



## Dongting Lake Newsletter

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### Securing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in protected areas

#### Project implementation systems

In April, the GEF Project Management Office (PMO) hired a project manager to strengthen project management and supervision.

#### Project supervision and monitoring

In January and May, the PMO organized a “project expert workshop” to further clarify the consulting service objectives of the experts and effectively promote the project implementation process. The guidance from the experts on the GEF project has played an active role in the special rectification of the Dongting lake ecological environment. In June, the Division of Wildlife Protection in Forest Department of Hunan Province (FDHP) jointly with the PMO experts prepared the “Hunan Province rare and endangered wildlife conservation action plan (2018-2022)”.

In early June, the PMO arranged a staff visit to Dongting lake to evaluate the management efficiency of the four NRs using the Management effective tracking tool (METT). The results showed that the management capacities of the four major NRs in East, West, South and Hengling lake had been significantly improved, and the scores of most of the protected areas have reached the project target score. Through the improvements in legal systems and capacity building conducted in recent years, the protection and management capabilities of protected areas have been significantly enhanced.

#### Project fund status

In terms of GEF project funding, at the end of June (2018), the PMO spent a total of 66,9483.79 US dollars with 121,474.21 US dollars remaining.

In terms of co-funding, in the end of June, a total of 96 million yuan was invested, including 20 million yuan for the national wetland ecological benefit compensation project of the South Dongting NR; 60 million yuan for the national wetland protection and restoration project of the West Dongting lake NR; 15



million yuan from the three gorges project for Hengling NR, and 1 million yuan from the FDHP's on wetland ecological compensation project.

## Project progress

### Hunan Province continues to carry out special rectification actions for the ecological environment in Dongting lake

Throughout 2018, Hunan Province continued to conduct five major special actions including remediation of livestock and poultry breeding pollution, cleaning of illegal fishing nets in rivers and lakes, dredging for flood retention, cleaning garbage along rivers and lakes, and inspecting key industrial pollutants in Dongting lake. Furthermore, a "River chief and lake chief system" was implemented with major projects in Hunan for joint action on water environment improvement of "One lake, four rivers", which means the nine dragons (the major Government Departments of Hunan Province) undertook joint measures for water environment protection.

On April 4th, the FDHP organized relevant experts to review the "Implementation plan for the Ecological restoration project of the poplar clearing site in Dongting lake NR". On May 21, the forestry department office issued the notice-implementation plan of the ecological restoration project for the poplar clearing site in Dongting lake NR, which will adopt natural techniques such as natural restoration and artificially assisted natural restoration to gradually restore wetland habitats and biodiversity.

On May 23, the FDHP held the "Provincial wetland protection and Dongting lake comprehensive management conference" in Changde City, and implemented ecological protection and restoration around "The lake, four rivers, The shore line and The belt". To make the strategy of the Yangtze River economic belt of Hunan Provincial communist party committee rooted into provincial forestry works.

### Strengthening the top design of Dongting lake protection and forming a consensus on the protection of Dongting lake

In April, FDHP started the formulation of Dongting lake national park plan.

Last year, "The revision of the Hunan Province Wetland Protection Regulations" was officially incorporated into the Provincial People's Congress legislative plan. Subsequently, on April 19, 2018, then GEF PMO of FDHP, the FDHP wetland protection center, the policy and regulation department, and the Central South University of Forestry and Technology Forestry Law Institute jointly held a seminar on the revision of "the Hunan wetland management regulations".

In May, the provincial government issued the "Opinions on implementing the lake chief system in lakes in the province". On June 3, 2018, the action of "Nongovernmental lake chief assistant" was launched in Yueyang City. More than 20 volunteers will now play a role as governmental assistants in monitoring and conserving of Dongting wetland.

### The biodiversity data of Dongting lake has been updated, and the construction of integrated information system has started

In March 2018, the field work of the Dongting lake biodiversity baseline survey has been completed. The data collection and database construction work for fish, benthic animals and birds have been completed.

