

***A Primer of Conservation Biology* by R. B. Primack, D. Batbold, R. Samiya, and N. Batsaikhan. 2003. 423 pages, paperback edition, ISBN 99929-5-858-8 (in Mongolian). 8000 tugrugs**

Professors and students at Mongolian colleges and universities constantly suffer by the lack of textbooks in the native language. This book was an attempt to fill the gap in conservation biology by using the second edition of Richard Primack's book *A Primer of Conservation Biology* (2000) as a main skeleton. There are several progressive aspects about this book. First, this is the first comprehensive text ever published on conservation biology in Mongolia. There has always been public misunderstanding that ecology is conservation of nature and environment. Hopefully, this book will be useful in drawing the distinction between the fundamental science of ecology and issues addressed by conservation biology. Second, it is probably one of the first books to be translated with official permission from author and publisher. Third, the typesetting for printing was nicely and professionally done. I have seen many translated books in Mongolian that contain only scanned figures with legends in foreign languages. Here, all figures and graphs were digitally reproduced to make everything in Mongolian, which makes the job by Mongolian authors complete. Fourth, the Mongolian edition was expanded by incorporating Mongolian case studies and examples to make it readily applicable to a Mongolian readership. This is important because people normally relate to an idea when explained using examples from their "own backyards." Fifth, lists of suggested readings at the end of each chapter, an appendix and a glossary provide useful information about references for in-depth supplemental reading, organizations for conservation of natural resources and how authors translated or transliterated English terms into Mongolian.

As it is the first attempt to produce a comprehensive text on the subject matter in Mongolian, there is still room for improvement. First, it is not indicated where the book was published in Mongolia, making it impossible to make a proper citation. The Mongolian edition points to Sinauer Associates, Inc, which was the original publisher of the English edition, as the publisher. However, this book is no longer the same edition as translated, authors were added, original text was somewhat changed to include Mongolian examples and it has a different ISBN number from

the original version. Second, as the purpose stated in the book says, it was targeted at teachers and professors in the fields of conservation biology, ecology and environmental studies. My inclination is that the book, a primer, should be used as a textbook for undergraduate courses, not for professors. Third, there are quite a few unintentional errors and inaccurate transliteration and translation of names in the book. For example, it contains only two equations and the equation for estimating effective population size contained a typographical error. One should be careful especially when producing the first and only text because consequences of any error contained will always be "snowballed" or "error-propagated" in future works by students who studied from it without critical thinking. Fourth, although the original text was supplemented by numerous case examples from Mongolia, chapter 5 on *Conservation and Sustainable Development* was a direct translation of the English text. Mongolians always claim to be a great nation in terms of traditional views of nature conservation. Therefore, it would have been good to include at least a few examples of Mongolian traditions toward conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and environment in this chapter, which in fact only contains examples from foreign nations. Needless to say, these minor comments are easy to fix in future editions.

All in all, this is a great introductory text for students and it offers a good overview of conservation biology: what conservation biology is, what it does, what issues it addresses and how it does so. I personally encourage this book, translated and compiled by our leading conservationists, to be used for courses such as conservation biology and environmental conservation at colleges and universities throughout Mongolia. *A Primer of Conservation Biology* sets the bar high for textbooks in any field that are being prepared for publication in Mongolian. We should also acknowledge World Bank who made this book possible by funding the translation, production and printing costs. The book can be purchased from local bookstores