

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	Nicolás Pelegrin
Project title	Contribution from science and social awareness to the conservation of Chaco reptiles in Argentina
RSG reference	13880-1
Reporting period	October/2013-October/2014
Amount of grant	£ 5207
Your email address	nicolas.pelegrin@conicet.gov.ar
Date of this report	October 2 nd , 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
Sample new Chaco localities			X	We sampled three new localities in the Chaco. One of them is a recently created reserve.
Increase our knowledge on species distribution and diversity			X	One of the main results of our samplings is the record of an amphibian genus never listed for Argentina, and the probably discover of a new lizard species.
Promote a change in citizens perception of reptiles		X		We made the first (of many) workshops about Sierra Chaco reptiles aimed to tour guides, tour guide students, park rangers, and personnel of environmental agencies.
Elaborate printed material on reptiles of the Chaco		X		We produced colour plates of common reptiles of the Sierra Chaco for free, and we are ending a field guide to recognise Sierra Chaco reptiles, and a commented list of Sierra Chaco reptiles.

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

The main difficulty we found was to complete our objective of produce a social impact with our work. We originally aimed our educational activities to scholars and medical posts in rural areas, but the effort needed to make a significant change was not reliable. Given that we started a partnership with a recently created private reserve (Los Chorrillos, in the Sierra Chaco), we realised that working with tourism guides and park rangers was a solution for our problem. Park rangers and tour guides are ideal to expand our educational activities, since they reach more people (including scholars, tourists, local people, and personnel of environmental agencies) than we do. By teaching tour guides about herpetofaunal diversity and conservation, we offer them a tool to be used in their job, producing a multiplying effect that spread the knowledge to different actors in the community.

During a workshop made with tour guides and park rangers, all al them recognized that the information offered would be useful for their jobs.

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

- 1- An increase in the knowledge on Chaco herpetofaunal diversity and distribution.
- 2- Finding a new genus of amphibians for Argentina, and a probably undescribed lizard species.
- 3- Start working with tour guides as a link to reach the community with our educational activities.

4- Freely downloadable material about Chaco reptiles aimed to common people.

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

The benefits of the project will be observed in the following years, while increasing the number of workshops, speeches and courses to tour guides (including undergraduates), and as they start to teach what they learn during their activities.

Speeches to schools are still being offered at the Centro de Zoología Aplicada about diversity and conservation of reptiles.

Tour guides that attended our workshop were very interested in the subject presented. All of them recognised reptiles as an interesting tool for their jobs, which will help us to spread the knowledge about Chaco reptiles and their conservation problems.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. We think we found a path to continue with educational activities in a much more efficient way. Our samplings in the Chaco will also continue, taking advantage of new contacts and techniques. The equipment obtained through our RSG, will allow us to sample herpetofaunal communities independently of the topography.

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

Some of the main results of this project will be presented in a Herpetology meeting next week.

Material for educational activities will be available soon in the lab's webpage at <http://pelegrinnicolas.wix.com/lecoherp> licenced under creative commons to be freely downloaded and distributed. We are attaching a preview of the material to be uploaded to our site soon.

A scientific article was published (Sánchez et al, 2014. Article attached) and one more is on preparation about the results of our samplings.

We have contacted a local radio station aimed to divulgation of science, where we will participate in some of the next broadcasts.

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

The project was carried out according to the original schedule.

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
Buckets	873	915	-42	
Plastic sheeting	300	375	-75	
HOBO data logger + software+ shipping costs	638	0	638	There are severe restrictions to importations in Argentina since 2013. We are unable to buy this item at the moment.
Gasoline	348	600	-252	Fuel increased it value, and we sampled sited located further than originally planned.
Notebook battery	112	110	2	
Ground driller	955	970	-15	
Tools (staple gun, shovels, etc)	450	500	-50	
Pesola scales	156	160	-4	
Printer	124	120	4	
Posters and booklets	896	500	396	These will be printed gradually according to the new methodology adopted for the educational activities.
Meetings	112	250	-138	
Contingency	248	500	-252	We had to spend extra money on shipping and transportation of field material and voluntaries to sampling sites, as well as food for voluntaries and researchers in the field.
TOTAL	5212	5000	212	The difference will be used to continue our activities during this spring-summer (October-March)

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

We believe that an important step is to expand our samplings and generate and provide free material on Chaco reptiles available for all. These two actions along with the continuation of the workshops to tour guides, park rangers and technicians of environmental agencies will ensure the long-lasting impact of our work.

We are also generating new collaborations with groups working in other areas within the Chaco, sharing our experiences and generating new objectives to work together, which will produce a larger impact.

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 in every presentation, and is included in all material to be printed and elaborated with RFG funds. The RSGF is mentioned in our publications and in the webpage where the project description and downloadable material is hosted at <http://pelegrinnicolas.wix.com/lecoherp>. Here you can find plates of native fauna to be freely downloadable aimed at common people and tourism guides in the field. The content of these plates is complemented with material online in the lab's site.

11. Any other comments?

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity of making this project real. We accomplished a lot of objectives and created a herpetology lab that started its activities thanks to the RSGF.

The activities of the Lab started with this project and helped to explore another research lines aimed to the conservation of the Chaco herpetofauna.