



Yangtze Programme Newsletter

Issue 10 September 2008



Reviving
The Lifeline of China

Reconstruct the earthquake affected area in an eco-friendly way

The Temperate Protection Station in Baishuihe Nature Reserve Finished

The Daping Temperate Protection Station at Baishuihe Nature Reserve was completed on September 22nd, 2008. Mr. Dai Baiyang, the Deputy Director of Sichuan Forestry Department and Mr. Guillermo Castilleja, the Global Program Supervisor of WWF, attended the opening ceremony of the protection station.

Baishuihe Nature Reserve is very close to the epicenter of the May 12th's Earthquake. All the three protection stations, including Daping, Wangjiaping and Donglinsi, were destroyed by the earthquake. According to the disaster assessment, WWF decided to help Baishuihe to rebuild the station first and launched the construction on July 2nd.

The construction received help from different walks of lives. Before the rebuilding, WWF contacted Mr. Yang Xin, a very famous conservationist in China, and asked him to introduce his experience. He was very positive to share his experience about building protection station in Tibetan plateau.

“As a member of WWF, I am very please to attend the ceremony,” Mr. Guillermo Castilleja said, “I saw what Chinese government and people achieved in front of the catastrophic disaster, which deserve to win respect all over the world. At the same time, WWF is trying its best in fundraising to help the affected nature reserves and neighboring communities.”

“I appreciate WWF’s long term support to giant panda conservation in Sichuan and other parts of China, and my specific thank goes for the immediate and effective help after the earthquake. I also hope that the cooperation between WWF and Sichun Forestry Department will be largely improved in the future,” said Mr. Dai Baiyang.



WWF supported Baishuihe NR to construct a temperate protection station in Sichuan.

The new station takes up 60 square meters, which meets the ranger’s needs on daily work and logistics. WWF also provided computer and printer for the station. The station can be used for 10 years.



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Protect & restore viable populations of focal species & their habitats

Conservation Network set up for Yangtze Dolphin

An unprecedented Yangtze Freshwater Cetacean Conservation Network initiated by the aquatic and wild life protection office at the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture was established in Xingzikou, Jiangxi province on September 24th to enhance the protection on Baiji dolphin and finless porpoise. Six nature reserves and two monitoring sites have joined an existing network that has already been there protecting the Yangtze cetaceans.

The Baiji dolphin and the finless porpoise are rare freshwater cetaceans found only in the Yangtze River. They embody the Yangtze's biodiversity, and also act as an eco-system health indicator. But habitat degradation from human activities such as illegal fishing, pollution and shipping has hit the Baiji dolphin and finless porpoise hard, causing them dramatically decline in numbers over the last few years. During the 2006 Yangtze Freshwater dolphin expedition initiated by the Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, no Baiji dolphins were found. And the population of the finless porpoise has dropped to an estimated 1800, half the amount found in the 1990s.

“It is necessary to integrate each of the nature reserves to effectively protect the Baiji dolphin and finless porpoise. We will rely on the data provided by the Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and conduct scientific management on river levels”, said Fan Xiangguo, director of aquatic wildlife protection at the Ministry of Agriculture.



A conservation network is set up to protect the endangered Yangtze dolphin in middle and lower Yangtze.

To be continued



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Over the past few decades, the Chinese government has made considerable efforts to protect the freshwater dolphin by setting up nature reserves. But there are still more needs to be satisfied: problems like inaccurate data collection has had a negative impact on monitoring and rescue standards, while the geographic separation of the reserves compromises other protection efforts. Meanwhile, extreme weather such as droughts, snow disasters and climate change are emerging as new threats to Yangtze dolphins and the finless porpoise.

The Yangtze Dolphin Network offers a unified monitoring and rescue standard alongside a shared network information platform. Periodic dolphin monitoring and safety training sessions at nature reserves are also part of the plan.

