

Project Update: July 2006

Over the past autumn and winter, our efforts involved surveying carnivore and small mammal abundance to measure the direct and indirect effects of hunting.

We also conducted extensive interviews with herders. We interviewed nearly 40 herders over the winter to understand the magnitude of illegal hunting and factors influencing hunting pressure. Our interviews documented hunting rates and methods, wildlife uses, market information, and knowledge of wildlife laws in Mongolia.

The interviews provided tremendous details on the threat of hunting. Much of this information will allow us to develop simple solutions to reduce, regulate, and better manage hunting in the steppes. For example, interviews revealed that traps set for marmots represent a major source of mortality for corsac foxes and Pallas' cats.

With this knowledge, we can focus anti-poaching efforts on marmot colonies in the reserve. In areas outside the reserve, where marmot hunting is legal, a potential solution is to institute a program to replace deadly traps with safe, inexpensive live traps.

During winter, our project trained students from the Mongolia National and Pedagogical universities in wildlife monitoring techniques. Local herders and game rangers also received training and, together with students, helped collect information for the project.