

Project Update: September 2009

Between June 1st and 21st 2009, some areas of East Kazakhstan and Almatin Regions of the Kazakhstan Republic were surveyed in order to collect data about Pallas' cat.

The itinerary covered some areas of South-Western Kazakh Upland - Tulkili hills, some areas north of the Lake Balkhash, Saryoba hills, and south-western side of Chingistau mountains and granite lands of Emeltau, Arkat and Karagaily.

This expedition was the first one here to study Pallas cat status. The data were collected from locals of different groups - herdsmen, hunters, hunt inspectors. Also, the information was provided by Kazakhstan zoologists and other specialists. The respondents were given educational posters telling them about Pallas' cat and the necessity of its conservation.

Though it's very difficult to see Pallas cat in wild especially in summer when they come disguised as grassland, we saw them one time. This case has happened while on one of our pedestrian routes in the place that seemed to be Pallas cat habitat.

The animal was spotted in the vicinity of the Emeltau granite lands, in the south-west part of the East Kazakhstan Region. The cat, having noticed the researchers, hurried away, hiding behind bushes. The stony ravine where the meeting happened was teeming with pikas. Apparently, the Pallas cat was hunting one of them when the people appeared. As it turned out later, Pallas cat is quite common in the Emeltau Mountains. Herdsmen see the cat quite often there.

Data collection on Pallas cat is continuing now as apart from visiting the cattle-breeder camps and interviewing the locals; the questionnaires were distributed among hunt inspectors and students with support of the Committee of Forestry and Hunting of Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan and our local partner in Kazakhstan - the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK).



A picture in the Emeltau granite lands; one of typical Pallas cat habitats in Kazakhstan. In the photo are the team members (including a local student from the East-Kazakhstan State University) and local herdsmen.