



Sihlwald and Gattikon, May 20th 2023

To the members of the
ITG - International Takhi Group

Minutes of the General Assembly of the ITG

Tuesday, May 9th 2023, 5:30 — 6:45 pm at Hotel Amaris, Room Klee, 4600 Olten and by zoom

Present: Reinhard Schnidrig, Christian Stauffer, Rebekka Blumer, Anita Fahrni, Franziska Peter (Guest), Lena Michler, Ruth Baumgartner

Present by Zoom: Karin Hindenlang, Jörg Beckmann (Nuremberg Zoo)

Excused: Sven Hoffmann, Miroslav Bobek and Jaroslav Simek (Prague Zoo), Honorary President Thomas Pfisterer, Thomas Rothlin (Wildpark Winterthur)

President Reinhard Schnidrig welcomes the members of the International Takhi Group and especially welcomes Jörg Beckmann and Karin Hindenlang as participants via zoom. Reinhard Schnidrig is pleased about the presence of Franziska Peter as a guest. Franziska Peter actually is working in Val Müstair in Switzerland and is willing to reflect on a closer engagement for ITG. Also Lena Michler as responsible for the socio-economy project is especially welcomed.

The agenda of the General Assembly (GA) of the ITG is accepted. The slides on the procedure of the GA are considered as an attachment to the minutes and will also be published on the website.

1. Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the General Assembly of the ITG of May 10th, 2022 are accepted.

2. Annual report 2022 of the president

The president goes through his annual report 2022 (see www.savethewildhorse.org), which is divided into the foreword and 5 chapters. Selected topics are briefly listed as follows:

– Foreword with important topic from the last year:

- The main topic concerns the 30th anniversary of the reintroduction of the wild horse in Great Gobi B in 2022. Thanks to the end of the Covid pandemic, the president was able to participate in the celebrations in UB. A big event was held at the university there. Present were many pioneers of the project as well as the current Minister of Environment B. Bat-Erdene and remarkably many young people. All 3 existing projects (Takhintal, Khomintal, Hustai Nuruu) were represented. The three projects organized a



successful painting competition with school children for the celebrations, which was then reported on in the Takhi Post of April 2023 by Peter Kistler.

– **The horse and its habitat:**

- At the end of 2022 more than 400 Takhi were living in the GGB-reserve. As a result of the very dry summer, pastures showed poor quantity and quality of forage, which had implications for the winter of 2022 - 2023. For details, see item Varia. It is noticeable that the population of Takhi in the Great Gobi B has split. About 300 Takhi stay in the east (Khonin Us region) and about 100 Takhi are further west at Takhi Us. It is encouraging to see that the Takhi are also moving between these oases and in wider areas, finding new grazing grounds.
- After 2010, 2015 and postponements, the area-wide point count of ungulates in the protected area took place in 2022 with a focus on the khulans and the goitered gazelles. About 5000 khulans and about 11,000 gazelles were counted. These numbers mean a stable population of khulans and an increase in the number of gazelles. Concerning khulans these numbers are very encouraging, as Mongolia hosts about 60% of the world population and here in the south of the Great Gobi B the population remains stably high. The counting with drones could not take place due to a ban on export from Russia.

– **Cooperation with political authorities and research:**

- The ITG maintains various partnerships in Mongolia, locally, regionally and nationally. In 2022, both the president and Lena Michler maintained various contacts in this sense during their stays in Mongolia. Such contacts are important.
- As in previous years, a workshop was held at the beginning of the year at the Langenberg Wilderness Park in Switzerland. Some participants took part by video.
- The three Takhi projects worked well together and organized and carried out the 30th anniversary celebrations-together. After the celebration in UB, the participants were invited to a Naadam in Hustai National Park. The president of the ITG was particularly impressed by the appearance and marksmanship of the female archers.
- The cooperation with the administration of the Great Gobi B is going well. A special thanks goes to Batsukh, who keeps close contact with all parties involved in the office in UB as well as with Takhintal and Switzerland.
- The PhD thesis of Lena Michler on the management strategies for the cooperation of local herders and the protected area of the Great Gobi B SPA is well advanced and should be completed in 2023. Lena Michler has already been able to publish a scientific paper on this topic. Parallel to this PhD thesis, Lena developed the socio-economics project 'Sustainable Cashmere - Utilization and Ecotourism' on behalf of ITG. The focus of this project is to create greater value while keeping fewer animals. This goal is to be achieved with good pasture management.
- The research project on genetic analysis from Takhi feces had to be terminated because the quality of the samples was not sufficiently usable.



– **Informing the public:**

- Our website www.savethewildhorse.org, information brochures and the Takhi-Post in German, English and Mongolian provide information about the activities of the ITG association. A big thank-you for this immense work goes to Mirjam Würsch and Lena Michler for maintaining the website and to Peter Kistler for the production of the Takhi Post with fascinating articles on a variety of topics throughout the year. A great job - heartfelt thanks!

