



## 2010-2011 Summary

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Exchange Visits with China

### *International Dialogue on Nature Conservation*

FWS has had an ongoing dialogue since 1986 with wildlife managers in China, via exchanges of information and specialists for addressing conservation of wetlands, river ecosystems and habitat including nature reserves. In Calendar Year 2010, 30 U.S. participants traveled to China and 80 Chinese traveled to the U.S. under the auspices of the Protocol on Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Conservation of Nature, coordinated by FWS Division of International Conservation and China's State Forestry Administration. In CY 2011, 17 U.S. participants traveled to China and 13 Chinese traveled to the U.S. The exchange program is guided by the principles of reciprocity and partnership.

## Fisheries

### Preserving Native Species and Aquatic Habitat



FWS Fisheries staff are actively engaged in a dialogue on the conservation of fisheries and aquatic biodiversity with their Chinese counterparts from the Ministry of Agriculture and other organizations. The two countries discuss management of ecosystems that have been heavily impacted by development for navigation, power production, agriculture, and urbanization. Conservation of fishery resources in these systems focuses on maintaining and improving habitats and populations that have suffered from changes in flow, degradation of physical habitat, fragmentation, sedimentation, and changes in species composition, including the introduction of invasive species. FWS demonstrates technically advanced methods to propagate fish and mussels for release, restore habitat function and quality, and assess the condition of fish populations and habitats, including genetic integrity, movement and distribution.

### **Hatcheries Help Save Threatened/Endangered and Native Species of Fish and Mussels**

In **April 2010** three scientists from China spent 3 weeks in the Midwest stationed at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin. Work assignments were scheduled with the LaCrosse Fish Health Center, the LaCrosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, and the Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center. The delegation worked alongside hatchery staff to spawn lake sturgeon and process the eggs, assist LaCrosse Fish Health Center in their wild fish healthy survey sampling, and assist the LaCrosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office assess stocked sturgeon populations in Legend Lake of the Menominee Indian Reservation. The group viewed Long Term Resource Monitoring efforts ongoing at the USGS's Upper Midwest Science Center, and assisted in sample collections in a cooperative sturgeon egg development study initiated by the Genoa hatchery. The Chinese visitors were impressed with the beauty of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge and its ongoing island habitat restoration projects. They also assisted in endangered mussel recovery, learning how to infest host fish with mussel larvae, and engaged in spring river netting operations.

## Sharing Experience and Techniques

In **June 2010** two staff from the FWS Southeast Region Fisheries Program, including a biologist from Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery in South Carolina, along with a biologist from Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin, spent 3 weeks in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province to work with Chinese colleagues for three weeks at hatcheries, laboratories and rivers and lakes on assessment of breeding facilities, sturgeon spawning, abundance surveys of threatened and endangered fish species, collection of brood stock and eggs, and preventive health treatments. The impact of urban, industrial, and hydropower development on aquatic habitats through sedimentation, contaminants, and blocking fish passage was studied as well.

## U.S.-China-Russia Dialogue on River Ecosystems

In **September 2010** the Third International Symposium on Ecology and Biodiversity in Large Rivers of Northeast Asia and North America, was held in Memphis, Tennessee. Building on two prior symposia in Khabarovsk, Russia (2002) and Harbin, China (2006), the third symposium brought together 33 Chinese and more than 115 North American and Russian researchers, river engineers, wetland managers, and conservation biologists to discuss local and landscape-scale management of large rivers and associated natural resources. The symposium focused on the countries' mutual objectives of managing riverine ecosystems to ensure optimal levels of water quality and quantity, restore and manage riverine and riparian wetlands, increase sustainable fishery stocks, and conserve their internationally significant natural resources. In addition to plenary and breakout sessions, symposium participants participated in a one day trip on the Lower Mississippi River to discuss the role of river engineering in the restoration and management of large riverine ecosystems and view native fish species and habitats. The Symposium was organized with FWS partners including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC), and Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA).

## Habitat Conservation and Management

A 6-person FWS team visited Guangdong, Wuhan and Shanghai, China, in **December 2011** for discussion of rare fish species habitat conservation and management with the Pearl River Fisheries Research Institute and the Yangtze River Fisheries Research Institute, among others.

