

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. 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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Long Vu
Project title	Conservation status of cetaceans in Kien Giang BR, Kien Giang province, Vietnam
RSG reference	10664-1
Reporting period	31 st January 2014 to 31 st January 2015
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	long.vu.192@gmail.com
Date of this report	24 th January 2015

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
1. To understand species composition, spatial distribution and relative abundance of cetaceans in the marine part of Kien Giang BR		Yes		<p>This objective has only partially achieved because our current data only enable us to understand limited aspects of species composition, spatial distribution and relative abundance of cetaceans in the marine part of Kien Giang BR.</p> <p>So far, we could only conduct systematic boat-base survey for 23.51% total sea area of Kien Giang BR. During survey time, we had only four on-effort sightings of 19 Irrawaddy dolphin (<i>Orcaella brevirostris</i>) and two on-effort sightings of two finless porpoise (<i>Neophocaena phocaenoides</i>). Current number of sightings was not enough to estimate absolute abundance of two sighted species. We could only calculate relative abundance or encounter rate for each species</p> <p>Moreover, six sightings can only provide limited data for analysis spatial distribution and relative abundance of cetaceans in the marine part of Kien Giang BR.</p>
2. Document cetacean behaviour, group dynamics, and movement patterns using focal observations and photo-identification		Yes		<p>This objective has only partially achieved because we have only observed and recorded data on Irrawaddy behaviours, group dynamics, and movement patterns in surveyed area.</p> <p>There were two sighting of finless porpoise during our boat-based survey but the animals were extremely shy to focal observe and photograph.</p> <p>For Irrawaddy dolphin, we had built the first dorsal fin database, which can be share with other domestic and international researchers.</p>
3. To understand local knowledge on			Yes	Semi-structured interview method was enabling us to understand local

<p>cetaceans, their social and cultural ties with these marine animals and possible conflict between fishermen and cetaceans.</p>			<p>knowledge on cetaceans, as well as document social and cultural ties related to these marine animals. Our collected data also show highly intensive of fishing activities and relative low awareness on cetacean conservation among local fishermen. There were very few direct conflicts between local fishermen and cetaceans have been recorded. In addition, we have identified entanglement in fishing gears as the serious threat for cetacean species in Kien Giang BR.</p>
<p>4. To raise awareness of local fishermen toward cetacean conservation.</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>During our project, we have successfully raise awareness of two local fishermen communities toward cetacean conservation. There are five local fishermen volunteered to participate in our “Cetacean network”. However, to maintain the current result as well as improve awareness</p>

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

First unforeseen difficulties we encounter were the price of fuel. During field survey time period (from March 2014 to July 2014), the price of fuel in Vietnam increased dramatically, resulted as boat hiring charge also increased. In addition, our survey vessels are local fishing boats which have low fuel efficiency. As the result, we could only conduct boat-based survey for an area of 1963.7 square kilometres (23.51% of Kien Giang Sea).

The cetaceans in our survey area are very shy. In all six sightings, the animals avoided survey vessel. Their behaviour makes them difficult to observe and photograph.

During the project, four volunteers from University of Sciences Ho Chi Minh city had joined our project. This was a great opportunity for us to raise awareness for cetacean in Vietnam, but also was a challenge for our limited budget. However, with the help of volunteers, we were able to push up survey time, especially for interview survey.

Our survey area is close to international border. During our survey, Vietnamese coastal navy requested us to limit our survey area at least 5 km away from Vietnam-Cambodia border due to security reasons.

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

The three most important outcomes of the project at this moment are:

1. Conduct the first systematic boat-based survey in Kien Giang biosphere reserve to study cetacean, which result with providing most updated information and robust data on cetacean in this area.
2. Establish first photographic database for Irrawaddy dolphin in Kien Giang BR, with 42 individuals have been “marked”.

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

In our project, we hired local two local fishing boats as our survey vessels. During our survey time, we carefully explained to boat’s crews the motives of our work and the importance of cetacean. These local fishermen were financially benefitted from our project. After we finished boat-based survey, all of these fishermen were volunteered to become our local informants, who will continue to provide us any data relate to cetacean from their community. After working for us, three young fishermen were now well trained in marine mammal identification and using of binoculars and GPS.

