



Megadunes and Desert Lakes Mongolia

In the Badain Jaran, nearly 100 lakes mingle with the tallest sand dunes in the world. Researchers have long studied these features in China, yet mystery continues to enshroud them.

Situated in the Alxa Desert region of Inner Mongolia, the Badain Jaran naturally piles up megadunes towering 200 to 300 meters (650 to 1,000 feet) tall. Scientists are still puzzling over how the dunes grow so large, investigating a combination of wind patterns and underlying geology.

Another enigma is the source of water for the lakes. Scientists are working to figure out the relative contributions from precipitation, groundwater, snowmelt, and paleowater. Regardless of the water source, they know that some lakes have shrunk or disappeared in recent years.