

## 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	
<b>Your name</b>	Trokon Saykpa
<b>Project title</b>	Coastal Protection of Sea Turtles in Bassa Point, Little Bassa and Edina
<b>RSG reference</b>	12850-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	April 2013 to March 2014
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£6,000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:trokonsaykpa@seaturtlewatchlr.org">trokonsaykpa@seaturtlewatchlr.org</a> or <a href="mailto:seaturtlewatch@hotmail.com">seaturtlewatch@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	April 16, 2014

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

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Not achieved</b>	<b>Partially achieved</b>	<b>Fully achieved</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Objective 1: to improve the quality and availability of awareness-raising materials within coastal communities and schools in the region		Partially achieved		Five communities are fully aware and are cooperating with the project. However, some communities are not still aware of the laws or importance of sea turtle conservation. As a lesson learnt, constant awareness raising using all necessary tools will strengthen our conservation work in the region.
Objective 2: to create an enabling environment for school children and youths in the region to learn and discuss about sea turtles, why they are threatened and how they can help to protect it		Partially achieved		The school children and their instructors from two schools were organized and they formed two school nature clubs – Little Bassa Public School and Edina Community Public School. There were two one-education workshops organised for the community members and school children in Little Bassa and Bassa Point. A video showing sea turtle conservation activities in other counties where also shown to the community members in Little Bassa. In the near future, these video shows will be extended to other communities in the area. There is still a need to construct a community conservation education centre in the region to educate school and visitors about endangered species in Liberia.
Objective 3: to monitor the beaches on a daily basis through counting, marking, and recording the locations of all sea turtle nests and bycatch along the coast of the targeted area		Partially achieved		Beach and bycatch monitoring is active on a 22.7km long beach from Bassa Point township to Little Bassa. There are currently 15 active beach and bycatch monitoring – four from Little Bassa, two from Samuel Brown Town, three from Duo Town, three from Sand Farm and three from Bassa Point Township. Monitors were selected by the community and hired by the project team. The monitors were also trained to identify the different species of sea turtles nesting in the region, to measure turtles, mark nest, record the information gathered on a data sheet and to do bycatch monitoring and

				<p>recording work. The training was carried out in collaboration with the Save My Future Foundation. All the monitors in the area are working in pairs and in some communities a group of three persons. Monitors are recording data in stages. In this stage, we were particular about species identification and nest recording. The next will focus on hatchling successes (nest excavating). The project team will continue to train the local monitors on how to gather proper details on sea turtles nesting and bycatches released in the region.</p>
<p>Objective 4: to engage coastal villages into dialogues and actions geared towards sea turtle's conservation in the target area</p>		<p>Partially achieved</p>		<p>Because of the mutual agreement with the communities and their leaders, there is high level of cooperation. However, the project team is seeking for community leaders/elders to put a strong tradition law banning hunting and poaching of sea turtles in the region. Community leaders want to see the project contribution to small scale-projects in their various areas, only then will they place this ban. The project team will work with the community leaders to solicit funding for small-scale community projects in the area.</p>

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

There were two major unforeseen difficulties/challenges faced by the project:

- 1) Local monitors are not well educated, thus resulting in their incapability to correctly fill out data forms. The project team was able to conduct individual training sections at the village-levels for each of the monitors. There will be training organised each year to review and lecture on previous strategies as well as new data recording ideas. Some monitors are gradually picking up the concept whereas others are still learning to write on the data sheet.
- 2) The local fishermen were requesting compensation for damaged fishing nets and gears. Laws and regulations in Liberia protect sea turtles; it is these laws we have used to somehow overcome this issue of fishing net repair. However, fishermen will be given threads whenever they bring a live turtle to the shore and release it – these details will be verified by our bycatch monitors.

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

As a result of this project initiation:

- a) Sea turtle nest poaching does not happen within the areas where there are active beach monitoring ongoing. This is due to the presence of the project team as well as the involvement/participation of the local community members with the project.
- b) Community members who have been involved with sea turtle hunting and egg poaching are enthusiastic about protecting the species and their habitats. Most of these people are involved with the implementation of project activities by serving as beach and bycatch monitors.
- c) Community leaders in the region are working towards a conservation action plan for the protection of sea turtles. The project will continue to encourage the local leaders to ensure such plan exist within the project target areas.

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

Monitors: 15 members of the local communities are involved with the beach and bycatch monitoring in the region. The beach and bycatch monitors were trained on how to identify sea turtle species and tracks, marking and counting nests and record information on a data sheet. **(Please see annex 1 below for unpublished nesting data).**

The local leaders: the increased collaboration between the project team and the local leaders in the region who led discussion on developing a conservation action plan.

The wider community: the community members were involved in an education workshop. During the workshop, community members learned about the different types of sea turtle species nesting on the shores in Liberia as well as the benefits and importance of protecting the species from extinction.