# Nature Reserves

## Managing Public Lands for Wildlife and People



FWS cooperation with China on nature reserve management has been recognized by the U.S.-China Framework for Ten Year Cooperation on Energy and Environment (TYF), a high-level intergovernmental forum.

## Places for Wildlife and People

In **June 2010** a 6-person FWS team visited nature reserves, several of which receive large numbers of visitors annually, in Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces of China. A focus of this exchange was sharing approaches in managing visitation, while fulfilling the mission to conserve wildlife and habitat. As China's population grows more affluent, visitation to scenic and natural areas is increasing.

## **Wetlands Management at National Wildlife Refuges**

In **November 2010** an 8-person Chinese delegation visited National Wildlife Refuges in Minnesota and Wisconsin where they were familiarized with management of wetlands and environmental education efforts.

## **Public Lands Management in New England**

A 7-person delegation from China's State Forestry Administration visited federal and state-managed public lands in New England for two weeks in **September 2011**. The delegation observed firsthand various management philosophies while touring national wildlife refuges, a national park, a national forest, and two state parks. Each stop emphasized government partnerships with public groups and citizens in managing land for wildlife and people. In the design and construction of visitor facilities, the U.S. side shared experience in energy-saving and environmentally friendly approaches, and making facilities accessible to the disabled. Of note, the visitors saw examples of former military ammunition bunkers transformed into bat hibernacula.

# Wildlife

## Sharing Experience in Wildlife Management



China's diverse ecosystems provide habitat for approximately 10 percent of the earth's wildlife, some of which is found nowhere else, including the giant panda and golden monkey. Under the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, grant assistance has been provided for the conservation of tigers, gibbons, Asian elephants and marine turtles in China. FWS has a panda policy to assist U.S. zoos applying for giant panda importation permits. The policy focuses on the conservation of the species in the wild in China.

## **Wildlife Reintroduction Workshop**

In **October 2011** eleven U.S. specialists, including FWS personnel, two U.S. Geological Survey staff, and biologists from U.S. zoological parks, traveled to Sichuan Province, China, to participate in a workshop on the reintroduction of giant pandas and other species to the wild.

## **Captive Breeding and Reintroduction of Endangered Species**

For one week in October 2011, four Chinese specialists traveled to field sites in Colorado and New Mexico for familiarization with captive breeding management and reintroduction-release efforts for the endangered black-footed ferret.



# Wetlands

## Restoring and Preserving Wildlife Habitat



Wetlands management, restoration, and conservation have long been priority topics for dialogue between FWS and China's State Forestry Administration and have been recognized by the U.S.-China Framework for Ten Year Cooperation on Energy and Environment (TYF), a high-level intergovernmental forum.

### **Large Scale Restoration**

In **June 2010** ten Chinese visitors under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program met with FWS Washington Office staff and traveled to the Poplar Island wetlands restoration project in the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Wetlands of International Importance**

In **October 2010** a 10-person group from China visited National Wildlife Refuge wetland habitat in the Midwest, including sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance.

In **November 2010** a 10-person U.S. delegation, nine from FWS and 1 from EPA, traveled to Zhejiang, Hunan and Jiangxi Provinces in China to discuss wetlands management, conservation, and restoration.

### **Coastal Wetlands Restoration in Oregon**

In **July-August 2011**, two biologists from Beijing Forestry University visited Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon at the invitation of Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Comple. They took part in coastal wetland habitat restoration efforts, helping to create future tidal channels. The visitors also assisted with bird, fish, amphibian and water quality monitoring studies, removed non-native invasive plants, monitored construction to protect archaeological resources, and much more. China's coastal wetland habitat is diminishing, impacting bird species breeding in Alaska and migrating to China. FWS encourages China to take positive steps for preserving coastal wetlands. The visitors also learned about the "Walking Wetlands" program, an Integrated Pest Management technique that rotates blocks of farmland with flooded wetlands to organically suppress plant parasitic nematodes and other soil diseases and pests.

"China started restoring wetlands late and we need to learn from other countries' experience. We are very impressed with U.S. laws and policies and strictness about wetlands conservation."

-- MR. GUANGREN MA, DIRECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF WETLAND CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT,  
CHINA STATE FORESTRY ADMINISTRATION

For additional information contact:

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation**  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, Virginia 22203 U.S.A.  
telephone: (703) 358-1761

*Wildlife Without Borders*  
<http://www.fws.gov/international/>