

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Navadarsan Public Charitable Trust, Kochi, India
<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation of critical freshwater fish habitats in the Western Ghats
<b>Date of Report:</b>	05.12.2013
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Rajeev Raghavan and K. Krishnakumar, Navadarsan Public Charitable Trust, Kochi, India and Conservation Research Group, St. Albert's College, Kochi, India

**CEPF Region:** Western Ghats India & Sri Lanka Biodiversity hotspot, Western Ghats Region

**Strategic Direction: Strategic Direction 2:** Improve the conservation of globally threatened species through systematic conservation planning and action & **Investment Priority 2.2.** Support efforts to conserve CR and EN species through the creation and implementation of species recovery and management plans with a special focus on development and implementation of conservation management plans for Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Sites

**Grant Amount:** 36,000 USD

**Project Dates:** January 2012 - July 2013

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

**The Indian Alliance for Zero Extinction (InAZE) through the Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO), Coimbatore** helped in overall coordination of the project, and specifically supported in the development of education and outreach materials, and inputs on standardized AZE protocols.

**Conservation Research Group (CRG), at St. Albert's College, Kochi** provided all scientific and technical support including staff, office space and other facilities for the implementation of the project.

**The Kerala State Forest and Wildlife Department through the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady,** provided official support, logistic and helped in the implementation of several site-specific AZE programs.

**Department of Zoology at St. John's College, Anchal** provided consultancy for mapping and systematic conservation planning.

## Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

The project helped to improve the conservation (species and habitat) of six globally threatened and endemic species through reducing threats, and, developing and implementing on-ground action plans. In addition, the project also set up a foundation for freshwater fish conservation in the Periyar Tiger Reserve by creating awareness and empowering relevant stakeholders. As a result of these interventions, the first freshwater 'Alliance for Zero Extinction' site is to be set up shortly in the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.***

### **Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

1) Utility of the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) approach for prioritizing site-based conservation actions demonstrated through the successful design and implementation of conservation action plans for two AZE sites in Kerala region of the Western Ghats; 2) Conservation management plans for globally threatened and poorly known taxa in the Western Ghats implemented through the application of species-specific action plans

### **Actual Progress towards Long-term Impacts at Completion:**

Several on-ground conservation action plans were designed and successfully implemented at one of the two sites, and for six of the eight species, that were the focus of the present project. This has paved the way for setting up the first freshwater Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) site in India, which will be officially declared in 2014.

### **Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

1) eight globally threatened and point endemic freshwater fish species and their habitats protected; 2) populations of eight globally threatened and point endemic species made stable; 3) a community/conservation reserve for freshwater fishes designed and implemented; 4) a set up for collaborative management of endemic and threatened fishes and their habitats created through instilling awareness, sense of environmental stewardship and empowering key stakeholders including local communities and forest department staff.

### **Actual Progress towards Short-term Impacts at Completion:**

Six globally threatened and point endemic species and their habitats were protected and populations made stable through the implementation of conservation actions including the country's first participatory eradication program for alien invasive species. Strategies, and the required base-line information for setting up a conservation reserve for freshwater fish in Idukki district of Kerala was developed, but the actual implementation did not take place due to unprecedented socio-political situations in the area. Key stakeholders were successfully trained and empowered thereby facilitating the development of a collaborative fish conservation action plan.

**Please provide the following information where relevant:**

**Hectares Protected:** N.A.

**Species Conserved:** Six Globally Threatened and Endemic Species

**Corridors Created:** N.A.

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

The success of the project was in connecting local communities, biodiversity managers and local self governments to freshwater biodiversity (fish) conservation in the Southern Western Ghats. As the first such attempt at integrating key stakeholders for both research (data collection) and on-ground implementation of conservation plans for freshwater fish in this region, this project was highly successful in achieving its short term goals. All relevant stakeholders were willing to participate, and many successfully completed training in scientific data collection and monitoring. Adoption of the conservation plans piloted during the project by the Department of Forest and Wildlife was also a major achievement. Agreements on the conservation and management plans piloted during the study is now in place and the trained members from the local community and forest department are carrying out monitoring on a long term basis.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

One of the unexpected impacts of the project was the failure to implement a part of the proposed goal of setting up a conservation reserve for freshwater fish in the Santhampara hills. The socio-political scenario in the hilly areas of the Western Ghats (especially in and around Santhampara) as a fall out of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report (WGEEP) was an unexpected negative impact for the project.

## **Project Components**

**Project Components:** *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

### **Component 1 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Develop professional capacity to assess and monitor key life history and population parameters of eight globally threatened, point endemic freshwater fish species

### **Component 1 Actual at Completion:**

Professional capacity for 18 individuals realized through a series of workshops and training programs. Members of the Kerala State Forest and Wildlife Department as well as local community members (10), volunteers (5) and interns (3) were trained in collection, analysis and interpretation of data for ichthyological surveys.

### **Component 2 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Determine the population status, ecology, key biological characteristics and threats to eight globally threatened, point endemic freshwater fish species.

**Component 2 Actual at Completion:**

Key information on population status, threats and natural history of eight globally threatened endemic species were determined. These are now being readied for publication in peer reviewed journals.

**Component 3 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Determining local communities' and local government's willingness to participate in long term monitoring and conservation actions.

**Component 3 Actual at Completion:**

Local communities and local self government (Panchayath) willingness to partner the project team and also participate in long term monitoring and conservation actions was determined and a list of interested individuals and organizations prepared. These interested parties have already initiated monitoring programs for threatened freshwater fish in the respective study regions.

**Component 4 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Development of a conceptual model for conservation of freshwater fishes and site specific conservation plans. Identification of potential areas for the establishment of community and/or conservation reserves.

**Component 4 Actual at Completion:**

Site specific conservation actions plans were implemented at one of the site - Periyar Tiger Reserve while at the second site, the plans that were developed could not be implemented due to socio-political reasons. The area for setting up a conservation reserve for freshwater fish was identified.

**Component 5 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Setting up a community/conservation reserve for freshwater fish at Santhampara hills in Idukki.

**Component 5 Actual at Completion:**

This component could not be realized due to unprecedented socio-political situations in the area.

**Component 6 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Adoption of the conservation action plan for the endemic and threatened fish species of Periyar Lake Stream system adopted by the authorities of the Periyar Tiger Reserve and the Periyar Foundation and integrated into the Park's management plan

**Component 6 Actual at Completion:**

The authorities of the Periyar Tiger Reserve have successfully adopted the conservation plans that were piloted during the course of the project and are in the process of integrating these into the Park's management plan, pending official approval from the Government of Kerala.

**Component 7 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Sharing the results of the study with local community members, local government, state department of forest and wildlife as well as other partners and stakeholders and capacity building and empowering stakeholders.

**Component 7 Actual at Completion:**

All results relevant to the project were shared with stakeholders including local communities, state government departments and local self governments. Several training and workshops were carried out to develop capacity, for ensuring long term sustainability of the project.

**Component 8 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Resource use of local communities assessed, affected groups identified and suitable mitigation strategies evaluated and implemented

**Component 8 Actual at Completion:**

Scale and intensity of resource use by local communities was assessed at the both the project sites. An indigenous people's plan was prepared and submitted to CEPF. Regular monitoring of any impacts of the project activities to the local communities was carried out and reported as well. Throughout the project, no conservation intervention/plan negatively impacted any local community member directly or indirectly.

***Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?***

One component of the project i.e. setting up a conservation reserve in the Santhampara hills was unrealized due to unexpected socio-political circumstances. All necessary baseline work for this component was undertaken and plans developed, but the actual implementation did not take place. The project team is constantly in touch with the local communities and self government in this project site, and plans to implement this component at a more appropriate time. Funding will be materialized from both the local self government as well as the Kerala State Biodiversity Board. Preliminary discussions have taken place in this regard.

***Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.***

None

**Lessons Learned**

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

All components of the project were designed to ensure maximum involvement of the local communities and the relevant government departments. Such participatory actions meant that there were minimum issues related to the implementation of actions on-ground, and that these plans would be taken up on a long term basis.

***Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

At one of the sites (Santhampara hills), the implementation of the conservation plans were envisaged with the participation and support of the government (Forest and Wildlife) department. Due to the unforeseen socio-political circumstances, this association with the government department was challenged by the local communities and resulted in resentment.

***Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:***

Conservation challenges and issues in freshwater ecosystems continue to be overlooked, in favour of those in terrestrial ecosystems. This is the same even in the case of protected areas.

Lack of awareness and failure to engage the common public is one of the major impediments to freshwater fish conservation.

## Additional Funding

**Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.**

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Rufford Small Grants Foundation	Grantee and Partner leveraging	£6000 INR 480000	Funds for alien species eradication in one of the project site - Periyar Tiger Reserve
Conservation Research Group (CRG), St. Albert's College, Kochi	Project Co-financing	INR 215000	Salaries for key project staff

**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

## Sustainability/Replicability

**Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.**

A major goal of the project was to ensure its long term sustainability and replicability of its components and/or results. This has been successful. Pilot AZE plans tested and piloted during the present project have been highly successful and have been subsequently adopted by the local communities and the Government (Forest and Wildlife Department). Agreements are also in place to integrate some of the plans into the official working plan/management plan of the Periyar Tiger Reserve, therefore ensuring its planned sustainability. In addition, specific components of the project (for e.g. the participatory eradication program for invasive species) have been taken up as an official program of the Periyar Tiger Reserve, while many participants who were part of the program have additionally shown interest to replicate it in their respective study regions.

**Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.**

None

## Safeguard Policy Assessment

**Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.**

Continued interactions with local communities at the project sites were undertaken, which ensured that no grievances or objections were raised by any individual throughout the project.

**Additional Comments/Recommendations**

None



## Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

**Please include your full contact details below:**

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**\*\*\*If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages\*\*\***

**Performance Tracking Report Addendum**

**CEPF Global Targets**

**January 2012 - September 2013**

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.				Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.				

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table**

**Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities**

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit											
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased Income due to:			Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
									Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities									
<b>Total</b>																				

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:

