



Securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in China's dongting lake protected areas project newsletter

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Pied avocet in dongting lake
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1. Project overview

The “securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in china's dongting lake protected areas” project is a joint effort by the forestry department of hunan province (FDHP), the four nature reserves (NR) management bureaus, other provincial and local partners, the food & agriculture organization of the united nations (FAO) and the global environmental facility (GEF). The objective is to secure the conservation of biodiversity of global importance in dongting lake ecosystem by strengthening existing management efforts and the promotion of wetland’s long-term sustainable development.

The project coordination structure was established in 2015, including three supervision and implementation committees, which are:

- ⊙ **The project steering committee (PSC)** to supervise the project implementation, facilitate cooperation between stakeholders and review the annual work plan of the project;
- ⊙ **The technical working group (TWG)** to support project activities and provide technical advice;
- ⊙ **The project management office (PMO)** under the division of wildlife protection (DWP)/fdhp in changsha to act as a day-to-day project operator.

Project milestones

- ⊙ **The launch ceremony** of GEF project was held in changsha on 29 and 30 april, 2015.
- ⊙ **The first PSC workshop** was held on 7 january, 2017 with participants from FAO headquarters, regional and country offices.

FAO’s supervision and monitoring

⊙ **The first technical backstopping** was conducted with an leading technical officer from FAO in july 2015. A series of crucial issues were identified during the visit and several recommendations were made to address the problems observed during the implementation of the project. The project management office adopted the suggestion in its later processes relating to project execution and management.

⊙ **A spot-check** was carried out during 5–7 april, 2017 by an independent agency on optimization of the project management and finance.

Financial management

An independent financial regulation was developed to manage the GEF fund taking into effect in 2016. Up to date, the first and second fund installments for a total amount of USD 535,741 were transferred to the executing partner through FAO. The majority transferred fund was utilized in purchasing equipment for monitoring local environment and recruiting consultancy services as GEF chief technical advisor.

2. Recent progress (2016 – 2017)

Government coordination mechanism

For the first time, a multi sectoral government meeting on wetland protection in hunan province has been put forward and established. High-level officials from various provincial departments joined the meeting and discussed the most crucial issues in dongting lake. The meeting has reached an agreement to take joint law enforcement and actions by different departments to better protect the ecological and natural resources in dongting lake area.

Implementation actions under new national policy

Regulation on wetland conservation and rehabilitation planning was developed for dongting wetland ecosystem by the fdhp after the announcement of national policy by the state forestry administration on 30 november, 2016.

Legislation progress and law enforcement

⊙ As promoted by the project, yueyang municipal people's government office issued a "notice of legislative plan" on 2 may, 2017, and declared "east dongting lake national nature reserve management measures".

⊙ On 18 may, 2017, yueyang municipal government set up a coordination meeting on the possibility of establishing an integrated law enforcement team for the east dongting lake.

⊙ Earlier this year, hanshou county government officially launched strict nature reserve management and penalty regulations towards illegal activities in nature reserve, and wide communication activities were carried out at county level.

⊙ As a result of law enforcement, the project made some significant achievements in the following areas: more than 134 hectare of exotic plants was cleared, 1500 meters enclosed nets were erased and over 210 thousand meters fishing nets were destroyed to combat illegal fishing. Consequently, more than 600 hectare low dyke areas were recovered for wildlife habitats.

Review of nature reserve management plan

The "west dongting lake national nature reserve management plan (2016–2020)" was updated. The plan included taking wetland protection work as one of the indicators for county government performance assessment, capacity building for the qingshan polder community, wetland restoration in the key areas, and development of an environmental education demonstration school and a textbook on environmental education (EE).



Training class
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Capacity building

From 16 to 17 may 2017, a two-day training session was held at the east dongting nature reserve on the subject of

"environmental education and natural interpretation". Several partners, such as guangzhou conservation center for birds and insects, institute of subtropical agriculture, chinese academy of sciences, yueyang city porpoise protection association, as well as the east dongting lake ecological protection association attended the training.

Progress on flag species protection



Wild david's deer
© FAO/by the drone

⊙ In january 2017, the project partners carried out surveys of birds and david's deer in the whole dongting lake region, and published a survey report of "wintering birds in dongting of 2016–2017".

⊙ In march 2017, a survey of waterfowl in spring (before migration) was also carried out.

⊙ From january to march 2017, an investigation on the extreme increasing number of little swan was conducted for emergency monitoring.

⊙ In may 2017, a drone funded by the project has been deployed to monitor david's deer in east dongting lake area, which hosts the largest number of natural wild david's deer (62 heads) in china, based on the first finding by the drone.

Wetland day and bird week publicity activities

Communication activities and the launching ceremony of spring water bird survey in dongting lake (east dongting NR) attracted thousands of kids and parents to visit.



protecting the migratory birds and green homes in yueyang city on 2 february, 2017