

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	Enzo Aliaga Rossel
Project title	Bolivian River Dolphin (buefo) Conservation; A Unique and Vulnerable Aquatic Mammal in Need of Protection in Fresh Water Rivers and Lakes of the Bolivian Amazon
RSG reference	13982-1: River Dolphin Conservation With Communities in the Bolivian Amazon
Reporting period	September 15 2013 to 2014
Amount of grant	£5942
Your email address	ealiagar@hotmail.com
Date of this report	15 September 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
<p>Community outreach and education: Identify and train local teachers who will help develop educational materials, presentations and activities to use in schools.</p>			X	<p>We trained local teachers from the City of Magdalena (North of Beni), we discussed and presented most of the educational material. However, the future plan is to expand this experience to several city schools in Beni. And we will follow-up workshop for teachers who participate in the project.</p>
<p>Research and record Amazonian indigenous traditional wildlife stories and folklore</p>		X		<p>We developed several activities to reach this goal, however most of the communities we work with, lost their houses and they decided it was not the appropriate time to discuss or talk about any other issue. However, we have their compromise to continue with the project in the near future.</p>
<p>Deliver presentations in schools, run interactive and lively classroom sessions about bufeos, their habitat and threats they face.</p>			X	<p>We performed several presentations in schools, in the Trinidad city and rural areas, we gave kids (from rural and poor areas) school material such as a colour pencils, sharpener, eraser, and other material. They were very excited about this. Finally we gave them certificates, which indicate they are the guardians of the river. A total of 400 children have received a diploma (attachments).</p>
<p>Monitoring and Conservation Activities Carry out informal interviews with fishermen and other river users about their attitudes towards bufeos, fishing activities and hunting habits to identify problems and harmful activities that affect the river's wildlife.</p>		X		<p>We carried out informal interviews to people from indigenous communities and people living near the rivers. Collecting important information, however, the sample size is still small and we are planning to continue next year</p>
<p>Identify and train local community members to participate in monitoring and observation of bufeo abundance, distribution, mortality and threats.</p>		x		<p>We identified some community members (from 1 community- Pto. Ballivian) that were interested and willing to help the project; we trained to record any mortality or issues related to bufeos in the area. They</p>

				started in May 2014, we hope they will increase the interest of other members of the community. However, they need more training.
Local Authorities Carry out regular meetings with local municipal representatives to support a development of a PA management plan; share examples of other plans and help them to review current activities and priorities. Provide the municipal authorities with relevant information on habitat use, abundance, threats and environmental needs of bufeos for adequate conservation measures.			X	We performed several meeting, with the municipal authorities (Department of Tourism is the department in charge of the PA), and also the Department Government. The cooperation with them will continue, and we will coordinate further actions to continuing working to finish a management plan. We gave the authorities relevant information on habitat use, abundance, threats and environmental needs of bufeos for adequate conservation measures. The program is willing to continue with this partnership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the authorities to refine plans for a visitor centre in the PA to include interpretation components and displays for locals and visitors. 		X		The small building that the authority told us it would be part of the interpretation centre. They decide to use it as a medical post; the disaster showed several needs in the area. However, we keep planning to build this, maybe in a different region of the Beni, We will looking for more support from the authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain regular contact with the educational authorities to ensure their support towards the delivery of environmental education at schools and lobby them to include environmental education modules in the curriculum. 			X	We had several meetings with authorities, and they are interested in continuing supporting the project. And all the environment education. Our goal is to cover at least 80 schools in different regions of Beni. We are planning to propose this idea to the Ministry of Education.
Local businesses: Organise a practical workshop for local tour operators about responsible dolphin watching and to share models of good practice.			X	After informal meetings with several tour operators in the area, and with the cooperation of the Beni Government, department of Tourism, we finally finished the book, "Good practices in the responsible observation Bolivian river dolphin".
Hold meetings with wildlife tourist operators to develop a voluntary code of conduct to ensure that wildlife tours are sustainable and educational		X		We had a preliminary approach to wildlife tourist operator, however, this part of the project working with tourist operators and boat handlers

(promote conservation				was postponed to November 2014 or possible next year.
-----------------------	--	--	--	---

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

We started with a big delay in our schedule, because Bolivia suffered one of the worst flooding in the last years

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/04/brazilian-dams-accused-aggravating-floods-bolivia/>
<https://nacla.org/blog/2014/3/31/are-brazil%E2%80%99s-dams-blame-record-floods-bolivia>
http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/Blogs/2309820/bolivia_and_britain_a_tale_of_two_floods.html

More than 180 000 cattle drowned in the area; also an undetermined amount of wildlife mortality was reported, without any study or register in the area. The water levels were so high that they covered my entire study site, including all the local indigenous communities living along the rivers, Therefore, all the agreements and logistics have to be suspended. Unfortunately this situation was denied by our national government to avoid any international help.

Until mid-June 2014 some areas at north of the country were still underwater, but waters were slowly receding. In July 2014 we did a population survey, and we were able to notice that there was still not beaches along the rivers, usually in this month there are several beaches where turtles lay their eggs Therefore, most of the activities planned were postponed or started too late. However, we were able to do several activities, and maintained the good relations and interest of the project with authorities and local communities.

There are no evaluations for the wildlife or the effects on this. With all this disaster going on, the Beni Department (State) Government stopped any activity that was not related to the flooding. However, we still managed to continue with the project, and maintained the interest of some local authorities related to river dolphins, doing most of the activities, and other activities will continue in the near future.

