

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	Vhon Oliver S. Garcia
Project title	Biology and Conservation Ecology of the Lake Taal Sea Snake, <i>Hydrophis semperi</i>
RSG reference	11155-1
Reporting period	May 2012 to May 2013
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	garciavhon@yahoo.com
Date of this report	June 21st 2013

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
Fill in scientific information gaps on the biology and ecology of the Lake Taal sea snake		X		Basic aspects of the sea snake's biology and ecology have been uncovered. This, however, is partially achieved since a lot of recommendations arise after the research. Further studies on the life history of the sea snake are highly encouraged.
Educational forum with primary stakeholders such as the fishing community of Lake Taal			X	A forum was conducted in the PUSOD Taal Lake Conservation Center which gathered key people particularly representatives of various fishing municipalities surrounding Lake Taal. This enabled an engaging discussion between the study team and the primary stakeholders of the lake which clarified the findings of this study.
Inclusion of the Lake Taal sea snake to the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape Management Plan		X		PUSOD, Inc., which is the watch in terms of legislation to Lake Taal as a Protected Landscape, has been made very aware of the existence of the Lake Taal sea snake.
Publication in a peer-reviewed journal		X		A scientific write-up is in preparation to be submitted to relevant scientific journals for publication.

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

None.

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

First, the team was able to conduct an event through the help PUSOD, Inc., one of its collaborators, for the fishing community of Lake Taal. Representatives of the small-scale fishermen movement, Kilusan ng mga Maliliit na Mangangisda sa Lawa ng Taal (KMMLT), from different municipalities of the lake attended this forum where major results were relayed, especially those relevant to their livelihood. Not only were the fishermen taught of the nature of the sea snake and its apparent role in the lake, they also learned how to treat these sea snakes as part of the ecosystem at which they also get their livelihood. This helped in changing their attitude and outlook towards the sea snake.

Second, in terms of community education at a larger scale, the study was featured in a local environmental documentary in the Philippines. This provided the opportunity for the species under study to be acquainted to the general public.

Lastly, is the revival of scientific studies regarding this endemic species of Lake Taal. Having studied the basic aspects regarding the sea snake, the answers that were gathered herein led to more points of insight which gives further research opportunities that will ultimately realise the systematic study and documentation of this unique and important species.

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

The fishing community surrounding Lake Taal was deeply involved in this project through their participation in bycatch sampling. Much benefit has been given to these people through information campaign and educational seminars which part of this study.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. There is much needed continuation of this work.

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

The results of this project are intended to be shared through scientific publications. Information campaign posters and training which would be readily available to immediate stakeholders – the fishermen – is also a plan in order to disseminate the results gathered in this project especially to those who are in frequent encounter with the study species.

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

The grant was used for 1 year which covered the entire duration of the project. The funding was fit for operating and executing the entire project, from procurement of necessary equipment and supplies to the community extension activities during the latter part. The funds were used as anticipated and the amount of funding was just right for the entire 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.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Land Transportation	50	350	-300	Most expenses on this item incurred from gas and highway toll going to the project site
Boat Rental	250	50	200	Researchers were able to find a fishing community to provide cheaper boat use

Lodging	100	0	100	Fishing community provided shelter to researchers through week-long fieldworks
Food	400	400	0	
Labour and Allowances	200	200	0	
Printing and processing	100	100	0	
Information Packages	600	600	0	
Presentation in Scientific Meetings	100	100	0	
Equipment and Supplies	4000	3000	1000	Reallocated to purchase necessary equipment
• Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tags	1200	1200	0	
• PIT Readers	1000	1000	0	
• Underwater Camera	550	500	0	
• Laptop	380	0	380	Reallocated
• Underwater Lamp	200	0	0	
• Handheld GPS Device	200	200	0	
• Snorkelling gear	160	0	160	Reallocated
• Formalin	100	0	100	Reallocated
• Communication Expenses	100	100	0	
• Container Tanks	60	0	60	Reallocated; improvised container tanks were used
• Ethanol	50	0	50	Reallocated
Contingency funds	200	200	0	
Total	6000	5000	1000	Amount of grant was £5000.

Exchange rate at 67.00Php = £1.00

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

I believe that the important next step is to first publish the results of this study into scientific journals in order to provide science-based information available to researchers, scientists, as well as wildlife conservationists in general. This will establish the knowledge on the species and from it could be a starting point in discovering and understanding the animal as a whole. In turn, this information would lead to the proper protection of the species from different threats found in its habitat.

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 logo has been very evident in all scientific meetings, posters, and in public presentations. The RSGF has been always duly recognized as the funding organization for this project.

11. Any other comments?

It is indeed very efficient for the RSGF team addressing my queries from the start to end. The fund distribution was very much efficient as well providing immediate financial resource for the project soon as need arise.

Above all, I am delighted with the way RSGF supports conservation especially of threatened species and its thrust to incorporate this knowledge to the local people. The dissemination of the important and relevant information gathered in this project, and also in other projects (as seen in the RSGF website) bridges the gap of information from the researchers to those who are immediately involved in what we study.