

Project Update: July 2011

We have finished our field investigations in Tajikistan (18/04/11 -15/07/11). The main study sites were Shakh sands in Kabodian region (N 37°03' E 068°12') and Zumudg village (Ishkashim region, Badakhshan, N 36°55' E 072°11'). We found that protection of nature communities on plains is rather formal. The area of sand deserts is decreasing rapidly, threatening the disappearance of psammophyle fauna. Forests are affected by selective logging and grazing. On the contrary, willow and sea-buckthorn thickets at mountain river valleys of Badakhshan are protected by Forest Service and are now in good condition. At Shakh sands we found a number of threatened species such as *Phrynocephalus sogdianus*, *Boiga trigonatum*, *Echis carinatus* and *Phasianus colchicus bianchii*. We studied in detail the biology of bird species that are characteristic for riverside shrubs and forests: *Hippolais rama*, *Acrocephalus orinus*, and *Phylloscopus sindianus*. We collected blood and tissue samples from live animals and acoustic recordings for further analysis.