



Reconnecting Mongolia's Vast  
Rangeland Wilderness



**POSTCARDS**

FROM THE

**FIELD**

**GALA 2020**





PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

Greetings from the WCS Mongolia Program! We are helping to protect Mongolia's iconic wildlife and Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem and we have exciting news to share with you...





In 1989 George Schaller first began exploring the wild landscapes found here, researching the natural history of some of the most spectacular but little known wildlife populations across the Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem. Building on his work, WCS established the country program in 2003, our focus to protect these species and places now consists of:



**Research & monitoring**



**Wildlife disease surveillance**



**Law enforcement capacity building**



**Biodiversity awareness raising**



**Rangeland management**



**Ensuring ecosystem connectivity**





PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

The vast grasslands and arid rangelands in Mongolia are home to large herds of Mongolian gazelle and khulan (Asiatic Wild ass); it is known as the Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

Khulan have one of the largest ranges of any terrestrial mammal. Once occurring across all of Inner Asia, Mongolia is the species' last stronghold.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

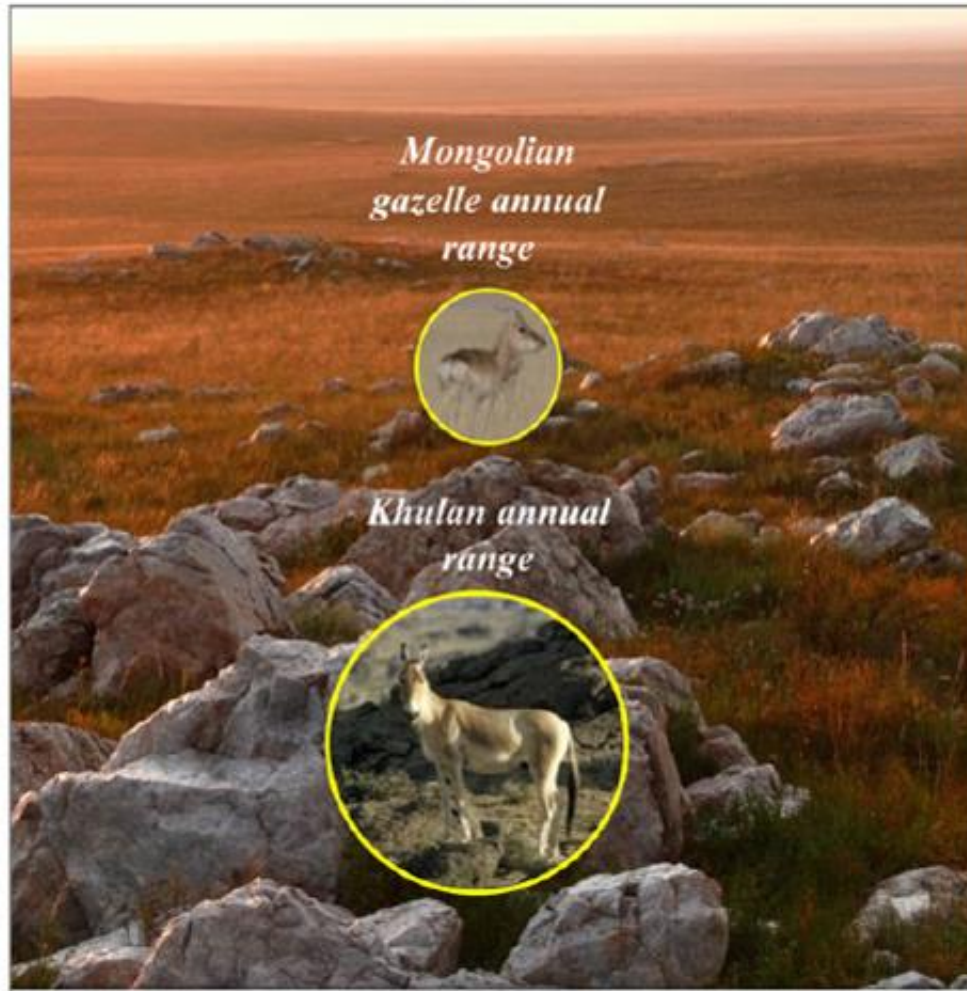
Mongolian gazelles are nomadic and roam in huge herds. Their population size is the largest of all the gazelle species in the world.





## Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem

827,000 km<sup>2</sup>



## US National Grassland Reserves

Olson 1997

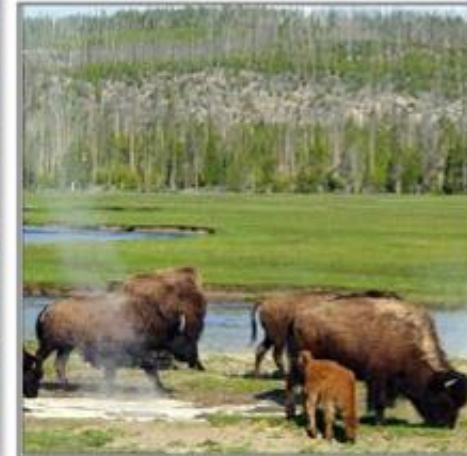
### Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem

(Sinclair et al. 2007)

### Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

(Noss et al. 2002)

108,000 km<sup>2</sup>



25,000 km<sup>2</sup>



15,378 km<sup>2</sup>



PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

The Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem dwarfs other iconic grazing ecosystems, such as the Greater Yellowstone and the Serengeti.