“Based on data provided by members of the network, we will build a united information platform on dolphins in the Yangtze River to provide more accurate reports. Up to date information will help streamline the decision making process,” said Wang Ding, a noted Chinese cetacean conservation specialist from Institute of Hydrobiology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

“WWF started working on Yangtze dolphin conservation as early as 2002. I am very happy to join the Yangtze Dolphin Network today. It is of big significance to dolphin protection efforts in China and around the world. In the future, WWF will work with the government as well as academics and nature reserves to identify the threats climate change will bring to species like the finless porpoise. This will help us enhance their resistance and resilience to climate change,” said Dr. Wang Limin, WWF deputy conservation director of operations.

The network launch ceremony will be followed by two days of dolphin monitoring and rescue training, as well as one day of field monitoring practice.



Baiji Dolphin.



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Yunnan's first law to protect black-necked crane promulgated

Black-necked cranes, the national first level key protected animal, will be in a safe and peaceful life in Zhaotong of Yunnan in the future. From January 2009 The Management Act of Yunnan Dashanbao Black-necked Crane National Nature Reserve will be implemented, providing legal support for effective protecting the habitat of black-necked cranes and Dashanbao wetland resources.

As the first nature reserve act in Yunnan led by the Yunnan provincial People's Congress, the act will provide a legal guarantee for black-necked cranes and their habitats and the economic and ecological sustainable development in local communities.

According to the overall plan, Yunnan Dashanbao Black-necked Crane National Nature Reserve will establish key protected areas in the core zone of the nature reserve, and implement strict protection and management regulations.

With the world population of over 4000, the black-necked cranes mainly distributes in China, India, Bhutan, Nepal and other countries. As one of its key habitats in China, Yunnan Dashanbao Black-necked Crane National Nature Reserve was listed one of the RASMAR sites in December 2004. The Dashanbao NR is the water tower of Zhaotong City, also one of the important ecological areas in the upper Yangtze River.

The Standing Committee of Yunnan Province People's Congress takes the lead to formulate the Management Act of Yunnan Dashanbao Black-necked Crane National Nature Reserve. With the support from WWF, the legislation workshop conducted and the act has been passed in September.



An act was passed by Yunnan government to protect black-necked cranes, the national first level key protect animal. (Photo by Zhu Yong.)



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Sustainably provide goods and services for people through restoration and Integrated ecosystem management

Traditional Chinese Medicine base line survey conducted in Upper Yangtze

As an essential component of ECBP programme, the baseline surveys for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) resources were conducted at the four pilot sites in the Upper Yangtze Eco-region from August to September.

The survey was postponed by May 12th's earthquake, and the landslide caused by the after quakes and heavy rain in September made it difficult to go to field. However, with the efforts from WWF Chengdu and Xi'an Office and their local partners, the surveys were successfully conducted at four pilot villages located at Pingwu County, Meigu County of Sichuan province, Wnexian County of Gansu province, and Ningshaan county of Shaanxi province.

The survey aims to find out the current situation of TCM resource distribution and utilization in the pilot sites. After nearly two months' hard work, the survey identified the TCM species to be protected as priorities, monitoring criteria and techniques for wild TCM resources at the pilot villages.

"Through this baseline survey, we now know what we have in our region, and the specific categories, distribution, utilization, and scales of endangered status of TCM resources. Only based on the survey could we design a work plan to better address the threatening issues and protect the wild species for long time in this giant panda habitat?" says Meng Xiangming, a staff from Pingheliang Nature Reserves of Shaanxi province.

The final survey report is now being compiled and analysed. Based on the results, a well-tailored management plan will be finalized to effectively promote the sustainable use of TCM resources, reduce the threatening factors to the wild resources and maintain the rich biodiversity in this giant panda habitat.



Due to over harvest, the yield of the wild Tall Gastrodia Tuber (*Rhizoma Gastrodiae*) declined greatly in recent years..



Field investigations at Pingwu.



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Heihe Forest Park Tourist Information Centre Now Open to Public

The WWF supported Tourist Information Centre opened to the public at Heihe Forest Park in September. The center focuses on Qinling's biodiversity significance and ecological function, showcase achievements in the ecotourism development as well as nature conservation, promoting WWF's image in the working areas.