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

Yes certainly. There is still work to be done in the region to make the community-based sea turtle programme become more effective and/or successful. For example, there is need for more training workshops for the local monitors as most are not well-educated to fill in data collection sheets/forms. Additionally, there is need to raise more awareness and extend the project beach monitoring activities to nearby communities where it is not yet active. There is also a need to work with local traditional leaders in the region to ensure that a traditional or local regulation is put into place to ensure that community inhabitants are banned from sea turtles hunting and poaching in the area. This can be achieved by contribution of small-scale community projects identified by the communities.

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

- 1) During a national stakeholder meeting organised by the Save My Future Foundation on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, the project leaders shared the result and progress of the project to Key stakeholders including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- 2) The result/success story of this project can be seen in the African Sea Turtle Newsletter (ASTN) - a free, bi-annual electronic publication about the biology and conservation of sea turtles in Africa, and the behind-the-scenes stories of people who work with sea turtles on this vast and fascinating continent published by the Ocean Ecology Network. You can visit

the Ocean Ecology Network website to download Issue#1 <http://oceanecology.org/newsletter.htm> or directly download it at <http://oceanecology.org/resources/documents/astn-1-2014.pdf>

- 3) Final project report: will also be shared with important stakeholders during communal and coordination meetings with NGOs. It will also be published on the RSG website.

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

In Liberia, the sea turtle nesting season starts in October. The project started in October 2012 and Ended in September 2013. It also continued in October 2013 and is anticipated to end in September 2014. The RSG grant was used from April 2013 through March 2014.

**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
Contribution to personnel cost	1,230.77	1,230.77	0.00	Cover contribution to staff stipends
Education workshop and training cost	2,115.38	2,115.38	0.00	Cover cost for local market women education workshop, training of local monitors, hall rental, stationary for workshop and facilitation fees
Supplies/Materials	1,243.00	1,243.00	0.00	Cover cost for office supplies and materials for local monitors, and fishermen
Consultative Meetings	465.54	465.54	0.00	Cost budgeted initially for performance-based incentive scheme, but the activity was cancelled due to advice from our Technical consultant that this activity would not be sustainable.
Printing cost	946.20	946.20	0.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,999.89</b>	<b>5,999.89</b>	<b>0.00</b>	

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

- i To organise further training for local beach and bycatch monitors in species identification, nests excavation (hatchling success protocol) and properly filling out data sheets.
- ii To raise more public awareness especially to communities where there is no active beach and bycatch monitoring.
- iii To partner with Save My Future (SAMFU) Foundation in public awareness campaigns on sea turtle conservation so as to reach more people within and outside the project area.

- iv To establish/construct an education centre in the project region for training school children, community members and visitors on sea turtle conservation.
- v To contribute to small-scale community project identified by these coastal communities.
- vi To work closely with SAMFU and EPA in strengthening/developing a simplify law/regulation on sea turtle protection for used by local authorities in coastal communities in Liberia.
- vii To continue beach and bycatch monitoring and expand to other nearby communities in the region where monitoring is not active.

**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 was used on sea turtle awareness billboards, fact booklets and is also on the organisation website recognising RSGF as a donor/supporter.

**11. Any other comments?**

On behalf of the Sea Turtle Watch, I am very grateful to Rufford Small Grants Foundation for having supported our project financially. During the period, the grant enabled us to complete our many field activities/work in the region. The grant also played a key role in producing a sea turtle facts booklet, which I am sure, will contribute to raise more public awareness amongst local school children and Liberia biodiversity strategy action plan.

It remains our vision for Grand Bassa County and Liberia as a whole to be a foraging habitat and nesting ground for sea turtles; therefore, we are hoping that the cooperation/support from the RSGF will continue to improve our awareness raising, beach and bycatch monitoring activities.

**ANNEX 1: INFORMATION ON TARGET REGION AND UNPUBLISHED NESTING DATA:**

The project area is a 22.7 km long beach stretching from the mouth of the Farmington River (Bassa Point Township) to Little Bassa beach. There are five (5) communities where beach and bycatch monitoring is currently active. Below are their names, latitude and longitude of their locations:

- i. Bassa Point Township: 6.116313, -10.371781
- ii. Sand Farm: 6.098789, -10.324684
- iii. Duo Town: 6.067982, -10.264486
- iv. Samuel Brown: 6.040115, -10.220034
- v. Little Bassa: 6.32468, -10.216980

**a. Summary of nesting data:**

Target species	# of nests laid	# of successful hatched nests	# of hatchlings	# of bycatch release alive	# of bycatch dead or drown
Olive ridley*	47	45	n/a	0	0
Green*	12	11	n/a	8	0
Hawksbill	0	0	n/a	0	0
Leatherback	56	55	n/a	1	3
Unknown	12	0	n/a	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>111</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>

\*It is likely that monitors may have confused green turtles and olive ridleys. Species identification is being improved upon for the next season.

**b. Trainees, beach and communities participating:**

Total number of trained local monitors = 17 persons

Total number of active monitors = 15 persons

Total number of communities involved = 5

Total number of beach length/coverage = 22.7 km

Name of active communities = Little Bassa, Samuel Brown, Duo, Sand Farm and Bassa Point Township