

MoU for the conservation of Saiga antelope

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative



Steffen Zuther, Sergey Sklyarenko, Alyona Shmalenko
Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan
CMS CAMI meeting, Bishkek, 23.-25.09.2014



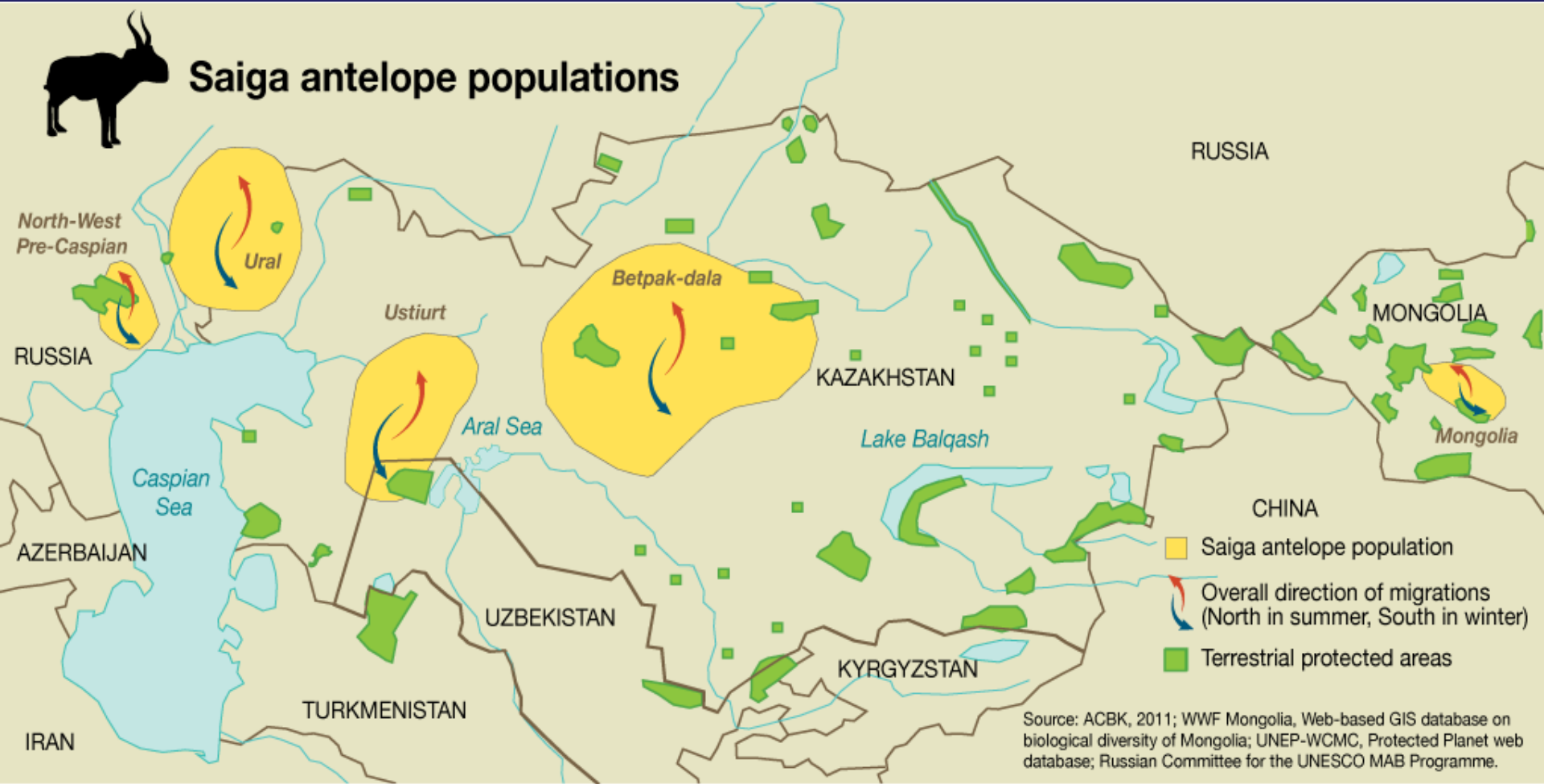
Background for the MoU

- Decline of saiga population numbers by more than 95% in 10 years time since 1993
- Reasons: primarily poaching for horn of males
- Since 2002 *Saiga tatarica tatarica* included in Appendix II of CMS
- Since 2008 also *S. t. mongolica*
- Migrating species, distributed across several countries, suffering through illegal, international trade → need for common actions

