

Project Update: January 2007

Systematic conservation planning seeks to identify priority areas for conserving biodiversity in the face of limited resources and global change. Effective conservation planning requires that all ecosystems in the planning region be well represented in the plan to ensure biodiversity persistence. For a long time freshwater ecosystems have been neglected in conservation planning as it was assumed that protecting terrestrial biodiversity alone will adequately protect freshwater ecosystems. However, many studies have recently showed that freshwater systems that are found inside terrestrial protected areas are often highly imperilled as these terrestrial areas do not offer adequate protect.

So far the core project activities that have been accomplished since I received funding from the Rufford include the following: -

- A framework for integrating the assessment of freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity has been developed and tested.
- Collation of geo-referenced data for the conservation plan is in the process
- To ensure maximum representation of wetlands in the freshwater conservation plan, a classification exercise has been undertaken to group them according to their functional units
- Field verification of the wetlands map is on-going, and expected to be completed in the next two months.

