

Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation in the Western Ghats

The Key Biodiversity Area Approach

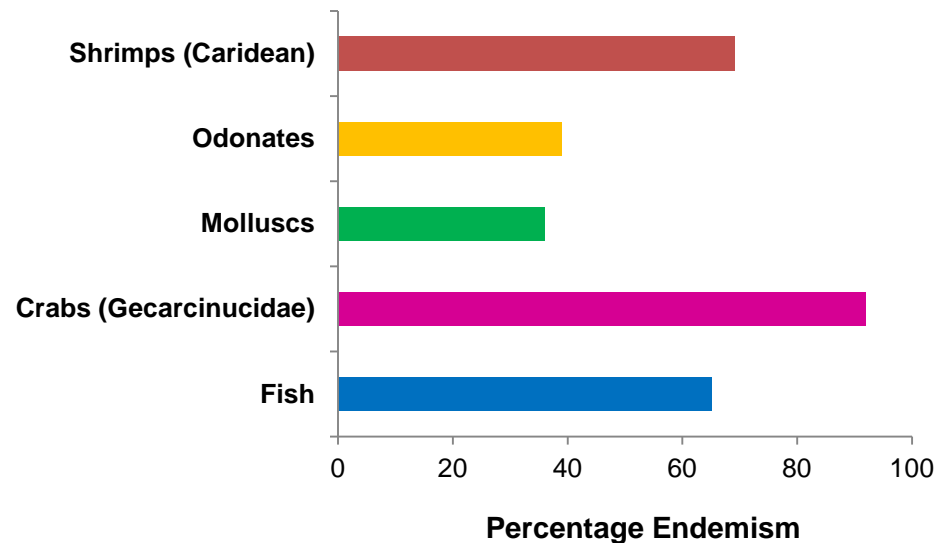
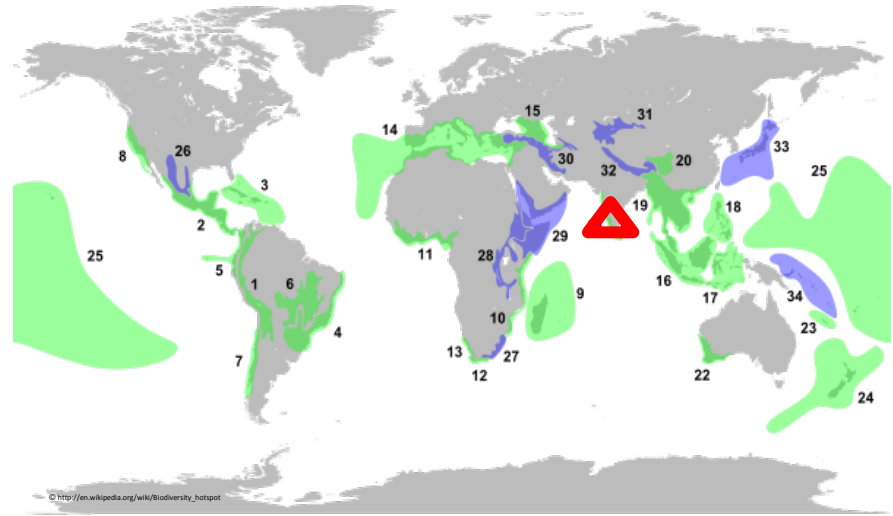
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Rajeev Raghavan, Kevin Smith, Emma Brooks, Sanjay Molur and William Darwall



Western Ghats region harbours exceptional diversity and endemism of freshwater taxa



