

Ramsar Information Sheet

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- 1. Date this sheet was completed:** October 1997
- 2. Country:** People's Republic of China
- 3. Name of wetland:** Heilongjiang Zhalong National Nature Reserve
- 4. Geographical co-ordinates:** 46°52 - 47°32'N 123°47 - 124°37'E
- 5. Altitude:** 140 - 146 m
- 6. Area:** 210,000 ha

7. Overview

Composed of a large patch of permanent and seasonal fresh water marshes and numerous small shallow lakes along the lower reaches of Wuyu'er River, surrounded by grassland, farmland and man-made fishponds.

- 8. Wetland type:** O M P Tp Ts
- 9. Ramsar Criteria:** 1a,2a,3a,3c
- 10. Map of site included:** Yes

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12. Justification of criteria selected under point 9:

- 1a: Lashed land form typical of Northeast China with rivers and lakes coexisting;
2a: There are a lot of wintering waterfowl, including several endangered species;
3a: over 20,000 waterfowl;
3c: close to 350 red-crowned cranes are living through winter here.

13. General location:

26 km east of Qiqihar City in the west of Heilongjiang Province.

14. Physical features:

With flat low-lying terrain, wide distribution of lakes and relatively widespread saline and marsh land, the land form of this region is of alluvial land form type under which rivers and lakes coexist. The soil is saline marshy soil and grassy marshy soil. The wetland originates from Wuyu'er River which runs through this area. Where the river lost its course and overflowing river water formed the marshy wetland. Water in lakes, generally speaking, is 2 meters deep with maximum 5 meters. The maximum depth of water in marshland is 0.7 meters. Water is slightly alkaline with pH value of about 7 all year round. The area of accumulated water accounts for 70% of the area of the nature reserve. Wuyu'er River runs through the nature reserve and then its water goes to large lakes along the lower reaches like Longhu Pond, Lianhuan Lake and Nanshan Lake.

During years that water is abundant, it can reach Nen River. This area belonging to semi-dry area, is of continental climate type with an annual mean temperature of 2.0 to 4.2 °C. The annual precipitation is 368-427 mm. The frost-free period is 121-135 days.

15. Hydrological values:

Vast lakes and marshy wetland are of great value to the adjustment of local climate and air humidity.

16. Ecological features:

Vegetation in the area includes meadow prairie, wet meadow, marshy vegetation and aquatic vegetation. 80% of the reed marshes in the reserve provides a hiding place for waterfowl living and breeding here. Low-lying meadow and meadow prairie with a lot of herb are herding areas for local herdsman.

17. Noteworthy flora:

In the marsh area, there are reed, *Scirpus tabernaemontani*, *Carex* spp., *Cyperus* spp., and so on. In the meadow there are *Pennisetum alopecuroides* and *Puccinellia tenuiflora*. In meadow prairie, there are *Aneurolepidium chinense*. Aquatic plants include floating plants, submerged plants and emerged plants.

18. Noteworthy fauna:

In the reserve, there are over 269 bird species recorded, mainly including 6 species of cranes like Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), Swan Goose (*Anser cygnoides*), Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Falcated Teal (*Anas falcata*) and many Woodcocks (*Scolopacidae*) and Gulls (*Laridae*).

19. Social and cultural values:

Rich resources of waterfowl attract large numbers of people to come here for bird watching. Each year, there are many people both at home and abroad coming to the reserve for sight-seeing, which increases the income for the reserve. Besides, in winter, most reed in the marshes are cut and transported to paper mills as raw material for producing paper, making a traditional source of income for the locality.

20. Land tenure/ownership of:

- (a) site: State and collective ownership
- (b) surrounding area: State and collective ownership

21. Current land use/principal human activities:

- (a) site: nature protection, scientific research, tourism, fishery and animal husbandry
- (b) surrounding area: fishery, herding, agricultural production and life of townsmen

22. Factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

- (a) site: enclosure for cultivation, wetland reduction; overherding in meadow marshland; overfishing leading to reduction in fish resources; development of production activities, increase of interference caused by human activities.
- (b) surrounding area: enlargement of land for agricultural purposes; discharge of industrial waste water into the upper reaches of Wuyu'er River results in water pollution; increase in large scale production and development activities; overfishing and overherding.

23. Conservation measures taken:

In 1979, the nature reserve was established with an area of 42,000 hectares, in 1982, the area was increased to 210,000 hectares and Zhalong Reserve Management Bureau was set up. In 1987, with the approval of the State Council, the reserve was raised to a National reserve; in the reserve, hunting is prohibited and public security agencies have been set up to identify and punish those who violate the law. A united protection committee was formed with relevant units in the surrounding area to organise together in protection of wetland and waterfowl. Breeding and raising facility for cranes was set up, engaged in artificial breeding and raising activities. It is stipulated that each year, from May to June, fishing is prohibited, which provides enough food for waterfowl breeding here. Permanent publicity boards were set up at and around the site, publicising protection of wetland and birds. A plan for the management of the reserve was made.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

Limit large-scale production and development activities at the site; reduce interference with birds' breeding at the core zone caused by human production activities; reserve in winter some reed, providing good breeding site for waterfowl to come here in the following year.

25. Current scientific and research facilities:

Breeding and raising of cranes; research of wetland ecology; biological research of White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*) and Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis*). Scientific research facilities include breeding and raising site for cranes, specimen hall, lab, equipment for artificial incubation and so on.

26. Current conservation education:

Each year in spring and autumn conduct at the site publicity of and education on birds loving and protection among residents, especially among middle school and primary school students; conduct publicity and education in the bird watching tourist area by way of watching videos introducing the reserve, visiting specimen halls and printing and distributing publicity souvenirs. Each year during the period when cranes watching festival is held in Qiqihar City, conduct rich and varies publicity activities for protection of wetland and waterfowl.

27. Current recreation and tourism:

The tourist area for bird watching was established surrounding the reserve management bureau, engaged in tourism, watching artificially bred species of cranes and sighting of various water wetland scenery in the open air. In the tourist area, there are an audio-visual education centre, specimen halls, crane watching towers and other facilities.

28. Jurisdiction:

Department of Forestry, Heilongjiang Province.

29. Management authority:

Management Bureau of Heilongjiang Zhalong National Nature Reserve

30. Bibliographical references:

Management Plan of Zhalong National Nature Reserve, etc.