The Heihe Park is not only a hot tourist spot in Shaanxi province but also the place where Houzhenzi giant panda Corridor is located. It is the first scenic spot on the way to the hinterland of Qinling and usually takes three to four hours for the city people to reach, making it hot but also fragile in front of the tourists.

To better educate tourists on the significance of nature conservation in their behavior, WWF supported the park to build the tourist information centre.

Since 2001, in close cooperation with WWF, the park has built eco-trails, Panda House and other eco-friendly facilities to minimize the negative impact from tourists on natural environment. At the same time, WWF assisted to set up a wildlife conservation team with 30 members as there is a panda corridor crossing this area. Now the team is under the overall giant panda monitoring and patrolling network. It is one of the areas that this kind of work is done through forest park, rather than the traditional wildlife conservation sectors like nature reserves.

One of the agreements reached on eco-facilities development during this cooperation is that the park shall strictly stay in line with the principle of returning a part of the profit to conservation work. Currently, 10% of the park entrance fee and 15 RMB from each bed sold in Panda House are taken as operational fund of wildlife M/P group, which guarantees a sustainable and long term conservation work.



The information centre in Heihe Park will provide environment education to tourists.



WWF supported the eco-tourism of the Heihe Park by building Panda House.



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Create enabling conditions for conservation and sustainability in the Yangtze Basin

Living Yangtze Photo Contest Embarked

The Living Yangtze Photo contest, the first river basin photo contest initiated by WWF CPO embarked on September 26th. The contest aims to promote the conservation and development achievements of the Yangtze River through high level photo images, and raise public awareness to protect the Yangtze eco-region.

Till February 28 2009, the contest will collect photos focusing on wildlife conservation, environment, community development and climate change.

Co-organized with The Yangtze Forum Secretary, the contest is also a platform to promote Yangtze Forum to public. The winning photos will be exhibited on the third Yangtze Forum held in Shanghai next year.

Series of warming-up events will be organized in four main cities along Yangtze River to call for photographers' participation in this contest. On Oct 16 and 17, the first event organized in Wuhan attracted more than 200 people's participation. Chengdu, Kunming and Shanghai will be the next stop for the warm-up events.

For more information, please refer to <http://www.fotomen.cn/theYangtzeRiver/>



Dr Zhu Chunquan announced the opening of the Living Yangtze photo contest in September.



The eco-photographic workshop attracted the attention of photographers in Wuhan, Hubei.



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Artwork Collection for WWF Expo Pavilion

Can you imagine that your work of flash, video and auto-device can have a display on 2010 World Expo? Yes, why not! On Sep 10th, 2008, WWF launched a artwork collection for WWF Expo Pavilion, together with SSTM (Shanghai Science and Technology Museum) and SSEDf (Shanghai Science and Education Foundation). We expect various interactive measures to reflect problems and phenomena about climate change. Your participation will be highly appreciated: Professional artwork makers and amateurs, home and abroad are all welcome!

The awarding ceremony will be on January 2009, with all together 5 excellent art works be selected out as final winners with surprised big bonus.

Application and more details, please go to www.sycste.org.cn.

Coming Next Month

- International wetland conservation network seminar in Jiangsu
- Field survey of earthquake impact in Minshan landscape
- Panda monitoring/patrolling system workshop in Shaanxi
- Sichuan Pepper Fair in Carrefour

Yangtze vision

A region where a living river links the Tibetan Plateau and the Pacific;

A region where people thrive in harmony with nature, pandas play in forests, children swim with dolphins and fish in the clear water, pheasants dance among the rhododendron, and cranes sing at sunrise.

A region where natural cycles sustain a rich and ancient culture.

For further information, please contact:
Zeng Ming,

Communication Manager
Yangtze Programme
WWF China Programme
Tel: +86 10 65227100 ext. 3298
Fax: +86 10 65227300
Email: mzeng@wwfchina.org