

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Matthias De Beenhouwer
Project title	How a better knowledge of the mammal and herpetofauna diversity of the remote Gera Forest Priority Area, Ethiopia, can lead to a sustainable forest protection.
RSG reference	14969-1
Reporting period	August 2014 - February 2015
Amount of grant	£4850
Your email address	mdebeenhouwer@gmail.com
Date of this report	15/02/2015

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
Assessment of larger mammals (camera traps)			Fully achieved	
Assessment of small mammals (life traps)			Fully achieved	This is the work of Demelesh, a thesis student at the Jimma University. He is expected to finish with his dissertation in June 2015.
Assessment of amphibians			Fully achieved	See BINCO Express Survey BES 4.
Assessment of reptiles		Partially achieved		The EWCA (Ethiopian Wildlife and Conservation Authority) did not grant permission to assess reptiles. Therefore, reptiles were only identified (and, if possible, photographed) when observed during fieldwork, and determined according to the photos.
Comparing biodiversity between coffee forest and natural forest		Partially achieved		We are only able to compare mammal biodiversity between coffee forest and natural forest, as it was not possible to standardise amphibian assessments accordingly.
Increase ecotourism awareness			Fully achieved	An ecotourism concept has been developed for Geruke (coffee forest) and Gera (natural forest). A travel guide has been made and distributed (e.g. via different websites).
BINCO-Local		Partially achieved		Although the concept has been developed, we were not yet able to launch the "BINCO-Local" section of our website. We secured additional funds for this and expect it to be online from May 2015.
Scientific articles		Partially achieved		One article is submitted to African Journal of Ecology, one article is in preparation. Because reviewing processes can take some time, we expect this will still take a while.

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

As stated above, we did not get permission from the EWCA to sample reptiles in the Belete-Gera forest. This was unforeseen and therefore reptiles were only identified when it was possible to

photograph them without handling them. Still, this has led to some interesting (re)discoveries (see detailed report). On the positive side, this gave us more time to assess mammal and amphibian diversity.

Secondly, we asked permission to the local kebele head of Afalo to use camera traps in their forest and the functioning of the camera traps was explained to the general public during a meeting. However, during the coffee harvest season (mainly end November, beginning of December), there was a high anthropogenic disturbance in the forest. This has led to malfunctioning of different camera traps (sometimes batteries were taken out, or camera settings were changed, or camera traps were dislocated slightly). Unfortunately this was only discovered at the beginning of January, leading to loss of time and data. If we foresee a new camera trap project in the future, we will take more time to explain to the local people what to do and what not to do.

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

The first important outcome of this project is an inventory of the amphibian diversity, present in the Belete-Gera forest, Southwest Ethiopia (see BINCO Express Survey BES 4). Up to now, there were only sporadic observations via opportunistic sightings. We provide a first checklist of species, including some that were unknown for this area and others that are considered vulnerable or endangered on the IUCN red list. This inventory will be published and can be used as future reference for the area.

The second important outcome is a comparison we made, using the camera traps, between natural forest and forest that is recently intensified for coffee production. As such, we are capable of comparing activity and distribution patterns of larger mammals between these two forest types. This has led to different interesting discoveries. The results will (hopefully) be published soon in a scientific, peer reviewed journal.

The third important outcome is the publication of a tourist travel guide with relevant information on ecotourism in the area, with a special focus on the Belete-Gera forest. The guide has been posted on different travel forums and is also available for downloading via our website (http://binco.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/booklet_vF.pdf).

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

The local community was involved in different ways. First, all fieldwork was guided and assisted by people from the local village of Afalo. Second, the local community of Afalo kebele has been interviewed to gain better insights in threats and benefits of the forest. Third, the approval of the local kebele head was necessary to ensure the safety of our camera traps. As such, only one camera trap was stolen (by someone of a different kebele). Fourth, a small ecotourism concept was launched in Afalo. Fifth, Jimma University was involved in this project via a thesis student and his promoter, working on rodents inside the forest.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Absolutely! There are plans to continue working in this forest to further develop a more sustainable forest usage and work on the implementation of a small conservation area. Furthermore, we have

had promising contacts with Rufford grantee Habte Jebessa with whom it would be most interesting to work on the genetic analysis of the forest buffalo population that we discovered. We sincerely hope that the Rufford foundation is willing to provide additional funds for future work.

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

The results of our work have been explained through different presentations, both at university level and at non-scientific level. We are also working on two scientific publications that can further disseminate our results to a broader scientific audience and a final expedition report that will be posted on our website and sent to the policy-makers. This will further stress the importance of our study area. We are looking, in cooperation with MELCA (an Ethiopian NGO), at possibilities to present our results also to the decision-making level in Ethiopia.

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

The Rufford grant was used from end of July 2014 till January 2015. This is actually very close to the anticipated length of the project. We were able to finish our work by the date foreseen (25th January).

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 (in £)	Difference (in £)	Comments (Not in £)
Rodent traps	278	46	+232	Most materials were provided by the Jimma University (Shermann traps) and BINCO (Triptraps)
Camera traps	1885	2015	-130	Additional costs were covered by the rodent trap budget.
Snake tong	36	36	0	None
Airfare	700	700	0	None
Thesis grant	400	400	0	None
Ecotourism Concept launch	400	300	-100	Due to a lot of voluntary work by Jan Mertens we were able to minimize these costs
Field assistance	1150	1270	+120	Extra cost covered by money saved from ecotourism concept launch
Others:	0	160	-160	Costs for sampling material amphibians
Total	4850	4927	-77	The balance was more or less in equilibrium. BINCO provided additional funding.

One pound is approximately 31 Ethiopian birr

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

As we could notice, coffee intensification is ongoing at an alarmingly fast pace. It will be crucial to help the local people to safeguard their forest from the threat of private investors, to work towards a more sustainable way of coffee cultivation and to convince them to set aside a small conservation area where natural forest is left untouched. In return, we need to develop a system with side income via ecotourism (Binco-local) and higher prices for local produce (most notably coffee and honey). Furthermore, we need to keep the Belete-Gera forest on the research agenda of the Jimma University and stress its importance at the decision-making level.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the logo was used on different occasions and the RSGF received publicity during the course of our work. This will continue in the near future when our scientific publications and the thesis of the (subsidised) Ethiopian MSc student are published, where the Rufford Foundation is acknowledged. Up to now, the logo was used in different presentations (at the Jimma University, Ethiopia, at the University of Leuven, Belgium and at a presentation for the general public, Belgium). Furthermore, the logo is used in our output (Jimma travel guide and different travel forums) and in two small movies on YouTube. Lastly, the Rufford foundation is also permanently acknowledged on our website (www.binco.eu) in the "Sponsors and Partners" section.

11. Any other comments?

We thank the Rufford Foundation for the opportunity provided. This project has not only enabled to fulfil the projects objectives. It has also been a great opportunity to meet more people working in similar fields, both at the Jimma University and in a local organisation called MELCA. I'm confident this will therefore result in more collaboration between these parties in the near future. Moreover, we were able to meet and discuss with other Rufford grantees working in Ethiopia (Habte and Anagaw). Finally, we are still working on a detailed final report, including species lists (BES 4). We will update Rufford when we are finished with this.