

Report of the 2023 World Coastal Forum Conference, September 2023

The first global event of the newly established World Coastal Forum, was held in Yancheng City, Jiangsu Province in China between 25 and 27 September 2023, with the theme "Our Coasts: Harmony between People and Nature". Over 1,000 participants from government departments, local governments, UN-related agencies, relevant international organizations, academic institutions, business and youth representatives from 34 countries from around the world participated, mainly in person.

The Conference was jointly hosted by the People's Government of Jiangsu Province, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) of China, and the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) of China and was supported by the World Coastal Forum Coordination Group facilitated by Eco Foundation Global and BirdLife International, including representatives from government agencies, international conventions, non-government organisations and advisors.



[The World Coastal Forum Partnership Initiative](#) was launched, with 21 organizations¹ becoming partners. This initiative is intended to engage like-minded stakeholders to develop and initiate priority actions in line with the WCF's mission and the vision. The People's Government of Jiangsu Province, the MNR, and the NFGA signed a "Cooperation Framework Agreement for Hosting the World Coastal Forum" to enhance coastal ecosystem conservation and sustainable development between government agencies and local stakeholders.

¹ List of 21 partners (alphabetic order): BirdLife International; Cornell Botanical Garden; East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership; East-West Philanthropy Forum; Eco Foundation Global; Future Earth Coasts; Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana; Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI); International Crane Foundation; International Union for Conservation of Nature; Paulson Institute; Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM, West Africa); Rest-Coast (Europe); Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (United Kingdom); The Nature Conservancy; Conservation Evidence, University of Cambridge; Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science Network, University of Queensland; Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve ; Wetlands International; Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (United Kingdom); Yancheng Wetland and Natural World Heritage Conservation & Management Center (China).

The Conference released key outcomes, including the WCF [Coastal Call to Action](#) and updates on progress in development of the WCF's two flagship knowledge products, the State of the World's Coastal Ecosystems Report and the World Coastal Ecosystem Conservation Toolkit. Furthermore, the event was used to launch an English version of the "Blue Book of China's Ecological Protection Red Line (2023)" and the publication "[International Applications of Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction in Coastal Areas](#)".

During the Conference, four thematic plenaries and more than ten parallel workshops were held under themes such as addressing challenges in coastal wetland conservation and protection; promoting coastal conservation knowledge and best practices; ensuring sustainable development in coastal regions; and raising awareness and engaging coastal communities, decision-makers, business leaders and other key stakeholders in coastal ecosystem conservation. These discussions focused on developing a vision and strategies for collaborative management in coastal regions.



The Conference also provided a perfect opportunity for multiple parallel meetings including a 2023 WCF Youth Forum, Global Coastal Wetland Cities Alliance Round Table, Judicial Protection of Coastal Wetlands in China, Biodiversity-friendly friendly urban development and Coastal Low-carbon Territory Space Optimization and Sustainable Development that brought together multiple stakeholders from China and abroad.

Our local host [Yancheng City](#) invited research topics for international cooperation projects and demonstration actions to promote international cooperation and exchanges on coastal wetland conservation and address the practical challenges and urgent needs of coastal wetland conservation and management.



The World Coastal Forum International Advisory Meeting held on 26 September 2023 to promote international cooperation and collaboration to address the challenges facing coastal ecosystems, emphasized the importance of science and evidence-based action in coastal resource management.

Additionally, special exhibitions were organized during the Conference, including the Yellow Sea Wetland Museum, bird-watching equipment exhibits, and cultural and creative displays, as well as awards for nature notes and paintings to future coastal leaders, all aimed at raising public awareness of ecological conservation.

The Conference participants expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the work of the hosts and organisers. They recognised this opportunity to further explore and lead the way for coastal ecosystem protection, sustainable management and restoration, also as a contribution to the harmonious coexistence of people and nature in coastal regions around the world.

The detailed Conference programme can be [downloaded here](#).