

The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project

In 2003 the International Crane Foundation, in collaboration with the governments of China, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Russia, launched the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP). **The project focused on protecting a network of globally important wetlands in Eurasia that are of critical importance for migratory waterbirds and other wetland biodiversity.** The project uses the critically endangered Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) as a flagship species, linking activities at 16 key wetlands along the species' western and eastern flyways. This project functioned at three levels:

At the **site level**, activities aimed to **reduce external threats and ensure necessary water flows to maintain the ecological health of wetlands.** Activities included strengthening legal protection and enforcement, training nature reserve staff, involving local communities, and developing site management plans, environmental education and public awareness programmes, and projects that promote sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

At the **national level**, the SCWP supported **monitoring, training, education and public awareness programmes across sites, and applied research to inform sound management decisions,** including ongoing study of seasonal waterbird movements and wetland system dynamics. SCWP also worked to improve legislation, policy and planning to support wetland and waterbird conservation. These activities were coordinated with other national wetlands initiatives to strengthen integrated wetland management through collaboration with different organizations.

At the **international level**, the focus was on **flyway-level conservation - the network of wetland sites along the entire migratory pathways of the cranes.** To achieve this, the SCWP promoted cooperation among the four countries, enhanced interaction among sites and engaged communities in the management of the wetlands along the West/Central and East Asian flyways for migratory waterbirds. Conservation actions within these flyways were coordinated with other initiatives for migratory waterbirds and closely integrated with the Conservation Plans created through the Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding.

For further information, please see the following websites:

www.scwp.info UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project

www.sibeflyway.org Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination

www.savingcranes.org International Crane Foundation

or contact the International Crane Foundation, E11376 Shady Lane Rd, Baraboo WI, USA

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