

China's Yangtze River fishing ban sees positive progress

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A 10-year fishing ban in the key waters of China's Yangtze River basin has achieved solid progress in ecological conservation, with aquatic bioresources gradually recovering, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

The Yangtze finless porpoises, an endangered species known as the "giant panda of the water," has been more frequently spotted in the Poyang Lake, the Dongting Lake, and the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River.

In the Jianli section of the Yangtze River, the number of fish roe produced by the four major Chinese carps, namely black carp, grass carp, silver carp and bighead carp, during the breeding season surged from less than 100 million to 7.87 billion, said the ministry.

In 2022, a total of 18,525 cases of illegal fishing along the Yangtze River were investigated by local agricultural departments, and 3,462 suspects were transferred to the judiciary, Tang Renjian, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, told in a press conference.

Next, local authorities will continue to implement policies to provide resettlement opportunities and other support for people previously engaged in the fishing business. They will also strengthen the targeted monitoring of those at risk of falling back into poverty, and provide them with timely assistance, Tang said.

Efforts will also be made to develop aquaculture, tourism and other industries along the Yangtze River, utilising policy support and technical training if conditions permit, according to the minister.

To restore the biodiversity along the river, China implemented a full fishing ban in 332 conservation areas of the Yangtze River basin in January 2020. The move has since been expanded to a 10-year moratorium along the river's main streams and major tributaries, effective Jan. 1, 2021.