

## **Endangered bird-trafficking ring busted in C China**

Police in central China's Hunan Province have busted a ring involved in hunting, killing and trafficking endangered birds, the provincial forestry public security department announced on Saturday.

Ten people from the ring have been caught, and the other six remain at large, forestry police in Xiangyin county in Yueyang city said.

At the end of last year, local police discovered some people had been hunting, killing and selling endangered wild birds, especially cygnets, in the county's Hengling Lake area, a natural wetland at the south end of Dongting Lake.

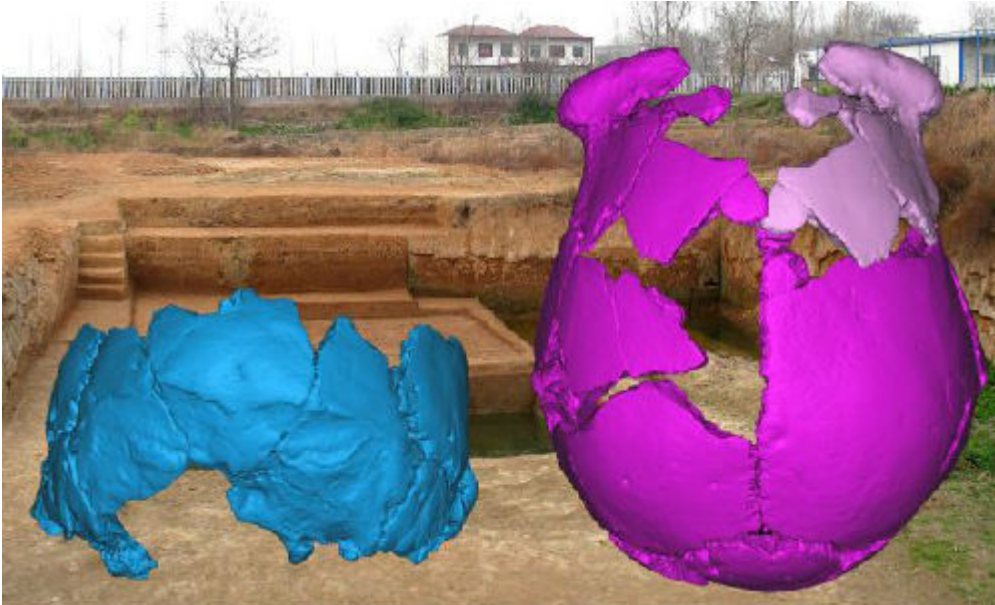
An investigation showed that the ring has hunted red-crowned cranes, cygnets, and wild ducks, police said.

According to Wu Xiaogang with the provincial forestry public security department, the ring hunted more than 10 cygnets and sold them for 500 yuan (72.5 U.S. dollars) to 600 yuan each, or 1,000 yuan to 1,200 yuan for live ones.

Police are tracking down the six suspects at large, and the case is under investigation.

---

## **Remains show N. China humans didn't originate in Africa**



The 3D images of the restoration of the two Xuchang Man skulls [Photo: Xinhua]

Latest evidence suggests prehistoric hominids in northern China might have been hybrids of the indigenous population and Europeans, challenging the popular view of humankind's African origin.

According to a report published in "Science" magazine on Thursday, human cranial fossil remains dating back to 105,000 – 125,000 years ago found in Xuchang, central China's Henan Province bear characteristics of Chinese hominids, early modern humans and the Neanderthals of Europe who thrived between 30,000 and 130,000 years ago.

The two skulls of Xuchang Man were discovered in 2007 and 2014 respectively by an archaeological team led by Li Zhanyang, first author of the report and a researcher with Henan provincial institute of cultural heritage and archaeology.

Li said the skulls show a similar occipital bone and inner ear labyrinth structure to Neanderthals, and share features of Peking Man (living in Beijing about 200,000 and 700,000 years ago) in a low neurocranial vault, flat neurocranium and short mastoid with inward slopes.

The Xuchang humans lived between Peking Man and early modern humans in north China (about 40,000 years ago), which Li said proves the continuity of human evolution in north China.

Li said Xuchang Man was very likely a direct ancestor of modern northern Chinese, which challenges the hypothesis that northern Chinese were originated from Africans. Geologically Xuchang is located in north China.

In anthropogeny, the study of human origins, African origin is the current general consensus, yet a competing "multiregional view" is also held by many scientists.

It is the first time fossils bearing characteristics of the Neanderthals have

been found in East Asia. And it will influence research on the origin of modern humans, said Erik Trinkaus, co-author of the report and a professor with Washington University in St. Louis.

After using CT scanning and 3D technology to make comparisons with other human fossils found in other parts of the world, Li said Xuchang Man is a new species. However, a DNA analysis has yet to be carried out.

Li presumes that the Chinese hominids migrated to warmer European regions during an ice age and crossbred with the local Neanderthals. During the last interglacial stage (74,000 to 128,000 years ago) when the climate got warmer, the ancestors of Xuchang Man came back to north China. The migration might have happened several times due to climate change.

