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Creating A Legal Basis for Community Co-Management of Wetlands



The CREL/JDR 3RD Wetland team surveys households in Gondhorbopurat and Berkuri villages, near the Kawadighi wetland.

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In Bangladesh, freshwater wetlands provide fish, an important source of protein, to millions of people. These “haor” ecosystems are threatened by over-harvesting of fish and destruction of wetlands for other land uses.

Evidence from other countries shows that community-based approaches to conservation can protect

fragile ecosystems, like haors, from over-exploitation. However, in Bangladesh, there is no legal basis for community co-management of haors.

In 2015 Winrock’s USAID-funded Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) project partnered with Winrock’s JDR 3RD Scholars Program to commission a one-year study to assess the difference in outcomes when wetland areas in northern Bangladesh are co-managed by community Resource Management Organizations, as compared with privately managed wetlands.

The CREL/JDR 3RD Wetland team (below) includes expertise in wetland management law and policy, ecology, biology, biodiversity, and sociology.

The team is conducting household surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews in villages near Hail Haor and Kawadighi Haor, and is meeting with local and national government officials.

Informing Policy

The project aims to inform changes in the 2009 Wetland Leasing Policy to provide a legal basis for community involvement in wetland management.

The team’s Expert Advisors include:

- Md. Rashedul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Land (MOL);
- Dr. Abdul Quaiyyum, Project Director, Fisheries Department (DOF);
- Dr. Paul Thompson, Senior Co-management Advisor to CREL; and
- Dr. Mokhles Rahman, Executive Director, Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS).



November 2015: The JDR 3RD Wetland team at Winrock’s Dhaka office. From left: lead researcher Hafijul Islam Khan; principal researchers Dr. Kaniz Fatema, Monjurul Ahsan, and S.M. Saify Iqbal.