

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole**  
Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Adriana Mireya Salinas Memdoza
Project title	The Bolivian river dolphin ( <i>Inia boliviensis</i> ): Ambassador for conservation in the northeastern part of the Amazon basin
RSG reference	07.03.09
Reporting period	July-July, 2010
Amount of grant	£5437
Your email address	<a href="mailto:Adriana.Salinas.M@gmail.com">Adriana.Salinas.M@gmail.com</a>
Date of this report	31 <sup>th</sup> July 2010

**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
a) To evaluate distribution patterns of the Bolivian river dolphin in the northern Amazon			X	A total of 482 km across five different rivers of the northern Bolivian Amazon were surveyed to obtain abundance data of the Bolivian dolphin. Physical and chemical data were also collected in order to determine the influence of environmental factors on the distribution and abundance of the species. The data were collected using standardised methods which allow comparison of the results with other rivers surveyed previously in different river basins in Bolivian territory such as the Iténez and the higher Mamoré. The results obtained during the expeditions represent the first scientific evaluation of the population status of the Bolivian dolphin in the northern Bolivian Amazon and a manuscript to publish this information in an indexed journal is in preparation.
b) To evaluate the role waterfalls in the Mamoré-Madeira basin play for the distribution of the species			X	The rivers surveyed during this project are located upstream and between the Madera waterfalls. Since this area has been considered as the natural barrier which separates <i>Inia boliviensis</i> from <i>Inia geoffrensis</i> it is impossible to determine which species the individuals which were recorded during the expeditions belong to. However, the results allowed establishing new hypothesis concerning the presence of two species of river dolphins in Bolivian territory and are useful as base line information to evaluate if the limit between both species is related to the presence of the waterfalls or is more related to the environmental characteristics of the rivers in the

				area. Further investigation is needed in order to validate the new hypothesis of the presence of <i>Inia geoffrensis</i> in Bolivian territory.
c) Estimate the impact of hydropower construction on the distribution and abundance of the species			X	Data collected during this project allow evaluating the possible impacts hydropower construction may have on the Bolivian Dolphin populations. At the time it is not possible to know for certain how these impacts are going to affect pink dolphin populations; however we are able to establish a base line of information to estimate and evaluate the impacts through time.
d) Adjust the national conservation plan of <i>Inia boliviensis</i>			X	Data collected in the project have provided important information about one of the most important areas of distribution of the species and contributed to the formulation of the National Action Plan with more accurate measures of conservation for <i>Inia boliviensis</i> in Bolivia. Assistance to the national meeting for the formulation of the National Action Plan has been an important opportunity to achieve this objective.
e) Provide recommendations to the Bolivian government concerning conservation strategies			X	During the National Meeting for the formulation of the National Action Plan for <i>Inia boliviensis</i> some of the results were discussed and taken into account to formulate conservation strategies for the species in the presence of local and national authorities. Some information material produced during the project (two leaflets, five banners) was shown and used to inform not only national authorities but also the general public, the press and local people from the communities visited during the expeditions in the Northern Bolivian Amazon.
f) Elaborate a digital version of a folder on dolphin conservation.			X	A digital folder already available on the following web sites: <a href="http://www.faanagua.org">www.faanagua.org</a> <a href="http://www.iniaboliviensis.org">www.iniaboliviensis.org</a>

				www.bufeoboliviano.org
g) To participate in the environmental education pilot program			X	Information collected during the project helped to improve the environmental educational pilot project for children organized by Faunagua in the community of Loma Suarez (Trinidad). The participation in this project allowed us to share information about the species with children and evaluate their perception of the Bolivian dolphin. At the same time, enforce their knowledge about the species and contribute to the conservation actions for the species.
h) To facilitate to a bachelor student in his thesis work in the Yata river in the northern Amazon.			X	Data collected in the Yata river from the Northern Bolivian Amazon will help a young student to develop his thesis project for the Gabriel René Moreno University of the city of Santa Cruz.
i) To print the Action Plan of Conservation of the Bolivian river dolphin ( <i>Inia boliviensis</i> )		X		Rufford Small Grant will participate as co-funder in the printing of the National Action Plan for <i>Inia boliviensis</i> .

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

The investigation suffered no major changes in the enforcement mechanism.

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

a) Data collected during this project represent the first evaluation of the abundance and distribution of the Bolivian dolphin in the northern Bolivian Amazon; therefore it is also the first evaluation of the population status of the species in the area. Since the area is considered as the natural barrier between *I. boliviensis* and *I. geoffrensis* and we recorded dolphins in rivers located in-between the area of waterfalls new hypothesis could be established about the possible presence of both species in Bolivian territory. To collect the data, standardized methods were used making the results comparable. Physical and chemical characterisation of the visited rivers allow to evaluate which patterns are related to the abundance and distribution of the species in the area and to evaluate the role of the waterfalls in the isolation of the species within Bolivian territory. A manuscript discussing all this factors to publish the new outcomes about the species is in preparation.

b) The evaluation of the population status of *I. boliviensis* in the northern Bolivian Amazon is an important base line of knowledge to evaluate possible impacts for the species due to the construction of projected dams in the area. This information also helped to contribute in the elaboration of the National Conservation Action Plan for the species, establishing priorities for new

researches in the area in order to consider more accurate conservation actions for *I. boliviensis* in the area and in the country.

