



Qinghai boosts cultural industry with rapid economic and social development

Province allocates 27.1 million yuan to alleviate poverty and promote rural tourism to increase income in 2018

By ZHANG LINWAN
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Boasting picturesque scenery and rich cultural resources, Qinghai is making efforts to boost its cultural tourism industry.

Official statistics show that 1.66 million people in Qinghai are directly or indirectly engaged in the cultural tourism industry, accounting for more than one-sixth of the province's total population.

Last year, Qinghai received 42.04 million visits to its attractions, and tourism revenue reached 46.63 billion yuan (\$6.65 billion). During this year's week-long National Day holiday, more than 3 million tourists from home and abroad visited the province, up 18.2 percent year-on-year.

According to the Qinghai Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, with rapid economic and social development, Qinghai's cultural industry is expanding, and tourism consumption is becoming popular among the general public.

Pallas's fish eagles are birds of prey at the tip of the food chain. The giant bird inhabits river valleys, mountains and grasslands at elevations between 2,000-4,700 meters above sea level.



Provincial profile

Qinghai is one of the largest provincial regions in China by area covering 720,000 square kilometers, yet its population density is among the smallest in the country. The province is located on the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and its average elevation is over 3,000 meters above sea level. Mountain ranges running through Qinghai include the Tanggula Mountains and Kunlun Mountains, with the highest point being Bukadaban Peak at 6,860 meters. Due to its high altitude, Qinghai is cold in winter yet has mild summers with a sharp diurnal temperature variation. The Qaidam Basin lies in the northwest of Qinghai and about one-third of this resource-rich basin is covered by desert. Thanks to its unique climate and geographic position, the province is rich in mineral resources. By the end of 2014, 134 kinds of mineral resources had been discovered in Qinghai. Among them, the reserves of lithium, potassium and magnesium rank first in China.

42.04 million visits to locations in Qinghai province by domestic and international tourists last year

50,000 cards each worth 500 yuan issued to Xining residents as part of a cultural welfare program

The province has hosted a series of festivals and activities to allow more people to experience its charm. Among these events is the 2019 Qinghai Cultural and Tourism Festival, which started in Xining, capital of the province, in April.

With the theme of 'Green, Harmony, Integration, Innovation', the half-year event included 373 major activities such as performances, forums, a signing ceremony and an exhibition of Qinghai's development related to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Held in the Qinghai-Tibet Culture Museum, the exhibition displayed nearly 400 cultural relics from 13 museums and cultural organizations in Qinghai.

The event was intended to showcase the brilliant culture and history of Qinghai while enhancing people's cultural confidence and promoting Qinghai's involvement in the BRI.

said Yang Pengshun, vice-governor of Qinghai. Another highlight of the festival was the launch ceremony of Qinghai's cultural welfare cards, as part of a pilot program.

Each cultural welfare card has a face value of 500 yuan, with 80 percent of it subsidized by the government and the remaining 100 yuan paid by cardholders. At the initial stage of the project, 60,000 cultural welfare cards were issued to Xining residents. Cardholders can use their cards to purchase books and tickets to theater performances and scenic spots.

According to the local government, the project will play an important role in fostering cultural consumption habits and meeting expectations for high-quality cultural life.

Qinghai has also integrated cultural tourism with poverty alleviation in recent years, striving to develop featured rural tourism.

In 2018, Qinghai allocated 27.1 million yuan for poverty alleviation and rural tourism. Achievements included five rural tourism demonstration villages and 50 poverty alleviation and rural tourism projects.

Cultural and tourism industries have become vital channels for farmers and herdsmen to increase their income, said Bering Tshar, deputy director of the Qinghai Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, adding that they are growing into sunrise industries closely related to people's well-being.

From November 2019 to April 2020, Qinghai will host the Winter and Spring Cultural Tourism Festival to attract more tourists in off seasons.



Tibetan antelope, or chiru, live in herds at elevations between 3,700-5,500 meters on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. One of the mascots of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games was inspired by the Tibetan antelope. It was reclassified on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List from endangered to near-threatened in 2016.



Przewalski's gazelles are an antelope species listed as endangered. They are confined to six isolated habitats that are separated by geographical barriers or human activities around Qinghai Lake in Qinghai province.

Officials making environmental protection a top priority

By ZHANG LINWAN

Qinghai province is forging ahead in its environmental protection efforts.