The construction of the integrated information management system platform for the Dongting lake wetland has started. The essential idea is to rely on the calculation, storage and network resources of the Hunan Forestry Data Center, based on the Internet and government affairs of Hunan Province related data resource interface including provincial departments: Development and reform, Environmental protection, Meteorology, Water resource, Emergency, Transportation and civil affairs. This will establish correlation models, realize the association and management of data resources, and provide support for local government

departments to protect the Dongting lake wetland and the coordinated management of protected areas.

### **One district and one law in the protected area has progressed smoothly**

On April 26, the People's Government of Yiyang City issued the notice on The Administrative Measures for the Hunan South Dongting lake Provincial NR in Hunan Province.

The first draft of the "Regulations on the Management of Hunan West Dongting lake national NR" has been completed, and the Legal Affairs Office of the Changde Municipal Government, the Municipal People's Congress, the Legal Affairs Office of the Hanshou County Government, and the County People's Congress to the West Dongting lake have been invited to conduct special research.

The East Dongting lake national NR has completed the "Administrative Measures for Hunan Dongting lake national NR", and the draft legislation of the "Hunan East Dongting lake protection area regulations" passed the legislative review by Yueyang Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee.

GEF legal experts assisted the Xiangyin County Government in drafting the "Administrative measures for Hengling lake provincial NR".

### **NR management plan development and updates**

Due to the update in protection legislation, the recent work priorities of the country and Hunan Province, the East Dongting lake national NR have revised the "Protected area management plan (2016-2020)" prepared in 2016 and reported it to Yueyang City. It gained government approval in February 2018.

In the first half of 2018, the West Dongting lake NR revised the "Hunan West Dongting lake NR management plan (2016-2020)", which incorporates poplar cleanup and ecological restoration into the plan.

Hengling lake NR has consulted relevant experts on "Developing a five-year management plan for protected

areas". At the same time, The NR will organize staff to participate in relevant training in the near future to improve the management capacity of the protected area.

The South Dongting lake NR and the relevant experts conducted preliminary investigation, and established the "Protected area management plan working group". The work plans have been formulated.

### **Capacity building of staff and management in NRs**

In the first half of 2018, West Dongting lake NR organized training and research on laws, regulations and scientific research with a total of 120 participants. With more than 20 people in key positions were selected to conduct business skills training and experience exchanges in Hubei, Jiangxi, Beijing and Changsha. Through training, capacity of the administrative law enforcement and business skills for the protected area staffs have been greatly improved.

On May 12th, Hengling lake NR sent 35 staff to participate in the "2018 GEF Project Hengling lake NR ecological monitoring technology training" course. From May 21 to May 23, the director of Xiangyin county forestry bureau and two branch officials attended the provincial conference on protection of wetlands and comprehensive management of Dongting lake, which was held by FDHP. They visited and learned about the advanced management model of East and West Dongting national NR, as well as the related work of returning farmland into wetland and wetland restoration. From June 4 to 9, a staff member was sent to Shanghai to attend the "2018 international important wetland training class".

### **Community sustainable development**

The East Dongting lake national NR is promoting the commercial insurance for crops damaged by wild animals, and is conducting a survey on sensitive ecological problems. Social and economic data and information were collected in March and June, and socio-economic feasibility studies were carried out. In May 2018, "The feasibility report on the socio-economic sustainable development of the Caisang lake project area" was prepared (first draft).

Xiangyin County Government is currently signing contracts and related agreements with fishermen in Qingshan Island and Yanglinzhai to implement the fishermen relocation policy; the NR and the fishery administration joined together to start the “2018 Fishing ban” plan. From the beginning of March to the end of June, all fishing operations were suspended; at the same time, the NR has negotiated with three village committees in Qingshan Island to ensure the implementation of the 1000-mu farmland return wetland task going smoothly in Xiangyin County this year.

### Progress in the protection and monitoring of flagship species

According to survey data from various parties, the total number of migratory birds that migrated to Dongting lake during the winter from 2017 to 2018 reached 226,352 (53 species), including 3,726 lesser white-fronted goose, 85 black stork, and 5155 Tundra Swan; The number of Dongting lake Milu is 182; more than 5% appearance of Silver Fish in monitoring caches; finless porpoise in Dongting lake have increased compared to the number of surveys in the same period in 2012. In January and June, East Dongting lake national NR and Yueyang City Milu Protection Association and Yueyang East Dongting lake environmental protection association joined together to conduct Milu patrol work, and Milu population surveys, routine monitoring, rescue, habitat and environmental improvements. In March, winter migratory birds and finless porpoises were investigated.

