



Title
Fifteen years ago, birdwatching was regarded as an unusual minority hobby in mainland China. Today, there are about 40 birdwatching societies with thousands of regular members all over the country, and numbers are growing rapidly.

BirdLife International was recently invited to participate in the first International Bird Fair held in Fuzhou, in Fujian Province in south-east China organised by Fujian Bird Watching Society and the Fujian Youth Environmental Protection Union. The event was a great success and was attended by an amazing 20,000 people from all walks of life.

“China has had an impressive growth in its economy over the last three decades and now we are witnessing an impressive growth in the conservation movement. Most of the birders are from the younger generations who are eager to learn more about nature and conservation. This will surely be a great support to the conservation movement of this big country and make the slogan of ‘Beautiful China’ come true”, said Simba Chan, BirdLife’s Senior Conservation Officer for Asia.

The fair was held at the Fuzhou National Forest Park, a popular birding and hiking area and one of the sites where modern ornithology took root in China. A team from BirdLife, together with BirdLife Partners RSPB (UK), Audubon Society (USA), Bird Studies Canada, the Wild Bird Society of Japan, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, Burung Indonesia and BirdLife Australia took part in historic event, with 19 birdwatching or wild bird societies from mainland China, five wild bird societies from Taiwan and several other government and civil environmental organisations based in China.

To further emphasise China’s interest in and importance for birds, a meeting on international conservation for youth took place on the same day as the festival at the Agriculture and Forestry University in Fuzhou. BirdLife Partners from the USA, Australia, Indonesia and the UK gave examples of conservation and education work from their own countries and emphasised the importance of cooperation along the flyway, something the BirdLife Partnership excels at and something that is needed to save the amazing spectacle of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the birds that use it.