

## **ABSTRACT**

For three years, teams of undergraduate and graduate students from the US and Kenya joined Kenyan and US researchers for five weeks of field and laboratory freshwater aquatic biodiversity research in Kenya with support from the U.S. National Science Foundation's International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) program and a pilot project from US Agency for International Development's Partnership Enhancing Expertise in Research program (USAID-PEER). For two weeks each summer, the teams collected fish and invertebrates and gathered data on physical and chemical characteristics of rivers across southern and Central Kenya. The USAID-PEER funding allowed for further sampling and training while the US participants are not in the country. Over the course of three years nearly 100 localities were sampled and more than 10,000 fish specimens were collected. Fish and invertebrate samples were identified and summarized by region and in comparison to physico-chemical characteristics of the rivers sampled. The fish specimens are cataloged in the Ichthyology Section of National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi. The students also received basic training in molecular sequencing methods which allowed for the production of mitochondrial and nuclear gene sequences for some of the collected fishes. Studies of the collected fish specimens have resulted in the discovery of a number of previously unrecognized species and unresolved taxonomic issues. This presentation provides an overview of the project and findings to date.