

For Immediate Release

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JRS Awards Three Grants to Support Freshwater Biodiversity Data in East Africa

SEATTLE, Washington – September 11, 2018 – The JRS Biodiversity Foundation announces three new grant awards, totaling \$545,000, to support access to freshwater biodiversity data in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. These investments are a part of the JRS Freshwater Biodiversity and Resources Program, supporting biodiversity knowledge for development and conservation.

Freshwater resources are vital for protecting food and water for humans and other species. Freshwater in East Africa faces numerous pressures from invasive species, expanding human populations, new human developments, and an increasingly arid climate. Although protected areas throughout East Africa protect swathes of land, there is still great need for sound biodiversity data in key freshwater areas to inform decision-making for conservation and development.

[National Fisheries Resources Research Institute \(NaFIRRI\)](#) – From the Lab to the World: Unlocking Uganda’s Freshwater Biodiversity Data for Sustainable Development, \$260,000

The goal of the project, led by Mr. Vianny Natugonza, is to make Uganda’s freshwater biodiversity data accessible to all. NaFIRRI will identify Key Biodiversity Areas ([KBA](#)) in Uganda for freshwater biodiversity and mobilize existing algae, fish, and invertebrate data. An important aspect of this work is to create a long-lasting system for data sharing. NaFIRRI’s work builds off of the momentum of three predecessor projects (IUCN—MacArthur Foundation [project](#), [project](#) funded by GBIF and European Union, and University of Denver—NSF funded [project](#)).

[National Museums of Kenya \(NMK\)](#) – Developing a Freshwater Biodiversity Information System for the Tana River Basin, Kenya, for Improved Ecosystem Management and Development Planning, \$250,000

The Tana River Basin in Kenya is Kenya’s most populous river basin. The team at NMK, led by Dr. Siro Masinde, aims to elevate the importance of biodiversity data in the decision-making of key partners engaged in basin management. Through mobilization and publication of biodiversity data from existing sources and through new data collection efforts, the status of the basin will be assessed and made accessible to the public and to decision-makers.

[The Albertine Rift Conservation Society](#) – Planning Phase for Using Ecological Integrity Assessment and Advanced Information Management to Guide Wetland Management and Decision-Making in Rwanda, \$35,000

JRS is supporting a four-month planning phase for ARCOS to plan an ecological integrity assessment of Rwanda’s wetlands, led by Dr. Samuel Kanyamibwa. The assessment will serve decision-makers by documenting threats and opportunities for preservation of these wetlands. During the planning period, the

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team at ARCOS and their governmental, academic, and NGO partners will determine the technical means of collecting and distributing data to serve data user needs. Furthermore, this project will enhance the adaptation JRS-supported ARCOS Biodiversity Information Management System ([ARBIMS](#)).

JRS believes that decision-makers will conserve biodiversity when there is an understanding of the need for biodiversity, and when there is greater access to high quality, relevant, and accessible biodiversity data. By improving the availability of freshwater species information, NaFIRRI, NMK, and ARCOS will help to bridge the gap between biodiversity data and conservation.

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 supports the capacity of institutions and people who collect, manage, and disseminate biodiversity data in Sub-Saharan Africa. JRS' grantees connect this knowledge to stakeholders who make and influence decisions that are crucial to supporting biodiversity. The foundation has awarded \$18M in grants since 2007. Visit us online at <http://jrsbiodiversity.org>.

About NaFIRRI – NaFIRRI is one of seven public National Agricultural Research Institutes under the coordination of the National Agricultural Research Organisation which was established by national mandate in 2005. NaFIRRI's mission is to generate the knowledge base, develop, and disseminate fisheries technologies for increased but sustainable fish production, conservation of the fisheries genetic resources, water quality and fish habitat and to develop and manage the fisheries and required linkages with stakeholders. Visit online at: <http://www.firi.go.ug/>.

About NMK - National Museums of Kenya (NMK) is a multi-disciplinary institution, established by state mandate in 2006, whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document, and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage. This is for the purposes of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the world, for now and posterity. Visit online at <http://www.museums.or.ke/>.

About ARCOS – The ARCOS network is a registered international NGO, and UK registered charity, established in 1995. ARCOS is a regional conservation organization with the mission to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Albertine Rift region, Africa Great Lakes region and African Mountains through the promotion of collaborative conservation actions for nature and people. Visit online at www.arcosnetwork.org/en.

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