During our interview survey, we have visited four fishing communities. We not only collected information, but also shared our knowledge with local fishermen. Many of them were now well aware their fishing zones are a part of UNESCO’s BR, and it is their responsibility to protect this place. Several have volunteered to be our informants.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we will continue my research work in this BR. we will expand my survey area to off-shore zones as well as repeat survey for in-shore zones to collect more data.

As the study site covers about 8,350 km², I feel the need for continuing the work for another 2 years or more to cover most of the habitat. One year is just not enough to survey the entire area and for confirming the status of some rare and elusive cetacean.

We have already worked with four schools in Kien Giang BR. In 2015, we will have awareness raising activities (in-class presentation, drawing contest and movies presentation) for student.

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

I will submit the final detail report to respective funding agencies and also to the Kien Giang BR office and my three referees. I also plan to share my experiences and detail report with “Young marine mammal researchers of Southeast Asia” group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/632626656835833/>). The Rufford’s meeting in the end of January 2015 is also a great opportunity to share our current results. As I recently became member of Society for Marine Mammalogy, I also plan to exchange data with cetacean experts from around the world. I will also publish the findings in reputed scientific journals.

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 for a period of 6 months starting from 31st January 2014 to 31st July 2014. The grant covers a major portion of my field project.

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.

Items	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference (£)	Comments
Accommodations for survey team members	540	900	(-) 360	Three volunteers from University of Sciences (Ho Chi Minh city) joined our project
Food for survey team	540	720	(-)180	Three volunteers from University of Sciences (Ho Chi Minh city) joined our project
Transportation from Ho Chi Minh city to Kien Giang province	48	96	(-)48	More ticket to three volunteers
Daily taxi from Hotel to boat ports	240	0	(+)240	We were able to find hotel near boat ports. We walked to the ports every morning to get on boat
Boat hiring (30 days x 100€/day)	2700	2900	(-) 200	The increasing in fuel price in Vietnam during survey time cause boat hiring became more expensive. As the result, we have to limit boat-base survey in in-shore areas.
Bushnell 7X50 reticle binoculars (3 units x £171.10/unit)	514	514	0	
16GB CF memory card (£31/card x2 card)	62	62		
Salary for boat crews (3persons x 30days x £3/day)	270	270	0	Differences adjusted with other consumable expenditures
Poster, sticker and leaflet, questionnaire printing	300	300	0	
Workshops expenses	600	0	(+)600	We have not conducted any workshop in this project because
Communication (telephone, EMS, fax)	100	100	0	
Unexpected expenses	86	86		We used this item to hire local fishermen to take us to whale-temples to collect data
Total	6000	6152	(-)152	The actual budget of the project anticipated was £7727, which including 6000€ from RSGF and £1727 equivalent equipment from Southern Institute of Ecology (SIE). Real budget

				<p>was shot up to £7879 so far due to unseen expenditures incurred during field surveys like extra field help, increased fuel price etc. The differences were cover up so far by SIE</p>
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* Exchange rate @ 1GBP = 33,711.94VND.

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

The important next steps required immediately are:

1. Expand survey area to remain zones of Kien Giang BR.
2. Repeat boat-based survey at surveyed area to collect more data for abundance estimate and species spatial distribution study. Repeating boat-base survey is also critical to monitoring the endangered and threatened marine mammals along with their associated habitats.
3. Continue to collect data from whale temples.
4. Continue awareness raising programmes.

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, I have used the RSGF logo in the awareness poster, leaflets and sticker. I also include RSGF logo in illustration and photograph sheets which we used to help interviewees identify cetacean I also used Rufford logo in three presentations at international workshops, as well as mentioning the grant as a great contribution for my study. As far as I know, the RSGF received publicity among my colleagues. Some research students enquire about the procedures to apply for the grant.

Both the funding agencies will be mentioned in the acknowledgement sections of all my future research papers and articles of this biosphere reserve.

11. Any other comments?

The photographic database resulted from our project could be shared with other researchers in Vietnam or the Southeast Asia region. Comparing photos from different databases can provide understanding on cetacean migration behaviour However, photographic database contains many photographs which are too large to be sent by usual ways. Therefore, developing website to share photographic data seem to be a best approach.