Wonderful

With a rich variety and broad distribution of wetland resources, ranging from cool temperate to tropical regions, from plains to ateaus and mountainous areas, China has long valued the rotection of this unique type of ecosystem. Since the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a national wetland conservation plan in 2003 the central government has spent 19.8 billion yuan (\$2.73 billion) in wetland conservation and restoration. That includes implementing more than 4,100 wetland restoration projects. With continuous improvements in wetland conditions, the restoration efforts in the country have shifted from rescue to comprehensive protection. To date, the country has established a multifaceted wetland protection and management system, which includes 64 Wetlands of International Importance and 901 national etland parks.





parties by the end of 2021.

Wetlands (International Importance in China

The Convention on Wetlands' contracting parties are to place suitable wetlands onto the List of Wetlands of International Importance, also known as the Ramsar List. The convention has several mechanisms to *help contracting parties* designate their most significant wetlands as Ramsar Sites, and to take action to manage them effectively, maintaining their ecological character. *There are over 2,400* Ramsar Sites across the world, covering more than 2.5 million square kilometers. Of them, 64 are located in China, covering a combined area of 73,200 sq km.

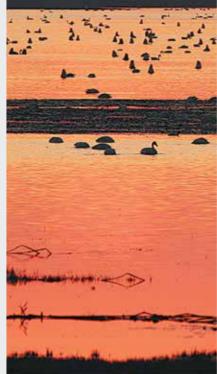
YANG GUOMEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



COP14 2022

COP14, short for the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, is being held and will last through to Nov 13. Its main sessions are held in Wuhan, capital city of Central China's Hubei province, and sideline meetings in Geneva, Switzerland. It is the first time for China to host such a conference of the contracting parties to the convention, an intergovernmental treaty that was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in February 1971 and came into force in December 1975. The Convention on Wetlands provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources through local and national actions and international cooperation. Every three years, representatives of the contracting parties meet at the COP, where they adopt decisions on the administration of the convention and guide its implementation. Currently, there are 172 contracting parties to the convention. China joined the multilateral environmental convention in 1992. Since then, the country has taken an active part in international cooperation in wetland preservation, protection and promotion. Its efforts include the adoption of the Wetland Protection Law and related regulations, launching wetland surveys, and implementing programs for wetland protection and rehabilitation, as well as expanding international cooperation and exchanges, contributing Chinese solutions to the global community.







RESTORATION PROJECTS BOOST WILDLIFE PROTECTION

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and international cooperation for the conservation and University.

in the country has been continuously improved. Accord- enjoying special investigation. remained stable, and their water quality and biodiversity mation management platforms. have been further improved.

ment has so far invested 19.8 billion yuan (\$2.75 billion) in and supervision. more than 4,100 projects for wetland ecological protection Statistics show that China has designated 64 Wetlands of Foundation, said he has visited nature reserves in more logical functions since its accession to the 16,760 rural households. By 2025, the country's wetland municipalities.

Wetland Protection Project (2002-30). The central govern- databases, in a bid to realize the integration of monitoring 595 species of wild plants and 316 species of birds

Convention on Wetlands in 1992. Conservation rate is expected to increase to 55 percent. By 2025, the number of China's Wetlands of Interna- Qinghai Lake Bird Island Wetland is another Wetland The country has experienced three stages of wetland Also, China's achievements in such fields as wetland tional Importance is projected to rise by another 20, and of International Importance listed in 1992. As an imporprotection over the past three decades — baseline inven- protection legislation, the protection of small and micro the list of wetlands of national importance is expected to tant stopover for migratory birds, the wetland is witness n from 1992 to 2003; wetlands, international wetland city certification stan- expand by 50, according to the National Forestry and to hundreds of thousands of birds each year. It is also the rescue protection of wetlands from 2004 to 2015; and dards and procedures, and the construction of wetland Grassland Administration. The goal for 2030 is to make breeding ground for summer migrants. There are 227 specomprehensive protection from 2016 to 2021. parks have all played a significant role in the international significant improvement in wetland ecosystem functions cies of birds in Qinghai Lake, including 50 species on the The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental community, said Zhang Mingxiang, vice-dean of the School and biodiversity, with enhanced integrated services and list of the China-Japan Agreement on the Protection of agreement that provides the framework for national action of Ecology and Nature Conservation at Beijing Forestry carbon sequestration capacity. China by then aims to Migratory Birds, and 24 species included in the agreement become "a key participant, contributor and leader in global signed by China and Australia to protect migratory birds

This year marks the 30th anniversary of China's acces- national land survey, which was conducted from 2017 to Northeast China's Jilin province, was one of the first wet- km compared with 2005. sion to the treaty, and the ecological situation of wetlands 2019, classified wetlands as the first-level land category lands included in the list of China's Wetlands of International Importance in 1992.

