

# Plateau Perspectives Newsletter

## June 2008

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China has seen many tumultuous events already in 2008 with huge snowfalls, earthquakes, flooding, etc. At the same time the Chinese people are looking to the future with high hopes, with the Olympic Games in Beijing just around the corner. In this context it is both a privilege and a challenge to participate and to jointly envisage the future with our national hosts and local communities in the Tibetan plateau region.

### Agreement signed with national nature reserve

A *long-term project agreement* was signed with the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve in January 2008, aiming to develop a more people-oriented model of conservation in the Tibetan plateau region. Project goals include:

- Development of a network of local wardens for the nature reserve
- Development of protocols for wardens to monitor wildlife populations
- Development of a scientific research program for endangered wildlife
- Development of solutions to help reduce human-wildlife conflict

**Important notice!** For those who would like to help people affected by the *Sichuan Earthquake*, please consider supporting *Alpha Communities*, see <http://www.alphacommunities.org>. [This work is independent of Plateau Perspectives].

### Renewal of office registration in Xining, China

The registration of Plateau Perspectives' *Representative Office* in Xining was approved and renewed for another year. This office greatly facilitates all our work in the region. It also opens the door for us to examine a variety of new avenues for the promotion of sustainable development and conservation through more business-oriented ventures.



### Cuochi village clinic



After three weeks of classroom and bedside teaching for the two doctors from Cuochi village in 2007, and following discussion with the doctors and local village leaders, we provided medical equipment, furniture and yak dung stoves for the Cuochi village clinic. This community has organized itself so well over the past 10 years that it also has a school. In addition, several local herders serve as wardens (or park rangers) for the nature reserve.

### Survey of breeding colonies with CAS

A fellow scientist from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) recently asked for our assistance in finding and documenting new breeding colonies of wetland birds in the source area of the Yellow River. This has in fact been a welcome change for us to work as guests and participants instead of our more usual role as project or trip leader. There is still so much to learn about this province and the Tibetan plateau region as a whole.



## Mongolia study tour planned

We are making preparations for a study tour to Mongolia in September 2008 with national colleagues from the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve and elsewhere. Our main goal is to learn from the experience of other projects focused on biodiversity conservation, grassland management and protected area management. We will spend most time in the western and southern provinces, including field visits with UNDP and Snow Leopard Entreprises.

## Conferences attended

Marc Foggin gave a seminar entitled "Environment and Indigenous Peoples: The experience of Plateau Perspectives in partnership with Tibetan herders" in Oslo, Norway, on 26 February 2008.

Gongbo Tashi attended the international conference *Range-wide Conservation Planning for Snow Leopards* in Beijing from 7-11 March 2008, which was organized and sponsored by the Panthera Foundation and other organizations.

Peter Foggin presented a keynote paper at the *Canada-China Forum for Western Development and Socio-Economic Change*, held in Beijing on 27-28 March 2008, organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Gongbo Tashi also participated in a study tour to the United States in April 2008, hosted by the University of Virginia, to learn more about the potential of "geotourism" for creating new economic opportunities for local communities.



## Tribute to Jane Margaret Torrance 1958 – 2008

Mrs Jane Torrance was central in establishing and running the work of Plateau Perspectives Scotland. Earlier this year, aged 49 years, she died peacefully, at home, on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was surrounded by her loving family, the adored wife of Alan and beloved mother of Andrew, Peter, Robert and David. She is greatly missed by us all.

Now "Risen with Christ."

## Field staff, January - June 2008

**Marc Foggin**, conservation biologist, Executive Director

**Gongbo Tashi**, environmental management, Projects Manager

**Andy Buchanan**, community development, Assistant Manager

**Marion Foggin**, consultant paediatrician, Medical Director

**Fiona Worthy**, biologist (presently studying Chinese)

**Jigme Rabden**, translator and field office manager

**Xu Haiying**, office assistant

## Upcoming activities...

Through the summer and autumn, in the context of our project agreement with the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve, we will continue to research and test equipment designed to keep Tibetan brown bear from breaking into homes and to keep grey wolf and snow leopard from killing livestock at night.



Photo by Milan Trykar. Courtesy of Snow Leopard Trust.

We also will bring further training to local community wardens (rangers), particularly for the conservation of snow leopard in their high and rugged mountainous habitat. The snow leopard serves not only as a 'target' of our conservation efforts, but even more importantly it symbolizes all of the wilderness and great biodiversity in the region and thus can serve as a valuable tool both for 'marketing' conservation

and to promote a more people-centred approach to sustainable development in the remote Tibetan plateau environment. Learn more about the snow leopard at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/06/snow-leopards/chadwick-text>.

