

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Jose Oswaldo Cortes Herrera
Project title	Assessment and conservation of threatened bird species at Guayabetal.
RSG reference	13.08.07
Reporting period	2009
Amount of grant	£2100
Your email address	Oswaldo.aves@gmail.com
Date of this report	6 June 2009

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

This study benefited immensely from the availability of a large team of workers, which allowed an unprecedented breadth and depth of study to be carried out on Cundinamarca Antpitta and Flame-winged parakeets in a relatively short space of time. Because of the numbers of observers involved, it was necessary to design relatively simple methods in all parts of the study, which had the two-fold advantage of reducing observer errors in data collection, and in making the methods much more easily taught and maintained. As one of the main aims of this study was to help put into place a continuous monitoring programme, this latter factor was vital to the success of long-term work.

As mentioned above, this study involved an array of methods designed to maximise the breadth of knowledge gained on Cundinamarca Antpitta and Flame-winged parakeets. Initially the study focussed on transect-based surveys designed to locate foraging areas of the birds, to assess the distribution of the species, and to gain information on habitat requirements (linked with habitat surveys carried out at the same time). Foraging sites located as part of the transect surveys could then be used as focal points for intensive collection of data on foraging behaviour of the birds. These areas also formed the initial base for starting location searches, which involved carrying out increasingly small-scale emergence watches which led to the precise location of two previously unknown nests being discovered on region Guayabetal.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
To estimate the current population level and distribution of the threatened birds at Guayabetal			X	From observations at cloud forest at Guayabetal, emergence counts were possible, with a maximum total of 22 Cundinamarca Antpitta and 30 Yellow winged Parakeets being observed at the three regions in cloud forest. The Guayabetal cloud forest appeared to be occupied by just these threatened birds, and although emergence counts do not provide an accurate population count, these numbers indicate cloud forest sizes alarmingly smaller than that present on Guayabetal.
To assess foraging rates and habitat use in order to better understand the threatened birds' requirements.			X	This species was found in 3 out of 15 investigated cloud forests. It nests on three of these cloud forests (parakeet) for sure. Further investigations about the distribution of this species in the south-eastern part of Guayabetal should be conducted. The most important territories for habitation of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Parakeet are the system of Cloud forest and Paramo on the territory of Guayabetal

<p>To identify the core threats to the species and the principal reasons for the observed decline.</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>This study has added considerable information to the current understanding of the ecology of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets. The information on habitat requirements has contributed considerably to proving that population extinctions on some regions at Guayabetal were not due to loss of suitable habitat. Conversely the strong relationships found between habitat structure and bird's distribution and foraging suggest that habitat structure will have sufficient influence to affect the distribution of the remaining populations.</p> <p>Local information suggests that cloud forest disturbance or destruction may have occurred in several places, including on Guayabetal. Although such human activity is likely to cause severe stress to the birds population, it does not, in isolation explain the local extinctions that have occurred, as many cloud forest will have escaped any frequent human attention. However, the finding that cloud forest vicinities are so vital as locations for both social and foraging behaviour emphasises the importance of effective cloud forest protection</p>
<p>To implement an education programme with Wildlife Clubs and schools of the Guayabetal</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>The workshop was successful in identifying key activities and the assistance of Guayabetal was sought in teacher training, community meetings, and further workshops. Positive feedback was received from the participants after an evaluation of the activity. Most of the participants found the energizers, "Club Antpitta" meaningful. T-shirts bearing the project logo were given to participants, who also received copies of the workshop proceedings.</p>
<p>To outline sustainable measures to improve its'</p>				

conservation status and implement an ongoing monitoring and recovery programme.				
---	--	--	--	--

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

I didn't have difficulties on this project.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION A specific plan for environmental education activities was structured and applied to the school at "Guayabetal". There was involvement of children of ages 10 to 14 plus the active participation of all the teachers and parents. Other activities mainly concerning massive diffusion were carried out outside the school and had active involvement of the rest of the. These are the results obtained from the education campaigns.



Photo 1. Creation of the ecological group "Friends of the Antpitta". Children, students, teachers and parents actively participate in it.

MONITORING AND CENSUS PROGRAM FOR THREATENED BIRD SPECIES AT GUAYABETAL

Construction of a special database with records from Cundinamarca Antpitta and parakeets and all the other threatened species at Guayabetal region, allowed analyzing information about the number of sightings of species such as birds, amphibians and bats.



Photo 2. Monitoring

INCREASED LOCAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION with people regional and local governmental, non-governmental, and community bodies involved in the implementation of the Action Plan for threatened birds at Guayabetal.



