

## 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:** Hunan East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve
- 4. Geographical co-ordinates:** 28°59' - 29°38'N 112°43' - 113°15'E
- 5. Altitude:** 35 m on average
- 6. Area:** 190,000 ha

### 7. Overview

It is a freshwater river-like lake or a wide lake-like river course, receiving water from the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River and the four major rivers of Hunan Province, namely Xiang, Zi, Yuan and Li rivers. The lake is surrounded by vast expanses of marshes and plain area.

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

### 11. Name and address of compiler:

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### 12. Justification of criteria selected under point 9:

- 1a: extraordinarily large inland freshwater lake wetland in central south China;  
1c: good example of freshwater lake wetland;  
2a: large numbers of rare and endangered species;  
3a: some 2 million wintering waterfowl;  
3c: over 800 White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) and over 400 Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*).

### 13. General location:

110 km north of the Changsha City, northern part of Hunan Province.

### 14. Physical features:

It is the largest lake in the Dongting Lake System presenting a wetland landscape of gullies and ports. The main soil types are limnic soil and river marshy soil containing 2% of organic matters. The annual average volume of water passing through the lakes amounts to 312.6 billion m<sup>3</sup> and its annual storage capacity is 17.8 billion m<sup>3</sup> with a water depth of 4-22 m, the greatest difference in water levels is 17.76 m and a pH value ranging between 6.8 and 8.6. East Dongting Lake has a continental monsoon climate in transition from the central subtropical to the north subtropical climates with an annual mean temperature of 17°C, a total precipitation of 1,200 - 1,330 mm and a frost free period of 258-275 days. The annual mean temperature of the lake water is 17.5°C. The wintering period for winter migratory birds is between October and next March during which the monthly mean temperature is 9.5°C and

total precipitation amounts to 429.5 mm. The breeding period for summer migratory birds is between April and September with a total precipitation of 804.9 mm and a monthly mean temperature of 24°C.

**15. Hydrological values:**

East Dongting Lake and its associated wetland play a vital role as a natural reservoir in controlling the water level of the Yangtze River and river systems surrounding Dongting Lake in summer floods. East Dongting Lake is also a major base for fisheries production.

**16. Ecological features:**

East Dongting Lake is rich in submerged, floating and emerged plants. The most common submerged plants are sedge and black phycophyta; the floating plants include lotus, gorgan euryale and duckweed; and the emerged plants include narrowleaf cattail and reed. Wetland is surrounded by paddy fields and other crop land.

**17. Noteworthy flora:**

There are 873 plant species and varieties in this area. Wetland vegetation is composed of plant communities of such families as *Salix*, *Graminae*, *Compositae*, *Cyperaceae*, *Potamogetonaceae*, and *Nymphaceae*.

**18. Noteworthy fauna:**

This area is a wintering site for migratory birds and a stopover in the flyway. There are 216 wetland bird species in record. Some 2 million migratory birds winter here and the annual total number of residing birds exceeds 15 million. Of which the endangered species include White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Siberian White Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), White-napped Crane (*Grus vipio*), Common Crane (*Grus grus*), Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), Swan species (*Cygnus* spp.), Chinese Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*), etc. Other animals include 114 fishes and 68 whale, mollusc and reptile species, of which *Acipenser sinensis*, *Lipotes vexillifer* and *Neophoceana palmer* are the major endangered species.

**19. Social and cultural values:**

The prolonged conservation measures and ban on hunting have increased the size of population and numbers of birds in the nature reserve, the endangered ones in particular. Large numbers of tourist groups come to this nature reserve for bird watching, thus, help increase the income of the nature reserve, raise the status of Yueyang City where the reserve locates and promote the municipal economic development.

**20. Land tenure/ownership of:**

- (a) site: 67,500 hm<sup>2</sup> of land and water area solely under the nature reserve and the remaining 124,600 hm<sup>2</sup> under joint management by the reserve and other institutions; governments.
- (b) surrounding area: towns, farmland and land for forestry use.

**21. Current land use/principal human activities:**

- (a) site: nature conservation, scientific research, tourism, fisheries production (seasonal), flood control;
- (b) surrounding area: agricultural activities, domestic fowl raising, urban living.

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

- (a) site: reed harvest, sediment;
- (b) surrounding area: expansion of farmland, industrial pollution, water pollution, water conservancy development, over-fishing, grazing.

**23. Conservation measures taken:**

A circular on the management of the nature reserve was promulgated by the highest local legislative authority; hunting is banned in all parts of the reserve. United conservation committees have been set up with local governments and institutions. Illegal means of fishing is prohibited. Large and permanent conservation publicity boards have been set up. The Research Society for Natural Resources, Crane Conservation Association and *Lipotes vexillifer* Conservation Association have been established. Wildlife market management system has been adopted in all vehicle and ship ports and in local free

markets. Boundaries have been defined and border poles erected. Publicity and education has been carried out and a nature reserve management plan has been formulated.

**24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

Efforts will be made to seek for support from all sources to accomplish the development of 18 protection spots, to set up environmental monitoring centre and local forestry police stations; regulations on management of eco-tourism in the reserve should be published as soon as possible and large scale industrial development activities should be prohibited.

**25. Current scientific and research facilities:**

Current research topics include: study on biodiversity in the core zone and preliminary research on the wintering habitats of White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*).

**26. Current conservation education:**

During the Bird Loving Week in April and the Crane Protection Month of October every year, the nature reserve, jointly with leaders, lecturers, and experts of the education commission, environmental protection agencies and the Youth League has organised thousands of youngsters to carry out protection publicity activities in railway and bus stations, ports, parks and local markets; every year, all the newly enrolled students of 14 middle schools in the reserve will have lectures on nature conservation and participate in summer camps organised by the nature reserve. In holidays and major local events, the reserve will provide the society with specimens, pictures and written materials.

**27. Current recreation and tourism:**

Eco-tourism activities; annual international dragon boat competition; bird watching in winter between November and next March.

**28. Jurisdiction:**

Department of Forestry, Hunan Province.

**29. Management authority:**

Management Division of Hunan East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve.

**30. Bibliographical references:**

Management Plan of East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve.