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Atlas of Biodiversity and Conservation in the Yangtze River Basin

By Ouyang Zhiyun and Zhu Chunquan (Editor-in-Chief). 2011. Science Press, Beijing. 380 pages. 128.00 CNY.

The Yangtze River basin is important as the birthplace of Chinese civilization. For thousands of years, generations of Chinese people diligently work in this area, and promote the development of Chinese civilization with wisdom and sweat. The vast area is characterized by numerous lakes, fertile land, mild climate, abundant resources, long history and abundant cultures. The area is about 19% of the whole area of China. Its length, flow and basin area ranks the first in the major rivers of China. The population, GDP and grain output of this area is about $\frac{1}{3}$ or more of China's total, thus this area occupies an important position in China. Hence, the status of ecosystem health of the Yangtze River Basin directly affects the sustainable development of China's national economy.

The biodiversity of the Yangtze River Basin is historically abundant. However, for a long time, the frequent and intensive human activities and various disturbance have imposed changes on this area. In recent decades, along with the rapid population growth and economic development, as well as the construction of large-scale infrastructure, the natural resources this area was over-exploited, leading to degeneration of natural vegetation, soil erosion, river block, wetland and lake shrinkage, water pollution, habitat fragmentation, endangered species increase and other ecological and environmental problems. Thus, biodiversity resources in this area suffered from unprecedented threats. Yangtze River basin has become one of the most prominent centres of interweaved conflicts in terms of regional economic development, natural resource exploitation and biodiversity conservation in China.

To scientifically protect the biodiversity in the Yangtze River basin, WWF organized a research project on the distribution pattern of biodiversity resources and the conservation planning based on priority degrees of the different areas of the Yangtze River Basin, aiming at

promoting the rational protection and use of the regional natural resources, and providing a basis for the General Plan for the Yangtze River Ecoregion 2010-2015, while providing a reference basis for the decision-making departments. The Atlas of Biodiversity and Conservation in the Yangtze River Basin is the reflection of such integrative research project.

To keep the integrity of regional ecosystems and wildlife habitats, the book included the Qiantang Nature Reserve, Ruogai region, the northern slope of Qinling Mountains, Qiantang River basin, Hunan and Jiangxi Province into the range of the evaluation and planning. The main content of the book is Part I – a Brief Introduction to the Yangtze River Basin. The sections include the location and the administrative divisions in the Yangtze River Basin, and the topography, climate, soil types, water system, water resources, population distribution, cities, economic development, transportation systems and land use in the Yangtze River Basin. Part II covers Spatial Patterns of Biodiversity and Identification of Priority Conservation Areas. The sections included ecosystem types and their distribution in the Yangtze River Basin, such as forest, wetland, grassland, desert and agricultural ecosystems; the distribution of the major organism groups in the Yangtze River Basin, such as the key plants, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles; priority conservation areas in the Yangtze River Basin; assessments on the biodiversity conservation areas; analysis of threats to the biodiversity conservation areas; the impacts of township settlements, road, tourism, environmental pollution, exploitation of mineral resources, hydrological engineering, geological disasters, earthquake and floods. Part III defines Introduction to Priority Conservation Areas for Biodiversity in the Yangtze River Basin. Part IV breaks down Biodiversity Conservation Strategies and Recommendations for the Yangtze River Basin.

This book will become a good reference for the persons who are engaged in geography, GIS assisted geographic mapping, conservation ecology, population or ecosystem ecology and so on, or any other persons who are interested in the field of biodiversity conservation in the Yangtze River Basin of China.

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Erratum The Canadian Field-Naturalist 126(4)

In response to the review of *Contributions to the History of Herpetology*. CFN 126(3): 344-345, the book's editor Kraig Adler pointed out (personal communication to FRC 12 May 2013): "Only one small correction. Mrs. Martof used a kitchen knife, not a gun. She told the police she slipped while cutting some pizza. But Bernie was stabbed up under his rib cage several times!"

Erratum The Canadian Field-Naturalist

It has come to our attention that sections of many of the book reviews by Li Dezhi and Qin Aili were copied from sources without attribution. The journal and the authors apologize for this oversight.