16% freshwater species threatened with extinction



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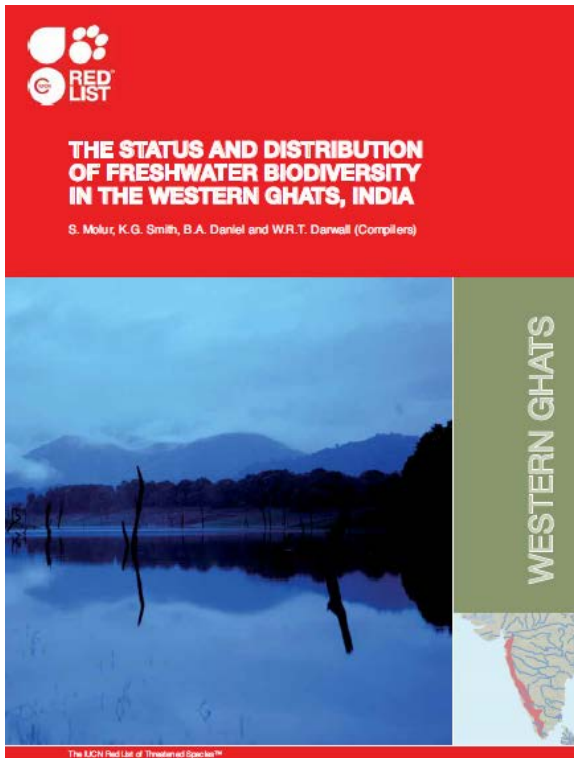
Collateral damage: Western Ghats freshwater species in peril

22 September 2011 | News story

Freshwater species in the Western Ghats, India, are being sacrificed as collateral damage in the race for rapid economic development. For the first time, comprehensive data are available on the conservation status and distribution of all freshwater fishes, molluscs, dragonflies, damselflies and aquatic plants across peninsular India. Water pollution from agricultural and urban sources, overharvesting and invasive species are the major threats that have led to 16% of freshwater species in the region for which we have sufficient data being classified as threatened with extinction on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.



Miss Kerala (*Puntius denisonii*)
Photo: Will Darwall



The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

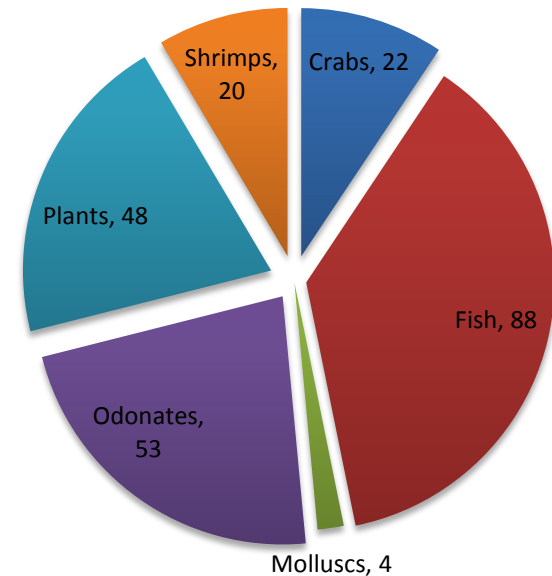


Freshwater KBAs in the Western Ghats

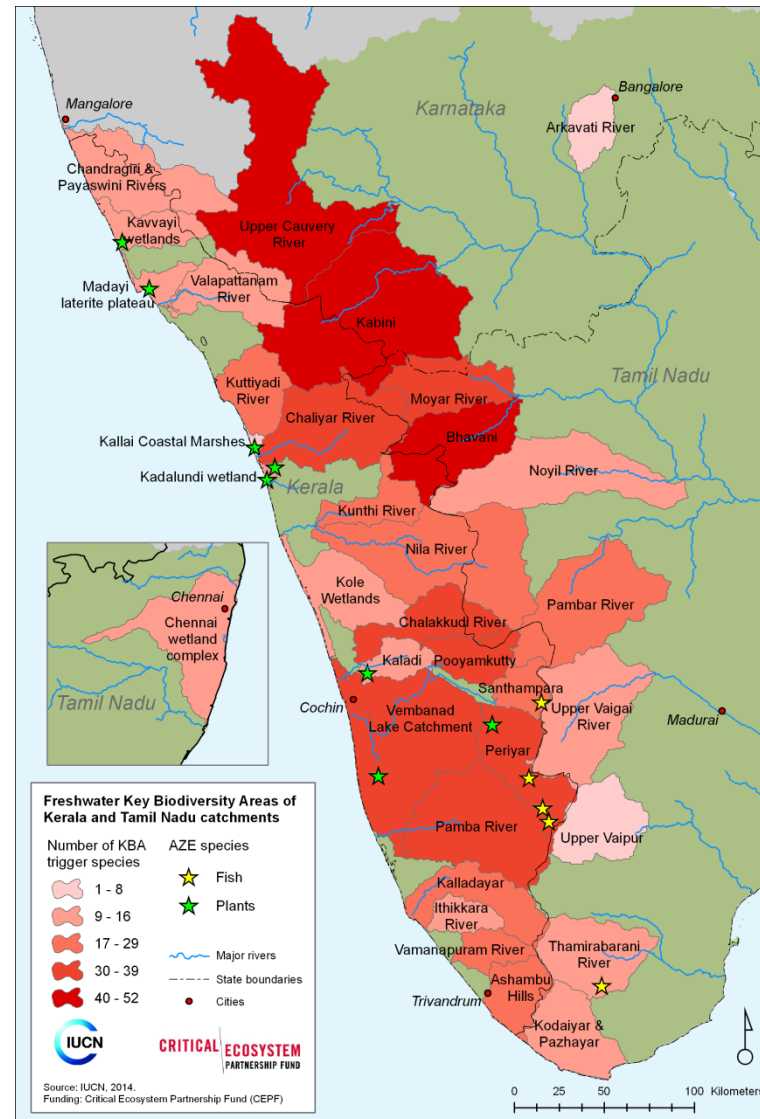
- Follow up of the IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Assessments
- Focused primarily on two Western Ghats states – Kerala & Tamil Nadu (and parts of Karnataka) [high species richness and endemism]
- Series of workshops in March 2014
- Based on Holland et al. (2012)