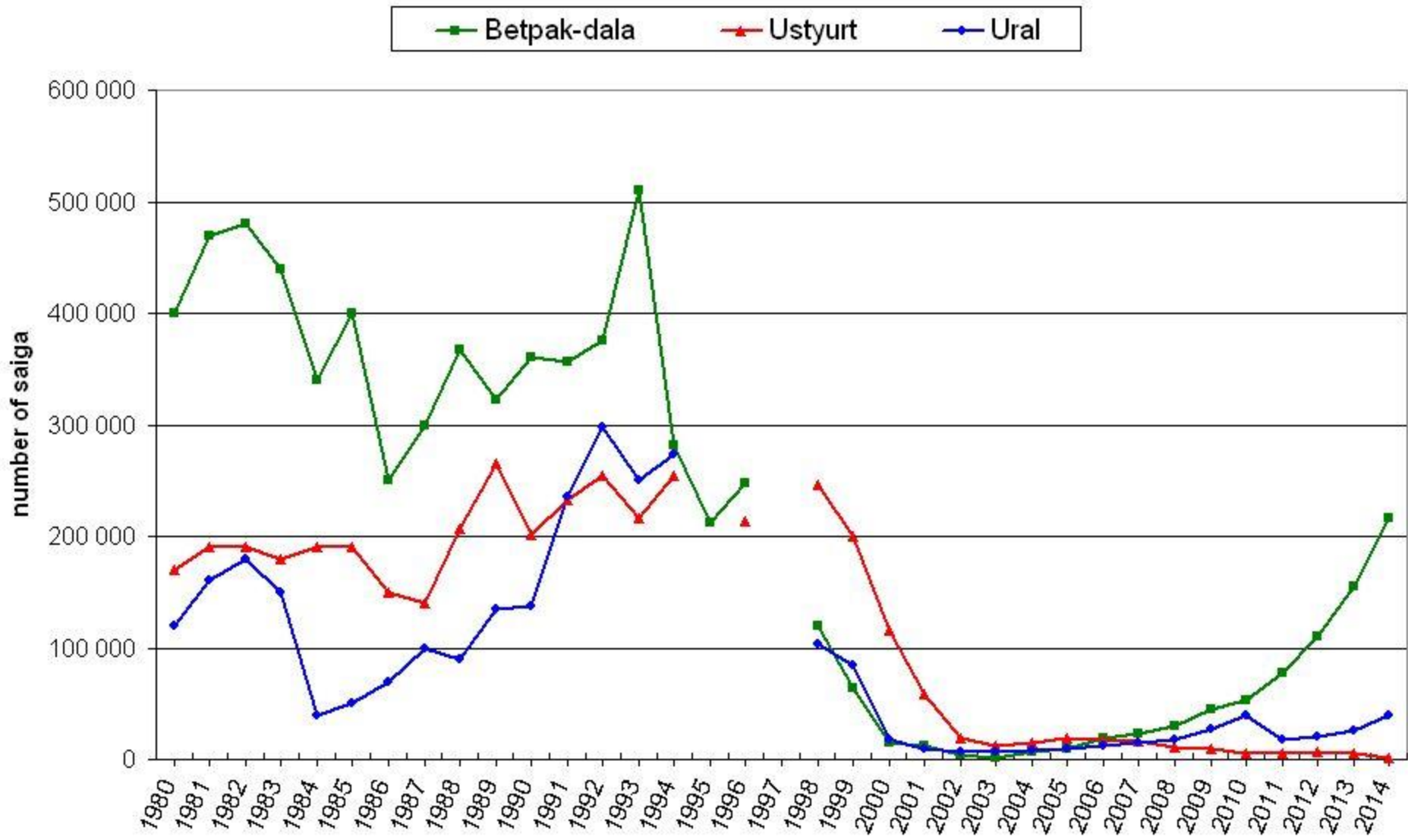
Distribution



Saiga antelope populations



Development of saiga population sizes in Kazakhstan



General facts on saiga MoU

- MoU for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of Saiga antelope
- In force since 1st meeting of the signatories in September 2006
- Non-binding agreement, on a voluntary basis
- Goal: Coordination of efforts undertaken for saiga conservation among range states and other actors

MoU signatories



Supporting organisations

- International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
- IUCN/SSC
- WWF International
- Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
- Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK)
- Saiga Conservation Alliance (SCA)

MoU work programme

- Agreed Medium-term international work programme for 5 years (2006-2010, 2011-2015)
- Guiding conservation actions in range states and countries, importing saiga horn
- Developed by a wide spectrum of stakeholders
- Consisting of clear actions (general and population specific), with timeframe and urgency assigned to them

**MEDIUM TERM INTERNATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE
SAIGA ANTELOPE (2011-2015)**

(To support the implementation of Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Saiga spp.) and Action Plan)

Information exchange and coordination

- Saiga News: information about activities related to saiga, in 6 languages, published twice a year by the Saiga Conservation Alliance
- On 2nd meeting of signatories, the role of the coordination of actions under the MoU was given to two NGOs, ACBK and SCA
- Tasks: support of communication and information exchange
- Review of national reporting template
- Gathering information on ongoing projects
- Creation of Saiga Resource Centre