– **The association ITG**

- At the end of 2022, the ITG association consisted of five organizations (Wildnispark Zürich Langenberg; Wildpark Bruderhaus Winterthur; Prague Zoo; Nuremberg Zoo and Berlin Zoo) and ten individuals who also form the board (Reinhard Schnidrig, president; Christian Stauffer, vice president; Rebekka Blumer, treasurer; Ruth Baumgartner, Actuary; Sven Hoffmann, Legal Advisor; Anita Fahrni, Associate; Karin Hindenlang, representative of the Wildnispark Zürich Langenberg; Miroslav Bobek, Representative of Prague Zoo; Jaroslav Simek, Representative of Prague Zoo; Lundeg Purevsuren, Representative of the Mongolian Government as Ambassador of Mongolia to Switzerland). The ITG Honorary President, Thomas Pfisterer, is invited to all board meetings as a guest.
- A big thank-you for financial support of ITG goes especially to Zoo Nuremberg, Zoo Berlin and Wildnispark Langenberg.
- Donations by Zoo Prague directly to GGB are also noted with thanks.
- The ITG office in Ulanbaatar is led by Batsukh Jamiyandorj as dedicated Executive Director. Batsukh provides a special service to ITG through her engagement.

– **Finances:**

- In 2022, income of CHF 194'025.- was generated through foundations. Considerable contributions were received from the Jean-Pierre and Sonja Siegfried Foundation, the Temperatio Foundation, the Boguth-Jonak Foundation, the Vontobel Foundation, the Foundation de bienfaisance Jeanne Lovioz, BirdLife Switzerland, the Basler Foundation for Biological Research and a Foundation in Zurich. The Friends of the Takhi were able to make a substantial contribution in favor of the ITG.

The ITG board accepts the annual report of the president by acclamation.

3. Annual financial report 2022 (Details see slides on the website www.savethewildhorse.org)

Accounts 2022:

The comparison of 2022 and 2021 is presented. Details are presented to the General Assembly.



At the end of 2022 the association's fund amounted to CHF 132'541.42. ITG received contributions from members, from donors and from Friends of the Takhi as a total income of CHF 194'024.96. The number of contributing foundations increased.

Expenditure amounted to CHF 175'241.70. At the end of the fiscal year there was a loss of CHF 17'158.10.

Regarding the detailed costs of the account, Rebekka Blumer especially pointed out the research with the point-count and the socio-economic projects as well as the costs for the celebration of the 30th anniversary and the expenses for the Takhi Post. The report of the auditor Peter Haller is available and published on the website. Rebekka Blumer reads out the report of Peter Haller Treuhand AG, which prepares the bookings based on the submitted vouchers as well as the report. The ITG is responsible for the annual financial statements.

The president explicitly thanks Rebekka Blumer and Peter Haller Treuhand AG for their immense and reliable work.

The 2022 accounts and the report are proposed to the General Assembly for acceptance and discharge of the Board. Acceptance and discharge are unanimous.

Budget 2023

Details are presented to the General Assembly:

- This budget was prepared by Rebekka Blumer and discussed by the Board of ITG:

Expected income: CHF 163'000.00.

Projected expenses: CHF 352'530.00.

The budgeted result is negative with CHF 189'530.00. Rebekka Blumer highlights the amount for ITG Switzerland of CHF 65,800.00 which largely relates to the mandate contract for the socio-economic project of CHF 54,000.00. The amount for research of CHF 196,980.00 also includes the socio-economy project with CHF 121,700.00. Unfortunately, so far no separate account could be created for this socio-economy project. The minus results from the fact that the projects are planned, but the money for them has not yet been found. Nevertheless, the projects will be conducted only if the necessary funds become available.

The budget for 2023 is noted as presented and the enormous work of Rebekka Blumer is honored with acclamation.

4. Granting discharge to the ITG Board

The ITG board unanimously is granted discharge.

5. Budget and Approval of the activities 2023

- 13-15 January Workshop: Participants are the ITG-Board Switzerland; from Mongolia Batsukh, Yondon (by zoom), Dalaitseren (ITG MN); Altansukh (GGB SPA); Boldbaatar, (MET); Petra Kaczensky (Research Council); Lena Michler; Nuremberg



Zoo, Berlin Zoo and guests. This event is valuable because of the direct exchange on various topics and for mutual understanding.

