

Jan Prinsen (Netherlands) had a great hunt in Mongolia for Altay and Gobi ibex during September 2015 and filed this report:

*In 2012 I booked a hunting trip to Mongolia for September 2013, which in May 2013 was canceled from the Mongolian side. No permits would be issued for what really looked like political reasons. In retrospect, I know some have been issued, but under what conditions? At the end of 2014 I contacted **Artem Veselov** of **Profihunt**, asking him if he had anything special for me in 2015. He came up, to my astonishment, with Altay and Gobi ibex in Mongolia. Now fast forward to September 2015.*

From Europe, the trip is rather easy. My wife and I flew from Düsseldorf to Moscow, and then waited a few hours there for the connecting flight to

Ulaanbaatar, and finally landed there 16 hours after leaving home. At customs, after picking up all luggages, we met our guide Sergelen, whose nickname is Sergii. Again, only a few hours later we checked into Hovd, western Mongolia, and flew there in a little Fokker 50. The Hovd airport is just an airstrip with a simple building where one or two planes arrive and leave every day. Meeting us, and acting as driver during our stay, was Birvaa. He is a high-ranking nature protecting official in the Province of Hovd. After buying some necessities at a local mini-store we left for our camp in the Altay Mountains, some 300 kilometers to the southwest. Our camp was situated in the valley of the Ulaan Ereg River and on the slopes of Kharchint Uul Mountain, consisted of two tents (locally called gers), one of them to be the home for my wife and I during our stay in the Altay.

With the local guides Zaluukhai, Dash and Deldee, the plans for next day were discussed, drinking lots of the customary tea. They would leave on horseback at 5 a.m. and we would follow a few hours later to meet them if and where they had spotted ibex. After breakfast Birvaa, Sergii and I mounted, yes, the Land Cruiser that had brought

us. Birvaa took us through a side valley to the east of our camp to a plateau from which we had a wide view to look for ibex. A group had already been spotted 750 meters away and 300 meters down



Jan Prinsen (Netherlands) took this Altay ibex from Mongolia in September 2015. Jan was hunting with Profihunt.

by the local guides, but they needed my field scope for evaluating. A nice trophy animal was in this 14 head strong group of males, so it was decided that two guides would accompany me to

make a final evaluation.

Fog is the hunter's enemy, usually, and here it was the case. With empty hands and a full magazine in my rifle, we climbed up again to the plateau. Upon our arrival there, the fog lifted to a blue and sunny sky. On horseback we climbed another mountain in this range, from which the search started again. This time a group was found one kilometer away, 400 meters down. "L'histoire se repête" (the story repeats itself), and down we went again. As steep as the Caucasus Mountains are, and I have been there, this slope was. Zaluukhai brought me to within 150 meters for what should have been an easy shot. The animal jumped up after some of his unseen companions alarmed him, and it urged me to shoot while not being ready. Fortunately I missed totally and did not wound the animal.

Climbing was not only physically gruelling, but my mood was at an all-time low. My punishment consisted of bad sleeping during a short night, as I was to ride with the guides at 5 a.m. to a range west of our camp and started looking for ibex there. Shortly after sunrise we spotted seven ibex, but none
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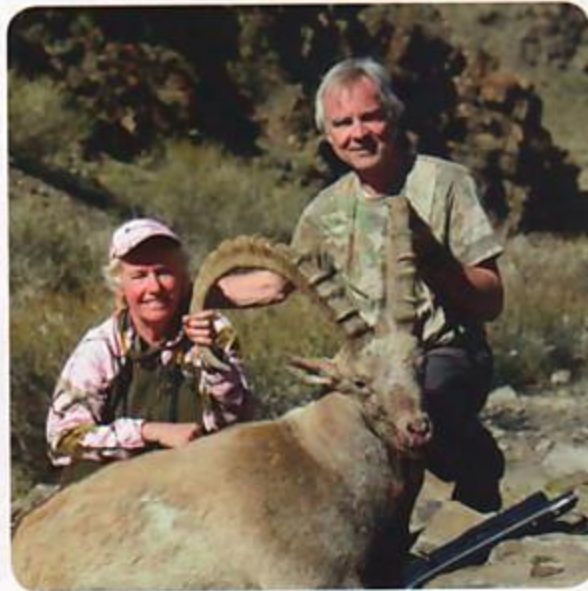
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of them a trophy animal.*

