Wetlands Conservation in China

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Main Contents

- Status
- Achievements
- Threats and challenges
- Future actions
Total area of wetlands = 38.5 million ha

Natural wetlands = 36.2 million ha (which is 3.8% of the land area)

(Source: wetlands with an area of over 100ha, First National Inventory of Wetlands Resources, 2003)
Wetland types and area

- Marshes: 13.70 m ha (22%)
- Reservoirs and ponds: 2.28 m ha (6%)
- Coastal wetlands: 5.94 m ha (16%)
- Riverine wetlands: 8.20 m ha (21%)
- Lake: 8.35 m ha (35%)
The total area of lakes amounts to 8.35 Mha and can be divided into five regions, they are: Eastern Plain, Mongolia Xinjiang Plateau, Yunnan and Guizhou Plateau, Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, Northeast China. The lakes of the Eastern Plain are distributed mainly in the middle and downstream reaches of the Yangtze, Huaihe and Haihe Rivers, as well as along
Marshes cover an area of 13.7 m ha, mainly on Sanjiang Plain, Daxing’anling and the Xiaoxing’anling area of Northeast China, Zolge plateau, etc.
There are 271 species of waterbirds, including 12 species of National Protection Grade I and 44 Grade II.
The Central government decision on accelerating strengthening the protection of wetland as an important part of forestry development strategy which gave its high priority to the ecological conservation.

The Circular on Enhancing Wetlands Conservation and Management was issued by the State Council in which wetlands conservation is a key aspect of the government’s agenda.

The No. 1 central document pointed out: “launch ecological benefits compensation of grasslands, wetlands …..”

The No. 1 central document pointed out: "strengthen wetland protection, promoting ecological restoration".

"The Central government decision on accelerating strengthening the protection of wetland as an important part of forestry development strategy which gave its high priority to the ecological conservation."
In 2000, the China Wetlands Conservation Action Plan issued by 17 ministries and commissions of the State Council.
"Research on Chinese sustainable forestry development strategies" identified guiding ideology and strategic objectives of wetland conservation in China.

In 2003, the State Council approved the National Wetlands Conservation Program Plan (2002-2030).
In 2005, the State Council approved the National Wetlands Conservation Program Implementation Plan (2005–2010), and launched in 2006.
Since the program implementation a total of 1.1 billion RMB has been invested by central government in over 100 wetland conservation, restoration and wise use, capacity building projects, and some degraded important wetlands improved.
Wetland conservation improved by series projects on coastal protection forest, Yangtze and Pearl River protection forest, wildlife and nature reserve development, return farmland to forests or grassland, natural forest protection, etc.
Wetlands conservation network: Across the country, over 550 Wetland Nature Reserves have been established, 41 wetland listed under the Ramsar Convention and 213 National Wetlands Parks established. New wetland conservation areas cover 1.5 million hectares. Over 80,000 hectares of wetland have been restored.
Fifteen Provinces have adopted Wetland Regulations and a National Wetland Regulation is in preparation. About 10 standards are in preparation on wetland conservation and restoration, inventory and monitoring, wetland park construction, etc.
Various public awareness and education campaigns were carried out on wetlands and their biodiversity, which greatly increased the awareness on wetlands conservation.
In 2003, the first nationwide wetlands inventory was completed which collected the baseline information and is of significantly importance for decision-making process and the implementation of the Ramsar Convention across China.

In 2008, the second national wetlands inventory was conducted with an area of above 8 ha by application of 3S and ground truth, which is expected to be completed in 2013.
Since China’s entry to the *Ramsar Convention* in 1992, the Government has faithfully implemented the Convention and its related resolutions. China has been promoting Ramsar resolution and recommendation through implementing all projects and activities etc…
China has carried out many international cooperation projects that introduced fund and technology for wetland conservation. China has worked with the Governments of Australia, Germany, the US, the UK, and NGOs of WI, WWF, TNC to conduct international cooperation on wetland conservation.

