

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	Tshering Dorji
Project title	Assessing population status of Pygmy Hog (<i>Porcula salvinia</i>) in Royal Manas National Park and Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary
RSG reference	13166-1
Reporting period	April 3, 2013 to October 2, 2014
Amount of grant	£ 6000
Your email address	tdorji73@yahoo.com
Date of this report	October 3, 2014

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
Presence and absence survey			Achieved	The questionnaire survey, installation of camera traps and direct observation for indirect signs in the entire historical home range has been conducted. However, we have not been able to record any evidence by any of the three methods employed. The only hope for false absence is from the recent evidence of 20 nest recorded in Manas National Park, 1.5 to 3 km from the border.
Population and distribution assessment		Partially achieved		Although the different methods were used to assess the population and distribution of pygmy hog in its entire historical range, the current distribution could not be ascertained due to lack of evidence. The mapping based on the information of occurrences in the past has been done to update baseline information of this species. Using the land use data (1970's and 2010), the habitat changes with special reference to grassland has been mapped to see possible cause of its population decline. The result shows that 50% of the grassland are lost over a period of three decades.
Habitat and threat assessment			Achieved	In RMNP the land use change (invasion of grassland by woody trees) is found significant which may be possible cause for decline of pygmy hog population. In Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary, the land use change includes abandoning of paddy field in 1990s due to insurgency problems. The habitat loss is the single most important threat for the decline of pygmy hog population in the study areas. Poaching incidences has not been reported.

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

The actual field work took more than the expected time of completion because of the following reasons:

1. The information on the species occurrence in its historical range was rarely available and more efforts were needed to ascertain its presence and absence.
2. The research areas was sparsely distributed (not continuous) along the international borders with India and some areas were not easily accessible due to security reasons.

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

The three most important outcome of the projects were:

1. In both the study areas, the presence of pygmy hog is not recorded through direct observation and only information based presence are predicted. This require extensive study and rectification by the park authorities.
2. The significant changes in grassland habitat is observed in both the study areas which can be attributed to the loss of this species. In RMNP alone 50% of the grassland has been lost in last three decades.
3. Both the park authorities are informed on the research outcome which itself has become one of the outcomes as this could be used as basis for further research.

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

The local communities were not directly involved in the implementation of the project but they are being hired as porter and guide by the researcher at different locations.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

One of the recommendations made to Manager of Royal Manas National Park and Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary is to conduct another sound of presence/absence survey. The species recovery plan is another recommendation from the study made to park authorities. We will explore financial support to continue with the population survey and make an effort to save this species from possible extinction.

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

The preliminary report has been presented to both the park management from September 9th-10th 2014 during TraMCA stakeholder consultation meeting held at Phuentsholing. Through this report the two park authorities have listed this species as transboundary landscape species. The detail reports is under draft to be submitted to the park management and a copy will be sent to Rufford Foundation for publication. A short article will be published on finalisation of detail reports and published in Ministry of Agriculture and Forests website which is widely read by mass Bhutanese population of conservationist.

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

The fund was used over a period of 18 months. The actual length of the project was planned for 12 months but it took six months more due to spare study areas and extremely scarce distribution of the species.

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
Logistic and travel for field survey	1484	1630	-146	As the length of the study took 18 months, the logistic cost increased over actual estimates
Daily subsistence cost for researcher	2055	2150	-95	The daily subsistence for the researchers too has increase due to extension of project duration.
Cost of survey equipments	1587	1550	+ 37	The saving is made to cover the field logistics by negotiating the cost of equipments.
Hire charge of camera traps	228	228	00	The estimated and actual cost remained same.
Printing and publication	228	150	+78	The cost saving is made to cover up cost of logistics
Field gear/Stationeries	418	292	+126	The field gears and logistics are used as minimum as possible
Total	6000	6000	00	

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

Pygmy hog is one of the critically endangered species found in Bhutan and Assam. The Park management of RMNP and KWS should come up with immediate recovery plan to save this species from local extinction. For this to take place, the two parks should come up with joint breeding program of this species and release back to natural 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?

I used RSGF logo on Maps and power point presentations of the project reports.

11. Any other comments?

The support rendered by RSGF has helped the researcher in motivating management of two parks to take further actions immediately and they have listed pygmy hog as top priority species to monitor jointly. This is big achievement in terms of influencing policy decisions.