In the beginning of 2018, a female Milu was found in the Hengling lake NR looking for food. The NR dispatched staff to track and guard throughout the day and night, and carried out a large number of publicity activities on Qingshan Island to effectively protect the Milu's foraging and habitat.

In order to protect the breeding activities of Baer's pochard in the NR, the South Dongting lake NR issued the "Notice on Strengthening the Protection of the Endangered Birds' Baer's pochard breeding area". In addition, warning signs and roadblocks are set up in areas where the Birds' Baer's breed. Special personnel were arranged to guard the area during the day and close the roads at night. A research group was set up to investigate,

monitor and patrol the breeding grounds of the Birds' Baer's.

### Biodiversity conservation into multiple key sectors

On February 9, 2018, the Hunan Provincial Department of Transportation and the Water Resources Department jointly launched the “Three-year action for special renovation of Dongting lake ecological environment transportation”, to strengthen ship pollution prevention and illegal sand pier renovation.

On March 1st, “China fishery administration anti-illegal fishing-action 2018”-- launching ceremony of the campaign to ban fishing in spring (Hunan Branch) was held at the Paiyunge Pier of yuanshui poetry wall in Changde City. From March 1 to June 30, the three cities of Yueyang, Yiyang and Changde carried out joint law enforcement in their respective jurisdictions, and strictly investigated and dealt with illegal operations such as fish trap net, low embankment, enclosed fishing net, and illegal manufacturing, selling, and using activities that prohibited fishing gear. Also, investigated the “illegal boats and ships” involved in fishing for legal responsibility of the offenders.

On June 18, the Hunan Provincial People's Government issued the "Three-year action plan for pollution prevention and control in Hunan Province (2018-2020)".

### Major events



On the afternoon of April 25th, General secretary Xi Jinping inspected the Lin Gelao patrol monitoring site of the East Dongting lake national NR. Mr. Hu Changqing,

Director General (DG) of FDHP, introduced the restoration of the Dongting lake wetland and the population conservation of wild rare species such as migratory birds, Milu and Finless porpoise in detail. The real-time monitoring video of the monitoring site transmitted images of a group of White Spoonbills and Milu in the NR. DG Hu introduced to the General Secretary Xi: "Usually in early April, these White Spoonbill will leave Dongting lake and migrate to the north." The General Secretary Xi responded with a smile: "Now the ecological environment is good, the migratory birds are also reluctant to leave, and they are willing to stay here for a while." The General Secretary Xi also praised: "This Milu is very strong and pretty. The water is clearer and you can see the reflection."



Launching ceremony of "2018 Hunan Bird Guard Flying Action"

On the morning of March 10, the launching ceremony of "2018 Hunan bird flying" was held at the East Dongting national NR. Hunan People's Government jointly hosted the launching ceremony of "2018 Hunan Bird Flying Action" at the Caisang lake management station of Yuedong East Dongting lake national NR. Yang Chao, Director of the Department of Wildlife Conservation and NR Management of the State Forestry Administration, and Hu Changqing, Director General of FDHP, delivered a speech. Zhao Shengli, Deputy Secretary General of China Wildlife Conservation Association, and Li Jiyang, Deputy Mayor of Yueyang city People's Government attended the meeting and provided remarks. More than 300 people from NGOs, such as the bird-flying volunteers, middle school students, and bird lover volunteers

attended the launching ceremony. The event of "Hunan Bird Flying Action" has been lasted for 60 days. A series of activities during the event organized including "Going to the village (Social) missionary action", "Volunteer guardian action", "You protect the fly, I report", and carrying out bird protection knowledge contests. These activities have further enhanced the awareness of the whole society to respect nature, protect nature, and adapt to nature.

## 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 objectives are: 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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