**Australia China Environment Development Partnership**

*Wetland Management Policy, Guidelines and Capacity Building*

Kiri-ganai & Wetlands International

**Funded by AusAID**
ACEDP Objectives:

1. Develop guidelines for
   • management planning and monitoring of Ramsar listed wetland
   • the construction and assessment of National Wetland Parks)
   • wetland restoration

2. Strengthen the institutional co-ordination mechanism for wetland management in China - National Implementation of Ramsar Convention Committee

3. Contribute to the develop related national policy, including national standards/forestry standards
1. Supporting the development, by Wetland Experts, of key guidelines on
   1. management planning at Ramsar sites
   2. monitoring of Ramsar sites
   3. construction of Wetland Parks
   4. assessment of Wetland Parks
   5. wetland restoration

2. Capacity building through 3 training activities in Australia (wetland experts, NIRCC, review site staff)

3. Obtaining feedback on the draft guidelines at workshops at 5 sites

4. Linking the project implementation to the National Implementation of Ramsar Convention Committee (NIRCC)
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3. Threats and challenges

The wetland area continues to decrease, their functionality and biodiversity declining.

Direct factor: rapid economic development, population growth

Natural factor: (Climate change, rainfall decrease, desertification, siltation)

Management factor: (awareness, legislation, system, funding)

Unreasonable human activity: unplanned reclamation and “improvement”, pollution, resources over-use, soil erosion, unwise use of water resources
3. Threats and challenges

- **Management factors**
  - Awareness: late start, limited understanding on ecosystem, land classification, industrial transfer, food security
  - Wetland legislation: lack of institution, imperfect
  - Policy: investment, ecological benefit compensation, ecological water replenishing, system on resource fee, standard
  - Institutional capacity
  - Department cooperation, management system construction
  - Science and technology supporting
3. Threats and challenges

Unreasonable human activity:
unplanned reclamation and “improvement”,
pollution,
resources over-use,
soil erosion,
unwise use of water resources
Etc........
Pollution and lakes’ eutrophication is serious threats. Wetland pollution will be worsening for a long period along with rapid socio-economic development.
Wetland reclamation and “improvement” is the largest factors causing wetland loss, especially in coastal areas, the middle and lower reaches of Yangtze River, northeast marshes.
Wetland declining
Shrinking Dongting Lake
2 Wetland reclamation and “improvement”

三江平原50年代沼泽湿地分布图

三江平原2000年沼泽湿地分布图

500万公顷

135万公顷
Overuse of biological resources causing sharp population decline of some species, even endangered, especially in coastal areas, the middle and lower reaches of Yangtze River, northeast marshes.
Soil erosion, siltation and drainage resulting in wetland area decreasing, function decline, flood disaster severe.

Soil erosion in the upstream of the Yellow River

Drainage in Ruoergai, Sichuan
1. Enhance wetland conservation laws and regulations

Legislation: regulation
Policy: establishment of systems on wetland ecological benefits compensation, ecological water replenishing, requisition-compensation balance of wetland.

Identify Ramsar sites, national important wetlands, national wetland parks as reclamation forbidden area in main function area planning;
Make great efforts to complete the second national wetlands inventory by 2013 to collect accurate information on national wetland resources.

Improve the wetland nature protection system construction and management.
Establishment awareness and education system on wetland conservation

Undertake a large-scale public awareness campaign on wetland conservation and resources protection by using various means to raise the level of public perception of wetland importance.

Undertake concentrated education activities related to the ecological benefits and economic values of wetlands by making the most opportunities presented by World Wetlands Day, Bird Lovers Week, etc.

Give full play to existing awareness and education centres in Ramsar sites, wetland nature reserves and national wetland parks.
Improvement monitoring and conservation of Ramsar sites

Promote bilateral and multilateral international cooperation on wetland conservation

Implementation the Ramsar Convention in an effective manner, positively join activities of the Convention