

China Coastal Wetlands Conservation

Quarterly News Bulletin

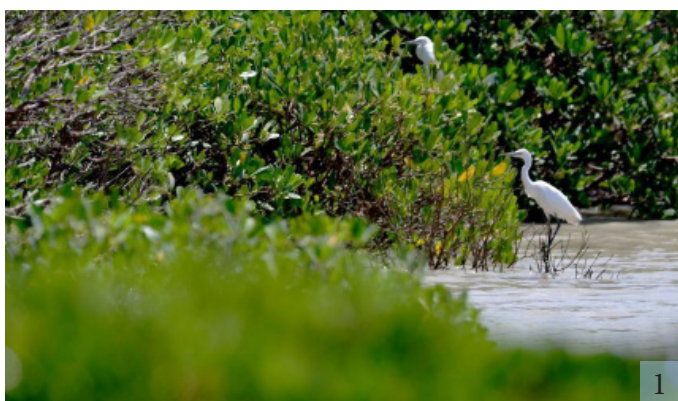
Jul-Sep 2021



Strengthened National Efforts to Conserve Coastal Wetlands

Expanding Mangrove Forests in China

In August 2021, a report released by the Ministry of Natural Resources showed that mangrove forests in China have expanded. Compared with 2018, the net growth of mangroves in 2021 was nearly 340 hectares. Approximately 490 hectares of mangroves have been added, mainly through afforestation, while 150 hectares of mangroves have been lost due to aquaculture and natural retreat.



Monitoring of Major Marine Ecosystems

In August, the Ministry of Natural Resources proposed the establishment of early warning and monitoring systems for marine ecosystems within sea areas under its jurisdiction. It is proposed to create a comprehensive monitoring system covering shorelines, the sea and the sky, to investigate marine ecology and carbon sinks, delineate national marine ecological zones, and formulate ecosystem health early warning systems, including technical guidelines and tools.

Technical Guidelines for Coastal Ecosystems

The Ministry of Natural Resources has led in developing a series of standards for the surveying, assessment, restoration and management of coastal ecosystems, and recently the English versions of those 21 technical guidelines were issued by China Association on Ocean Engineering. The technical guidelines include investigation and assessment methods of eight ecosystems such as mangrove, salt marshes and coral reef, provide scientific guidance to implement and monitor coastal re-



habilitation projects, and afford a tangible example of NbS application at national level to address marine disasters as one of the key aspects of societal challenges in the coming decades.

Regional Policies and Initiatives for Stronger Enforcement

The Conservation Regulation of Migratory Birds in Jiangxi

In August, the Conservation Regulation of Migratory Birds in Jiangxi Province (draft) was adopted. The Regulation includes a specific chapter on the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), making it the first legislation aimed at the protection of a specific wild animal species in China. The Regulation will establish a collaborative form of conservation based on the principles of government-led department cooperation, social participation and strict supervision, enhancing the long-term conservation mechanism of migratory birds.



The Balanced Requisition and Replenishment of Shorelines in Guangdong

In July, the Department of Natural Resources of Guangdong Province issued the Implementation Measure of Requisition and Replenishment of Shorelines (trial). The Measure specifies that projects occupying coast-



lines and that caused changes in their original shape and ecological function shall restore and replenish the shorelines in situ according to the proportion of 1:1.5 for natural shorelines and 1:0.8 for artificial shorelines. The Measure came into force on 2nd July and will be valid for 3 years.

The Forest Chief Scheme of Mangroves in Guangxi

In August, the forest chief scheme for coastal mangrove forests was rolled out in Guangxi Province. The scheme has set up an annual task list system in coastal cities and their counties and towns to specify tasks for mangrove restoration. Taking the opportunity of implementing the scheme, Fangchenggang city has initiated all-day inspection and management of mangroves which has led to a 100% coverage of patrolling within nature reserves and 80% outside nature reserves.