---

## [Chinese leaders join political advisory discussions](#)

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and other senior leaders on Saturday joined political advisors in their panel discussions concerning the nation's economic and social development.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang goes to join political advisors in their panel discussions on Saturday. [Photo by China.org.cn]

Meeting with advisors from economic and agricultural sectors during the the ongoing session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the premier highlighted the main theme of "seeking progress while maintaining stability" in economic work.

He stressed the need to keep the continuity and stability of the macro-policy with the supply-side structural reform as the focus.

Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, China witnessed a good start for its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), said Li.

Despite economic woes at home and abroad, stabilization and improvement were seen in both social and economic areas, he said, citing progress in employment, structural adjustment, new growth impetus and improvement in people's livelihood.

Li pledged to consolidate the trend of economic stabilization and improvement by comprehensively deepening reform.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, joined in a panel discussion of political advisors from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

Zhang said Hong Kong and Macao maintained overall stability over the past year, witnessing new and positive development.

Zhang said the central government attaches great importance to elections to be held this year respectively in Hong Kong and Macao, which concern the regions' prosperity and stability.

Zhang hoped the election in Hong Kong will be held orderly and in accordance with the law.

A chief executive who loves the motherland and Hong Kong, who is trusted by the central government and supported by Hong Kong people, and who is able to govern Hong Kong effectively, should be elected, Zhang said.

Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, joined political advisors from the circles of social sciences as well as press and publication in a panel discussion.

Yu called for promoting the development of philosophy and social sciences, and media and publicity work, in order to fuel China's drive to build a well-off society and realize its great national rejuvenation with "huge positive energy."

In the process, Yu said, Xi's instructions and new ideas, thoughts and strategies on state governance should be implemented.

He also stressed upholding the correct political direction, guidance of public opinion and values, and continuing efforts to boost the development of socialist core values.

Liu Yunshan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, joined political advisors from the literary and art circles in a panel discussion.

Liu said confidence in the country's culture is an important issue concerning the independence of ethos, and a significant pillar of confidence in the country's path, theory and system.

Liu attributed cultural confidence to the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core, the highly effective political system, as well as shared ideals and aspirations that unite all Chinese.

The CPC Central Committee with Xi as the core has opened a new era for state governance, Wang Qishan, head of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, said at a panel discussion of political advisors from the Communist Youth League of China, the All-China Youth Federation, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the All-China Women's Federation.

The CPC's leadership is the essence of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Wang said.

Wang added that organizations under the CPC's leadership should unite people around the CPC and consolidate the political basis for the Party's governance.

Meeting with advisors from the China Zhi Gong Party, the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and the group for friendship with foreign countries, Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli called for joint efforts from Chinese people both at home and abroad for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Zhang asked the CPPCC members to step up friendly exchanges with foreign countries.

He asked them to help explain China's stories and solutions, and introduce to the world the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative to contribute to the shared future for mankind.

---

## **China clears 1,845 cases of suspects in long custody without trial**

China has cleared and settled 1,845 cases involving 4,459 suspects, who were placed in custody for more than three years without being charged, said sources with the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Saturday.

The number represents all the cases unveiled in a nationwide rectification

campaign on prolonged custody in 2013, said Yuan Qiguo, a senior SPP prosecutor during an online interview.

Among the suspects, 3,451 had been placed in custody for less than five years, 926 for five to eight years, and 82 for eight years or above.

“Prolonged custody without trial not only infringes upon the suspect and the defendant’s litigation rights, but also tarnishes the judicial organ’s image and credibility and impairs social harmony and stability,” Yuan said.

Amid enhanced supervision over the duration of criminal custody in recent years, the number of suspects, placed in custody for more than three years without being charged, had notably decreased, reducing from 4,459 in 2013 to six by 2015, the SPP figures show.

The prosecutor said China’s procuratorates will continue to make efforts to prevent and settle new cases involving prolonged detention of suspects in order to safeguard the rights of the suspects and the defendants.

---

## [Environmental court opens in NW China province](#)

A special court for environmental cases has been established in northwest China’s Qinghai Province to provide legal service for environmental protection work in the Sanjiangyuan area.

The Sanjiangyuan environmental court, affiliated with the Yushu City People’s Court, was approved by the Higher People’s Court in Qinghai Province and was established on Tuesday, according to the government of the Tibetan prefecture of Yushu.

The court hired six people to handle environmental protection cases and civil suites related to pollution prevention and environmental damage in the area.

Sanjiangyuan literally means “the source of three rivers,” referring to the Yangtze, Yellow, and Lancang (Mekong) rivers. The ecology in the area has degraded due to human activities such as overgrazing.

The environmental court is the first such specialized judiciary organ in the province, said Man Zhifang, vice president of the Higher People’s Court in Qinghai Province.

Planning began on a national park in the area last year, aiming to protect the headwaters of the three rivers. It is expected to officially open in 2020. Endi