In 2003, the State Council issued the Plan for National national forest and grass ecological network system and 12 villages in Tongyu, featuring rich biodiversity such as species of wild animals.

George Archibald, a founder of the International Crane

hina has taken diverse action to tackle and restoration, and carried out these projects together International Importance -63 on the Chinese mainland than 50 countries and regions, and Xianghai is one of the global challenges such as shrinking wet-with local governments. Last year, for example, some 3,188 and one in Hong Kong. The 63 wetlands on the mainland few wetlands in the world with perfect natural landscapes, lands and the degradation of their eco- hectares of degraded wetlands were restored, benefiting are distributed in 23 provinces, autonomous regions and an original ecological environment and diverse wetland

use of wetlands and their resources. It had 172 contracting China is the first country in the world to complete three wetland conservation and restoration", the NFGA said. and their habitats. In 2021, the water area of Qinghai Lake wetland resources surveys nationwide, and the third Xianghai National Nature Reserve in Tongyu county, reached 4,625.6 square kilometers, an increase of 375.35 sq

autonomous region was listed as a Wetland of Intering to the white paper titled the Ecological Condition of In addition, relevant research institutions and local The reserve, established in 1981, mainly aims to protect national Importance in February 2020. Covering a China's Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar governments have established wetland investigation and rare waterfowl such as red-crowned cranes and rare plants. total area of nearly 20,000 hectares, the wetland has Sites), the overall ecological situation of these wetlands has monitoring stations, and real-time monitoring and infor- It is also an important wetland for migratory birds to diversified landscapes including forest, shrubs, grassreproduce and refresh themselves during their journeys. land, meadows and swamp, providing a good habitat These stations and platforms are being included in the It spreads across more than 100,000 hectares and covers environment for 1,118 species of wild plants and 691

National wetland parks

A key part of China's system, wetland parks are aimed primarily at wetland ecosystem preservation. Meanwhile, following the principles of *comprehensive* protection, scientific restoration, rational utilization and sustainable development, the system also works for science popularization

scientific research, sightseeing, and leisure activities. To date, there are 901 national wetland parks across the country, some 90 percent of then open to the public free of charge, providing a shining example of practicing the concept that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.



The Lashihai Wetland in Yunnan province is among China's 64 Wetlands of International Importance



An expanse of wetland in the Tibet Trari Nam Co Wetlands. The Wetland of International Importance in the Tibet autonomous region features rivers, lakes and marshes. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Ecological importance promoted across China

the national wetland parks now cover 31 provinces, auton- In addition to maintaining the wetland's ecology and improved. omous regions and municipalities. They have contributed water environment, the protection project has valued The park has been cooperating with Xiamen University Without any allowance, villagers still volunteer to plant substantially to economic growth in surrounding areas. the wetland's role in scientific research and education. to carry out protection, investigation and monitoring of trees every March, the official said.

urban expansion. Local farmers were also engaged in pig and cultural history of the wetland, and has become an three types of wetlands – permanent rivers, flood plains The park received 195,700 tourist visits in 2021, adding farming, which seriously polluted the water of Xixi. important landmark.

For example, more than 13,000 villagers were moved to Another national wetland park is the Minjiangyuan the park on a regular basis. a newly built community close to the wetland in the city's park in Jianning county, Fujian province. The park "We are all beneficiaries of the wetland protection tial," said Yang Hongqing, an official in charge of the Xihu district. Some of them have since switched jobs to covers a total area of 395.3 hectares, of which 241.48 drive," an official of nearby Qugu village told Economic Nyingchi forestry and grassland bureau's animal, plant tourism service and trade.

nina is home to more than 1,600 wet- the conservation of original vegetation and landforms, park and restore its damaged natural wetlands. After 2016 when the wetland restoration program started. Trees land parks, including 901 national wetland and bans visitors from most of the wetland areas. The years of development, the ecological wetlands and habi- were planted in riverside areas surpassing 87 hectares to parks, according to the National Forestry daily visitor flow in the remaining areas is limited to tats of wild animals and plants in the park have been prevent sandstorms and beautify surroundings. Back in about 5,000 to 6,000. This ensures the wetland's water protected. Meanwhile, the species and quantity of wildlife that time, nearby villagers were each paid a 200 yuan daily With a total area of 3.6 million hectares, bodies can purify any natural waste produced by tourists. have increased significantly and the quality of water has allowance for their participation in the greening project.

