

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	Tarun Nair
Project title	Assessing the conservation status of the Gharial (<i>Gavialis gangeticus</i>) in four tributaries (Ken, Son, Gandak and Kosi Rivers) of the Gangetic River System.
RSG reference	13367-1
Reporting period	12 months (extension sought till August 2014)
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	tarunnair1982@gmail.com
Date of this report	31 st August 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
Assess conservation status of gharials in the Ken, Son, Gandak and Kosi Rivers; identify threats to these populations, and record incidences of fisher-gharial conflict.		✓		We did not survey the Kosi River due to low flows in the dry season which renders the river unnavigable. The logistical challenges associated with operating in a braided system like the Kosi probably requires a stand-alone project. That apart, fishers, particularly on the Gandak, were reluctant to report incidents of gharial entanglement in fishing nets and hence, it was difficult to get an accurate assessment of the extent of fisher-gharial conflict. We realise that only sustained interactions with these groups will enable us to gain their trust and eventually get a better understanding of conflict levels.
Formulate location-specific conservation strategies		✓		We are not in a position to formulate specific conservation strategies for the Gandak at the moment, owing to the complexities (e.g., high frequency of channel avulsion, wide floodplain, large part of the Gandak River is outside the Protected Area network, and high human population densities) in a system in which we have relatively little experience. However, we hope to continue working in this region (with the help of other more experienced groups) to better understand the challenges and potential strategies for gharial conservation here.
Dissemination of information		✓		While some results of our work have already been shared with the State Forest Departments, local communities and the public, the final results will be shared through publications / presentations in appropriate fora, over the next few months (see response number 6).

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

The project faced delays due to unsuitable weather conditions, occasionally, last winter (Dec 2013 - Feb 2014) and due to election-related restrictions and logistical issues in April-May 2014. We sought a project extension till August 2014 to compensate for these delays.

We could not access some riverside villages along the Gandak due to floods and had to therefore abandon plans to conduct awareness programmes in a few such locations.

In addition, we dropped our plans of surveying the Kosi River because extremely low flows in the dry season render the river unnavigable. And, after consultation with our local partners, we felt that the logistical challenges associated with operating in a braided system like a Kosi required a stand-alone project.

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

- i. This project has helped provide a clearer picture on the status of gharials in the Ken, Son and Gandak Rivers, and most importantly demonstrate the conservation potential for the species in the Son and Gandak Rivers. We have also collected some evidence for the trans-boundary movement of gharials (between Nepal and India) in the Gandak River.
- ii. The project has allowed us to interact with a large number of people from riverside communities, state officials and local conservation groups. We believe that this network of regional contacts and resource people are vital to our continued work in these areas. With an audience of almost 15,000 people our awareness programmes reached out to a sizeable section of our target groups. We believe this is a significant first step towards securing local support for gharial conservation. This has also given us a good understanding of the scale of operations required for better outreach coverage in the future.
- iii. Conservation interventions: Another important outcome of this project was our involvement in two high-level meetings with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department – (a) We presented the results of our study and discussed threats to the Son Gharial Sanctuary (SGS) at the Second Meeting of Expert Committee on Conservation Planning of Son Gharial Sanctuary (12-13 March 2014); and (b) a meeting with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden (29th-30th April 2014) to discuss provisions for ecological river flows in the Son River and to present objections to proposed construction activities near the only known gharial breeding site in the SGS. In addition, our interim report submitted to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department was also used in a Public Interest Litigation filed in the National Green Tribunal against sand-mining in the SGS.

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

Individuals from the local communities have been an important part of our surveys, and their inputs and support have been vital. Local communities have been the primary audience for our awareness programmes where we also shared some results from this project. Our interactions with these communities have also helped shape future plans for long-term species monitoring and community awareness programmes in these locations.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project has helped establish the conservation potential for gharials in the Son and Gandak Rivers. While there are no immediate plans to continue this work, we hope to undertake long-term species monitoring and community-awareness programmes in these locations in the near future.

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

Some results of our work have already been shared with: (a) the State Forest Departments through interim reports and during frontline-staff training programmes; (b) with local communities through street plays and puppet shows in villages and schools; and (c) with general public through local news reports. Final results will be shared through publications / presentations in appropriate fora.

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 between October 2013 and August 2014.

We anticipated using the RSG between April 2013 and July 2014. However, our grant application was approved on 20th June 2013 with a 12-month final reporting period, followed by an extension granted in May 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
Wages	1680	2266.12	- 586.12	Wages were budgeted only for project personnel. But midway through the project, we decided to enlist local theatre artists for the awareness programmes. Hence the increased expenditure.
Equipment: Camera	235	385.28	- 150.28	Camera model budgeted not in stock. Purchased model was more advanced and better suited for our work.
Equipment: Binoculars	350	00.00	350.00	Obtained through another grant.
Operating costs: Accommodation	360	573.56	- 213.56	Weather-related delays, obtaining permits, organising project activities and logistics required more days than expected. We were also constrained to stay mostly in towns during the awareness programmes, and hence the increased expenditure.
Operating costs: Provisions / supplies	2000	1226.51	773.49	Supported by another grant.

Operating costs: Travel / transportation	1100	1474.52	- 374.52	Additional vehicle (rental + fuel) for theatre group. Hence increased expenditure.
Operating costs: Miscellaneous	275	117.93	157.07	Miscellaneous expenses (stationery, printing, battery hiring, bedding, etc) were also supported by another grant.
TOTAL	6000	6043.93	- 43.93	Local Exchange Rate @ £ 1 GBP = INR 90.816

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

While we hope to undertake long-term species monitoring and community-awareness programmes in the Son and Gandak in the near future, we would like to use the momentum from this project to highlight the conservation challenges and opportunities for gharials in the region whilst continuing to engage with local conservation partners.

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. We used the RSGF logo on programme banners, presentation slides, and awareness hand-outs, posters and calendars. RSGF support for this project has been highlighted in press reports as well. Further, RSGF support will be duly acknowledged in all future publications and presentations.

Annex 1

Press Articles



