



ANSWERING THE CALL IN CHINA



Overview

China is home to one-tenth of the world's species, including some of the most precious animals humans have grown to love and cherish, such as giant pandas, golden monkeys, red pandas and Siberian tigers. However, China's rapid economic and population growth has resulted in endangering 20 percent of mammal and 13 percent of bird species, numbers that will increase without immediate action. China's development footprint stretches worldwide and her biological riches, rivers, valleys, forests and natural landscape are paying the price.

The Chinese government has created nearly 200 million acres of protected areas. But only with the support of local people can overgrazing, fires, illegal hunting, and forest clearing be addressed and conservation efforts succeed. Rare's Pride training program in China will greatly strengthen our partners' ability to win this local support.

Rare Pride in China

Alongside the good work of conservation groups like Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy, Rare and our local partners are addressing a major environmental challenge in China – pending extinction of some of its most threatened species including the black-crested gibbon, the Asian elephant and the iconic golden monkey, China's first rank nationally protected species.

Deforestation, fires, fuelwood collection and agricultural expansion threaten critical habitat while poaching and the illegal wildlife trade threaten these endangered species. This is why China has become a top priority for Rare and our partners. Beginning in October 2008, Rare is running Pride campaigns at seven sites across China to help address this crisis.



An abundance of fuelwood collected from precious forests.

Interventions to promote responsible land use include implementing alternative energy measures, developing village regulations for sustainable land use, and periodically closing forests to all traffic for reforestation. Additionally, to reduce fuelwood collection and thereby deforestation that threatens wildlife habitats, conservation projects will focus on the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves and biogas to reduce the community's dependence on fuelwood. Raising awareness about the desertification effects of the overexploitation of *Haloxylon ammodendron* shrub is another emphasis. Farmers will be taught and provided alternate income options, such as organic production and renewable energy technologies, while also improving supervision of public management systems to support their livelihoods.

In efforts to reduce poaching of endemic and endangered Siberian tigers, alternate sources of income will be provided, such as microcredits and food production, while increasing anti-poaching enforcement and advocacy within reserve surroundings.

Progress to Date

Rare's first suite of local partners will enter the Rare Pride training program in late October 2008, at Southwest Forestry University in Kunming, Yunnan Province. The Mandarin Pride program, to be taught by our new China team, will be equip Campaign managers to assess the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of local communities, design and implement public outreach campaigns based on tested social marketing tools that aim to make conservation part of daily life. With training and technical support from Rare during the course of his/her campaign, each campaign manager will address specific environmental threats, and work with residents to target destructive attitudes and behaviors relevant to these threats. We aim to launch another 12 partnerships in 2009.

Gaoligong Nature Reserve, Yunnan: One of the New Pride Campaigns Launching in China

Extending more than 300 miles along Yunnan's border with Myanmar, the narrow, jagged Gaoligong mountain range meets with the Salween or Nu River in a dramatic 500-mile-long gorge. The mountains form a divide between two major rivers in Asia, the Nu River to the east and the Irrawaddy to the west. Remote and rugged, the Gaoligong Mountains, containing the Gaoligong Nature Reserve, are recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot and the epicenter of plant endemism in northwest Yunnan.



Gaoligong Nature Reserve



A white-eyebrowed gibbon

Because of its abundant precipitation, appropriate microclimate, and huge elevation span, the Northern Gaoligong Mountain Range project area has been identified as a Green Treasure House and the Paradise of Animals. It is roughly estimated that some 3,500 species of plant, including spermatophyte, fern, macro-fungi and medicinal plants occur in the resort of intact old-growth forest. Specifically, the Gaoligong project area is home to about 55 endangered or rare seed plants and a total of 318 plant species found nowhere else on Earth. Various ornamental plants ranging from fern to orchid make the project area a natural garden. As a transitional zone, more than 400 vertebrate species and 1,700 invertebrate species have been recorded in the Gaoligong Nature Reserve. Impressively, Gaoligong Nature Reserve protects more primate species than any other reserve north of the Tropic of Cancer. As scientists continue their exploration and surveillance of the region, it is believed they will discover an even greater number of species residing here.

The Nu River is one of the last two remaining river systems in China with its ecological integrity still intact. For this reason, there is still great urgency to protect this healthy and incredibly valuable ecosystem before it is too late.

Threats to Gaoligong Nature Reserve include unsustainable development and human use. This campaign aims to increase the standard of living in local communities, to reduce the need for agriculture in the forest. Introducing set rules for sustainable planting in forest territory and for tourism in the forest will reduce interference with wildlife that live in the reserve. Fostering awareness of the importance of the protection of white-eyebrow gibbons and the natural resources found in the reserve will be an emphasis of the campaign for both communities and tourists. In addition, the management department of the reserve will help the community establish a sustainable tourist-focused fruit business, to reduce local dependence on the forest and increase income alternatives for the local community.