



Oriental Stork - the symbol of the Amur River

The Oriental stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) is an endangered species included in the Red List of the Russian Federation, China, IUCN (En), CITES Appendix I. As the final link of the food chain, the Oriental stork is an indicator of the well-being of the Amur freshwater ecosystems.

Most of the Oriental Stork population breeds in the Amur River basin: 75% in the Russian Far East and 15% in North-East China. The remaining birds registered on recently formed breeding grounds in the mouth of Huang He (Yellow) River. The stork winters in the Yangtze River floodplain in China. For many years, their nests were ruined, and the birds were suffering from poachers, poisoning on migrating ways and wintering sites. Because of the massive use of herbicides, Oriental storks disappeared in 1970th in Japan and Korea. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain the remaining Oriental stork population in Russia and China.

Agricultural land use, forest fires and logging of large trees reduce the number of natural nesting supports. In recent years, predators are increasingly ruining the nests. It is essential to maintain the feed supply and prevent its sharp decline.

To protect and increase the Oriental Stork population, WWF-Russia focuses on the following activities:

1. Monitoring of the Oriental stork population.
2. Creating and supporting of protected areas network in breeding concentration.
3. Increasing the capacity of nesting areas by installing artificial supports for stork nests, crown reduction to improve or maintain the shape of trees suitable for nesting.
4. Conducting fire preventive measures for trees with nests to protect the existing nests: removal of dry grass around the trees and chemical treatment against fires.
5. Performing artificial aeration of small reservoirs to prevent fish mortality in the winter season and maintain a food supply for birds.
6. Fighting against illegal net fishing and poaching.
7. Raising public awareness by organizing events, holidays, workshops and competitions and holding scientific conferences.

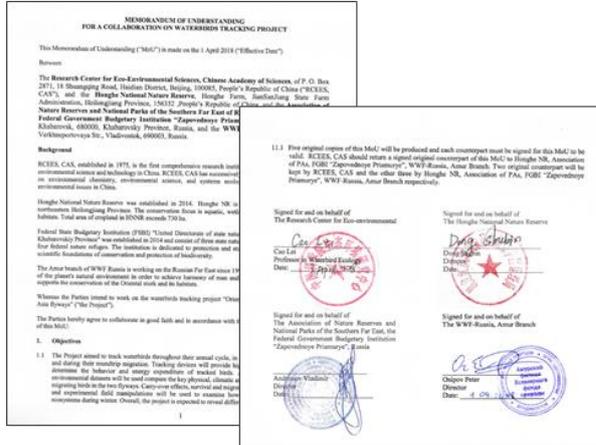
Since 2000, the protected areas network for the stork habitat was doubled, forming up to 1,7 mln hectares of wetlands and supporting 50% of all nesting pairs. The volunteers of the Oriental Stork Nest Keepers movement take care of 130 stork nests. 27 artificial supports installed. 20 baskets fixed on the trees for future nests.

According to the full-scale census conducted in 2018, the number of breeding pairs in Russia had increased by 70% compared to the year 2000 and is estimated at 720–800 pairs.

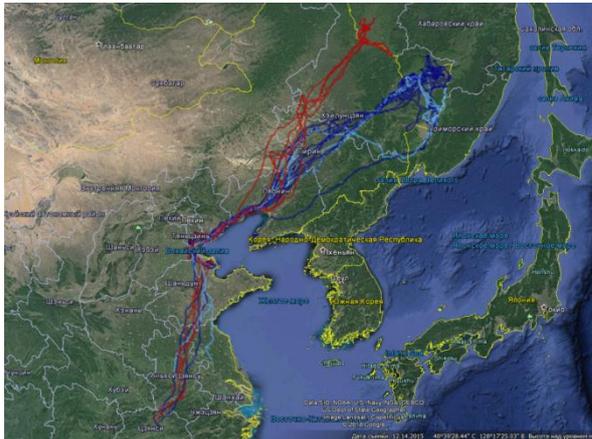
WWF partners: 6 NGOs, 2 research institutions, 5 national protected areas.

2018: Year of Oriental Stork in the Amur basin

WWF and the Amur Coalition of NGOs announced 2018 as the Oriental Stork Year. 26 state and public organizations joined the actions. Here are the key results of our work in 2018.



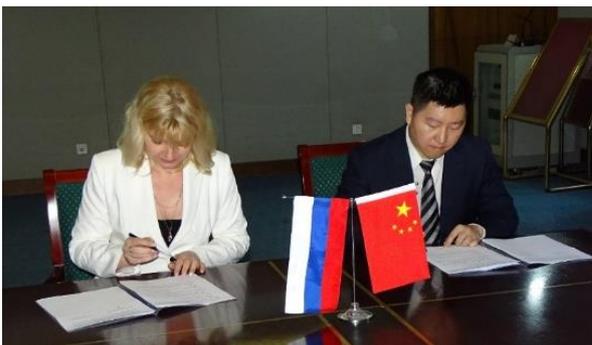
The Memorandum was signed between China (the Research Center for Ecology and Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Hinghe Reserve) and Russia (the Coordinating Board of Directors of the Southern Far East Reserves, United Directorate for the Protected Areas of Khabarovsk province and Amur Branch of WWF-Russia) about joint investigation of the Oriental Stork migration. Within the framework of the Memorandum, 42 GPS transmitters were mounted on 2-month-old chicks and tracked to their wintering ground.



A Chinese-Russian workshop was conducted to study the migration of the Oriental stork using GPS transmitters. Tagging of birds allows to analyze migration routes, determine the location of birds' stops and nesting sites and protect these locations both in Russia and China.



42 young storks were tagged with GPS transmitters.



WWF participated at the meeting of the Russian-Chinese Working Group on the implementation of the Agreement between Russian and Chinese governments to protect migratory birds and their habitats.

WWF presented the results of storks and cranes conservation in the Amur basin.



WWF financed the installation of 13 new support tools for nests in the Amur basin in Russia.



WWF partners conducted 63 raids to combat fish poaching. 13,050 meters of fishing nets destroyed. 30 protocols compiled.

Workshops on fishing rules for local fishermen conducted.

5 information signs on the rules of sustainable fishing installed.



101 trees with nests were fireproofed in the Amur basin in Russia.



WWF installed an online camera and organized the broadcast from the nest.



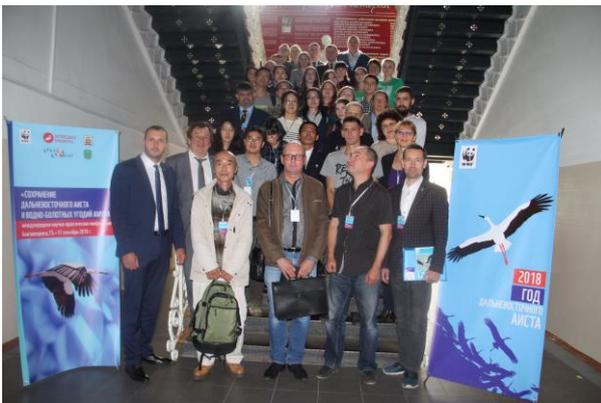
WWF purchased quadcopters for the nature reserve and NGOs working on the Oriental stork monitoring.



Database of nests of the Oriental stork prepared, GPS coordinates and other data on nests, as well as media files posted on AmurInfoCentre website hosted by WWF-Russia.



WWF and partners organized numerous activities, holidays and workshops for children and students to raise their awareness about rare waterbirds and importance of saving their habitats.



International Conference “Conservation of the Oriental Stork and the Amur Wetlands” became the final event of the Year of the Oriental Stork. Experts from Russia, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea participated in the conference.



Full-scale census of 2018 revealed that the number of breeding pairs increased by 70% compared to the year 2000 and is estimated at about 720–800 pairs.