One of China's first national wetland parks, Xixi Nation- Five ecological protection and restoration areas were its biodiversity. Currently, the park has 876 species of vasal Wetland Park in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province is known established in the first phase of the project, and a wetas the "kidney of Hangzhou" due to its cleansing proper- land science popularization and exhibition hall was China's highest national-level protection. It also houses black-necked cranes. As a result, tourists also came in ties provided by an abundance of water networks, rivers, set up at the park's entrance. The park is also home 304 vertebrate species and 142 bird species. ponds, moors, swamps and mud flats. to the Xixi Wetland Museum, which was designed by In Nyingchi, Tibet autonomous region, the 8,738-hect-Profiting from tourism by selling farm produce or developers were engaged in construction there due to The museum demonstrates the ecological diversity Yarlung Zangbo River and the Nyangchu River features advocates for wetland protection.

hectares are wetlands.

A special plan for Xixi wetland's tourism has been In December 2017, the park launched a pilot construc- "This used to be a desolate landscape. It became dusty issued, with ecological protection a priority. It highlights tion project to upgrade itself into a State-level wetland on a windy day," he recalled. The turning point came in

and marsh grassland.

In 2002, the Hangzhou government decided to protect Official statistics showed that by the end of 2020, the Since 2016, 31 million yuan has been poured into the "We are trying to build Yani National Wetland Park the Xixi wetland. It launched the first phase of the protec- Xixi wetland housed 711 vascular plant species, 490 more restoration and protection of the park and nearly 123 into a shared green space that integrates wetland contion project in September 2003, with a series of measures than that in 2005; 898 insect species, 421 more than in hectares of vegetation area has been recovered. The park servation, ecological improvement, leisurely sightsee-2005; and 193 bird species, 114 more than in 2005. authorities have hired scores of nearby villagers to patrol ing, and science popularization and environmental

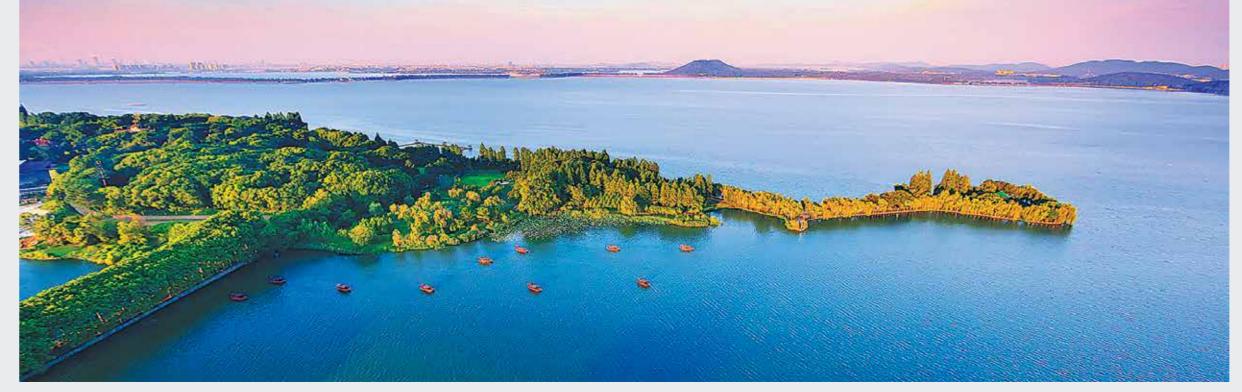
Daily.

Planting trees has become a tradition in the village.

However, in the 1990s, a large number of real estate the Pritzker Architecture Prize winner Arata Isozaki. are Yani National Wetland Park at the confluence of the running rural inns, the villagers have become staunch

2.1 million yuan to their combined income.

education, and to unleash the green development potenand wetland resources department.



A picturesque view of the East Lake National Wetland Park in Wuhan, Hubei province. The city is playing host to the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



International Wetland Cities in China

urban wetlands, the Convention on Wetlands has introduced a Wetland City accreditation scheme, which aims to promote the conservation and wise use of urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socioeconomic benefits for local people. China ranks No 1 worldwide with 13 International Wetlan Cities, six of them recognized at the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention in 2007 and seven accredited at the 59th meeting of the convention's Standing *Committee in May*

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Recognizing the *importance of cities and*

CITIES FLOURISH THROUGH RESULTS OF CONSERVATION

By YIN RUOWEI yinruowei@chinadaily.com.cn

hina is a vast country boasting diverse delegates," Zhu added.

ber of any country, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Wetlands, an intergovernmental environmental agree-

Wetlands from Nov 5 to 13.

can immerse themselves in the scenery of the wetland, including Yinchuan.

ence ahead of the event. "Moreover, the meeting will be Shuanggui Lake National Wetland Park, which covers nearly 3,150 sq km of wetlands, including a Wetland of held during the migration season, when the captivating nearly 350 hectares, is located in the district. A total of International Importance and a provincially important sight of hundreds of birds in flight is expected to enchant 277 wild animal species — including 207 birds — and 623 one, as well as nature reserves at national and provincial

Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region Accreditations. Behind this title is the city's years of tire-clock, and even through the wind and the rain, he sticks Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei province, is in Northwest China, was among the first six Chinese cities less efforts in wetland protection. among the ranks of International Wetland Cities in China. granted the status of International Wetland Cities in 2018. Hefei boasts the Chaohu Lake, China's fifth-largest He has a deep love for the birds in the park. He often

"The main venue of the meeting is located near the of wetlands, aiming to create a biological corridor along Chaohu Lake have been developed. A total of 4,333 hect- Li said that wetland parks in Wuhan have gained in

wild plant species can be found in the park. The number of levels, and two pilot national wetland parks.

importance to make China a more beauti- known as "the city of hundreds of lakes". Over the past few Liangping has also taken the lead in exploring the of them under the country's priority protection. Since years, Wuhan has been committed to promoting wetland protection and utilization of small and micro wetlands August 2018, the city has restored some 5,727 hectares of There are 43 cities worldwide that hold Wetland City ecological restoration. A total of 10 wetland parks and five in rural areas. It has more than 400 such wetlands. More coastal wetlands and added 17.6 kilometers of new natural Accreditations, of which 13 are in China, the highest num- nature reserves were set up. The area of wetland has been than simply wetlands, they have crossover collaborations coastlines. maintained and water quality in urban areas was improved. with organic farms, homestays, and healthcare centers as The improvement The number of bird species in Wuhan reached 442, well as tourist agencies, which has resulted in an income has required long-term efforts by ordinary people who The accreditation is an honor for the protection of including 99 species on the national key protection list. increase of 52,000 yuan (\$7,200) per household on average. devote themselves to wetland protection.

in the world's second batch of cities with the Wetland City Wetland Park, is one of them. He often works around the

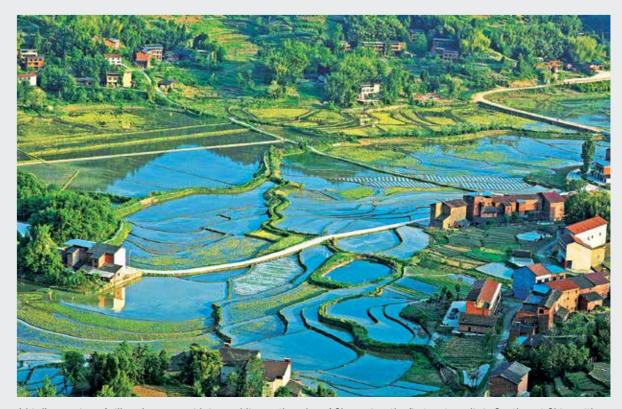
It is playing host to the 14th Meeting of the Conference It boasts a host of lakes, rivers and streams, which is rare freshwater lake, five national wetland parks and three proof the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on on the Ningxia Plain, long known as an arid area. vincial wetland parks. The total wetland area in the city figure out their species. Once he was so focused on a bird This year alone, the city has restored 3,533 hectares is 118,200 hectares. Up to now, 10 wetland parks around that he accidentally fell into a pond.

tection and restoration," Zhu Gongwei, deputy secretary- story of protecting wetlands. It is the first of its kind in of International Wetland Cities. The coastal city standing importance of wetland protection, he takes a lot of time general of the Wuhan government, said at a news confer- Southwest China with the title of Wetland City. at the Liaohe River estuary in Northeast China boasts to explain relevant policies to them.

landscapes and mesmerizing geographical Wuhan is a city of rich water resources. It has 166 lakes, greater painted-snipe, a wading bird which likes to live in The wetlands in Panjin, a key stopover for migratory features. Of them, wetlands are of growing 165 rivers and 1,624 square kilometers of wetlands, and is wetland, soared from six to more than 120 in just one year. birds, provide habitats for 463 wild animal species, 78

urban wetland ecology. It is given by the Convention on The city is the breeding ground of Baer's pochard, a proto his post, according to the park.

Wuhan East Lake National Wetland Park, where delegates the Yellow River, which runs through a number of cities, area of wetland which were once either residential areas popularity among the public and seen a growing number or farmlands have been returned to their original state. of visitors. To make visitors, who go to the lake to catch and perceive the city's progress in wetland ecological pro-Liangping district in Chongqing is another success Panjin in Liaoning province is also on the second list fish, or operate drones to take pictures, understand the



the title of International Wetland City. XIONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



A bird's-eye view of village houses amid rice paddies on the edge of Chongqing, the first metropolis in Southwest China with A highway bridge runs through an expanse of wetland lying in front of high-rise buildings in Hefei, capital of Anhui province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY