Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia

FAST FACTS

Achieved: Protected Eurasian wetlands critically important for biodiversity and migratory waterbirds including the endangered Siberian Crane.

Where: Kazakhstan, Iran, China, Russian Federation

Cost: GEF Funds: $10.35 million; Co-financing: $37 million

When: March 2003 to December 2009

Partners: International Crane Foundation and the governments of China, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Russia, Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination Office, Convention on Migratory Species, RAMSAR Convention, Wetlands International, China’s State Forestry Administration, Iran’s Department of Environment, Kazakhstan’s Forest and Hunting Committee, All Russian Research Institute

Achievements

The Siberian Crane Wetland Project was the first of its kind to use a flyway approach to stabilize populations of migratory birds. In local, national and regional projects, it dramatically strengthened the network of wetlands for use by birds and people. It stabilized the population of Siberian Cranes in the region and increased it in China. Working with governments and local communities, it protected millions of hectares of wetlands.

Legacy

The project’s lasting impact includes:

- Safeguarding a network of 18 critical wetlands in three flyways ensuring the survival of the Siberian Crane and other migratory waterbirds. The area spanned two continents.
- Assuring improved water supplies for millions in the region.
- Enabling water-management planning, wetland restoration and hydrological monitoring and research in China and Kazakhstan. Regional governments in Zhalong and Momoge, China secured financing to support annual water replenishment.
- Linking national science institutions, private companies, conservation agencies and local communities in four countries.
- Enhancing greater compliance with international environmental agreements including Convention of Migratory Species and the RAMSAR Convention.
- Establishing international site support systems and monitoring and data sharing networks to identify and respond to future threats.
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What People Say:

The Siberian Crane Wetland Project underlines how conservation of biodiversity and human concerns can go hand in hand. - Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNEP

This project has been a cost-effective investment in both people and wildlife—securing the future of this iconic bird but also assisting to secure the future health and well being of hundreds of thousands if not millions of people. - Monique Barbut, Chief Executive Officer of GEF

Publications:

The project’s many publications, technical briefs and fact sheets can be found at http://www.scwp.info. They include:

- Safe Flyways for the Siberian Crane: A Flyway Approach Conserves Some of Asia’s Most Beautiful Wetlands and Waterbirds
- Practical Advice for Reducing Avian Influenza Risks at Wetlands of Importance to Waterbirds
- Supporting Wetland Management and Improved Livelihoods at Fereydoon Kenar, I. R. Iran Through Development of Trappers Associations and Trust Funds
- Outputs and Deliverables:

  - The project was able to:
  - Establish a wetlands and waterbird conservation education that was integrated in school curricula in some areas. Programs include crane celebrations at 120 sites in nine countries.
  - Develop conservation management plans and facilitate their implementation for 15 wetlands.
  - Increase effectiveness scores in 13 conservation sites that improved protection of 1.8 million hectares of wetlands.
  - Facilitate a new five-year bird-monitoring program in China that covered more than 300 sites and led to the discovery of new critical wetland areas.
  - Survey about 35 wetlands in Kazakhstan and record 1.6 million birds in 126 species.
  - Secure key wetland sites through international recognition and improved national protection.
  - Inspire alternative methods of wetland reserve governance through community involvement in Iran.
  - Instigate pest-management pilot programs in the Fereydoon Kenar Non-Shooting Area of Iran to reduce pesticide and herbicide use.
  - Link microcredit schemes and Iranian bird-trapper associations.
  - Lead China to pioneer approaches to resolve water distribution and wetland conservation.
  - Start community development programs to help Chinese herdsmen manage wetlands grazing and deter detrimental livestock activities on the Songnen Plain.
  - Develop a network of forestry protection stations near Poyang Lake Basin in southern China.
  - Conduct six years of mid-winter counts in 68 sublakes of the Poyang Lake Basin.

Contact: www.unep.org/gef or email: gefinfo@unep.org

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