



WAN YUJIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Xiamen locals celebrate the rising sun on the beach. The coastal city will host the upcoming Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation framework.

Ocean enlivens vibrant Xiamen

Marine economy and ecology add GDP and quality of life

By YANG FEIYUE
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The coastal city of Xiamen in Fujian province is integrating its marine ecology into the full range of its economic, political, cultural and social development, said local officials.

The 390 sq km city has about 234 km of coastline and 17 uninhabited islands as well as nearly 2,000 marine species including the Chinese White Dolphin and the lancelet, both rare species, said Kang Tao, deputy mayor of Xiamen.

The city made remarkable progress after it was named a national special economic zone by the State Council in 1980 and also made long strides in marine management.

It has cooperated with the environmental organization Partnerships in the Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia — or PEMSEA — since 1994 and has established comprehensive marine management, Kang said.

World Ocean Week organized by the city government, the State Oceanic Administration, the United Nations Development Program and PEMSEA has been held annually in Xiamen since 2005 for coastal cities around the world to share their experience in marine management, he said.

"The Xiamen government holds a series of events such as Environment Day and the national Ocean Publicity Day to popularize marine knowledge among the public and encourage them to protect rare marine animals," he said.

The city has improved sea areas through de-silting, seal walls, management of mangrove forests and beach restoration since the turn of the century to maintain a healthy marine ecology system.

Ten sewage facilities have been built that can treat 833,400 tons of wastewater a day, said Kang.

The de-silting work over 51 sq km of sea helps improve the city's hydrodynamic conditions and scenery.

"We plan to restore one to two uninhabited islands every year, have five beach islands covered with mangrove forests totaling 44.8 hectares, and increase marine life," he said.

Kang stressed that Xiamen will continue to push ahead with development of the emerging marine industry.

Added value created by the city's marine economy rose from 9.46 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) in 2003 to 28.4 billion in 2011, accounting for 11.2 percent of local GDP, according to government statistics.

The local government will strive to realize an annual growth rate of 15 percent in added value in the marine economy, which is projected to reach 51 billion yuan in 2015 and 102 billion yuan in 2020, according to the city's plan.

The city's port cargo throughput reached 156 million tons in 6.47 million standard containers in 2011. Marine transportation generated 2.92 billion yuan in revenues, up 12.4 percent from the year previous.

"The Xiamen government will extend marine industry chain and



The city's well-preserved ecology draws wild birds to its wetlands.

ZHENG BAOZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

build a coastal industrial zone featuring petrochemicals, yacht manufacturing and maintenance businesses," Kang said.

Support will also go to coastal tourism development, according to Kang. It generated 1.8 billion yuan in revenue last year, up 18.1 percent.

"Xiamen is on a sustainable development path featuring marine resource utilization and ecological construction," the deputy mayor said. "We have managed to maintain the overall balance of the marine environment in Xiamen."

Xiamen was twice named a national advanced city for integrated marine management by the State Oceanic Administration. It won awards from the PEMSEA in 2006

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and 2009 for its coastal zone management and sustainable development.

Xiamen's urban area expanded from 14 sq km to 230 sq km in 2011

as the local population grew from 930,000 to 3.53 million.

Local GDP maintained an average growth rate of 17.1 percent to surpass 301.8 billion yuan last year.

Integrating land and sea development

By YANG FEIYUE
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The Xiamen city government will integrate and coordinate land and sea development to fully tap its coastal natural resources, local officials said.

As a modern international port city and one of China's special economic zones, Xiamen enjoys natural beauty, quality development and social harmony, they said.

The city has maintained about 18 percent annual economic growth over the past 30 years, yet has retained an appealing ecological environment. It has been named an international garden city and won a string of other honors including the UN Habitat Award.

The city government started to focus on ecological conservation and sustainable development at the beginning of the century.

Anticipating President Xi Jinping's call to take full advantage of Xiamen's natural resources and build it into an ecological city, the local government

stepped up ecological efforts in 2002.

The city's development model was recognized by Seeking Truth magazine, a Chinese government publication, on the 87th anniversary of the Party's establishment.