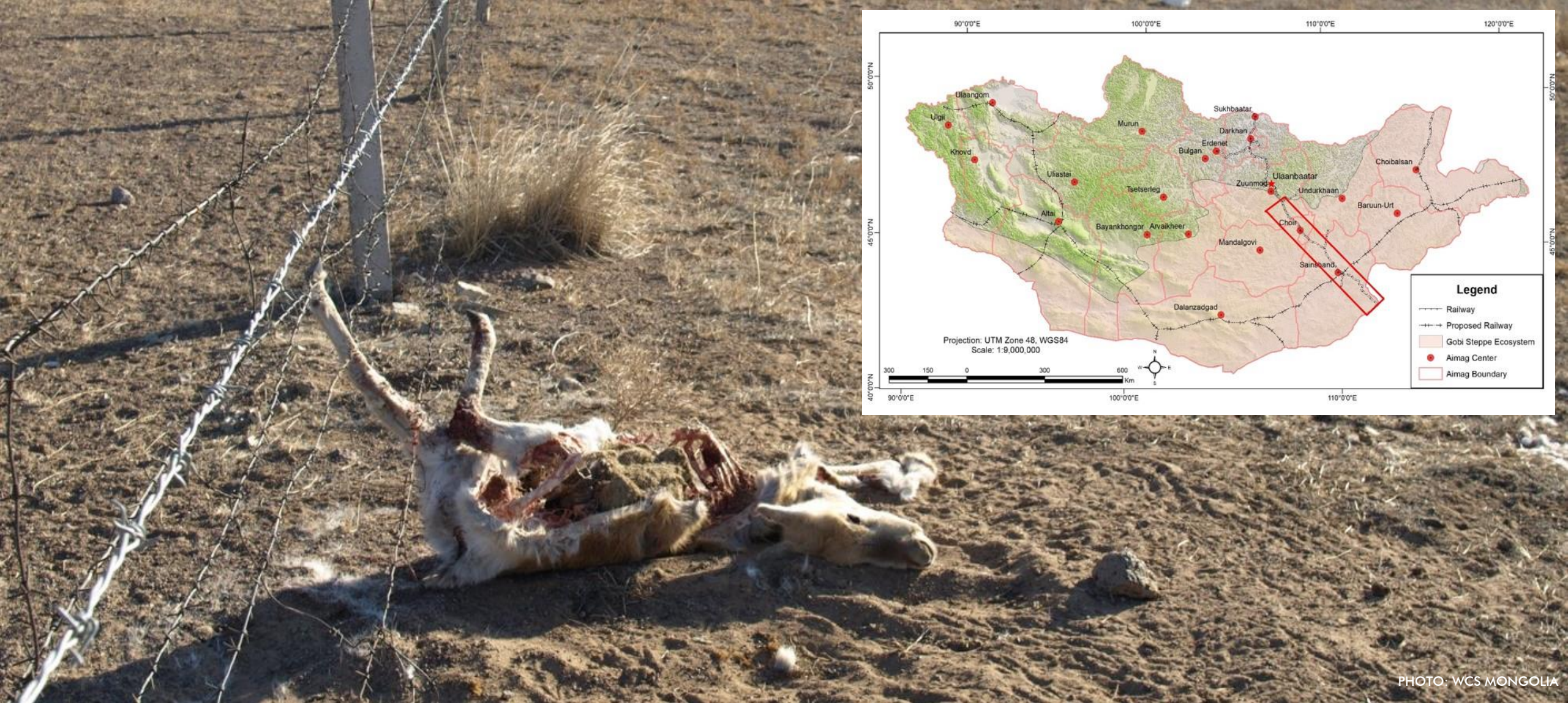


PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

A single barrier to movement, such as a fence can have devastating consequences. Much of the Gobi-Steppe Ecosystem is open and without barriers, with the exception of the fence along the Trans-Mongolian Railroad.





