



# Dongting Lake Newsletter

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**Securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in protected**

## Project implementation system

In November 2018, Project Management Office (PMO) recruited a new coordinator to further strengthen the supervision of the project and enhance daily communication and coordination with the Dongting Lake Nature Reserves (NR).

## Supervision and monitoring of this project

In August 2018, a team of five staffs of the PMO, along with the FAO representatives, relevant NRs' staff and experts, conducted a field inspection on the NRs. During the visit, the project staffs also talked with local community representatives and discussed the existing problems faced by local residents. Participating project staffs, experts and the public representatives put forward several solutions to facilitate follow-up implementation of the project.

## Financial status

As of December 21, 2018, the project has received a total of US\$ 1,397,371 from its lead agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). To date, the total expenditure of the project amounted to US \$826,232 with a surplus of US \$571,139.

In addition, as of December 21, 2018, the project has received provincial financial support of CNY1.2 million in which the total expenditure is CNY754,348 and with a surplus of CNY445,652.

## Project progress

### Specialized actions for ecological improvement

From July 5 to July 15, 2018, leaders from Forestry Department, Ecological and Environmental Department, Housing and Urban-Rural Development Department, Water Conservancy Department, and Agricultural Committee of Hunan Province, conducted a field supervision and inspection on the NRs. Their inspection focused on the

construction and management of NRs in Hunan Province, as well as NRs around the mainstream and main tributaries of the Yangtze River.

### **Strengthen top-level protection design and reach a common consensus on conservation**

In terms of strengthening the protection of Dongting Lake, a draft version of the Construction of Dongting Lake National Park was completed and is awaiting the approval of Hunan Forestry Department.

In addition, the amendments to the Regulations on the Protection of Wetlands in Hunan Province by relevant departments of the cities around the Dongting Lake have been submitted to the Hunan Provincial People's Congress under investigation.

### **Update biodiversity data and build an integrated information system**

The Dongting Lake Integrated Management System based on Hunan E-Government Network has been basically constructed and is in the stage of improvement. The PMO cooperated with the NRs on data collection to enrich the system.

### **One NR, one law**

The Regulations on the Protection of Hunan East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve have been approved by the Standing Committee of Yueyang Municipal Government and the Standing Committee of Yueyang People's Congress after three times of deliberation, and are now awaiting the approval of the Standing Committee of Hunan Provincial People's Congress.

On July 25, 2018, Hengling Lake Nature Reserve, Central South University of Forestry and Technology, the Legal Office and Forestry Bureau of Xiangyin County compiled the Regulations for the Management of Hengling Lake Nature Reserve. Then the Regulations were sent to 12 units for their comments, including Xiangyin County Economic Research Office, County Legal Office, Forestry

Bureau, Fisheries Administration, Water Bureau and Land Resources Bureau.

### **Draft and upgrade NRs' management plan**

According to work plan of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, the East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve, in cooperation with field experts, updated the Management Plan of East Dongting Lake NR (2016-2020) which has passed reviews.

South Dongting Lake Nature Reserve (SDLNR) is working with Jiang Yong, an expert in NR management, on the preparation of the "South Dongting Lake Nature Reserve Management Plan". At present, the SDLNR Management Bureau has set up a corresponding working group with dedicated people to take charge of the work, and the preliminary version was formulated.

### **Capacity-building of staff and management**

The South Dongting Lake Nature Reserve organized relevant staffs to participate in various training activities. On December 17-19, they participated in "Training on Wetland Conservation and Wetland Park Construction and Management in 2018". During the training, representatives discussed many important issues, such as wetland protection and park construction, pilot construction of wetland parks, wetland conservation and restoration, investigation and monitoring of wetland resources, building of science popularization and public education system, as well as sustainable utilization of wetland resources. They also learned on how to construct and manage protected areas from national wetland parks, such as Yuanshui in Taoyuan, Yuanshui in Hengdong, Simeng in Pupu and Yinling in Guiyang.

Nearly 50 employees of the East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve visited Sanjiangyuan National Park in Qinghai, Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve in Sichuan, Wang Lang National Nature Reserve in Sichuan and Qixing River National Nature Reserve in Heilongjiang. They learned about eco-tourism development models, biodiversity

monitoring, integrated agricultural management model and community co-management from their visits.