Over the past 20 years, the Xiamen government has continued to improve laws covering the marine environment and local nature preserves, as well as water resources and uninhabited island management.

The government has also introduced a range of ecological elements in urban planning.

"Ecological resources are the most valuable of all in Fujian, and the provincial government has put in great effort to build competitive industries based on them," said a government official.

The local government gives a priority to public well-being and strengthened environment and public facility construction.

Since 2004, the city government has earmarked funds to improve the environment upstream on the

Jiulong River, the second biggest river in Fujian. It has also contributed 160 million yuan (\$26 million) annually to Fujian's environment improvement since 2011, including 80 million yuan for water environment treatment of major rivers.

Other initiatives by local authorities include investment of 1.5 billion yuan to build a 6.76 sq km park in the Xinglinwan area and a 35 km sewage pipeline that can collect 76,900 tons of wastewater daily.

The effort has significantly improved water quality in Xinglinwan, turning it into a waterfront district with harmonious environmental and economic development.

A 12.56 sq km wetland park was also built at the Wuyuanwan area with more than 1 billion yuan spent on wastewater collection, landscaping and de-silting.

In addition, the Xiamen government spent nearly 700 million on treatment of Yundang, Haicang and Tiandi lakes.

In 2011, the government put in



Haicang Bridge is one of the city's landmark structures.

LI LUANHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

extra 560 million yuan to improve Yundang Lake's surrounding shoreline and scenery.

Local authorities have also poured more than 750 million yuan into comprehensive treatment of adjacent sea, removing 85,000 breeding nets and cages, developing 75.3 sq km of mudflats for aquaculture, clearing

out 220 million cubic meters of silt and restoring 1.5 sq km of wetland parks.

They have also started protection work on rare sea life to ensure biological diversity.

Xiamen has been named a national advanced city in comprehensive sea management for seven consecutive

years and the city's experience has been promoted by the International Maritime Organization.

The city has won awards for outstanding management from the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Program, and the International Maritime Organization.

Protecting, restoring beaches and islands

By FU CHAO
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The Oceans and Fisheries Bureau of Xiamen has made a series of reforms to better manage marine resources and facilities.

The coastal city in southeastern China is famed for its ocean, beaches, islands and a booming economy.

The bureau has released a comprehensive plan to rehabilitate the city's bays, seashore and islands with a focus on preservation. By 2016, the city is expected to gain the status of a national oceanic demonstration area.

Wuyuan Bay used to be a cluster of fish farms with serious sanitation problems. Since 2002, the city government has invested some 230 million yuan (\$37.4 million) restoring a total area of more than 70 sq km.

Today, the bay has become a popular tourism spot with beautiful ocean and residential area with better infrastructure.

Seven other bays are also undergoing restoration.

As a recreational center, Xiamen's seashore is an important part of everyday local life. The city government has put an emphasis on protecting and renewing this natural charm. Starting from protecting rocks and sand on the beach, it then planted trees mangrove forest.

The city now has about half a square kilometer of mangrove forest with the long-term goal to reach 1.3 sq km.

Baicheng near Xiamen University is a renowned beach in the area. In the future it will be home to a 24.87 sq km State-level ocean park that will feature scenery, beaches, islands and entertainment facilities.

Almost three-quarters of the islands in Xiamen — some 17 — are uninhabited. With plans underway to develop the islands, protection is the priority, according to the Oceans and Fisheries Bureau. The height of buildings, waste treatment solutions and other aspects of development will be strictly regulated.

According to the bureau, the ocean in the west of the city has been affected by land pollution. The government will renew the area's pipes and gutters to tightly control what flows into the ocean. It will also step up efforts in ocean sanitation by expanding the area covered.

With facilities and the environment improving, the city has a better backdrop for its colorful oceanic events like a regattas, sailing competitions and beachside cultural festivals, local officials said.

The bureau is also working on building a marine museum and a marine culture plaza.

Xiamen Ocean Week, an annual event showcasing the city's latest developments in the marine industry, has attracted attention from around the world. This year, the event will focus on the marine economy to seal more deals for the charming coastal city.