

Case Study - Okavango Delta

The Okavango Freshwater Biodiversity Experts meeting

The Okavango Freshwater Biodiversity Experts meeting took place from 24 to 27 October 2007 in Maun, Botswana. The event was hosted by the **Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre (HOORC)** as a shared activity of the Centre and its three freshwater biodiversity projects: the Biokavango project, the **University College London, Darwin initiative** project in the delta, and the **IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Information case study**. HOORC is implementing this IUCN case study on the Okavango Delta for the EU-funded project, Integration of freshwater biodiversity in the development process throughout Africa: mobilising information and site demonstrations on behalf of the IUCN Species Programme.

The meeting objectives were to:

1. Establish data availability for species in a few key taxonomic groups – fish, molluscs, crabs, odonates, and some aquatic plants.
2. Focus on knowledge gaps for those species which have potential value in monitoring the Delta's water quality over a long - term horizon, especially at proposed sites for the government's long-term water quality monitoring programme.
3. Provide recommendations on baseline field surveys necessary for the eventual development of indices of biological integrity.
4. Input to the development of a long - term bio - monitoring and indicators which will build local capacity for adaptive management of the Okavango Delta.

Presentations which took place at the meeting are available to download below, grouped thematically. The full report of the meeting including meeting outcomes, an annotated programme and measures for following-up on recommendations will follow in early 2008.

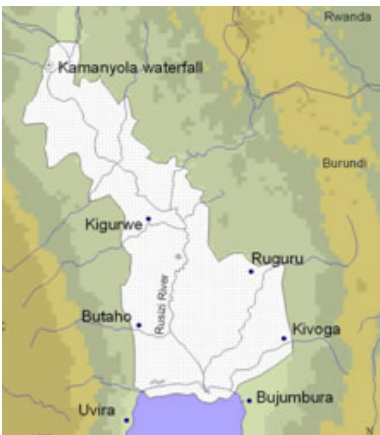
Case Study - Rusizi Delta

The Rusizi Delta case study will demonstrate the process for applying biodiversity information in the development of a transboundary environmental management plan in an inland delta and river system subject to the impacts of heavy agricultural use and shared by three neighbouring countries.

The Rusizi is a permanent tropical inland delta on the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika, renowned for its high biodiversity. The drainage to the delta encompasses areas of Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. Burundi has designated its portion of the delta and adjacent littoral zone of Lake Tanganyika as a Ramsar Site (wetland of international importance).

The Issue

The Rusizi floodplain and delta supports the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Burundian and Congolese people who cultivate, fish, graze cattle and harvest wetland products. Conflicts have erupted over natural resource use and current resource use patterns do not seem sustainable. Invasive species also threaten the ecosystem and the livelihoods dependent upon it.



The Rusizi transboundary management area

Activities Completed:

A workshop "Popularisation of status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity in Eastern Africa and identification of biodiversity information requirements for Rusizi Region" was held to familiarise local scientists and natural resource managers with the type of biodiversity data collated through the project. Discussions were held to see how the broad scale data might be refined for input to planning for transboundary management of the Delta's natural resources. The workshop was held from 15th –18th February in Bujumbura, Burundi and was well attended by local scientists and Natural Resource (NR) managers from both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.