18. Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:
June 1997

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DD MM YY

Designation date | Site Reference Number

2. Country: Russian Federation

3. Name of wetland: Selenga Delta

4. Geographical coordinates: 52°12'-52°22'N, 106°15'-106°29'E

5. Altitude: 456-458 m a.s.l. **6. Area:** 12,100 ha

7. Overview: Shallow water area of Lake Baikal, small shallow lakes and regularly flooded meadows cover 85% of the total area of the site. Meadows and shrubs along the streams and oxbow-lakes, rarely flooded, occupy 15% of the area.

8. Wetland Type (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A · B · C · D · E · F · G · H · I · J · K

inland: (L) · M · N · O · P · Q · R · Sp · Ss · Tp · Ts
U · Va · Vt · W · Xf · Xp · Y · Zg · Zk

man-made: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant: L

9. Ramsar Criteria: (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12, next page.)

1a · 1b · 1c (1d) ³ (2a) · 2b · 2c · 2d ³ (3a) 3b · 3c ³ 4a · 4b

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1d

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* ✓ -or- *no*
(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:
Vladimir V. Baskakov: Baikalsky Nature Reserve
Tankhoi, Kabansky District, Buryat Republic 671120, Russia
V.G.Vinogradov (vavy@aha.ru).

12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page: 1d - the site provides an example of a unique type of wetland and supports a large number of threatened and endemic species.

13. General location: In Buryat Republic, Kabansky District, in the central portion of the Selenga Delta, 35 km of the village of Kabansk.

14. Physical features: The site presents the delta of the largest river entering Lake Baikal. It is underlain by Pleistocene alluvial deposits. The construction of the Irkutsk hydro-electric power plant on the Angara River has resulted in a large part of the Selenga Delta being waterlogged.

The area has a continental climate, with the mean air temperatures of +14°C in July and -19.4°C in January. The growing season lasts for 140-150 days. Annual precipitation is 315 mm. The spring flood is very vigorous, the water rises at 20 cm an hour. Floods often occur in summer, after heavy rains.

15. Hydrological values: The Selenga Delta is the largest delta in the Baikal catchment. The vegetation of the delta's wetlands filters the river water before it reaches the lake.

16. Ecological features: Aquatic vegetation in the lakes is represented by *Lemna, Utricularia, Potamogeton, Myrioohyllum, Ophioglossum, Sagittaria, Nymphoides* and *Nymphaea* sp. The regularly flooded areas are occupied by reed *Phragmites* and *Equisetum* beds, with *Scirpus* and *Typha*, as well as by sedge-grass marshy meadows. Ar the rarely flooded parts of the floodplain, willows *Salix* and other shrubs are found. Dense brushes of *Malus baccata* occur on some islands.

17. Noteworthy flora: Two species listed in the Buryat Red Data Book occur at the site: *Malus pallasiana* and *Nymphaea tetragona*.

18. Noteworthy fauna: Large concentrations of migrating, breeding and moulting waterbirds assemble at the wetlands in the Selenga Delta. The nesting density in the lower part of the delta reaches 130 nests per 100 ha (Melnikova & Klimenko, 1979). According to N.G.Skryabin (1975), ducks nest at the sors, deltaic lakes and streams with a density of 527 nests per 100 ha (nests of dabbling ducks comprise 61% and nests of diving ducks 39%). On the sor islands, within the colonies of Laridae, the number of duck nests reaches 2200 per 100 ha (Melnikov et al., 1984). In 1990, the density of waterbird nests in the Kabansky Nature Reserve was estimated at 250-300 nests per 100 ha of breeding habitats.

The total breeding population of Anatidae varies from year to year between 20,000 and 138,000 individuals, and the number of young fledged birds varies between 23,000 and 175,000 (Skryabin et al., 1991).

The moulting population includes, apart from the locally breeding ducks, eight to ten thousand males which come from adjacent areas, including such species as wigeon *Anas penelope*, teal *A.crecca*, falcated duck *A.falcata* and pintail *A.acuta*.