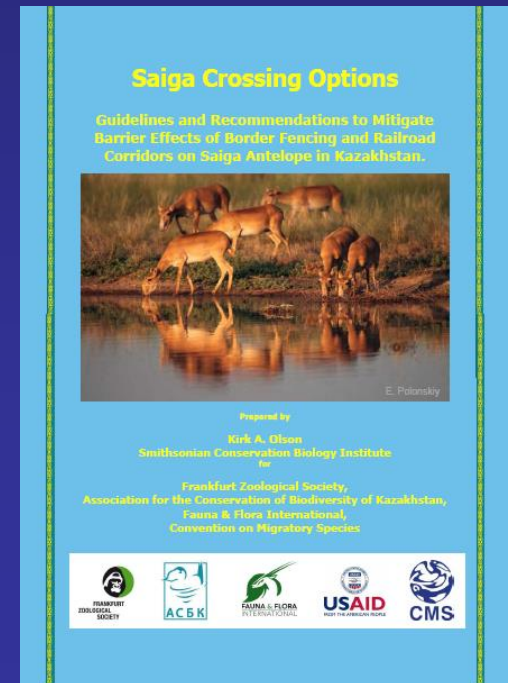


Progress of implementation

+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness raising• Research• Protected areas• Monitoring• Human factors• Population-specific measures• MoU implementation
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable use and trade• Actions specific for Ustyurt population

Benefits for saiga conservation

- Facilitation of information exchange and discussions among various stakeholders (several meetings on saiga conservation issues)
- Creation of the “saiga conservation community”
- Support of information exchange regarding saiga mass die-offs
- Guide for saiga crossing options
- More political weight of any saiga conservation actions



Planned railways across the population ranges of Saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan

