# Sichuan, China: Building Six Giant Panda Corridors to Restore Their Habitats.

The climate change and human activities in recent years have further aggravated the fragmentation of wild giant panda habitats. In the whole distribution area of giant pandas, the habitats of higher altitude and residential areas in the valley of lower altitude are intertwined. Together with various influences from i.e. transportation, industries and mining facilities and water conservancy facilities, giant panda habitats are thus divided into many "isolated islands". The wild giant pandas in China are divided into 33 isolated populations according to statistics.

Combined with social conditions, natural conditions, threats to giant pandas and other factors, the *Sichuan Giant Panda Corridor Construction Plan* was formulated and promulgated in December 2016, identifying 13 giant panda corridors where they connect these "isolated islands" to restore the "shattered" homes for wild giant pandas and provide better conditions for the survival of them.

For instance, there are nearly 10 protected areas related to giant pandas around this approximately 30km long Huangtuliang Corridor at an average altitude of over 3,000m. With the Huangtuliang Tunnel open to traffic in May 2017, the vehicles to and from Jiuzhaigou do not need to bypass the top of the mountain anymore, leaving a precious life corridor for the giant panda migration in the north of Mountain Min.

Meanwhile, some major projects in the vicinity of the Panda Corridor have also taken evasive measures. "The Chengdu-Lanzhou Railway crosses Mountain Min so that we have made other plans to avoid the habitat of giant pandas. Thus, many tunnels such as Yuelongmen Tunnel have made turns here, which have increased the construction load by 20%." Relevant staff said that there are acoustic and visual barriers to minimize the disturbance to animals at the exit of the Yuelongmen Tunnel, which is adjacent to Jiudingshan Area of Giant Panda National Park.

The favorite food of giant pandas is bamboo, and it takes 2 kg of cattle and sheep dung to plant a set of arrow bamboo. The local government in the Huangtuliang Corridor have specially purchased more than 2,200 tons of cattle and sheep dung from other places and hired local villagers to plant 300,000 arrow bamboo plants.

Thanks to the promotion of protection projects, the restoration of vegetation in corridors and the implementation of other protection measures over the years, the functions of corridors have been improved increasingly. In recent years, the activities of wild giant pandas in the Huangtuliang area have become frequenter, and their activity duration in some areas is on a substantial increase, whereby other species protected by giant pandas have also appeared.

It is reported that Sichuan Province has invested 374 million RMB in the construction of six giant panda corridors and completed 68 square kilometers of vegetation restoration in the corridor area in recent years. The fragmentation of giant panda habitat has been improved to a certain extent, which has created favorable conditions for the communication of small populations of giant pandas and avoidance of the risk of extinction and also provided a channel for the communication of populations for wild animals and plants in the same region, which is of great significance to the protection of species diversity in the region.

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