

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Helbert Anchante
Project title	Distribution, Behaviour and Conservation of marine otter (<i>Lontra felina</i>) in the Paracas National Reserve, Peru.
RSG reference	02.05.07
Reporting period	15 November 2007 to 14 November 2008
Amount of grant	£3,824
Your email address	acoremabiodiverso@yahoo.com
Date of this report	15 December, 2008

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
To gather information on the current situation of the marine otter in the Paracas National Reserve			X	Through the project period marine otter groups and the problems they face at present were identified. Besides, the first behavioural study on marine otters in the main marine protected area of Peru was initiated.
To contribute to conservation of the biodiversity of the Paracas National Reserve.			X	The information obtained through research and the inclusion of several publics in the awareness programme gave positive results in the process for enhancing the critical situation of the marine otter in the Pisco area.
To update data on marine otter distribution in the Paracas National Reserve.			X	The distribution of the marine otter in the Reserve was updated. However, there were difficulties to reach some areas because access was closed as a consequence of the 15 August 2007 earthquake, which seriously affected the coast in this marine protected area.
To insert marine otter in the local marine conservation programme.			X	Dissemination of information about the marine otter allowed reaching several public. The species is being included in local conservation agenda. This is the first effort involving an awareness effort about the species in the area.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant)

At the beginning of project activities we had to face the damage caused by the earthquake that struck the Pisco area on August 2007. Many observation points located at cliffs along the Paracas National Reserve had collapsed or were in danger of fall down. At some points we had to find new observation platforms increasing security measures and also took advantage of the sites used by fishermen to descent to the rocks below.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- The answer to the question I proposed to test during this project "Are there marine otters left at the Paracas National Reserve?" is a yes. There was some concern about the fate of this species at the Reserve, given that the last census was carried out in 2004 and several of its conservation problems prevail. However, the new information on distribution and conservation problems of marine otters in the area will help to call attention and direct the actions needed to enforce protection of this species in the main marine conservation area of Peru.

- The first steps were made to involve the fishing community of San Andrés in discussions about the fate of marine otters. Meetings with representatives of fishing cooperatives were successful in building the bridges for future conservation actions. Also, other community groups were involved, placing the marine otter in the local conservation agenda.
- An unexpected result was the effect of the lecture program on marine otter at one of the largest local schools. The teachers and students organised elections for the threatened marine species representative of the school. All students vote and elect by the majority the marine otter as “representative species”. The teachers made a commitment to include marine otter issues in the school curriculum during the year 2009.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

- Line Fishermen Cooperative and Lobo de Mar Free Diving Cooperative; these groups work in or near rocky shores, especially near marine otter locations, so they generate direct and indirect pressures. These fishermen received informative materials, besides some informal discussions on marine otter subjects and the need for reducing the impacts of fishing debris in the coastal habitat.
- Tourism school; students from this institute received lectures and informative materials on the marine otter that can be used during their guiding work, promoting in this way the practice of a responsible tourism. It is important to note that this was the first time that this public receives information about the marine otter and its present situation in the Paracas National Reserve.
- Local schools; distribution of informative leaflets was carried out at schools of the fishing villages of San Andrés and Paracas. A lecture programme organised at the Jose de la Torre Ugarte school of Pisco was successful as a pilot experience for raising awareness about the marine otter, the results are reflected in the election of this species as a symbol for the school and over which work will be done by the teachers to insert marine otter issues at class during 2009.
- Paracas National Reserve; the reserve’s Head Office received a significant part of the informative materials produced during the project to be distributed among the thousands of visitors arriving to visit the reserve. This helps to strengthening the actions of this administrative office for conservation of threatened marine species.
- Other public involved included the Regional Production Office (formerly the Regional Fisheries Office), the San Andrés police station, and the Pisco Port Authority; here, the large prints were placed in the hall and therefore visible for the public. In addition, informative materials were distributed at stores and markets, as well as at public transport units, spreading in this way the conservation message about the marine otter.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We realize that this is the beginning of a series of actions to improve the present status of the marine otter in the Pisco area, so yes, we are planning to continue the work in the mid and long term. The immediate action related to raising awareness involves a follow up of the activities developed by the local school that adopted the marine otter as symbol species. We will provide the teachers with information, advice and guidance to keep up the momentum generated by their initial enthusiasm to insert marine otter issues at class.

Regarding research, one of our priorities would be to determine the status and interactions of a particular group of marine otters we found around the fishing dock of Lagunilla, in the Paracas

National Reserve. This locality receive several visitors during the Summer months (December through March) and it would be necessary to study the effects of the interaction of marine otters and humans in this site, and work with the relevant publics in order to minimize the possible pressures faced by this marine otter group.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Preliminary results of this investigation were presented as a poster at the 13th Working Meeting of Experts on South American Aquatic Mammals and 7th Congress of the Latin American Society for Aquatic Mammals held at Montevideo, Uruguay, from 13 to 17 October 2008. Also, a full technical report is under preparation to be submitted to the National Natural Resources Institute (INRENA, Peru), in charge of the administration of natural protected areas in the country.

It is expected to publish the results of this project in peer reviewed scientific journals, in this case probably the Latin American Journal of Aquatic Mammals (LAJAM).

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The project period was the initially proposed (from 15 November 2007 to 14 November 2008). All the proposed activities were carried out during this 12-month period and there were no extensions.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference (£)	Comments
01 Responsible for project activities	1,531.20	1,520.56	10.64	No significant difference
01 Assistant for project activities	919.20	917.06	2.14	No significant difference
Awareness materials (6,000 leaflets, 1,000 stickers, 9 large prints)	408.20	418.95	10.75	No significant difference
Transport	408.30	419.44	11.14	No significant difference
Communications	183.72	172.51	11.21	No significant difference
Fieldwork material	91.92	61.33	30.59	In this item expenses were below the proposed budget. The difference was used to buy binoculars, which initially was not considered.
Fieldwork equipment (1 tape recorder and 1 binocular)	40.80	72.95	32.15	In the original budget only a tape recorder was considered, however the binoculars used for observations was broken and it was necessary to buy a new one.

Office supplies	127.55	123.22	4.33	No significant difference
Permits and reporting	112.25	111.39	0.86	No significant difference
Bank fees		5.73	5.73	Applied to the transfer
TOTAL	3,823.14	3,823.14		Exchange rate: 1 £ sterling= 2.0288532 American dollars.

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

Next steps should focus on continue the studies on behaviour and ecology of marine otters and their interactions with humans in the locations already identified, especially of the group living around the fishing dock of Lagunilla. Parallel to these studies, an extension of the awareness programme is necessary to maintain the interest and involvement reached by the public, to ensure their concourse in the mitigation of threats such as dynamite fishing and habitat encroachment, among others that pose a serious danger to the survival of marine otters in the Paracas National Reserve.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF logo was included in all the awareness materials (leaflets, stickers and large prints) produced and distributed during the project. In addition, acknowledgement to the support provided by the RSGF to the marine otter research was granted in both the abstract and the poster submitted to the marine mammal meeting held in Uruguay on October 2008.

11. Any other comments?

The updated information on distribution, behaviour and threats of marine otter in the Paracas National Reserve obtained during the development of this project with support of RSGF and submitted as a report to the National natural Resources Institute (INRENA/Peru) will be a valuable contribution to the next Management Plan for the reserve, expected to be produced sometime next year.