

Wildlife News

[Massive reforms to China's forestry industry put in motion](#)

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The Chinese authorities have put in motion major reforms to the forestry sector which will include a ban on logging of natural forests in important areas and ordering state forestry plantations to cut back harvesting by 20% each year.

In addition the authorities have announced a major reforestation programme that will see 6.6 million hectares planted with trees – a size equivalent to double the area of Belgium. The reforms are set to be completed over the next 5 years.

Many of China's state owned forestry companies are struggling because of over-exploitation over the last 30 years. In an effort to protect jobs the government has announced grants to allow the businesses to look for alternative sources of income.

Some of the forestry business will be looking at operating as nature reserves and eco-tourism while other business are expected to look for alternative and more sustainable income streams.



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Some forestry zones will be closed completely to commercial logging. The Greater Hinggan Mountain forest zone in Inner Mongolia, is due to close at the end of the month after 60 years of logging because of a lack of suitable trees. The local party chief was reported as saying the business will be looking at boosting their mushroom cultivation business and looking for other eco-tourism based work.

With 10,000 people employing in logging in the zone finding alternative work is essential for the region and local community.

Shortly after the formal statement on the reforms it was announced that the European Investment Bank (EIB) would be providing over £25 million loan to Liaoning province to help pay towards a reforestation programme. The money will be used to replant 23,000 hectares of forests.

It is the first tranche of loan to China that will go to 8 different provinces that have been approved by the EIB for reforestation loans.

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