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

As part of the strategy for the conservation of the river dolphin is tourism (with cooperation of the Tourism department of the Beni Government). We finished two main products: the publication “Buenas prácticas en la observación responsable del bufeo boliviano (*Inia boliviensis*)”—Good practices in the responsible observation of the Bolivian bufeo (*Inia boliviensis*). This book is in final design and will be launched at the end of September. Also we finished a video with basic information on river dolphin; this video will be presented as promotion for the species, highlighting the unique species. This will be presented in some local touristic restaurants, exhibitions and fairs. And the link of a lower resolution is posted in YouTube and distributed via social networks.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7e8zFVGUCI>

We are planning to continue working with tourism operators and companies related to tourism.

With all the presentations and workshops we reach more than 5000 people with information about the river dolphins, at least 1000 were kids and young, this people will become future leaders and allied for river dolphin conservation. We distributed posters and booklets about the species, their threats and how we can help them. We are planning to continue with this presentations and information In the future. The Beni Government and some small cities, are interested in my project and will continue supporting this initiative, for example, the government set a banner in the main square of the city, as a promotion (See attached pictures).

We continued with the monitoring and the evaluation of the population status of the river dolphin. We surveyed five rivers, one (Mamore) and four tributaries of two sub basins (Ibare, Tijamuchi, Machupo, Itonama). Machupo and Itonama belong to the Municipality of Magdalena. Despite the flooding, I was glad to see several young and calf river dolphins, so is important to monitor the population next year, however, the numbers of river dolphins counted are under relatively good conditions, so the importance of continue with all the conservation efforts is important. This information is part of a long term project, and will be published in a scientific journal.

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

The involvement of local communities is a key component for the conservation of the species. Also, we created a close relation with authorities, they are changing their perception of the species in the area, and the image of river dolphin is used more frequently in different banners, and other information. Local communities were visited and informed about the main objectives of the project; we started with small workshops last year, and a series of environmental educational campaign. Two community members (Pto Ballivian) are more involved with the project by participating actively in the surveys and mortality, we are planning that more people will be involved and have a bigger participation. This is a long term project and locals will benefit with different tourism projects, ideally will be hired as tourist guides by local companies. Some locals have already experience in the tourist activity.

For the expeditions we hired local guides and motor driver, they understand the project and are a good link to the communities and the programme.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I have more plans to continue with this project. I've been working with river dolphins for around 15 years, and even though this was not continued this species needs a lot of protection. We need to continue with the promotion of the species, creating aware about the species and the threats. We need to work with fisherman, and the local communities. We need to include the river dolphins in different management plans of protected areas.

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

Most of the results and basic information on river dolphins were presented in different activities of diffusion in cities and rural areas. Many of the results (of the surveys) will be presented in scientific publications, national and international meetings. For example, in December 2014 there will be the meeting of cetacean specialists in South America, E. Aliaga-Rossel will be presenting and involved in several discussion groups, where the results and the experience will be presented. The PI was

interviewed in small note at the local newspaper (July 31st 2014), where they explained about the project, environmental education, etc. We are planning to open a social network page, reporting the results and basic information of river dolphins.

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

The RSG Grant was used over a period of 12 months, from September 2013 – September 2014, the majority of the objectives were fulfilled and we were able to reach additional and important results than we expected. We are planning to continue with a long term project, and depending on the funding expand to other rural towns, and to strength the results already consolidated with local communities and the relation with 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
Bank commission ITF Taxes		45	45	
2 x return air tickets for project leader: La Paz to Trinidad @ £200	400	560	140	A cheaper company allowed to round travel five people of the team, making this more efficient.
Travel in Trinidad and the PA by road and river taxis@£24per month	288	288	0	This was used in several trips (including trip to Trinidad by bus)
Contribution to accommodation costs for team in Trinidad@£72/mth	864	864	0	
Contribution to food for project team in Trinidad@ £30 per month	360	360	0	
Stipend for project leader (£100 per month)	1200	1200	0	
Stipend for project partner (£80 per month)	960	960	0	
Education materials for children's' activities (booklets, arts & crafts)	550	550		Several of the material was a present for kids, and the booklet is not published yet. It was also used for the book of good practices
Make interpretation resources with local people for outreach/exhibits	650	300	-350	
Boat and motor board, motor driver rent for bufeo survey	0	350	350	We used the difference of the interpretation resources, because that activity was cancelled.
Expenses for school and teacher visits and activity days	265	245	20	
Expenses for visits and conservation activities in 8 local communities	245	130	-115	We visited and worked with three local communities, the rest did not

				wanted to participate, but agree they want to continue.
Expenses for Teachers meeting and training workshop	90	90	0	
Expenses for Tour Operators Workshop	90	50	-40	This activity was performed with a limited participation of people, and we are planning to have a larger workshop next year, with more tour companies involved
TOTAL	5942	5992	-50	

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

The killing of river dolphins in the Amazon is a terrible reality; people kill to use them as a bait. We need to avoid this situation in Bolivia. The next important steps are: to continue working with the communities, increasing the awareness and the importance of the bufeos in the rivers of Bolivia. We think tourism is a good alternative for conservation and an economic alternative for the communities in the area. We started with the protocol and some workshop, we need to consolidate this, and we need to continue monitoring the population status.

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?

All diffusion material elaborated during this project has the RGS logo included. This material was shown in different meetings (see attached material). Also the video on YouTube RSGF is acknowledged there.

11. Any other comments?

Even though we started late, and the region suffered a natural disaster, we were able to fulfil several of the objectives and have other results. We thank the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for its generous support on behalf of the Bolivian river dolphin population and its habitat. We acknowledge the foundation for the conservation initiatives it supports around the world.