

Jan Bouman Scholarship

Introduction

In 1998 the Foundation for the Preservation and Protection of the Przewalski Horse (FPPPH, the Netherlands) initiated a special grant in remembrance of its former chairman Jan Bouman, who passed away two years earlier.

Through this grant - the "Jan Bouman Scholarship" - each year one Mongolian postgraduate is being offered the opportunity to participate full-time in the field research programme on the free roaming Przewalski horses in Hustai National Park, or for the conservation of the species in the for the steppe ecosystem relevant research.

Until his death in 1996 Jan Bouman had been engaged in several activities on behalf of the protection and conservation of the Przewalski horse in captivity as well as in the efforts to reintroduce and to reintegrate this unique species into its original natural environment, the steppe.

The Przewalski horse, or *takh* in the Mongolian language, is a unique wild equid, one of the domestic horse's last remaining wild forebears. Sadly, the species became extinct in the wild some thirty years ago. From that moment on the survival of the species depended solely upon the Przewalski horses held in zoos or private parks. Alas, the preservation of the Przewalski horses in captivity was also at risk, due to genetic and behavioural problems which resulted from protracted breeding in captivity from 1901 onward.

Already, as early as 1974, Jan Bouman already did devise a studbook inventory data system based on cards. This system, which became colloquially known as the "Bouman system", made it possible for the owners of Przewalski horses to implement a breeding policy founded upon a broad genetic diversity.

Several articles in specialist and non-specialist

magazines and a number of books on the breeding history and on genetic management policies were published.

Under his chairmanship several so-called "semi-reserves" for the Przewalski horses were established in the Netherlands and in Germany. The ultimate design of this programme (IUCN/WWF no. 3077) as well as that of the breeding programme with special for this purpose acquired horses, was the reintroduction and reintegration of the species into its original habitat, the Mongolian steppe.



In 1990 the Foundation Reserves Przewalski Horse and the Mongolian Association for the Conservation of Nature and Environment (MACNE) started with a jointly executed programme. The objective of this joint project is the build up of a viable and sustainable Przewalski horse population in the Hustai National Park.

In the meantime a skilful, well-equipped and experienced staff apparatus has been established at Hustai National Park. A research and long-term management plan, which functions as a framework for sustainable conservation of the Hustai Nuruu steppe ecosystem, was also set up.

Aims of the Scholarship

The main objective of the Jan Bouman Scholarship is to encourage Mongolian scientists to become

acquainted with the different methods of monitoring and also to get experienced in field studies on the ecology, social behaviour and organisation, and the population dynamics of the growing number of takhi groups at Hustai National Park. However, by engaging trainees MACNE also gets the opportunity to strengthen the teaching skills and research capacities of its field staff at Hustai National Park

Programme

The traineeship covers a wide range of subjects. Although the emphasis will be put on takhi research, the trainee will also profit from the experience of working in a multidisciplinary team. The Park's biological staff is being involved in the execution of monitoring programmes on a variety of aspects concerning the steppe and forest vegetation, the different species of wildlife that live in and around Hustai National Park, but also on issues that are directly related to nature management and the problems it faces such as erosion.

Subject matter for the research to be carried out by the Jan Bouman Scholarship student will be set in consultation with the Park's managing staff. A special supervisor will be appointed to give guidance to the student during his/her traineeship. This supervisor bears responsibility for the on-the-job training of skills in the diverse monitoring methods and also supervises over the input, processing and analysing of the acquired data.

Key features in the training programme include participation of the trainee in meetings with colleagues from other disciplines, incorporating concepts and approaches from these other disciplines, with the aim to sharpen his/her understanding of nature management. A brief outline of the participant's research plan (objectives, research questions and hypotheses, methods, observation period, and year planning) will be sent to the Advisory Committee within three months after the participant has arrived at Hustai National Park.

Candidates

Those that want to apply for this grant must hold an appropriate bachelor degree - or its equivalent in biology or zoology - and must have an affinity toward field work. Although it is not obligatory for the applicant to express him/herself in the English language, knowledge of this language will be preferable in order to be capable of fully participating in the training programme.

During his/her traineeship the participant will write a report on their activities and research findings in English. At the end of the year - when the scholarship terminates - this report will be presented to the scientific advisory committee of the "Jan Bouman Scholarship."

The participant is also obliged to present the Park's staff with a paper at the end of the trainee period.

Selection and Admission Procedures

Admission is on competitive basis. Applications should be made through a letter in English to the Advisory Committee of the "Jan Bouman Scholarship", addressed to the offices of MACNE, CPO Box 1160, Ulaanbaatar 11, Mongolia. In this letter the applicant must elaborate upon his/her motives for wanting to get involved in the research activities at Hustai National Park. He/she also has to include a curriculum vitae (CV). This curriculum vitae consists of a detailed description of the different stages of education he/she went through, relevant professional experience, personal fields of interest and duplicates of diplomas. The letter must also be accompanied by two letters of reference from persons capable of judging the applicant's abilities. All letters and documents must be submitted to the above mentioned advisory committee before October 1st of each year.

Selection Committee

The Selection or Advisory Committee consists of several representative members of universities in Mongolia, the director of Hustai National Park, FPPPH and an internationally acknowledged etholo-

gist, with a speciality in behaviour ecology.

The Committee is not only responsible for the selection and admission procedures, but will also evaluate the quality of the candidate's field work and report. The Committee will inform the Netherlands based funding agency for the Jan Bouman Scholarship on its conclusions through annual reports.

Scholarship Fee

FPPPH will remit the money that is allocated for the scholarship, to Hustai National Park's own special bank account. The Park staff will provide the trainee with a monthly payment. All other costs in Hustai National Park (housing, food, training, supervision, transport) will be covered.

How to apply for the Jan Bouman Scholarship?

Please send your application for the scholarship, together with all other documents (CV, copies of diplomas) to the director of Hustai National Park.

Addresses:

Hustai National Park
Central Post Office, Box 1160
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