

A British research team reported in both the **January, 1994 issue of *BioScience*** and the **September 23, 1993 edition of *Nature*** that a method presently used by conservationists in selecting lands for the preservation of species diversity are flawed. Conservationists often decide which lands to preserve by evaluating species diversity and the presence of rare or endangered species within them. In using this strategy they frequently make the assumption that species richness for one group of plants or animals will be equally rich for another group, and that an area beneficial to a rare species will be a magnet to others.

J.R. Prendergast of Imperial College in Ascot, U.K. led a research team to look into the question and found no evidence that either assumption was true. They mapped nearly 2,700 ten-kilometer squares and then examined their data for overlap-

ping areas rich in birds, butterflies, dragonflies, liverworts, and aquatic flowering plants. They found that only 12% of the dense bird and butterfly areas overlapped while no single square was rich in all five of the kinds of lifeforms. Only 26 of the squares were especially diverse in any three kinds of the taxa and 25% or more of the uncommon species from four of the groups were not found in any hot spot. While the authors/scientists admit that severe habitat fragmentation in Great Britain may indicate that the data would not also apply elsewhere, they were confident in their conclusions.