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East Dongting Investigation activity

## Sustainable development in communities

The East Dongting Lake Nature Reserve (EDLNR) actively promoted an integrated management mode of “bird-friendly agriculture”. The EDLNR invited experts and FAO officials to conduct field visits and hold multi-party symposiums to discuss in-depth on relevant issues and propose solutions in the implementation of this project.

The EDLNR strengthened its team building of coordinators. The Management Bureau cooperated with ecological and environmental protection organizations, such as the Finless Porpoise Conservation Association, David’s deer Conservation Association and local communities including the Caishang Lake Fishing Ground to jointly protect and patrol the Lake.

The Western Dongting Lake Nature Reserve strengthened wetland ecological restoration through compensation funds for wetland ecological benefits in

the NR to develop its organic fish production in Qingshanyuan. Related measures have also been put up and formulated the "Qingshan Ridge Community Co-management Measures". At present, the number of birds and fish in Baibian Lake of the West Dongting Lake Reserve is increasing in which the number of swan increased to more than 3000.

## Protect and monitor flagship species

The Dongting Lake Nature Reserve has strengthened the protection of flagship species. Firstly, the NR worked with the fishery administration of Yueyang City to crack down on illegal fishing and strictly protect finless porpoises. Second, Yueyang David’s deer Protection Association and Yueyang East Dongting Lake Environmental Protection Association jointly carried out a series of actions on David’s deer protection. Thirdly, the NR cooperated with the Institute of Zoology and the Institute of Subtropical Ecology of China Academy of Science, Hunan University, WDLNR, SDLNR and Hengling Lake NR to conduct a series of routine biodiversity monitoring on birds, vegetation, David’s deer and reed vole. Fourthly, 15 spoonbills and 20 wintering waterbirds were installed with satellite positioning and tracking equipment besides bird banding.

Hengling Lake Nature Reserve carried out a synchronous bird monitoring work with a bird expert Zou Yeai and his team. They observed 1,332 geese overwintering at Cichang Lake, 5 white cranes and 13 black storks at national first-class protected level. In addition, more than 7,000 animals protected at first and second national level, were also discovered at Gongguanzi Fishing Ground.

Then Hengling Lake Nature Reserve immediately formulated a patrolling plan to better protect these wintering migrant birds. Seven monitoring cameras were installed for 24-hour observation, and the recorded data and files were saved for future study. Staff of Cichang Lake and Gongguanzi fishing ground also carried out 24-hour shift patrols in this area.

## Major events



10<sup>th</sup> Dongting Lake bird watching festival and international symposium kick-off



FAO China Representative Vincent Martin spoke at the Dongting Lake International Seminar.

On December 6, the International Conference on Ecological Conservation and Green Development of Dongting Lake was held in Yueyang Nanhu Hotel, co-sponsored by Hunan Provincial Forestry Department, Yueyang People's Government, FAO, GEF, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Beijing Forestry University. Four themes were discussed during this event: ecological conservation and green development of national parks, wetland conservation and restoration, migratory wintering bird and its habitat protection and international cooperation in these areas.

More than 120 top international experts shared their experiences in International Lake management, wetland conservation, restoration and management. Participants discussed the strategy of building National Park in Dongting Lake and promoted ecological protection and green development of Dongting Lake.

## Project Overview

“Securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in China's Dongting Lake protected areas” is a five-year-long project being executed by the Forestry Department of Hunan Province (FDHP) and the Hunan Province Finance Department (HPFD) under the supervision of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and financing through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The total budget of the project is USD 10.55 million, of which USD 2.95 million is contributed by GEF and the other USD 7.5 million is co-financed by FAO and FDHP.

- The project aims to strengthen the existing institutional and policy framework; to promote an integrated, ecosystem-wide planning and management approach; to develop biodiversity and biodiversity friendly production practices to reduce human activity pressure on the Wetlands; and to increase institutional capacity and public awareness and support for wetlands conservation.
- The project consists of four major components:
  - Component 1: Strengthening of institutional capacities for integrated monitoring and management of biodiversity in Dongting Wetlands Ecosystem (DWE);
  - Component 2: Strengthening of management effectiveness of DWE NRs network;
  - Component 3: Mainstreaming of conservation of biodiversity in key sectors in DWE;
  - Component 4: Environmental education and awareness.



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