The province is the birthplace of the major rivers of the Yangtze, the Yellow and the Lancang. It provides nearly 60 billion cubic meters of high-quality water to downstream areas every year, benefiting 20 provinces and regions in China and five other countries.

The unique plateau environment of Qinghai attracts various wildlife including 85 species of wild animals protected at the national level such as the Tibetan antelope and snow leopard.

Qinghai's greatest value, potential and duty lie in its ecology, said a top Chinese leader during his visit to Qinghai in August 2016.

To preserve the province's beauty, the Qinghai government has committed to working on two pilot national parks.

Covering more than 123,000 square kilometers, the Three-River-Source National Park is located in Qinghai's Sanjiangyuan area. Since the 1970s, the area has faced environmental threats from climate change and human activity.

To prevent further deterioration and restore the ecosystem, the central government has carried out two ecological protection projects in the area since 2006.

So far, nearly 100,000 herders in the Sanjiangyuan area have moved out of the grassland. The move has helped reduce the environmental degradation caused by overgrazing.

"I feel relieved when I see from photos that the grasslands in my hometown are flourishing, which proves our efforts were worth it," said Gunga Nangyal, a Tibetan elder who led 400 herders to relocate to a nearby 400 kilometers away from their hometown.

After the park's establishment, to encourage more people to engage in the park's environmental protection, its administrative committee has offered local residents jobs and trained them to be conservationists. To date, 17,211 conservationists work in the park.

Government data show that the environmental protection sector helps Qinghai residents earn an average annual income of around 21,000 yuan (\$3,080) per household.

Last year, the grassland coverage in the park increased by 27.31 percent compared to 2017, according to a report released by the park's administrative committee.

As the environment improves, the wildlife population is also on the rise. In 2018, a rare black wolf was photographed for the first time in the park.

Zhao Xiang, director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, paid his fifth visit to Qinghai in April.

It is obvious that the desertification area is decreasing and the wetland is expanding, Wang said.

"More importantly, people's ecological and environmental awareness has improved greatly," he added.

In date, a total of 28 counties and districts in Qinghai have abolished the GDP system and replaced it with an assessment mechanism taking into account ecological protection and poverty alleviation.

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In July, the Qinghai Research Center of the Qilian Mountains National Park was founded in Xining, capital of Qinghai.

Cooperating with universities and research institutes, the center will make efforts to build an advanced monitoring system and protect the local environment with modern technologies.

In addition to the two national pilot parks, Qinghai has always kept a close eye on forest planting.

After 30 years of efforts, Xining's forest coverage rate jumped from 7.3 percent in administrative committee.

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Chinese mountain cats are a wild cats which live in cold and habitats between 2,000 and 4,000 meters above sea level. They have only been found in Qinghai province's Sanjiangyuan area and in the Gansu Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province. The cats have been listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List and are a second-class nationally protected species in China.



Wild yaks are a unique species on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and is also a first-class nationally protected animal in China. Their giant fur coats make them able to endure temperatures as cold as -30 C to -40 C.

Ideal location to test the mettle of international athletes, electric cars

By CAO YINGYING
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With its high altitudes, vast mountains and deserts that form the unique plateau climate, Qinghai province in Northwest China is hosting international sports, in an effort to boost its economic development and promote itself worldwide.

Revolving around Qinghai's landmark lake, a series of races and competitions have been held. Among them is the annual Tour of Qinghai Lake cycling competition.

Its latest session started on July 13 in Haidong in Qinghai province. The race went through neighboring Gansu province and ended in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on July 27. Taking part were 169 cyclists from 17 countries.

After 18 years of development, the competition has become a branded event with international influence, representing a healthy lifestyle.

After finishing the 3,001-kilometer race, the Medellin team from Colombia, the Marseille

team from France and China's Qinghai Tianyong Cycling Team won the top three prizes.

The local government said the greatest value, responsibility and potential of Qinghai lies in the local ecosystem. As a result, the cycling event's organizing committee cooperates with the China Green Foundation and the China Wildlife Conservation Association every year. Together they protect the environment along the race route by setting up garbage disposal facilities.

The local government said through the competition, more people learn about Qinghai and appreciate the natural scenery.

The province also hosted an international electric car event this year. The sixth China EV Rally, Qinghai Lake, which kicked off on June 20, evaluated and tested the quality of electric vehicles. This included battery range, charging time and power-saving capacity.

