

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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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. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. 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. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. 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**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Juan Sebastián Mejía Correa
<b>Project title</b>	Population status of Baird's tapir <i>Tapirus bairdii</i> on Los Katios National Park, Colombia
<b>RSG reference</b>	10634-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	Final Report
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5800
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Sebasmeco@Fundacionhomonatura.Org">Sebasmeco@Fundacionhomonatura.Org</a> , <a href="mailto:Sebasmeco@Gmail.Com">Sebasmeco@Gmail.Com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2012

**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
Determine the population status of Baird's tapir ( <i>Tapirus bairdii</i> ) in Los Katios National Park			X	We successfully determined the density number of the tapir population in Sautata sector of Los Katios National Park with the camera traps. We were able to identify 13 individuals in an area of 13.5 km <sup>2</sup> . The sharing of information with local park functionaries and local people allowed a more accurate identification.
Determine habitat use and food habits of the Baird's tapir in the protected area			X	We successfully established the preferred use of tapirs for secondary forests between six different habitats types. We also identified 40 different plant species that the tapirs feed on. The identification of plants species was achieved mostly by the precious knowledge of local park functionaries and local people.
Assess the effects of selective logging and hunting on the species in the protected area		X		The areas where exists logging and hunting by local communities could not be sampled as expected because of presence of armed groups in the area. But, with the visits and interviews to local people we could make estimations on how is affecting this actions on the species in the area.
Assess the human community's perception on Baird's tapir through surveys and interviews			X	We successfully assessed the perception on tapirs and even more change it on the communities that hunt them for food.
Implement environmental education activities and community involvement to ensure the development of public awareness of the importance of the Baird's tapir in the ecosystems.			X	We productively implemented six educational activities in four different communities. We focused the work in the children on these communities with the help of the park functionaries to strengthen the tides between them and the communities. We develop T-shirts of the project for the children, support local soccer teams with balls and also participate in local communities.
Identify, evaluate and implement strategies to reduce levels of hunting pressure of the Baird's tapir population in the protected area.		X		We have identified and evaluated strategies with local communities to reduce hunting pressure in the area. The implementation of these strategies will be on charged of the park functionaries with our support for next year. Other strategies are also being evaluated alongside the communities to see if it can be implemented on the area.
Obtain the support of the community and involve			X	We successfully involved and obtained the support of the communities to these kinds of projects in the

them in future research and conservation projects.				area. The work with the children and the sharing and participations in normal local communities helped to create bonds with the people.
Develop a working document that serves as a support guide for Baird's Tapir conservation throughout its distribution within the country.		X		We are currently in the construction of the analysing data and contacting other organisations to develop a more complete document and also other documents. The delay we have is because the project starting date was moved because of security problems in the region.

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

- We had to start the project on late April, because of security problems in the region. Because of this we decided to make the most of the time regarding field work, by living in the cabins of the protected area. Also because of this, we are a little delayed on the data analysis and final report construction, but we are currently advancing to present it as soon as possible.
- The work with the local communities was not as much as we wanted to be at first. The presence of illegal armed groups in the region could not let to visit as much as we wanted to, so we decided to stay as much as we can in the few visits, we had. Also, we as an organisation know how to talk and deal with these groups, so with the advice of the park functionaries, we let them know the purpose of the work so that at least we could develop the work as we did.

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

- We established a population density of Baird's Tapir on Los Katios National Park of one individual per 0.91km<sup>2</sup>, becoming the first information of density for the species in Colombia. Also, Los Katios Park is the only protected area in the country where the species is still in an ideal status, because it can still live without any significant interferences. So, the information collected and generated in this project becomes a control group for other organisations and researchers use it to compare in other studies developed in the country. This is the first information of density for the species in Colombia, and thus it becomes in one the most important data to develop conservation actions in the country. The document we are constructing will assist in the decision-making processes of the area, contributing to the regional and national conservation effort. It also establishes a background to coordinate and articulate government's efforts to maintain an ongoing and permanent conservation effort at medium and long term for the species.
- The presence not only in the protected area but in the region developing the project, raised awareness of the importance of the Baird's Tapir and its protection. First, at local level we strengthen the research and monitoring of the park population and with the work with the communities we changed perceptions and attitudes towards the species that will help us in the preservation of the species and its habitat decreasing its threats. One of the strategies to mitigate hunting pressure is to strengthen the legal instruments of control and regulatory systems of communities and support their sustainable local systems. Also, the long presence on the area helped to make a stand on the conservation of the species at a regional level. In a national level, the publicity made with Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia about the

project and the article published by the national newspaper El Tiempo, helped to gather more supporters for the conservation of the species.