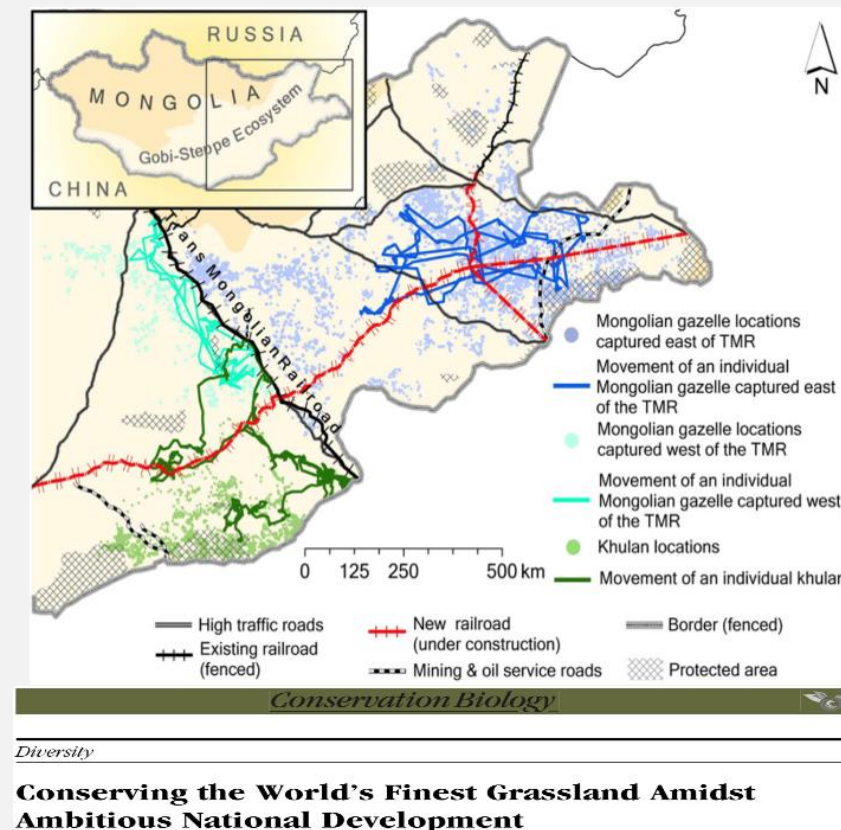
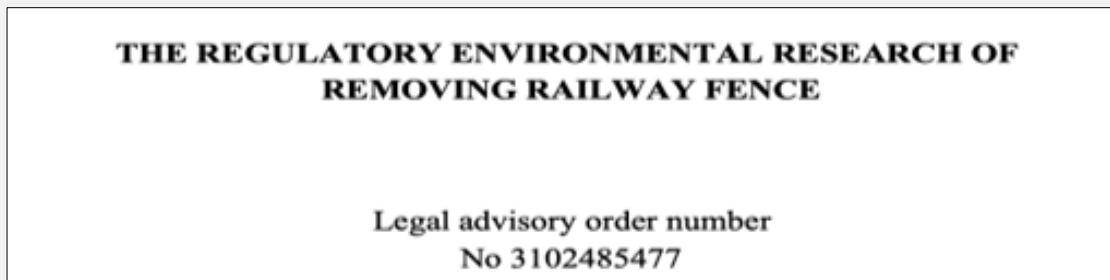
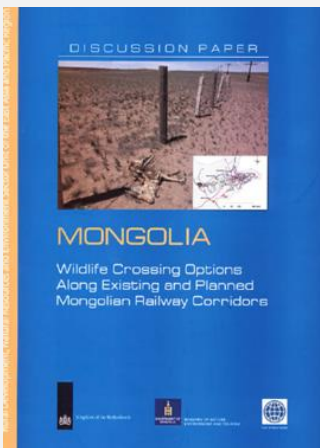


PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

Drawing on results from field research, WCS has been addressing the threats of barriers to the movements of Mongolia's large population of Mongolian gazelles and khulan (Asiatic wild ass). They are some of the most mobile species on the planet, moving nomadically across the steppe in search of quality forage.







PHOTOS: WCS MONGOLIA

WCS embarked on a long journey to ensure connectivity of the Gobi-Steppe by using good science, strengthening policy, and developing partnerships to mitigating a decades old barrier.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

In 2019 pilot project in partnership with Oyu Tolgoi, a large copper mine project in the Gobi, and the Ulaanbaatar Railroad Authority was initiated to pilot test new fence designs and safe corridors. Four kilometers of fence were modified to allow Mongolian gazelles to easily pass between the wires.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

Fencing along two segments of the rail corridor fence were removed entirely to allow khulan to cross. Camera traps were installed to provide evidence that khulan and gazelles will cross.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

One year later, we have documented thousands of gazelles crossing.







11°C



03/16/2020

04:23PM

CAMERA62

PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

On March 16 2020 at 4:23PM, we recorded a khulan entering the gap and crossing. This is the first time in 65 years the species has been able to return to the eastern parts of its former range.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

We are encouraged and excited to have made these first steps towards restoring connectivity of one of the greatest open range landscapes on the planet. There is a lot more to do.







PHOTO: WCS MONGOLIA

We would love to have you join us on this incredible conservation journey.  
Warmest Regards, WCS Mongolia.