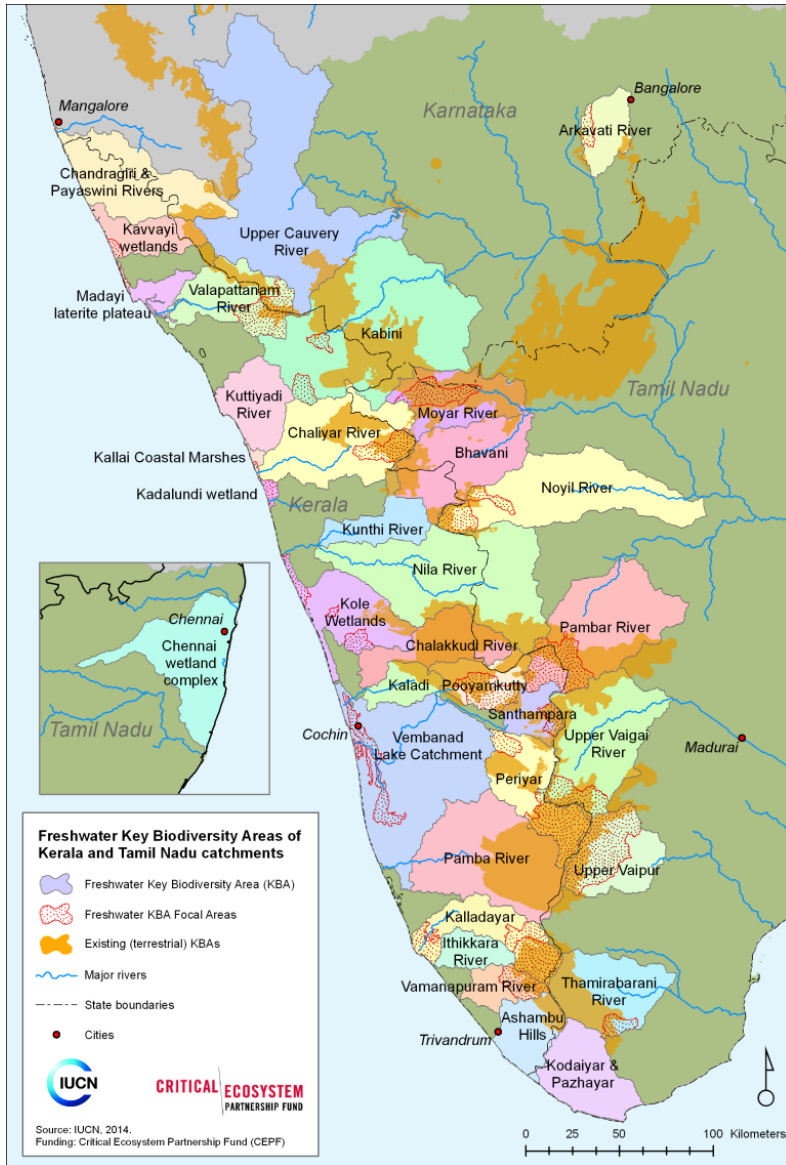
34 freshwater KBAs identified
235 KBA trigger species
(110 threatened, **196** restricted range)



