

11.11.2015 | VOLGA-DNEPR FLIES RARE PRZEWALSKI HORSES FOR REINTRODUCTION PROJECT IN URAL STEPPES

Volga-Dnepr Group has supported a project to reintroduce endangered Przewalski horses in the Ural steppes of Russia.

One of the Group's Boeing 737-400SF freighters carried six of the rare horses from Montpellier in France to Orenburg, located on the Ural River some 1,500 kilometres southeast of Moscow. The horses were accompanied by three representatives of the Association for the Przewalski Horse to ensure their safety and wellbeing throughout the six-hour flight.

The Przewalski horse is one of the rarest and most endangered subspecies of wild horse on the planet. It is included in the Red Book of the Russian Federation, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora. The horses were gratuitously given by the Association for the Przewalski Horse in France where several generations of horses have been living in the wild at the Tour du Valat Biology Station. The flight to Orenburg is the first step of the pilot project in Russia to reintroduce the Przewalski horse in the Preduralskaya Step of the Orenburgsky Reserve.

For their journey, organised through cooperation between Volga-Dnepr Airlines and AirBridgeCargo Airlines, the horses were transported in special stables. "We took the utmost care of these special animals. The stables were carefully installed and secured inside the cargo cabin and ambient noises were minimised to ensure the horses were as comfortable as possible. We also maintained the temperature in the cargo hold below 20°C," said Alexey Grebinyak, lead load planning specialist at AirBridgeCargo Airlines.

Following their safe arrival in Orenburg, the horses completed the final part of their journey by road. Svetlana Berezina, General Director of Fly Concord, which commissioned the flight, thanked Volga-Dnepr Group for the reliable and safe delivery of the 'priceless cargo'. Rafilya Bakirova, Director of the Orenburg Reserve, stated: "You helped us resolve one of the key issues – to deliver such invaluable cargo safely to Russia. You, literally speaking, returned Przewalski horses to Orenburg steppes. We could never implement the practical part of the project without your help."

Volga-Dnepr Group has many years of experience of safely transporting animals for breeding and conservation projects around the world. In August, another B737F flight by AirBridgeCargo carried a shipment of 1,236,000 baby Muksun fish to help repopulate the freshwater Ob River basin in northern Russia.

