

ZHARSOR-URKASH LAKE SYSTEM, Kazakhstan

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COUNTRY: Kazakhstan

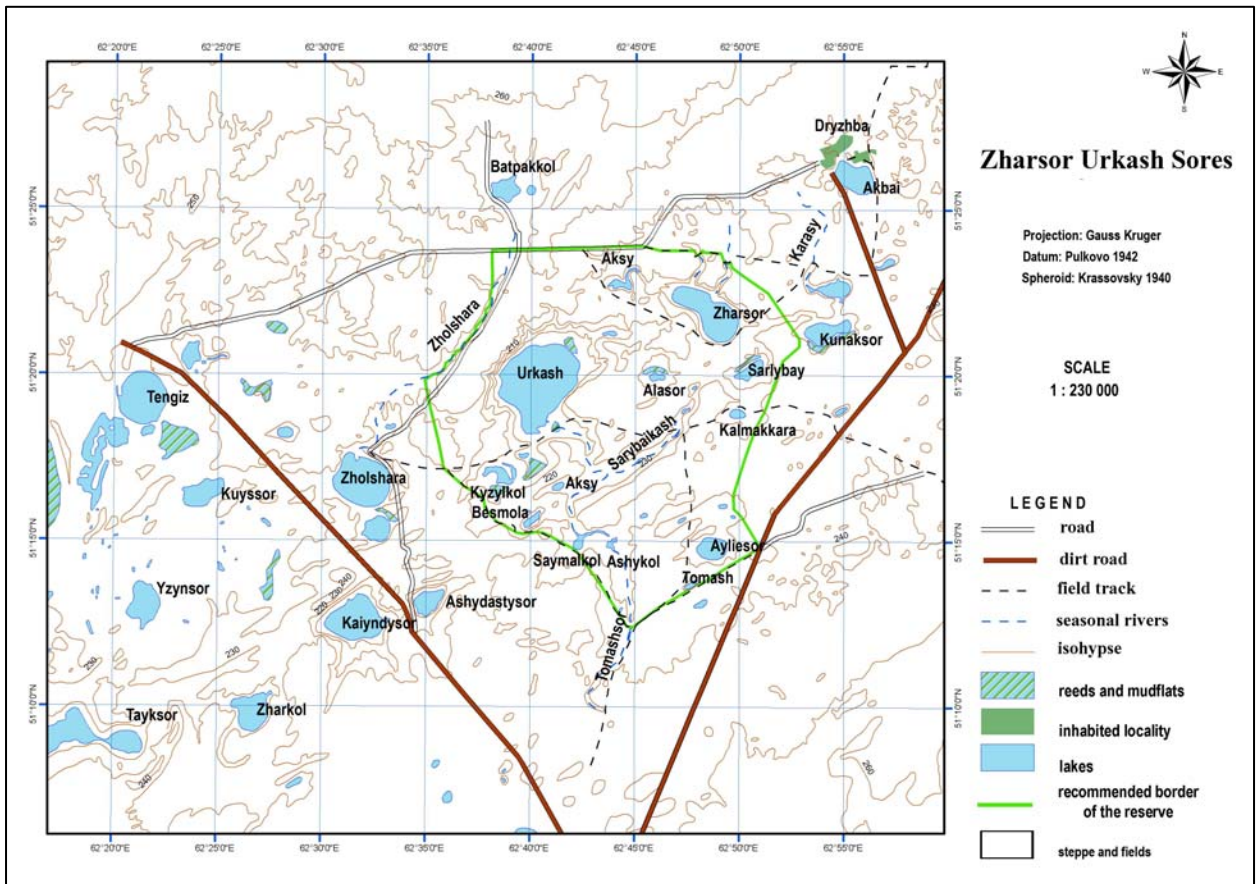
NAME OF SITE: Zharsor-Urkash Lake System

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES: 51°22'N, 062°48'E

ALTITUDE: min 202-240 m above sea level.

AREA: the total area is about 41,250 ha, including the lakes area – about 3,700 ha.

MAP:



OVERVIEW: This is a group of salt and fresh water lakes surrounded by typical landscapes of Sapsynagash Hollow. It's a place of large migration concentrations of the Eurasian Crane, migration stop-over of the Siberian Crane, and also geese, including the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) and the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) and a great number of northern sandpiper species during migrations.

WCASN CRITERION AND QUALIFIERS

Criterion 1: Site's Importance for Siberian Crane

Sub-criterion 1.2: The site has held one or more Siberian Cranes during the last 50 years, but there are less than five records during the 10 last years.