10 out of the 34 KBAs include one or more **AZE** species



FW KBAs vis-à-vis Terrestrial KBAs and PAs



Periyar KBA

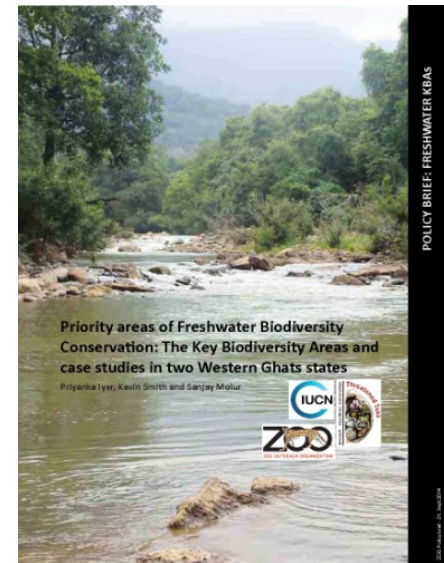
36 trigger species

Focal area has the most AZE qualified species – three freshwater fish



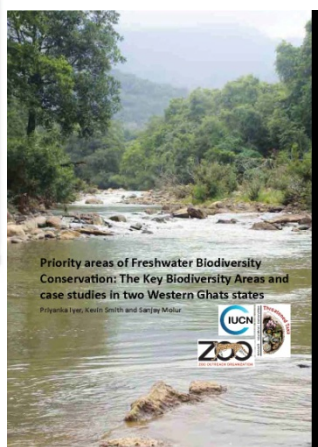
Follow up actions

- Policy briefs and white papers
- Consultation with State and Central Government/Departments, and relevant stakeholders
- Education and Outreach campaigns
- Setting up of India's first Freshwater AZE site at the Periyar Tiger Reserve

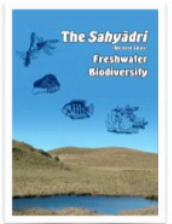
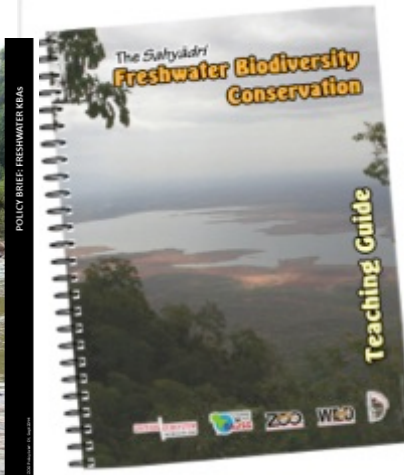




Packets in Kannada Tamil Malayalam Marathi and English



Priority areas of Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation: The Key Biodiversity Areas and case studies in two Western Ghats states



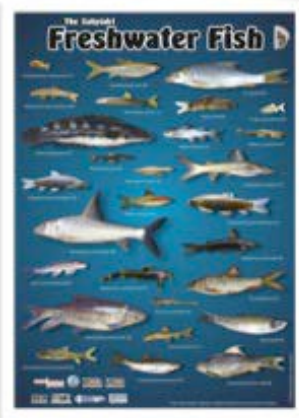
Booklet



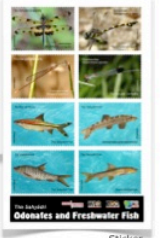
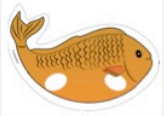
Pamphlet on laws



Placard



Masks



Sticker



'Rakhi'



T-shirt for educators

Language being a major barrier in this region, conservation education and dissemination of information to local communities posed a big challenge. At the same time the conservation effort will not be effective without involvement of the local communities, governing bodies and all stakeholders. So it was inevitable education materials were in local language wherever possible.

Challenges and next steps

- Expanding the KBA identification process for rest of the Western Ghats region (and India) – **funding?**
- Informing **policy** and on ground **conservation actions**
- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (**NBSAP**)

Thank you

