

# Improving natural resource use by local communities at Cape Mount, Liberia

Title Cape Mount (also known as Lake Piso) is an Important Bird Area located on the coast in the south-west of Liberia. The site comprises lagoons, mangroves as well as a small area of lowland forest. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Liberia (BirdLife in Liberia) have worked with communities at the IBA to form a Local Conservation Group. Their work is raising awareness of the problem of unsustainable timber harvesting, and is introducing fuel-efficient stoves. Although still in its early stages there is already some evidence of a reduction in timber harvesting from the mangroves. Twenty-eight stoves have been built, and people have been trained in their construction and use. The project is helping to reduce the destruction of nesting sites for birds and habitat for other animals. Michael Garbo, the project manager, reports that *some fish smokers we talked to indicated that the quantity of fuel wood sellers have dropped slightly (fish smokers are not buying the quantity of fuel wood as before) due to the drop in sales. Some of the fuel wood sellers have abandoned the business and are doing other business. Also from observation, there is not a huge pile of fuel wood stacked at the fish smokers designated site, unlike before?* The project is also bringing benefits to people's livelihoods. In surveys fishing was identified as the second most important source of economic activity in 11 communities and for women in 9 communities. It is mainly women who are involved in smoking and selling the fish, and purchase of wood for fuel significantly reduced their profits. Aminata, a refugee from Sierra Leone, who now lives in Fanti town with her three children is using the new stoves. *The new stoves are better than the drum stoves. They make my fish dry quicker and I do not use plenty of wood like with the drum stoves. After drying all my bags of fish and selling, my profit is more than before when I was using the drum stove. I am now in a better position to pay my children's school fees on time and feed them?*

**Biodiversity at Cape Mount** The site is important because of its congregations of waterfowl, presence of significant numbers of species characteristic of the Guinea-Congo Forests biome and presence of threatened species (Illadopsis rufescens- Rufous-winged Illadopsis (NT) and Lamprotornis cupreocauda ? Copper-tailed Glossy Starling (NT)). These species depend for feeding and nesting sites on the mangrove and other vegetation which is under severe pressure, especially to provide fuelwood for smoking fish. Mammals include Pygmy Hippopotamus Hexaprotodon liberiensis (EN), Chimpanzee Pan troglodytes (EN) and Olive Colobus Procolobus verus (EN) .

**22 May 2010 - International Day for Biological Diversity** This year's International Day for Biological Diversity theme of *Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation?* is a reminder of the unique contribution of biodiversity to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This is one of a series of projects showcasing the BirdLife Partnerships

work around the world to improve livelihoods while conserving biodiversity. This project is part of a small grant programme managed by the BirdLife Secretariat with generous support from the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation.