

What China's Worst Drought on Record Looks Like

By [BBC](#)

Global Research, August 27, 2022

[BBC News](#) 24 August 2022

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Environment](#), [Global Economy](#)

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A month-long heatwave and record low rainfall have resulted in an unprecedented drought along the Yangtze, China’s longest river.

Lakes and tributaries have receded as a result of the drought, exposing riverbeds and even a 600-year-old Buddhist stone carving and rocks below the famous Guanyin Pavilion, in Wuhan, Hubei province.

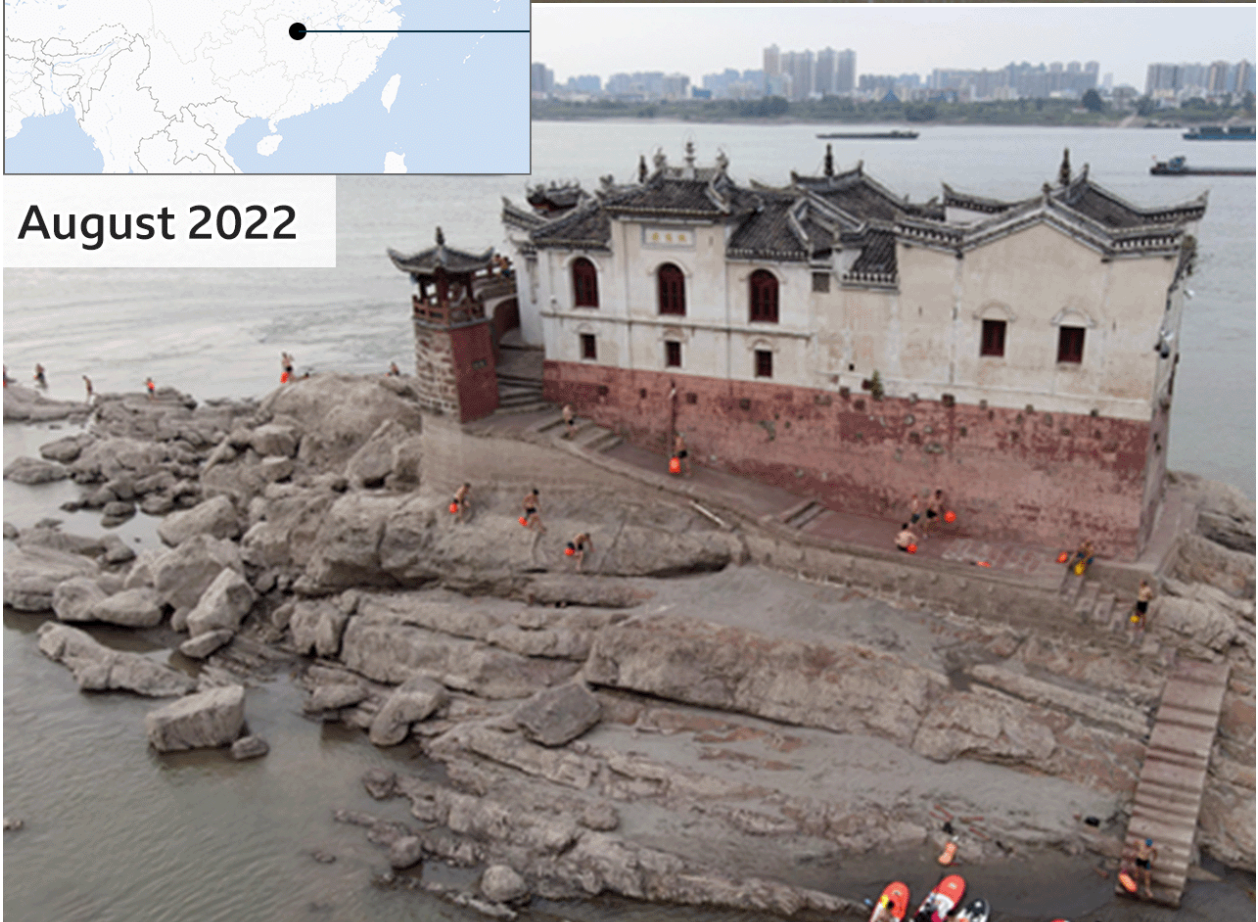
Hubei's Guanyin Pavilion in flood and drought



July 2017



August 2022



Source: Getty Images

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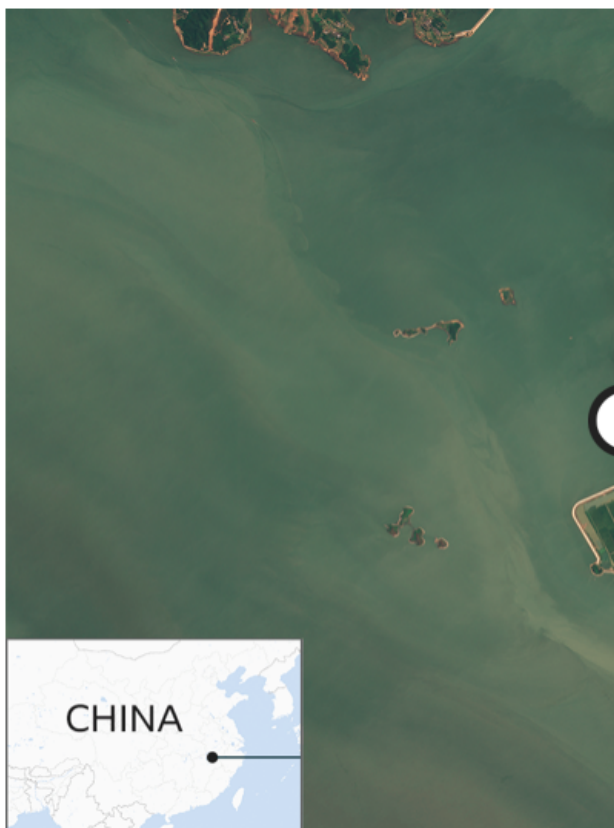
Low river levels have reduced the ability of hydro-electric power stations in the area to generate energy.

Emergency measures imposed to save electricity include factories closing, shops reducing opening hours and office buildings switching off air conditioning – all in response to the double-whammy of high demand for electricity and low production.

In big cities sited along the river, Shanghai is switching off its famous waterfront lights and the city of Luzhou is turning off street lights at night, in an attempt to ease pressure on the power grid.

Poyang Lake dries out around farming areas

August 2021



August 2022



Source: Planet Labs



Summer rainfall in the Yangtze river basin is the lowest since records began in 1961, according to China's Ministry of Water Resources.

Similarly, sustained regional heatwaves have also broken all established records, according to China's National Climate Centre.

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