- In terms of habitat of Baird's tapir, we established that the species preferred areas of secondary vegetation, confirming its preference for this type of habitat. Another important aspect is that the area has huge zones of wetlands, and between the forests and these areas there are small areas of palms associations with other vegetations that are too preferred by the species. The knowledge of this potential habitat helps us to define actions for its preservation and protection. In terms of food habits, we identified 40 different plants that the tapir uses as food, and five are new for the literature. The knowledge of these plants as source of food for the tapir in the area, along with the habitat use strengthens the institutional management of the park, directing new studies or researches in these habitats and the different plants species. All this information also enables a better resources management to strengthen the decision-making processes in the area

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

We visited four communities (black and indigenous), two in the frontiers (fishermen mostly) of the area and other two that are inside and use some of the natural resources of the protected area. We could teach everything about the tapir to the fishermen communities and obtain their support to spread the message for protecting the tapir and its habitats. With the other communities (hunters, farmers and loggers), we visited them and stayed in their communities and work with their schools, teachers and leaders. We made friendship and obtained their support for the park functionaries to the species monitoring. In the visits we helped them in the construction of community projects planned for sustainable farms that improve their quality of life, like sugar cane crops and its uses. In all the communities we delivered a total of 270 t-shirts with pictures of the tapir and a conservation message. We also acquire six soccer balls for the communities, and also gave in the school's food and supplies for the students. We also helped to strengthen the relationships between the park administration and the communities with all the activities realised with them.

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

Yes, we want to sample other protected areas that are much intervened in our country so we can establish an actual population status of the species in the country. We also want to work in regions that do not have protected areas and see what is really happening in these places. We want to really grasp the effects of human actions on Baird's tapir population in our country. The work in Los Katios Park will be continued by the park functionaries thanks to our support and information.

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

Results from this work will be shared through:

- Seminars and talks at professional meetings, schools and universities.
- Publication of results in scientific journals and other venues.
- A final report to Parques Nacionales de Colombia that can be consulted by anyone on their libraries.
- In our organisation's website, a summary of the project with some pictures.

- We want to publish a small article for regional and national newspapers, so not only the scientific community knows about the project, but everyone.

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

The RSG was used over 10 months from March until December of 2012. This period was shorter than originally anticipated due to a change of the starting date of the project. In these final months we are using the RSG for all of the publicity and documents elaborations.

**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
Personnel costs	700	500	200	We did not work with as many local assistants as we wanted to, but we support the schools of the communities with some supplies and food
Transportation	500	714	-214	The excess of transport was due to the fact, that to travel to the communities more gasoline was needed than expected. Also, we support the transportation for local people in some cases too.
Subsistence	2050	2150	-100	In the community meetings we made food for everyone in the community, and also support the administration of the park in food supplies in meetings and in the area.
Lodging	400	200	200	By living and staying more time in the protected area, we could save a lot in this item.
Field equipment	550	605	-55	The batteries for the camera traps were a little more expensive in the region than in Bogota.
Scientific equipment	600	542	58	We bought 10 camera traps "Wildview 8IR", and with the aid of another organization we could save a little in this item.
Graphic material	1000	1150	-150	The elaboration of 270 T-shirts for the children communities raised the budget for this item.
<b>Total</b>	<b>5800</b>	<b>5861</b>	<b>-61</b>	Budget: 5800 £sterling, in Colombian pesos: 17'300240\$ Conversion rate 1£ = 2982.8\$

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

- The results have already become a starting point to embark on developing a participatory conservation programme of the species in the area, which can be replicated in other areas in the country. So, in the short term, we will support the park administration to construct its conservation programme for the species. Also, it is priority to find a way to work in the areas where the communities that lived inside use.
- With the communities we would like to start by implementing strategies to reduce hunting pressure, this alongside with the aid of organisation that specialised in supporting communities to develop their own local projects. The general idea is basically to strengthen their regulatory systems regarding use of natural resources and enhanced them.
- In a medium and long term, with the help and support of the conservation national programme of the genus *Tapirus* in Colombia, we want to start with Los Katios Park as the starting point to work in all the of the pacific region of our country where the species occurs, and establish an actual distribution and create or protect forest connections that allow the preservation of Baird's Tapir population.
- As a last benefit, it will strengthen the institutional management of Katios Park, seeking to integrate with other national conservation initiatives. It will also enable a better resources management to strengthen the decision-making processes in the area and strengthen community partnerships.

### **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?**

Yes, the RSGF was recognised in all presentations given in which the project was mentioned or it was central to the presentation, in particular to: all the communities presenting the project and to the park administration; different posters elaborated with the information and preliminary results of the project, given to the four communities and to the park administration; button clips and T-shirts elaborated for the children of the communities in the educational activities realized.

The RSGF received publicity within Parques Nacionales Naturales of Colombia with a written article and also with the publication of an article in the digital edition of EL Tiempo, one of the two most recognised and important newspaper in our country. We also recommended the RSGF to a number of professionals in the region. Finally, and obviously, the RSGF will be recognised in all future publications.

### **11. Any other comments?**

The project had numerous obstacles, but we are convinced that this the correct way of to work in conservation in our country: go the most abandoned and difficult regions and generate new information that can be used to elaborated proper tools to protect the biodiversity of our country. Go to the communities, share with them not only things regarding the project, but also lived among them, show them that if people take the trouble to visit those places it is not just for work or because we really liked it, but to show them that is really important. And if could change the attitude of just few people and also of other groups just a little bit, we are really happy with our work.



In this regard, and in the name of our organisation, Fundacion HomoNatura, and all of the staff of Los Katios National Park, and of course the Baird's Tapir of Colombia, we would like to thank the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for the support of our work in this year. We could not do it if it was not for your support and believe us that with your aid, we helped and did more that can be seen in this paper or any other document.

Thank you so much for your support, we are very grateful to you, best regards.