

Brief Final Report and List of Attachments.

Project history and report structure

The team presenting this Report included Chinese, Russian and Australian members and was initially formed in 2006 by an international cooperative effort involving AusAid's "Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development" program, local authorities of Eerguna District of Inner Mongolia, Daurian International Protected Area, WWF Amur/Heilong River Basin Programme and North-East Forestry University. We were brought together by common desire to bridge discrepancies in river management and biodiversity conservation in the Daurian "Global 200" ecoregion – magnificent steppe and wetland area that spans China, Mongolia and Russia. We focused on Eerguna/Argun River –source of the mighty Amur, that has tremendous global biodiversity values and ecological significance, but is virtually unknown by world conservation community.

In 2006 we started from biodiversity inventory in 120 000 ha wetland reserve lying in the bounds of Erguna City. These wetlands are under-studied and subject to several pressures from surrounding settlements. Studying pressures that this river faces we realized that it is sentenced to death by water authorities of Inner Mongolia by means of planned water transfer into Dalai Lake. The natural Dalai lake ecosystem is also likely to be severely altered and harmed by water transfer. The logic of integrated river basin management and better understanding of wider distribution and interconnection of rare birds populations made us strive to expand our activities to the full middle portion of Argun/Erguna River Basin that lies in Daurian steppe ecoregion. **In 2007** continuation of this effort was supported by BP Conservation Partnership which enabled our extended team to undertake next stage - design and implement the project: "Conservation of Threatened and Migratory Birds in the Eerguna-Midflow Transboundary Wetland in China and Russia". The Project's focus is assessment of viability and conservation status of important habitats for migratory, breeding and post-breeding bird populations in the Middle Eerguna Basin with emphasis on 5 threatened: Red-crowned Crane, White-naped Crane, Swan Goose, Great Bustard and Greater Spotted Eagle. Socio-economic conditions and current trends in water utilization were assessed through a participatory survey. Main project participants are university students -conservation volunteers from Heilongjiang Province and Hulunbeier Prefecture of Inner Mongolia and staff of Daurian International Protected Area from China and Russia. So far we conducted 6 field surveys in China (April, May, June, July, August, Septebmer 2007,) and one two surveys in Russia (June, August 2007). The project will be completed only in 2008, but this report includes majority of raw findings from 2007.

We present general report on activities undertaken during the project with emphasis on community work and two attachments, one more scientific – report on ornithology, and more descriptive report on socio-economic situation and environmental impacts on Argun River Wetlands. (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2). General maps of the area and particular important survey sections are presented in Attachment 3, since they illustrate both reports, while some specific maps on bird migration, etc are presented within the body of text.