Hainan Stops the Approval of Sea Reclamation

In July, the General Office of Hainan Provincial Government issued the 14th Five-Year Plan for Ecological Environment Protection of Hainan. According to the Plan, during the 14th Five-Year Plan, there will be strict control and management of sea reclamation and coastline development, and no further approval of new reclamation projects, with the exception of key national projects. The plan will promote pollution control and ecological

restoration in eight bays, establish 19 pilot zones as “Beautiful Bays”, carry out water treatment projects, and continue to act on marine conservation and restoration. In addition, Hainan will establish an intelligent decision-making platform to enhance its law enforcement, supervision and emergency response capabilities.

Updates on Waterbirds

Thousands of Nordmann’s Greenshank Appear in Yancheng

In September, more than one thousand Nordmann’s Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*) were counted at Tiaozini Wetland in Dongtai, Yancheng. Because of its global scarcity, Nordmann’s Greenshank is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Dongtai allocated CNY one million to restore 48 hectares of wetland in the reclamation area next to the Tiaozoni mudflat, becoming the first permanent high-tide habitat for migratory birds in China.



Conservation Action and Practices to Achieve Significant Results

The First Ocean Carbon Trading in Fujian

In September, the first transaction relating to ocean carbon trading in Fujian was completed in Xiamen Property Rights Trading Center. The Luoyang River mangrove restoration project in Quanzhou, which reforested mangroves after eliminating invasive species, sold 2,000 tons of ocean carbon. The project achieved synergetic effects of carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

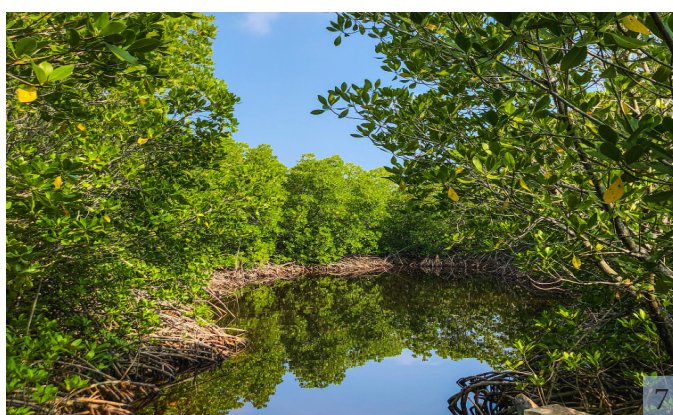
The World's First Asian-Pacific Horseshoe Crab Observation Station

In July, the world's first Asian-Pacific horseshoe crab observation station at the Beihai Binhai National Wetland Park began official operation. IUCN's Asian-Pacific Horseshoe Crab Observation Network Initiative will set up 17 observation stations along the Chinese coast, nine of which will be located in Guangxi Province. The Chinese Horseshoe Crab (*Tachypleus tridentatus*) was up-listed to Endangered on the IUCN Red List in March 2019. Earlier this year, the Chinese Horseshoe Crab and the Mangrove Horseshoe Crab (*Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda*) were listed as species under national Grade-II conservation in the revised List of Wild Animals Under State Priority Conservation in China. This Initiative will begin a long-term monitoring process, providing data for evidence-based decision-making on the conservation and restoration of horseshoe crab populations and their habitats.



Converting Fishing Ponds to Restore Mangroves in Hainan

Hainan Xinying Mangrove National Wetland Park, covering an area of 507 hectares, was extensively damaged due to the expansion of aquaculture in the 1980s. Since 2019, about 113 hectares of illegal ponds have been removed and the management unit of the park, together with the municipal government, have replanted 69 hectares of mangrove trees to restore the wetland. The visitor center and education facilities in the park now integrate sightseeing with educational and recreational activities and the park has been listed as a wetland of national importance.



An Incentive for Mangrove Inventory in Fuqing

Fuqing Municipal Government of Fujian province has established an incentive mechanism for mangrove restoration and a coastal forest protection inventory to both guarantee the ecological function of coastal mangrove forests and to encourage the public to participate in mangrove restoration. According to the incentive, newly planted mangroves will be rewarded with CNY 6,000 per mu.

The Mangrove Community Conservation Project in Leizhou, Guangdong

In September, the Beijia village mangrove community conservation project was launched collaboratively by the Zhanjiang National Mangrove Conservation Bureau, SEE Foundation, the Mangrove Conservation Foundation (MCF) and the Beijia Village. The project will include activities such as river management, waste treatment, ecological education and patrolling, to improve com-

munity safety and the environment, encourage citizen engagement, and reduce the impact of human intervention on mangroves.



Joint River Management between Shenzhen and Hongkong

Collaborative management of the Shenzhen River by Shenzhen and Hongkong authorities has achieved remarkable results. The project can be traced back to 1982 with the initial purpose of tackling flooding. It has adopted measures including ecological riverbanks, embankment greening, riverbed naturalization, and soil and water conservation, underlying the design concept of natural waterways. The project has constructed a lake of 22,000 m², which will become a riparian wetland when it's not used for flood water storage, providing habitats for birds and other wildlife. With a high-quality wetland environment and more migratory birds, the project has transformed the 18-km-long Shenzhen River from a disaster-like river with frequent floods into an ecological and natural river. In the future, the two cities will continue to develop a comprehensive wetland management plan and strengthen cooperation across the Greater Bay Area.

Miscellaneous Items

Administrative Penalty Given to a Project in Guangzhou

The Mingzhu Bay project received an administrative penalty due to its illegal occupation of 0.47 hectares of extra mangrove areas, damaging 0.92 hectares of mangrove trees, making no impact assessment of taking up

9.84 hectares of marine red lines in the Marine Environmental Impact Report, and occupying 0.06 hectares by building two trestles, lasting over three months. The responsible body was ordered to rectify, remedy and return the illegally occupied area and restore the ecosystem, as well as paying a fine of CNY 90,000.

Accusation Against the Blue Bay Project in Lianyungang

The Friends of Nature filed a lawsuit at the Nanjing City Intermediate People's Court for illegal ecological damage relating to the Blue Bay Project in Lianyungang, and the case has been placed on file. According to the indictment, the three coastal restoration projects in Lianyungang, collectively called the Blue Bay project, were implemented in the name of coastal conservation and restoration but were actually developed at the expense of natural shorelines and coastal wetlands. At the same time, the environmental impact assessment report of the project contained issues, including missing key content and false conclusions concerning data. The project plans to build artificial reefs and submerged dikes, fill coastal mudflats, plant trees, and transform the 4.8-km-long hard embankment into a sandy beach, which will significantly affect the natural ecological function of the intertidal coastal wetland, leading to the loss of feeding and resting grounds for water birds, some of which are endangered and species with special protection in China. The overall investment of this project is over CNY 1.8 billion with financial support from the state government of CNY 300 million. The Friends of Nature initiated public interest litigation requiring the project to stop construction immediately, eliminate negative impact on ecosystems, and restore damaged areas.





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- Front cover: (Esteban Amaro/Unsplash)
- 1 Mangrove forests in Fuqing, Fujian (http://www.fj.xinhuanet.com/kfj/2021-08/28/c_1127803676.htm)
 - 2 Kentish Plover (Wang Jianmin)
 - 3 The sunset of salt ponds (Zetong Li/Unsplash)
 - 4 Sunset at a fishing village (Isaac Chou/Unsplash)
 - 5 Spotted Greenshank (people.com)
 - 6 Horseshoe crab (http://qqpublic.qpic.cn/qq_public/0/0-1077561536-5AD-83B071A83907151EA737504526F35/0?fmt=jpg&size=84&h=675&w=900&ppv=1.jpg)
 - 7 The mangrove forest (Muhammadh Saamy/Unsplash)
 - 8 The Shenzhen River (Cai Zhiyang)
 - 9 The plan of the Blue Bay project (<http://n.sinainmg.cn/sinakd2021520s/150/w1000h750/20210520/6764-kqhwhrk5330906.jpg>)
 - 10 Common Shelduck (Wang Jianmin)

Sources

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