

## Biography: Dr David Coates



### 1. Employer

Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity

*Function in Organisation:* Programme Officer – Inland Waters and Ecosystem Approach

### 2. Contact details

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### 3. Experience

David graduated in biology from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK). Like most other people at the time, he had a passion for marine biology and a particular interest in coral reefs. His Masters of Science was based on this subject in the Red Sea and East Africa, which was not only interesting but a good excuse to go diving. The realities of needing a sustainable livelihood, and a desire to stay in the tropics, left him effectively landlocked in the middle of the Sudan in the late 1970's where he was forced under duress into working on inland waters. Here he researched environmental management problems in irrigation schemes in the Nile Basin. Surprisingly, he found both applied science and freshwater interesting but was bitterly disappointed by the beaches and the diving. His interests then took him to Papua New Guinea where initially he worked on large river fisheries development – but later became Chief Fisheries Scientist with a brief sojourn into the marine environment again. But this time he failed to self-deny that the most interesting, challenging, and socially urgent needs in the aquatic sciences were in inland waters and has not been unfaithful to the cause since. His PhD was earned in 1986 as an external student of the Open University (UK) working with Peggy Varley and Ro Lowe McConnell and was on the applied biology of tropical freshwater fish faunas based upon studies in Africa and Australasia. In the same year he joined the field programme of the FAO where he worked for 11 years - mainly on the management and development of large river fishery resources, including food-security, sustainability and environmental issues. From 1997 to 2001, he worked with the fisheries programme of the Mekong River Commission dealing with water resources management

aspects of fisheries in the lower Mekong basin. He then worked as team co-ordinator for a project mainstreaming biodiversity and environmental considerations into the fisheries, agriculture and water resources sectors in the lower Ganges Basin. He joined the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, based in Montreal, in August 2003. His interests are broad based and include the linkages between biodiversity, livelihoods, sustainable development and water resources management and the need to break down the barriers between the biological and social sciences. He intends to continue fighting the cause for better management of inland waters, partly because it is interesting, but mostly because it is important. But he still misses the beaches and the diving.

#### **4. Principal research interests**

His interests are broad based and include the linkages between biodiversity, livelihoods, sustainable development and water resources management.

#### **5. Selection of papers**

Biological Diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems: Linkages between the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and poverty alleviation/sustainable livelihoods, including human health considerations. Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Convention on Biological Diversity, Curitiba, Brazil, 20-31 March 2006. UNEP/CBD/COP/8/INF/15.