

For Immediate Release

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JRS Announces Two Planning Grants for Information Systems for African Freshwater Biodiversity

SEATTLE, Washington – SEPTEMBER 15, 2016 – The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is pleased to announce two new planning grants, totaling \$45,000, to support project development of freshwater biodiversity information systems in Zambia and in South Africa. Both projects are part of JRS' Freshwater Biodiversity Program in Africa, and will contribute to the formation of regional freshwater data portals and capacity in biodiversity information systems. JRS believes that when decision makers understand the need for biodiversity and the urgent threat it faces, and when they have access to biodiversity data that is high quality, relevant, easily-accessible, and timely, they will fight to preserve biodiversity by making informed decisions about conservation and sustainable development.

Freshwater Research Centre – Planning Grant: Long-term River Data in South Africa, \$30,000

The unique freshwater biodiversity of South Africa's Cape Floristic Region is under enormous pressure from climate change, human activities, and invasive species. The region lacks an informative and accessible database for hosting riverine freshwater biodiversity data, impeding assessments of historic and current river conditions. The Freshwater Research Centre and a community of conservation, research, and government partners will develop a project plan for a biodiversity information system for monitoring long-term change in riverine biodiversity of the region. The Freshwater Research Centre seeks to build consensus, vision, and plans for construction of an information system to be funded by JRS. Ultimately, they plan to facilitate a flow of data from strategic sites on regional rivers, enhancing efficacy of conservation and planning decisions.

BirdWatch Zambia – Planning Grant: Zambian Wetland Bird Diversity Assessments, \$15,000

The extensive wetland systems of Zambia, which include eight Ramsar sites, host an incredible diversity of wildlife. However, Zambia lacks a centralized repository for biodiversity information related to wetlands, creating a gap between the data that have been collected in these rich ecosystems and conservation planners and policy makers. BirdWatch Zambia will undertake planning for the potential development of databases for wetland birds and their habitats to be funded by JRS, as well as other important wetland species of conservation concern. Their planning process will also strengthen the network of partners engaged in monitoring and protection of Zambian wetlands.

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation's grant awards aim to increase the capacity of the institutions and people who collect, manage, and freely disseminate biodiversity data and information in sub-Saharan Africa. Freshwater resources in Africa are insecure in quantity and quality, and water resource development is a high priority for governments and international donors. The goal of JRS' Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment in Africa Initiative is to build the data and information systems to meet the

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urgent need to document and classify freshwater biodiversity in priority areas for freshwater resource conservation.

“There is a rising awareness that African nations need environmental information systems to meet national needs for conservation and sustainable development as well their international obligations for biodiversity conservation,” says JRS Executive Director, Don S. Doering. “We aim to invest in the gap that often divides the holders of data and the users of data. We are excited to make these grants to catalyze new partnerships and collaborative planning for demand-driven, open access biodiversity databases.”

See “[Freshwater Research Centre \(2016\) – Planning Grant: Long-term River Data in South Africa](#)”

See “[BirdWatch Zambia \(2016\) – Planning Grant: Zambian Wetland Bird Diversity Assessments](#)”

About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation – The mission of the JRS Biodiversity Foundation is to increase access to and use of information that will lead to greater biodiversity conservation and more sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation works to increase the capacity of the institutions and people who collect, manage, and disseminate biodiversity data and information in sub-Saharan Africa, and to connect this knowledge to stakeholders who make and influence decisions that are crucial to supporting biodiversity. The foundation has awarded more than \$13.5M in grants since 2007. Visit online at <http://www.jrsbiodiversity.org>

About the Freshwater Research Centre – FRC is a non-profit organization that undertakes research across a range of disciplines in the field of freshwater science. The FRC aims to achieve a thorough understanding of how freshwater ecosystems are structured and how they function, to improve the ability to use water resources sustainably, and to predict the effects of climate change and other human-related impacts on the integrity of freshwater ecosystems. Members are specialist river and wetland ecologists, with collective research experience exceeding 150 years. Visit online at <http://frcsa.org.za/>

About BirdWatch Zambia – BirdWatch Zambia, formerly known as ZOS (Zambian Ornithological Society) was founded as an NGO in 1969 with the object of stimulating interest in, and furthering the study and conservation of, birds in Zambia. As Partner Designate of BirdLife International, BirdWatch Zambia host and active and committed membership that conducts ornithological research related to the understanding and conservation of Zambia’s avians. Visit online at <http://www.birdwatchzambia.org/>

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