Zharsor Lake is a regular stop-over site of the Siberian Crane. In 1997-2006 at least four sightings of the Siberian Crane in the spring and autumn migration period are known. One adult bird in a group of Eurasian Cranes was seen at the shore of Kunaksor Lake at the beginning of May 1998. Also a sighting of one adult Siberian Crane in a flock of Eurasian Cranes at the northern shore of Zharsor Lake at the end of August (or beginning of September) 2004 was registered. In 2005 a pair of Siberian Cranes was recorded on 18 September in Zharsor Lake, and one more bird was sighted on 27 September. There is also information about a Siberian Crane pair in a flock of Eurasian Cranes in September 2000 or 2001 provided by hunters, but this information should be checked.

Qualifier 1: *Site's importance for other crane species: the site is important for other crane species when it is known to support a total of 25 or more migratory cranes (which can be of more than one species) at any stage of their life cycle (e.g., breeding, migration stop-over (staging), non-breeding birds (wintering), etc.).*

The territory of the site is of great importance for pre-migratory congregations of Eurasian Cranes and during migration period. They numbered up to 15-20 thousand birds in 1998-2002. At the end of September 1998-1999 the number of cranes staying for the night at Zharsor Lake was 8-10 thousand birds, in 1998-2001 the total number of concentrations was 15-20 thousand birds; on 24-25 September 2002 – from 7 to 9 thousand birds. In some years cranes use this site from the middle – the end of August to the beginning of October.

Qualifier 2: Site's importance for other waterbird species

Sub-qualifier 2.1: *A site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more migratory waterbirds during migration periods.*

The lake system supports more than 20 thousand migratory waterbirds during seasonal migrations, mainly sandpipers and geese. In spring, at the end of April-May, the most numerous species are sandpipers. Tens of thousands of northern sandpiper species stay at the shores of the salt lakes for feeding. At the end of migration period on 9 June 2000 at the southern part of Zharsor Lake there were 3.5 thousand Little Stints (*Calidris minuta*), Curlew Sandpipers (*Calidris ferruginea*), Dunlins (*Calidris alpina*), Temminck's Stints (*Calidris temminckii*) and Ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*). At the end of May 2001 about 11.2 thousand sandpipers, including, except those mentioned above, Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) and others, were recorded at the same place.

The number of geese stopping-over at the site lakes reaches several tens of thousands. On the territory of the site geese stop at Aksu, Kunaksor and Akbay lakes. At Batpakkol Lake, according to recording data on 9 September 1996, there were 22 thousand geese, 6 October 1999 – 29,960, 4-5 October 2000 – more than 20 thousand birds, 10 October 2005 – 10,052 birds. About 80% of the total number were White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) and 10-10.5% - Graylag Geese (*Anser anser*). A considerable number of ducks, coots and grebes stop-over here.

Sub-qualifier 2.3: *A site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of migratory waterbird.*

During autumn migration the site supports more than 1% of populations of the Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), and probably, the White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) and also the Sociable Lapwing (*Chettusia gragaria*). The main stop-over water body is Batpakkol Lake. At the end of the 1990s the number of Lesser White-fronted Geese in some September days reached 620-740 birds (P.Tolvanen & P.Pynnonen 1998; P.Tolvanen, K.Litvin & P.Lampila 1999; P.Tolvanen,

T.Eskelin, T.Aarvak, G.Eichhorn, I.Oien, & E.Gurtovaya 2000), Red-breasted Geese – 1500 birds. 107 Lesser White-fronted Geese and 384 Red-breasted Geese were registered in 2005 (UNEP/GEF SCWP Report). Besides, on 17-19 September 2005, 50 White-headed Ducks were registered at two lakes; and in 2002 two Sociable Lapwings were recorded in the area of Batpakkol Lake and two nesting pairs of this species were found in 2003 in the western area of Urkash Lake.

WETLAND TYPES (according to Ramsar classification):

Inland Wetlands

- N** Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams/creeks
- O** Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha); includes large oxbow lakes
- P** Seasonal/intermittent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha); includes floodplain lakes
- Q** Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes
- R** Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes and flats
- Sp** Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools
- Ss** Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools
- Ts** Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils; includes sloughs, potholes, seasonally flooded meadows, sedge marshes.

Human-made wetlands

- 2** Ponds; includes farm ponds, stock ponds, small tanks (generally below 8 ha)

JURISDICTION:

- a) territorial jurisdiction:** Kamystin District, Kostanay Region, Kazakhstan
- b) functional jurisdiction:** Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan

MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY:

Kostanay Regional Society of Hunters and Fishermen: 181, Gogol Str., Kostanay. Tel/Fax: +7 (7142) 535-617. Chairman –A.E. Kovalenko

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