Seven new Wetlands of International Importance for China

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China has designated seven wetlands as Wetlands of International Importance. It now boasts 64 such “Ramsar Sites” which together cover over 7.3 million hectares (73,000 square kilometres).

Tianjin Beidagang Wetlands (Site no. 2425 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance) lies in a transitional area of inland and coastal wetlands where the Duliujian River meets Bohai Bay. Located just to the south of the city of Tianjin, the site provides exceptional habitat for waterbirds, and its situation on the East Asian – Australasian Flyway migration route results in annual total numbers regularly exceeding 400,000.

Henan Minquan Yellow River Gudao Wetlands (Site no. 2426) is in Henan province on the North China Plain, on what was a channel of the Yellow River until the River was diverted in the 19th century. It now forms a part of the Huaihe River Basin and is an important source of drinking water for Minquan county and Shangqiu City. It features a reservoir, and also the permanent river which feeds it and aquaculture ponds. The site provides important waterbird habitat along the East Asia - Australasia Flyway and regularly supports 60,000 individuals.

Inner Mongolia Bila River Wetlands (Site no. 2427), on the slopes of the Grand Khingan mountain range in north-east China, is home to great biodiversity, with 45 mammal, 228 bird and 35 fish species present, many of which are threatened. These include the vulnerable Siberian taimen (Hucho taimen) and the critically endangered yellow-breasted bunting (Emberiza aureola).

Located close to Harbin City, Heilongjiang Hadong Yanjiang Wetlands (Site no. 2428) is part of the main stream of the Songhua River. Characterized by flat open deltas, oxbow lakes and thaw lakes, 64% of the entire site is covered by marshes, which provide exceptional habitat for waterbirds. Overall, more than 20,000 waterbirds are found on the site, including over 1% of the biogeographical populations of bean goose (Anser fabalis) and greater white-fronted goose (Anser albifrons).

Gansu Yellow River Shouqu Wetlands (Site no. 2429) is a
typical high-altitude wetland of the Tibetan Plateau, with densely distributed meadows, marshes, ponds and rivers. It feeds the upper reaches of the Yellow River, which highlights its importance for water conservation. This vast wetland also limits rapid runoff of excess water, reducing flood risks further down the Yellow River basin. The site also acts as a vast carbon sink, with deep layers of peat having built up underneath the marshlands.

Located at 4,600 metres above sea level in the south-west of the Chang Tang Plateau, on the northern hinterland of the Tibetan Plateau, Tibet Trari Nam Co Wetlands (Site no. 2430) includes permanent saline and freshwater lakes, and permanent and seasonal rivers. The wetland provides habitat to numerous threatened species including the vulnerable snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) and the endangered steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*).

Jiangxi Poyang Lake Nanji Wetlands (Site no. 2431) is in Poyang Lake, the largest freshwater lake in China. One of the main features is the large inland delta complex formed by the channels of the Ganjiang River, which flow into the Lake and on from there into the Yangtze River. When the water level drops, a variety of other wetland features emerge including rivers, lakes, meadows and mudflats. This creates important habitats for waterbirds as a stopover and wintering place, with between 20,000 and 70,000 migratory birds wintering in the site annually.

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