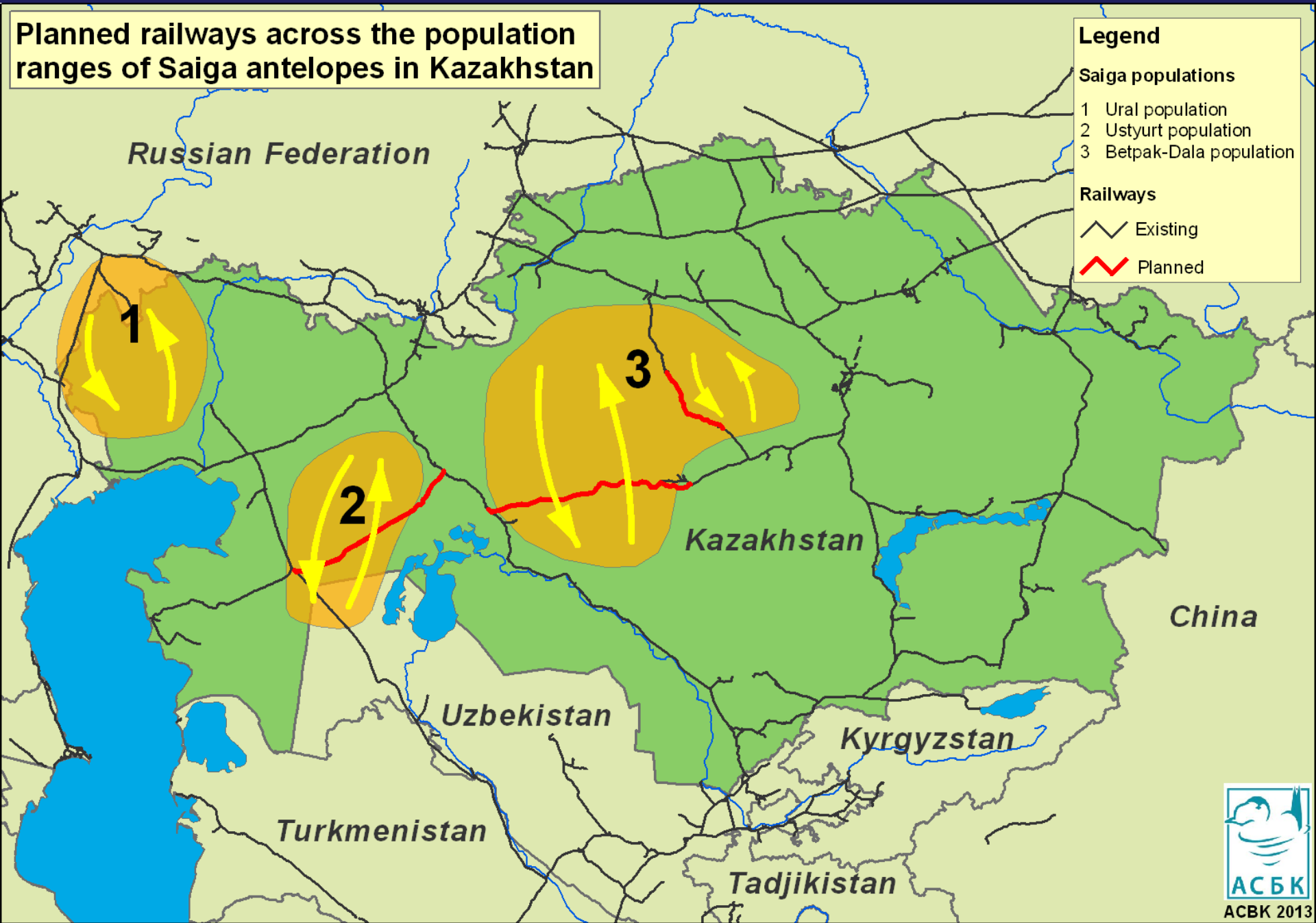
Legend

Saiga populations

- 1 Ural population
- 2 Ustyurt population
- 3 Betpak-Dala population

Railways

- Existing
- Planned



Opinion of Kazakh government

- No strong effect on the activities inside the country, since they are done anyway
- Political and moral support for government and other organisations, also on international level
- Support for bilateral agreements on saiga conservation (Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan – Russia)

Problems and challenges

- Lack of funding (for coordination and activities on certain overarching conservation issues)
- Lack of human resources (for coordination)
- Economical interests of range states are usually of higher priority than conservation (non-binding agreement)

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative

Conserving biodiversity of grassland ecosystems in Central Kazakhstan



Basic facts

- Launched in 2006
- Ecosystem approach
- Aiming at conservation and restoration of steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems in Central Kazakhstan
- Project area is equal to historic range of Betpak-Dala saiga population (560,000 sq. km)
- Not so much a project, but programme



Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative

Purpose: The ADCI area, covering the historical range of the Betpak-Dala saiga population, is preserved and restored as a unique ecological system

All levels of society in Kazakhstan and beyond value the steppe, semi-desert, and desert ecosystems, are aware of the threats facing them and are enabled to support their protection

A network of ecologically representative steppe, semi-desert and desert protected areas is established and managed effectively

The ecological connectivity of the steppe, semi-desert, and desert ecosystems is secure

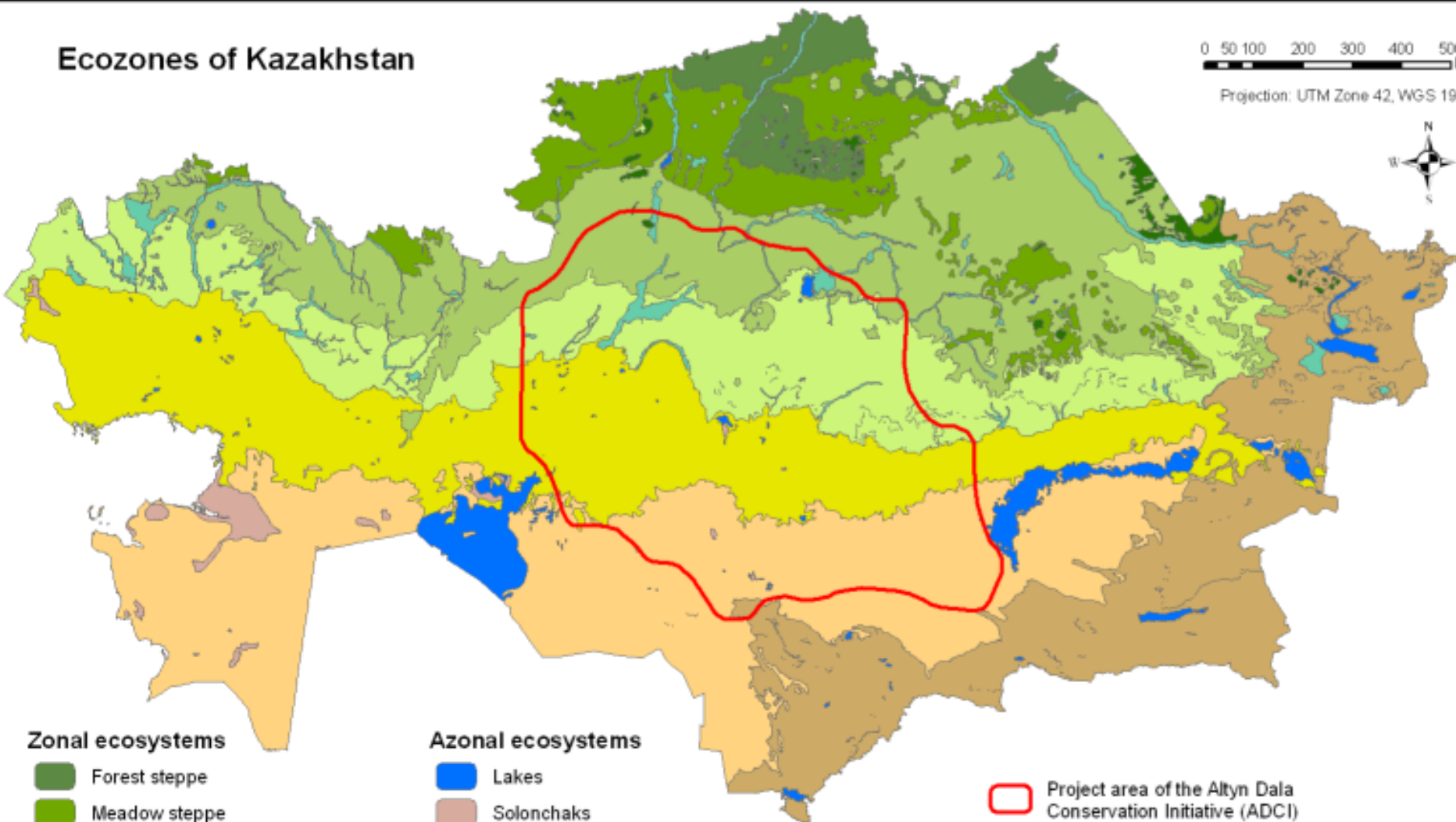
Historical assemblage of species in steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems is re-established

