1: Nominated property and buffer zone