With my field scope, we found a group of three at probably three or four kilometers, but these were inaccessible and too far away in these steep mountains. In between, Deldee had gone on a separate search and located a group of four; with two trophy animals with them. We had to go down some 300 meters but this slope was not that steep and we could take our horses with us, although we had to lead them to the bottom of the valley. The ibex were at 800 meters from us but we could not get close enough, and worse, wind and snow came our way. As Deldee was on the other side of the animals, we decided to let him disturb them a little and push them toward us. Zaluukhai expected the animals to cross the valley and enter a side valley ahead of us.

The ibex descended at their ease from the ridge where they were lying as they were not very disturbed, but once on the valley bottom they took this at full speed, about 200 meters away from us. This gave me a perfect opportunity to evaluate the trophies. The first one being a Khan, two non-trophy animals following, and then came the real Khaan! I had ranged the entrance of the side valley at 260 meters but they definitely did not enter this little valley. Instead they ran to the right up the opposite slope, only slowing down to a trot, with a strong wind from the right. At 320 meters I took my shot, but because I had not corrected enough for

wind and the ibex's speed, it hit him in the rear lung area, bringing the animal to a stop, but my second shot did the rest. A 13-year-old, 49" Altay ibex was mine!

Of course, lots of photos were taken before the caping and butchering began. I think I should better not describe which part of the animal the local guides ate raw, but I suspect



This Gobi ibex was taken in Mongolia by Jan Prinsen (Netherlands), September 2015. Jan booked through Profihunt.

that they thought this part had an aphrodisiacal effect..... And speaking of that, arriving in camp created a festive mood for all, especially for Sergii, as he heard that his wife had borne a son the day before.

As our goal had been obtained very fast, and my legs hurt like hell, my

wife and I decided to take at least one day of rest before moving to the Gobi area. The guides were not that happy with that, but a day doing nothing in a beautiful mountain range is something special in our eyes. But the locals were inventive! Why not shoot two Altay ibex? The trophy would be much larger than the Gobi variety, and we had a nice camp here, and some more ... the "some more" being that there was no camp prepared in the Gobi, and there were no horses there! My answer to my guide Sergii concerning these last "problems" was simple. I told him that I had paid for a Gobi hunt and if that was not possible, we should return to Ulaanbaatar so I could get this payment back from his boss.

This worked, and we transferred to a handful of dusty houses in the Gobi, where my wife and I stayed with a Mongolian family during this part of the hunt ... not really what we look forward to when hunting in the mountains, but it gave us the opportunity to see some of the everyday life in this region.

The next day the hunting guides went scouting, this time using motorcycles instead of horses. My wife and I could take a very welcome shower in the local bathhouse and strolled around a little. As the village has no sewer system, only outdoor toilets, and the temperature had risen nicely, the overall "atmosphere" was smelly to say the least. After sunset the guides returned, having seen some old ibex billies, so the plan for the following day was composed. They would leave very

early trying to locate the ibex they had seen and we would follow a little later, like in the Altay.

It took Birvaa quite some searching before he found one of the guides; there we left the car and my wife. A hike of about 500 meters and we were on the top of a not very steep mountain and found the other guides there. They had located one of the goats grazing

at about one kilometer and would like to evaluate with my field scope. It was a Khan, not a Khaan, but definitely a very good trophy. We waited to see where the ram was heading for his morning sleep and then Birvaa and I went for him. Within 15 minutes we had covered the distance to the billy's bedding area and were looking down into the small ravines to find him. After

another 10 minutes we found him lying 100 meters from us, some 60 meters down and facing away. I had ample time to confirm that he was the one, bed my rifle and aim at his back, with the bullet's path projected into the heart/lung area. At the shot the animal tried to get up, but the second bullet kept him in place. The first shot had already broken the back and entered the lethal

area, but I found that out a few minutes later. An ibex hunt finished within one hour, on the first day, no sweat lost. I had only experienced this before in Spain.