Sufficient knowledge of the ecology and socioeconomics of steppe, semi-desert, and desert ecosystems exists to inform effective conservation

Ecozones of Kazakhstan

0 50 100 200 300 400 500 km

Projection: UTM Zone 42, WGS 1984




Zonal ecosystems

- Forest steppe
- Meadow steppe
- Dry steppe
- Desertified steppe
- Semi-desert
- Desert
- Mountains

Azonal ecosystems

- Lakes
- Solonchaks
- Forests
- River valleys

 Project area of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI)

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative 2011



Data on ecozones originally based on © GEF-UNEP-WWF- "ECONET Central Asia"

Saiga antelope



Photo: Roland Frey

Protected areas inside ADCI project area in 2006

Where to create protected areas??





Need for data

- Monitoring
- Expeditions (complex assessments)
- Telemetry

Legend

-  Oblast borders
-  Roads
-  Rivers
-  Lakes
-  Boundary of project area of the "Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative"

Protected Areas

-  State Nature Zapovednik
-  State Nature Reservat
-  State Nature Zakaznik
-  State Reserve Zones








Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative 2012








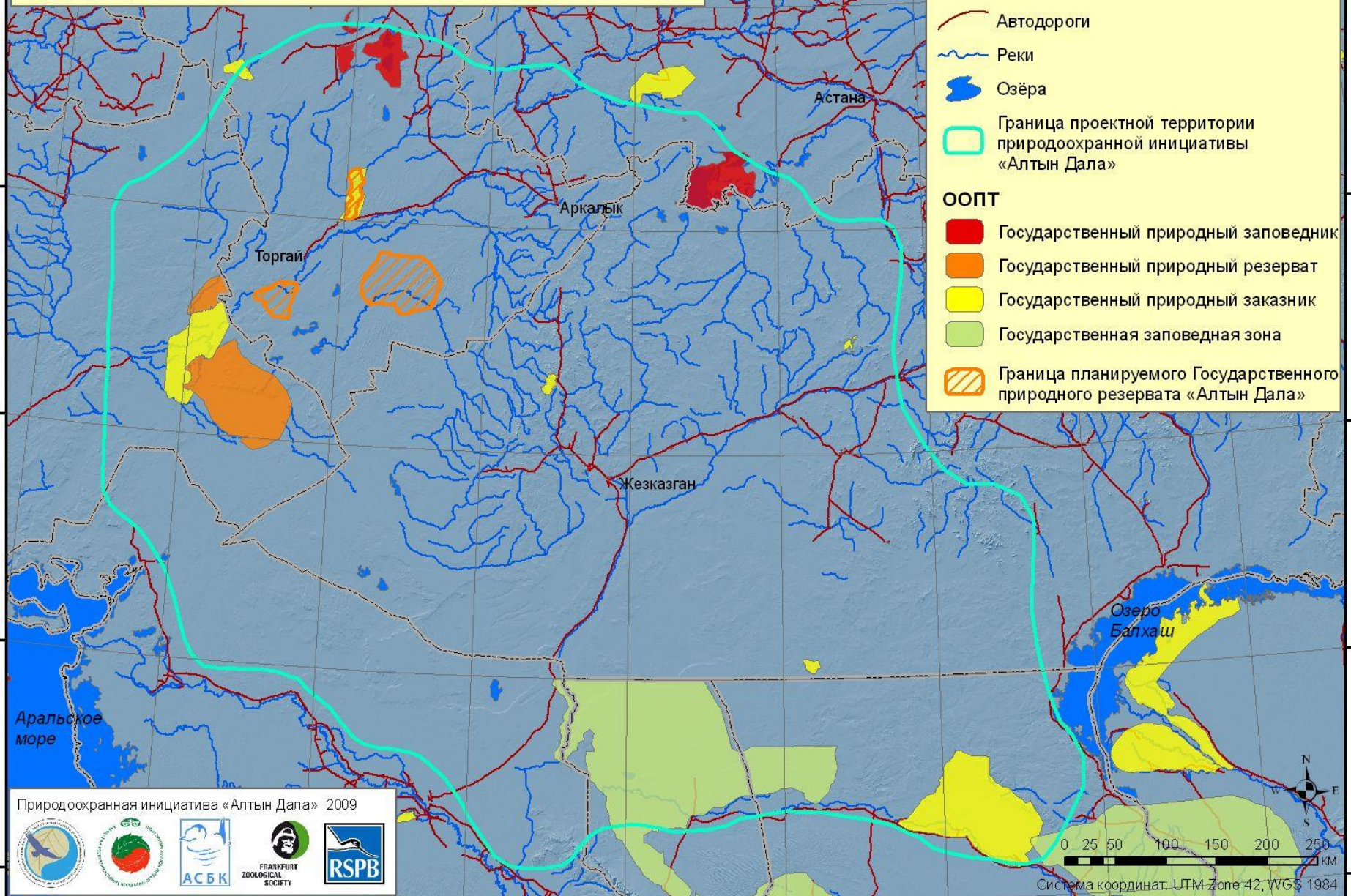
Особенно охраняемые территории в проектной территории ПИАД

