

WCC-2012-Rec-153-EN

Conservation of Poyang Lake, People's Republic of China

NOTING that Poyang Lake in the People's Republic of China is by far the most important wetland in East Asia for wintering waterbirds (cranes, storks, swans, geese, ducks and others), providing critical habitat for many migratory and globally threatened species;

AWARE that over 98% of the world population of the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) depends on Poyang Lake and associated wetlands as its wintering ground, together with over 90% of the world's population of the globally Endangered Oriental Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*), and over 50% of the globally Vulnerable Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*);

RECOGNIZING that the People's Republic of China has made numerous, exemplary commitments to the conservation of wetlands, including the designation of a network of 15 nature reserves to safeguard the wetland resources of Poyang, and the establishment of wildlife protection offices in all counties surrounding the lake;

COMMENDING the People's Republic of China for designating Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1992, and a site of international importance for migratory waterbirds under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway site network in 1997;

WELCOMING the commitment that the People's Republic of China made to the recently completed United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) project *Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia*, through which the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve received significant funding, with UNEP/GEF funds being matched by a considerable investment from the People's Republic of China;

NOTING that the ecosystem services provided by Poyang Lake have extraordinary importance to millions of people in Jiangxi and the provinces downriver;

ALSO NOTING the importance of Poyang Lake for other important components of biodiversity, including diverse vegetation, fish, and the only freshwater porpoise in the world;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that infrastructure for water management, such as the sluice gates proposed by Jiangxi Government for the outlet to Poyang Lake, affects the natural water fluctuations, and might transform the ecological character of the lake and its wetlands;

AWARE of the 2010 report by the Wetlands International – IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Crane Specialist Group and the IUCN China office entitled, *An Ecosystem Approach to Resolving Conflicts among Ecological and Economic Priorities for Poyang Lake Wetlands*;

AWARE of the Ramsar expert team invited by Jiangxi Province to visit Poyang Lake in April 2010 that discussed concerns about management challenges and ecosystem change at this Wetland of International Importance, and made a series of recommendations emphasizing the importance of a strong scientific basis for decisions affecting this system and the need to ensure that the remarkable variability and biodiversity of these wetlands is maintained; and

RECALLING that the People's Republic of China has adopted the National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011–2030) where Poyang Lake is included as one of 35 biodiversity conservation priority areas, and also the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020* with the 20 Aichi Targets, particularly Targets 5, 12, and 14;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:

RECOMMENDS to the relevant agencies, when making management decisions that affect Poyang Lake, to seek to:

- a. maintain and enhance the extraordinary international and local biodiversity values of Poyang Lake through management and monitoring activities;
- b. maximize benefits for both biodiversity and development through management measures that maintain the ecological character of the lake, including water levels and water fluctuations that sustain or restore natural ecological processes characteristic of these wetlands; and
- c. consult scientists and relevant organizations with diverse expertise and practical experience to advise on research and management actions for Poyang Lake.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.