Many industry experts attended the launch ceremony and remarked Qinghai as a shining example of China's lithium industry development. They also expressed their confidence in Qinghai's lithium resources and clean energy.

A total of 13 models competed, including FAW

Hongqi's first electric SUV E-HS1. It was the first time for Hongqi to participate in the China EV Rally. The carmaker said it plans to launch more electric models in the future and hopes to test more of them at the rally.

Through the competition, Qinghai province has promoted the applications of technologies relating to electric vehicles and lithium batteries. This has enhanced the use of local lithium resources to stimulate the development of related industries.

The event is not only a response to the central government's call to encourage the development of the new energy vehicle sector. It also provides Qinghai with opportunities to promote sustainable growth, the local government said.

The province plans to increase its production of lithium carbonate to 125,000 metric tons by 2020.

Bi Wenjing, a world champion gymnast who serves as the ambassador of the event, said that she has participated in the rally three times.

Bi added that she felt that the performance of new energy vehicles is getting better and the testing of electric cars are constantly being updated.



Snow leopards are mainly distributed on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Pamirs regions in the country. They inhabit the bare rocks, meadows and bushwood at altitudes between 2,000-6,000 meters.



Huangyu, or naked carp, are endemic to Qinghai Lake. As the dominant of five native species of fish in the lake, it can be distinguished from other carp by the black spots on its back.



Black-necked cranes are the world's only crane living and breeding at high altitudes from 2,500 to 5,000 meters above sea level.

Bukadaban Peak

Bukadaban Peak, also known as Xinqingfeng Peak, is the highest point in Qinghai province, standing at 6,860 meters above sea level. The peak lies on the border between the Xinjiang-Uyghur autonomous region and Qinghai province. It is part of the Kunlun Mountains, one of the longest mountain ranges in Asia. Kunlun Mountains extends from the Pamirs in Tajikistan in the west to the Kunlun Pass and mountain ranges in Qinghai province in the east. Bukadaban Peak's name is borrowed from the Uyghur phrase for "bison peak". The snow-capped mountain is part of Hoh Xil, which is a region in the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and is considered the world's largest, highest and youngest plateau with more than 230 species of wild animals.



Species of plants



Rhodiola is a perennial flowering plant with traditional usage as an anti-fatigue agent and adaptogen compound. It has been used in traditional medicine for several disorders, notably including treatment of anxiety and depression.



Gentiana, commonly known as longdan in Chinese, has been an important medicinal herb in traditional Chinese medicine for more 2,000 years. It is available in many forms including extract and tea and is named for its extreme bitter taste.



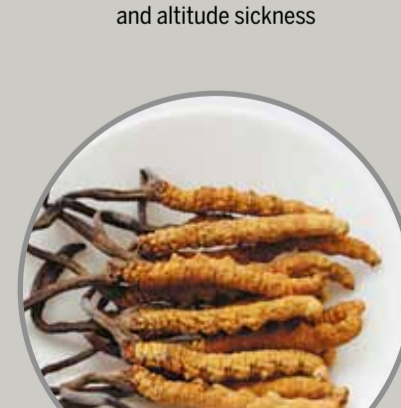
Snow lotus is a specialty and a rare herb mainly produced in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and neighboring regions, and is scattered above the snow at 4,800 to 5,800 meters above sea level. It generally grows in mountain rock crevices. Usually, only 5 percent of seeds can sprout.



Goji berry, also called wolfberry, is a bright orange-red berry that comes from China's native shrubs. Research shows that it can boost the immune system and brain activity, protect against heart disease and cancer, and improve life expectancy.



Highland barley, also known as qingke in Chinese, is the principal cereal cultivated on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and is rich in mineral elements. The plant is mainly used to make liquor, flour, bread, cakes and noodles. It is believed to help reduce cholesterol, improve digestion and prevent diabetes and altitude sickness.



Dongchongxiacao, or Chinese caterpillar fungus, is classified as a medicinal mushroom, and its use has a long history as part of traditional Chinese medicine as well as traditional Tibetan medicine. The hand-collected, intact fungus-caterpillar body is valued by herbalists as medicine.

PREVIEW QINGHAI



Kiang or Tibetan wild donkeys are native to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Herds of the donkeys are confined to plains of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Ladakh in Kashmir and northern Nepal along the border shared with the Tibet autonomous region.

Black-necked cranes are the world's only crane living and breeding at high altitudes from 2,500 to 5,000 meters above sea level.