Легенда

-  Границы областей
-  Автодороги
-  Реки
-  Озёра
-  Граница проектной территории природоохранной инициативы «Алтын Дала»

ООПТ

-  Государственный природный заповедник
-  Государственный природный резерват
-  Государственный природный заказник
-  Государственная заповедная зона
-  Граница планируемого Государственного природного резервата «Алтын Дала»



Природоохранная инициатива «Алтын Дала» 2009

Система координат: UTM-Zone 42, WGS 1984

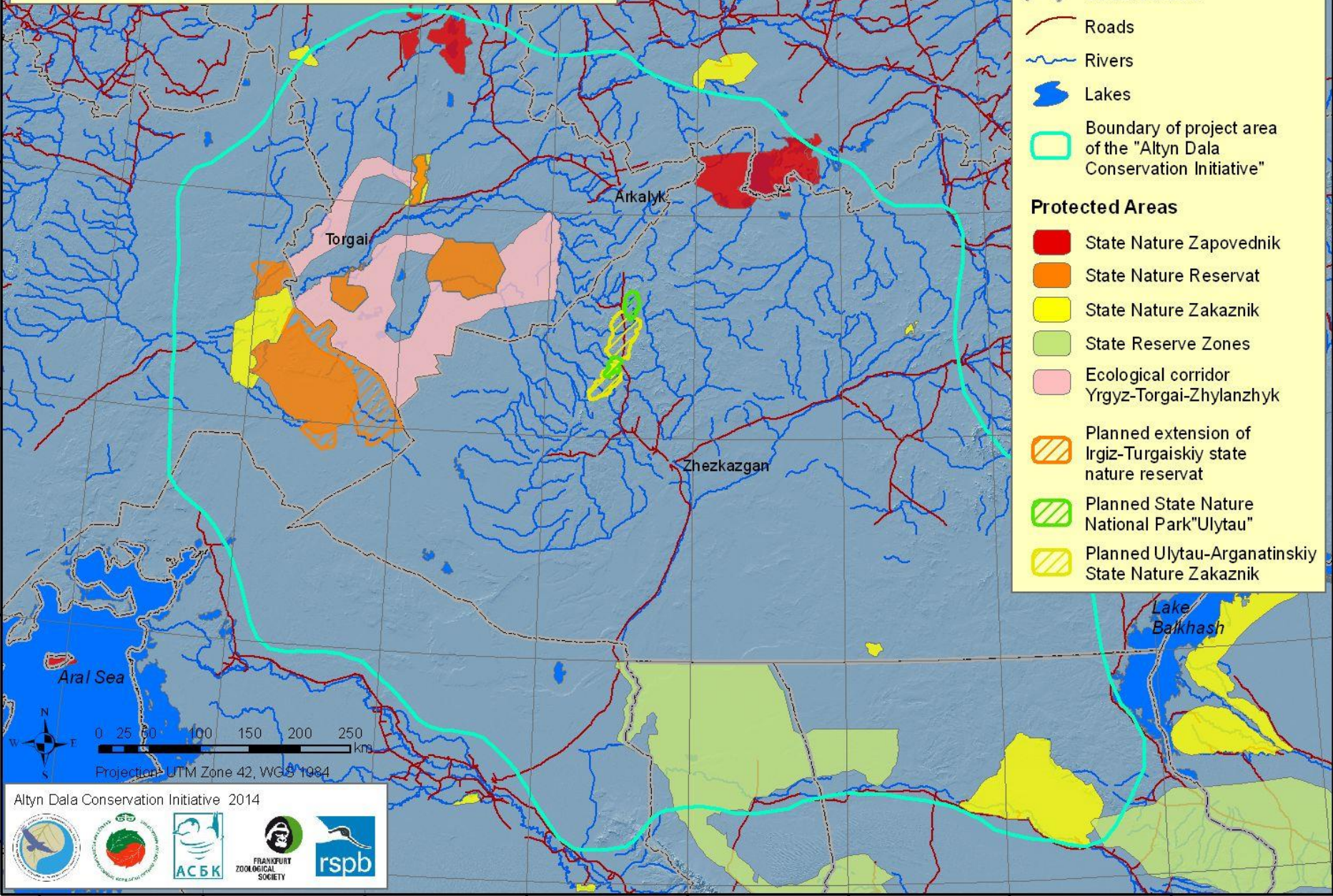
Existing and planned protected areas inside ADCI project area in 2014