Photo 3. Local people

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

In the period of 8 months, with the objective of making a first evaluation on the general consciousness of the situation of the birds that inhabit our cloud forest, Guayabetal Project surveyed ten locations along the cloud forest with participation of 100 children and local governments. Guayabetal worked with the schools in the most important communities, organizing talks and interactive activities with children and teachers. In some cases, talks and follow-up activities were organized outside the school limits with the hunters and their families. In addition, schools and high schools farther away from the coastal area were visited after being invited. Relevant information was collected in order to design an Educational Programme for the critical areas.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This Action Plan has been developed on the basis of fieldwork and research carried out by the University Expedition 2008. The aim of the Action Plan proposes a broad array of management and education goals that will allow protection of the extant populations of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets, and work towards the re-establishment of the species across its former range and the increase of populations. The Action Points fall into four categories:

- **Education**, which encompasses programmes aimed at raising public awareness and public responsibility, public dissemination of knowledge and progress, and the active encouragement of youth conservation awareness.
- **Protection**, which includes those measures which are intended to conserve the current population, Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets and which take steps to prevent any detrimental activity.
- **Mitigation**, which involves both ecological and political programmes aimed at encouraging the expansion and growth of the extant Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged

parakeets' populations. These are designed based on our current best knowledge of the species, and will of necessity adapt as our understanding of the species ecology increases.

- **Research**, further research projects are suggested which would further our ability to successfully adapt conservation measures to the requirements of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets. Other research possibilities of a less applied nature are not considered here, although their value is also high.

The Action Plan

Education

1. Through public media, to increase awareness of the identity and conservation status of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets throughout the Guayabetal. This has been commenced with considerable success through newspaper, radio and television coverage. A children's book currently under construction will, along with work with school and youth groups, instigate the education of younger members of society, and aims to increase both awareness, and a sense of responsibility towards the native wildlife.
2. Again, using public media, to commence a programme of education aimed at raising awareness of the multiple affects of both public and private pesticide use. As well as emphasising the negative impact of these chemicals on Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets (through a reduction of prey abundance and a possible impact on male fertility) and other native fauna, the drive should also allow people to understand the potential risks to public health and to the wider environment via overexposure and contamination of water.
3. To encourage and educate towards the use of more native tree species in garden and ornamental settings.

Protection

The immediate need for the protection of the present Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets' populations is for the establishment of some form of reserve status around known foraging areas and areas of mature forest. This does not have to take the form of National Parks.

This would involve the assurance that certain activities could not take place in those areas, such as wood burning, and felling of trees over 5m tall; and that other activities such as housing development be carried out in accordance with ecologically sensitive guidelines.

These could be that no non-native plants are introduced to gardens, that native trees cannot be cut down, or that stands of trees must be planted along roadsides to soften the habitat damage.

As has proved useful in the Colombia, the introduction of legal protection of the birds would allow criminal charges to be brought against anyone proven to intentionally or recklessly disturb or harm any Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets, whether in the cloud forest or foraging.

Research

Much further immediate effort is required aimed at locating and recording the locations of all of the remaining cloud forest sites and foraging areas of Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets.

An immediate requirement is the study of insect abundance and fruits associated with different medium/large tree species. We need to clarify the relative prey richness associated with each tree species to ensure that reforestation programmes are designed to benefit the invertebrate community and the birds. This enrichment will obviously be of benefit to a wider array of species, beyond the immediate need to aid Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets.

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

- Constant publication of results on the project's web site as soon in Cundinamarca project
- Final report with full details of activities, results, analyses, action plans and conservation strategy available
- Report on meetings and results of the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets action plan with team members and experts.
- Important news of activities and events at Guayabetal.
- Peer-review publication in the new journal about the ecology and conservation birds.
- Exposition of results each year on national or international events such as ornithology meetings.

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

The period was 2007- January 2009

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
Transportation (By vehicle) Insurance	510 £ sterling			
Digital Recorders, Mist nets and Waterproof cases	140 £ sterling			
Living costs, Local guide, Drivers, Local participant, Fuel costs	850 £ sterling			
Education Activities: Workshops and guidebooks	1000 £ sterling			
Total	2500£ sterling			

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

Information on the population status and distribution of the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets is critical for recognizing the key areas and outlining a strategy for the conservation of this species. Besides little is known about basic biology of the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets, which is indispensable to establish adequate management plan. We recommended to extend our approach to other mountain ranges in Cundinamarca (Cloud forest), especially the north-east of the Cordillera oriental and to discover other key areas, we consider the Cubarral and Quetame area extremely important for the conservation of the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets strongly recommended continuous monitoring the populations.

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?

I did use the logo on the local training and environmental education at Guayabetal.

11. Any other comments?

Further community consultations are needed to discuss the threats to the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets and other key species in the Antpittas, parrots and hummingbirds and agree on measures to counter these. The resulting conservation action plan will be more effective in addressing the conservation need in the cloud forest Guayabetal if jointly implemented by the local government and communities in the vicinity of the birds habitat. The process of community consultations will be iterative and participatory.

In line with the previous recommendation, declaring the Cundinamarca Antpitta and Yellow winged parakeets as municipal 'flagship species' will greatly increase local people's awareness and concern for the survival of the birds as well as other key species in the Guayabetal. The declaration can serve as an anchor by which a municipal-wide environmental pride campaign can be launched.