During the autumn migration, the Anatidae population varies between 384 (1981) and 743 (1985) individuals per 100 ha of the wetland area. The total number of birds passing through the Selenga Delta is about five millions, with 7,300 to 18,300 birds stopping at the site (Skryabin & Tupitsin, 1991).

A number of bird species listed in the Russian Red Data Book occur in the delta, including:

- migrating species: Siberian crane *Grus leucogeranus*, black stork *Ciconia nigra*, Bewick's swan *Cygnus bewickii*, swan goose *Anser cygnoides*, imperial eagle *Aquila heliaca*, golden eagle *A. chrysaetos*, peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, gyr falcon *F. gyrfalco* and saker falcon *F. cherrug*; and
- breeding species: white-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* (2-3 pairs) and snipe-billed godwit *Macrorhamphus semipalmatus*.

Species listed in the Buryat Red Data Book include, in addition to the above, the following breeding bird species: whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, spotbill duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* (5-6 nests per 100 ha), falcated duck *A.falcata* (4 nests per 100 ha), bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Baillon's crake *Porzana pusilla*, water-rail *Rallus aquaticus*, corncrake *Crex crex*, short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* and azure tit *Parus caeruleus*.

The Selenga Delta also supports the following species listed in the Buryat Red Data Book: *Acipenser baeri baicalensis, Thymallus arcticus baicalensis infrasubspecies brevioinnis, Bufo raddei, Rana terrestris, Myotis ikonnikovi, Plecotus auritus, Vespertilio murinus* and *V.nilssoni*.

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19. Social and cultural values: The Selenga Delta (except for the area of Kabansky Nature Reserve) is extensively used by locals for hay harvesting, grazing, commercial and sport fishing, muskrat trapping, waterfowl shooting and recreation.

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20. Land tenure/ownership: State (regional) ownership

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21. Current land use: Grazing takes place at an area, comprising approximately 25% of the total area of the site. This activity causes disturbance to birds during the breeding season. When the water level is low, the stock penetrate far into the nature reserve. As a result, the vegetation of the lower delta has been significantly affected by grazing.

Other activities include hay harvesting, commercial and sport fishing, muskrat trapping, waterfowl shooting and recreation.

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22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects: The regulation of the Angara River, resulted in the alteration of the delta hydrological regime and a rise in water level of Lake Baikal, has produced the major threat to the delta ecosystems. Further regulatory activities increasing the water level in the lake have been planned. These will cause further degradation of wetland ecosystems and decline of waterfowl habitat.

See also Section 21.

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23. Conservation measures taken: The area is protected as a nature reserve (the Kabansky Zakaznik, established in 1974). In the reserve, timber cutting, collection of food plants and hunting (except for muskrat) are prohibited. The staff of the reserve comprises six rangers and a hunting manager.

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24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: It has been proposed to increase the protection status of the Kabansky Zakaznik to Strict Nature Reserve ('zapovednik'), extending this reserve in area; to increase the area of the Ramsar site beyond the boundaries of the nature reserve (to the Severnaya channel on the east and the Promoi and Galutai channels on the west).

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25. Current scientific research and facilities: Ornithological and botanical research have been conducted for many years.

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26. Current conservation education: No data

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27. Current recreation and tourism: This is poorly developed at present.

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28. Jurisdiction:
Territorial: Government of the Buryat Republic (Dom Sovetov, Ulan-Ude 670001, Russia).
Functional: State Committee of the Russian Federation for Environmental Protection (4/6 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Street, Moscow 123812).

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29. Management authority: Baikalsky Nature Reserve (Tankhoi, Kabansky District, Buryat Republic 671120, Russia).
State Committee of the Buryat Republic for Environmental Protection (21a Solnechnaya Street, Ulan-Ude 670015, Russia).

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30. Bibliographical references:
Ecology of East Siberian birds. 1977. Irkutsk Publishers.
Ecology of birds in the catchment area of Lake Baikal. 1979. Irkutsk Publishers.
Ecology of vegetation in the Selenga Delta. 1981. Novosibirsk, Nauka Publishers.
Skryabin, N.G. 1975. Water birds of Baikal. Irkutsk Publishers.