Legend

- Oblast borders
- Roads
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Boundary of project area of the "Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative"

Protected Areas

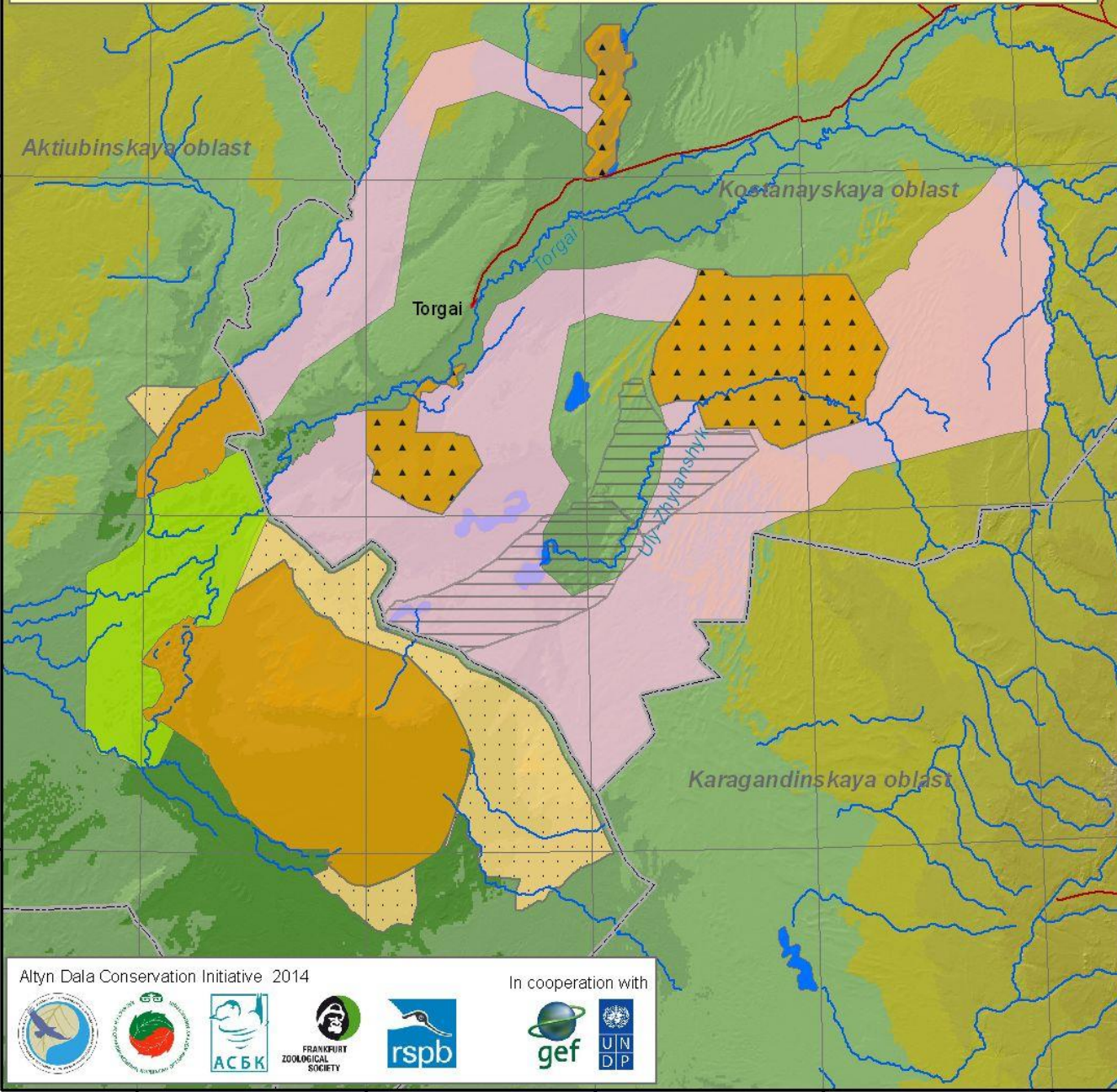
- State Nature Zapovednik
- State Nature Reservat
- State Nature Zakaznik
- State Reserve Zones
- Ecological corridor Yrgyz-Torgai-Zhylyanzhyk
- Planned extension of Irgiz-Turgaiskiy state nature reservat
- Planned State Nature National Park "Ulytau"
- Planned Ulytau-Arganatinskiy State Nature Zakaznik



Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative 2014

ACBK
FRANKFURT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
rspb

Development of a network of protected areas in the region of Torgai



Legend

- Oblast borders
 - Roads
 - Lakes
 - River
- ### Network of protected areas
- Turgaiskiy State nature zoological sanctuary (zakaznik) (348,000 ha)
 - Irgiz-Turgaiskiy state nature reservat (764,000 ha, designated in 2007)
 - State nature reservat "Altyn Dala" (489,766 ha)
 - Planned extension of Irgiz-Turgaiskiy state nature reservat (410,000 ha)
 - Ecological corridor (2,007,582 ha)
 - ACBK hunting areas (343,500 ha)

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative 2014



62°E 63°E 64°E 65°E 66°E 67°E 68°E

Ecological corridor

- Type of area mentioned in the law
- Status like a protected area of low category
- Administered by close-by protected area of higher category
- Giving PA rangers the possibility to patrol at the area of the corridor
- Identified by pure scientific analysis (based mainly on telemetry data) plus extra monitoring data
- Connecting protected areas

Changes in the PA coverage

Protected area	Size
Korgalzhynskiy Zapovednik	284,000 ha added
Irgiz-Turgaiskiy rezervat	764,000 ha + 410,000 ha added
Reservat "Altyn Dala"	490,000 ha designated
Ecological corridor "Yrgyz-Torgai-Zhylanshyk"	2,007,000 ha designated
Ulytau National Park	32,000 ha to be added
Ulytau-Arganatinskiy Zakaznik	148,000 ha planned

Capacity building

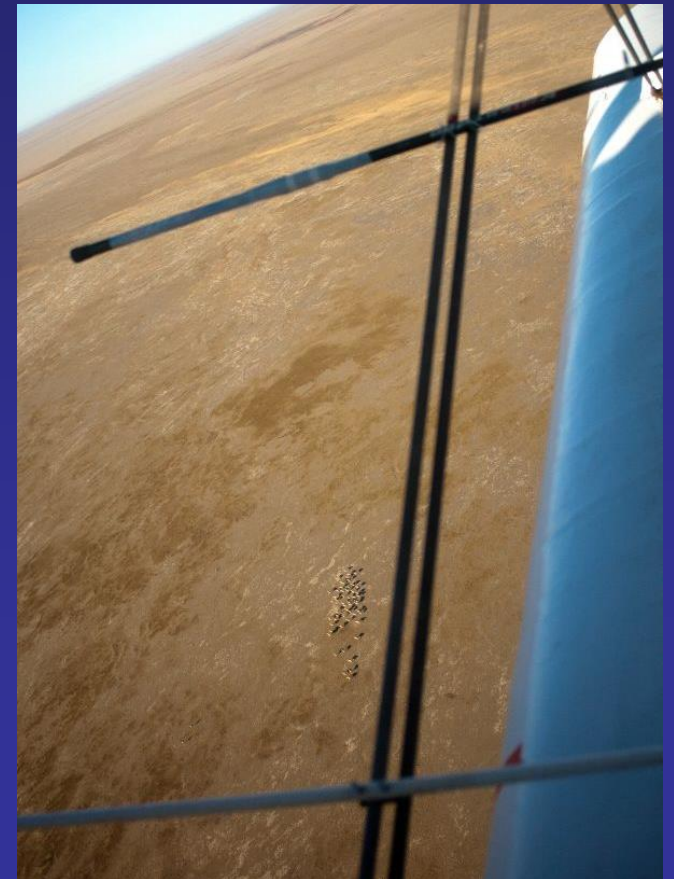
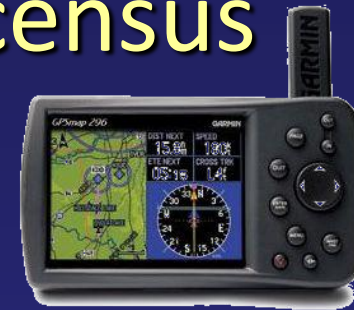


Trainings



Equipment

Improvement of aerial census



Saiga telemetry



Work with local population



Lessons learnt

- General ecosystem approach crucial
- Long-term vision needed (think big!)
- Long-term commitment needed (depending on starting situation)
- Good relation with government needed (its involvement)
- PA establishment needs a lot of lobbying
- Risk of overloading projects

Thank you for your attention!
Спасибо за внимание!