c) Co work with Faunagua institution allowed the participation in different meetings and projects. This opportunity allowed us to share the more recent information about the species and communicate the preliminary results to national authorities, new young scientists and specialists working in the subject. We shared information and influenced in conservation actions at a national level around the four departments which comprehend the entire distribution area of the species: Cochabamba (production of diffusion material, co work with experts, co work with Faunagua institution), Santa Cruz (contribution to the develop of a thesis project for the local university enforcing one young student, participation in the Wildlife Congress of the city with diffusion material), Beni (evaluation of rivers in the northern Amazon, workshops with local people from the communities visited during the expeditions, co work during the expeditions with local people, environmental educational campaigns) and Pando (evaluation of rivers in the northern Amazon, workshops with local people from the communities visited during the expeditions, co work during the expeditions with local people)

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

Local communities were visited and informed about the main objectives of the project. One environmental educational pilot campaign was partially supported with the help of the RSG funding. One important achievement is that community members were employed as local guides and motor drivers. This type of activities represents an important employment source for the villagers who are used to work in partial jobs for the day. Additionally, the local people provided food and different other services that are required by the working team and because of this direct contact they are very well informed about the objectives and methods used to develop investigation work. This activity is very important since oral communication is very common between the communities from the Amazon basin so it is probable that even when researchers have left the area people is still talking about the performed work in the area and sharing information. This way of local communication also influences as a conservation tool since local villagers learn about the value of the natural resources in their environment and start to take conscience about what they have. In the community of Rosario del Yata people showed particular interest in starting sustainable tourism through well conducted projects by using the Bolivian Dolphin as a flagship species after knowing its importance and are actually taking actions to start this type of enterprises.

#### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

This project generated base line information about the population status of *Inia boliviensis* in the northern Bolivian Amazon and has helped to establish some conservation priorities in the area that have been taken in count for the National Action Plan for the species. It is very important to continue research in the area, and some proposals are now being prepared to continuing working in the area and fill information gaps still remaining in the knowledge of the ecology and biology of *Inia boliviensis* in the frontier area between Bolivia and Brazil.

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

A lot of the preliminary results and information about the species has already been shared among the general public through diffusion material and the press and with other co workers. However it is now very important to publish the results in an indexed journal for other scientists interested in the

subject to recognize the work performed in the area and its importance. Therefore a manuscript is already in preparation.

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

The RSG Grant was used over a period of 12 months, from July of 2009 – July of 2010, as was foreseen. Thanks to the coordinated work with the institution Faunagua and the correct administration of the funds we were able to reach additional objectives than those proposed in the original project and extend the limits of the work beyond the original study area. However, the results obtained in this work are a base line of knowledge about the species and new questions to investigate have been originated from it. Therefore it is recommended to continue with more specific long lasting programs to answer some questions related to the biology and ecology of the species in the area.

**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
Comis. Gir		44	44	
ITF-Taxa		7	7	
<b>Remuneration locally</b>				
* Personal services				
- 3 pilots for the boats	314		(-)314	
- 3 local guide	131	213	82	
<b>Personnel – Employees</b>				
- Insurance of the technical personal	48	15	(-)33	
Insurance of the bank card		4	4	
<b>Information, locally</b>				
- Office material	60	5	(-)55	
<b>Communication and print services</b>				
- Print of satellite map	20	7	(-)13	
Plastic		7	7	
Comunication		16	16	
Leaflet	-	-	-	
National workshop		326	326	
- Printing of the report	36	91	55	
Print the National Action Plan		1163	1163	
<b>Food and Lodging</b>				
- Foods and drinks during survey (5 people)	390	599	209	
Foods during the workshop (1 person)		9	9	
Hotel during the survey	84	120	36	

Hotel during the workshop (1 person)		25	25	
<b>Travels locally</b>				
- Air travel	216	804	588	
- Transport to survey location (bus)	4	14	10	
- Urban transport (taxi)	30	12	(-)18	
Local transport		90	90	
Fuel (16 days)	510	177	(-)333	
- Boat rent	1559	542	(-)1017	
- Motor boat rent (1)	468		(-)468	
- motor rent (1)	234		(-)234	
<b>Running/Up-keep</b>				
Store and power tools	40	18	(-)22	
<b>Equipment – Farming</b>				
- GPS	300	278	(-)22	
- Secchi disk	17	15	(-)2	
- Binoculars	33		(-)33	
- Conductivimeter	300	230	(-)70	
- Tents	240	64	(-)176	
- Flashlights Maglite	96	22	(-)74	
- Batteries	80	160	80	
- Mattress	108	45	(-)63	
- Small field equipment	103	258	155	
Other		11	11	
<b>Materials - Health care</b>				
First aid kit	16	46	30	
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>5437</b>	<b>5437</b>	<b>0</b>	To 1-year grant from in the amount of £5437

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

It is very important to cover some of the rivers which could not be already covered during this project and evaluate the population status in other sub basins from the northern Bolivian Amazon. We also consider important to monitor the populations of dolphins recorded during this project to evaluate possible impacts caused by the increasing dams to be developed in the area. One important aspect is to evaluate the genetic flux between populations of dolphins from the northern Bolivian Amazon and others from different sub-basins. It is also important to establish the identity of the dolphins recorded in the area to evaluate the possible co existence of two species of river dolphin in Bolivian territory and re evaluate if the area is actually the main barrier between species.

**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?**

All diffusion material elaborated during this project has the RGS logo included. This material was shown in different meetings and congress and was also shown in the National meeting to elaborate the National Action Plan for *Inia boliviensis* and in the local communities that were visited during the project.

**11. Any other comments?**

I thank the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for its generous support on behalf of the Bolivian river dolphin population and its habitat. We acknowledge the foundation for the conservation initiatives it supports around the world.