- Since the beginning of April, Dr. med. vet. Angela Becsek has been working in Takhintal. There she is working together with Dalaitseren on the topic of disease monitoring and the examination of dead Takhi. In a workshop in which a veterinarian from Mongolian University of Life Science, Institute of Veterinary Medicine in UB was involved, the importance of the examinations of the dead Takhi and the procedure of the documentation were explained. Explanations about zoonoses and other diseases were also given to the rangers. Furthermore, she has established contacts with local veterinarians, and in her reports she emphatically explains that the care and treatment of domestic animals needs to be significantly improved, also in order to avoid the transmission of diseases to the wild animals. It is essential to continue this work. For this purpose, memorandums of understanding and a kind of contract with Mongolian University of Life Science, Institute of Veterinary Medicine in UB have been drawn up.
- Finalized architectural design of new administration building located in Altai soum – support tender process where requested: The planning has been fully accepted and the tender for the construction work is pending. The warrant architect of KFW wishes to make certain changes to the plan, which the ITG must take note of. This results in time delays and certain additional costs, which are included in the budget. As far as known to date, the foundation stone is to be laid in the fall of 2023. The opening is planned for 2025.
- Zoning of the entire park (follow-up work due to enlargement): New central zone and less strictly protected zones are set.
- Socio-economic feasibility work: sustainable cashmere and eco-tourism projects are continuing.
- Under the leadership of Prof. Petra Kaczensky, the application for Gobi B and Gobi A as UNESCO World Heritage Site is initiated.
- Thanks to financial support, the bird diversity in the Great Gobi B can be surveyed.
- Trip of board members to Mongolia with visits to all three Takhi projects.
- From July 12-17, the first ecotourism trip with the theme of horse behavior will take place.
- On July 16, the Naadam in Takhintal is held as an addendum to the 30th anniversary celebration.

The activities are unanimously accepted.

6. Agreement on the annual fee 2023 (CHF 500.00 / Euro 500.00)

The deputy director of Nuremberg Zoo proposes to increase the annual membership fee to CHF/EUR 1000.00. The ITG board supports this proposal.



7. Elections

The ITG board recommends re-electing the following board members for a period of two years:

Reinhard Schnidrig, Christian Stauffer, Rebekka Blumer, Miroslav Bobek, Jaroslav Simek, Anita Fahrni, Sven Hoffmann, Karin Hindenlang, Ruth Baumgartner,

The election was confirmed for all.

Not on the list is a representative of the Mongolian government, because no stable situation with a person from the ministry is possible. In addition, Lundeg Purevsuren (former foreign minister and advisor to the president, ambassador to Switzerland) is no longer a representative of the government (executive) in Mongolia, but is probably running for office in the legislature in Mongolia. Thus, the two Mongolian representatives were no longer nominated for election.

The ITG board recommends re-electing Reinhard Schnidrig as President for a period of two years

The ITG board recommends re-electing Christian Stauffer as Research Officer for a period of two years.

The ITG board recommends re-electing Peter Haller Treuhand, Magden, Switzerland as financial auditor. They do the accounting for the ITG and the Friends of the Wild Horse and do the audit without charging ITG.

The functions were confirmed by acclamation.

9. Varia

There are no applications for varia.

Latest news from Takhintal:

- Development of vegetation in 2022: no precipitation in summer; much snow; great cold and drought, thus black dzud; no moisture in the soil.
- Livestock 2023: cows and horses are still dying, a dramatic situation; -
- Takhi 2023: considerable mortality with about 65 dead Takhi (mainly older mares and many yearlings), about 270 living Takhi, difference of about 80 Takhi missing. There is hope that these Takhi have moved to new areas.
- In Takhi Us the rangers are still feeding the Takhi; the weather conditions are very difficult, in the last days again snowfall and big cold; monitoring is therefore hardly or not possible.
- In summary, we can say that evolution is visible here, in that mortality is always part of a cold steppe, although not easy to endure. More serious is the situation with domestic animals.
- Ganbaa has left the position as director GGB SPSA in 2022. He has a great merit in the project of reintroduction of Takhi in Great Gobi B Protected Area, for building



the ranger team, doubling the protected area, etc. He is a profound wild horse expert.

- Agi is from the region and has taken over the director position first ad interim and now definitely.
- Dalaitseren resigned as of the end of July. Thus, the ITG no longer has a Takhi expert in Takhintal. It would be a pity if the current information on monitoring and mortality recording would be lost. The further procedure is a challenge and needs a new planning also concerning monitoring as a whole.
- Ms. Suvd works 50% in the UB office and brings advantages such as various foreign languages and experience in management, tourism, socio-economics and international organizations.

The next General Assembly takes place on Tuesday May 7, 2024.

For the minutes of the ITG - International Takhi Group

Reinhard Schnidrig
President of the ITG

Ruth Baumgartner
Actuary of the ITG

Attachements

- Annual Report in German (see www.savethewildhorse.org)
- Annual Report in English (see www.savethewildhorse.org)
- Slides General Assembly May 2023 (see www.savethewildhorse.org)