Twelve-month wetland inventory planned in DPR Korea

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For several years, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention together with the Hanns Seidel Foundation has been working towards the implementation of goals and plans aimed for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands in DPR Korea, in cooperation with the DPR Korean Ministry for Land and Environment Protection and the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.

As part of these joined efforts, a seminar was conducted at Kumgangsan (Mt. Kumgang) with 25 experts of North Korean environmental institutions and foreign experts to prepare an inventory of wetlands in DPR Korea. The seminar was opened by Director General Mrs Ri Kyong-sim (Ministry for Land and Environment Protection), who emphasized that the inventory is an integral objective of country’s policy.

Prof. Dr. Chong Jong-ryol of the Korea University in Tokyo and one of the initiators of the first wetland inventory in North Korea in 1995, emphasized his research on habitats of red-crowned cranes (Grus japonensis) and black-faced spoonbills (Platalea minor), that he has been studying for decades and that need the most a protection. David Melville, who is an advisor on environmental issues with experiences from working several decades on the protection of wetlands along the East Asian – Australasian Flyway gave an introduction into the criteria for wetland inventories and provided practical examples on how to conduct surveys.

Dr. Nial Moores, founder and director of Birds Korea, an organisation that is concerned with the study and protection of migratory birds and their habitats on the Korean peninsula, put much emphasis on the importance of Korean wetlands for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway and the possibility and methodology of surveys. Dr. Bernhard Seliger of the Hanns Seidel Foundation shared the foundation’s experiences with three surveys in Rason. Director General Mrs Ri Kyong-sim provided an overview on the current state of preparation of the planned twelve-month inventory that is meant to result in a publication on the new inventory of wetlands.