

## The Rufford Foundation

### Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Fredrick Ekow Jonah
<b>Project title</b>	Survey of turtle nesting beaches and conservation in the Cape Coast-Elmina area of Ghana
<b>RSG reference</b>	15520-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4959
<b>Your email address</b>	auclerof101@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> November, 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
Introduction of the concept of sea turtle conservation to local residents, tourism businesses and interest groups			√	The project was well received by local scientists and research students, conservationists, tourism businesses, some local residents and fishermen. Through initial dialogues, one-to-one discussions and focus group discussions with community leaders, business owners, researchers and other key stakeholders, they exhibited a lot interest in ensuring the success of this project.
Identification of major nesting beaches and specific species that nest in the Cape Coast area			√	<p>I went through 14 days of field training in sea turtle monitoring, identification using tracks, handling and community conservation techniques at the Mankoadze sea turtle research station. The training was facilitated by Andrews Akyekumhene (Wildlife Officer at the Wildlife Division and IUCN sea turtle specialist for Ghana) and Dan Barbour (project manager at the research station). This enabled me to adequately identify sea turtle species using the tracks encountered on the field. The Mankoadze project team also aided in species identification through field photographs of turtle tracks.</p> <p>Local residents and fishermen also helped in species identification. During questionnaire administration, one-on-one interactions and focus group discussions, photographs of turtle species were presented to them to identify species they have encountered. Overall, three species were identified to nest in the area, these are olive ridley (the commonest species), the leatherback turtle and the green turtle (the least observed species in the area)</p>
Sea turtle monitoring and patrol		√		This was partly supported by a two volunteers from the communities who

				occasionally reported on poaching and nesting activities. From 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2014 to 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2015 45 dawn (4am to 6am) patrols were undertaken to identify sea turtle nesting activities. Several turtle tracks were identified, with some indicating that turtles were poached before they could nests, while others indicated destruction of nest by dogs. A regular regime was not followed for this since the project did not have enough volunteers at that particular time.
Identify the threats to sea turtle and poaching hotspots in the Cape Coast-Elmina area			√	Threats to sea turtles and sea turtle poaching hotspots were identified through beach and community visits and the administration of a set of structured questionnaire to 225 members of the communities.
Community sea turtle conservation		√		I took part in two radio shows on a local radio station in Cape Coast with a reach of about 50 km <sup>2</sup> . During these programmes, I talked about the problem of sea turtle poaching in the Cape Coast area and nearby communities, ecological importance of sea turtles, opportunities for tourism and community conservation. In February 2015, I undertook four informal dialogue meetings with small groups (3 – 5 people) of community leaders in three communities about ways to stop sea turtle poaching. From 1 <sup>st</sup> June to 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2015, with support from other local stakeholders including the Wildlife Division of Ghana, we held six community dialogue sessions with fishermen and female fish processors on sea turtle conservation and protection and developed a conservation action plan for the Cape Coast area. Finally, on 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2015, I led a group of students from the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Cape Coast to undertake community conservation education on preventing sea turtle bycatch during fishing activities at the Cape Coast landing beach.
Local authorities	√			Local authorities including the Ghana Police

involvement in sea turtle conservation and enforcement of environmental regulations				Service and the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly showed little interest in the project since they seemed not to fully appreciate the severity of the poaching activities.
<b>Additional achievement</b>				
Research paper on the sea turtles in preparation		√		A research paper based on the results obtained during this project is in preparation. This will be published in an international conservation journal.
Sea turtle documentary		√		Based on the experiences, photographs and videos obtained during this project and using additional field videos and interviews to be taken in November-December 2015, a video documentary on sea turtle conservation is being worked on.
Important alliances made with other sea turtle conservationists			√	I have been able to create an alliance with sea turtle researchers and conservationists working in other areas of Ghana. Key amongst them is Andrews Agyekumhene who provides us with advice and support at all time. Such alliances will be critical in our future successes.

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

The major unforeseen difficult that this project encountered was the apathy of local government agencies towards the project. Major local government stakeholders within the project area are The Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ghana Police Service. However, these government agencies did not seem to appreciate the sea turtle poaching activities.

They seemed to regard these practices as being normal fishing activities which do not warrant their involvements. Hence, these agencies do not in any way get involved in sea turtle poaching prevention or education. Moreover, some personnel who we tried to include on this project, in subtle ways demanded some monetary rewards. This difficulty was tackled by solely working with the Wildlife Division of Ghana who also have the legal authority to enforce wildlife laws.

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

*1. Sea turtle poaching hotspots identified*

During this project, we identified communities known for their high sea turtle poaching and nesting activities. Hence, we now know the communities to focus our future conservation activities on in order to protect nesting sea turtle populations in the area.

### *2. Long-term sea turtle conservation strategy developed*

Through continuous interaction with coastal communities in the Cape Coast area, we have devised an education-centred approach to sea turtle conservation in the Cape Coast area. Through our experience gained in this project and that of our partner sea turtle conservation organisations working within Ghana, we have realised that using continuous education of communities and fishermen will produce better long-term results in protecting nesting and migrating sea turtles in the Cape Coast area.

### *3. Alliances created with Wildlife Division and other local sea turtle conservation organizations*

During this project I established contacts and collaboration with several sea turtle conservation organisations and conservationists across Ghana's coast. Our project draws expertise and advice from these contacts. In the long-term, these collaborations will be very vital in curbing sea turtle poaching in the Cape Coast area.

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

Local communities were essential in addressing several objectives of this project. Community members provided vital information to the project through responding to a set of structured questionnaire, taking part in focus group discussions, dialogue meetings and community dialogues. Some community members volunteered to provide information about turtle nesting activities and incidence of poaching within their communities. Community elders assisted us in gathering community members for dialogue meetings and discussions. Local communities have benefited by way acquiring new knowledge about the status of sea turtles, importance of conservation and the relevant laws protecting sea turtles.

### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes. We are seeking additional funding from both local and international funders to continue and sustain the project.

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

This project's results will be shared through the publishing of a scientific paper in an international journal. Results will also be shared locally with stakeholders including communities during conservation education and awareness creation programmes. A video documentary using the project's results as well as videos obtained from other sites along Ghana's coast shall also be used to produce a video documentary which is scheduled to be released in February 2016.

**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 Foundation grant was used for 14 months (September 2014 – November, 2015). I anticipate that a successful sea turtle conservation project in the Cape Coast area should be long-term and indefinite in nature.

**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
First dialogue with local stakeholders	347	347	-	Four formal dialogue sessions was undertaken with community leaders (3 – 5 people). This was combined with a series of informal discussions with several other opinion leaders within the communities as well as one-on-one interactions with community members.
Second (review) dialogue with local stakeholders	347	-	-	This was undertaken as part of the 'Community conservation education' component of the project
Trainer of trainees (i.e. venue, projector, stationery, stipend for participants and conservation educators, transportation and accommodation	752	-	-	This aspect was identified not to be relevant during the life of this project. With advice from local project partners, we decided to carry out more interactions and surveys to identify the actual issues first and carry out education for sea turtle volunteers as the project continues in the long term.
Field work (i.e. printing, questionnaire administration, focus group discussion, field trips to beaches, accommodation, transportation, stipend and food)	1298	1420	122	These included the cost of administering 225 questionnaires, 3 focus group discussions, 14-day field training of principal investigator and dawn beach patrols. The difference in the expenditure was obtained from the other activities that were not undertaken.
Community conservation	1046	1870	624	These included six community

education and campaign i.e. stationery, accommodation, snacks, stipend, transportation, projector and media				dialogue sessions (conservation education forums where community members were allowed to express their views more than the project members or facilitator) and two radio shows. The difference in funding was obtained from the 'trainer of trainees' budget.
Field equipment (i.e. 2 GPS and 2 digital cameras)	264	80	184	One digital camera was purchased. Two GPS devices were purchased for us by IDEA WILD.
T-shirts (200 pieces)	522	522	-	240 T-shirts were printed for the project. So far about 140 has been distributed with the remainder to be distributed during the next few months.
4 sign boards to be placed on beaches	322	-	-	Not carried out. With advice from project partners, we decided not to do these but undertake more community dialogues to obtain more community involvement and support.
Banners	61	-	-	Not carried out
<b>Activities undertaken but not budgeted for in the initial proposal</b>				
87-beach seine hauls monitoring		150		
Equipment for field documentary		500		This includes a DSLR camera and tripod stand for taking photographs and videos during project activities.
<b>Total</b>	4959	<b>4959</b>		<i>All figures are in £ sterling. The exchange rate used was 1 £ sterling = 5.8 Ghana cedis</i>

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

Looking ahead, I feel continuous education and establishing sea turtle volunteer groups within the communities are the next important steps to be taken. Continuous and sustained education is critical because traditionally, local coastal community members especially fishermen are usually not included or adequately informed about fishing regulations, environmental laws and wildlife laws. Using education-centred approach will get them to understand and decide to participate in sea turtle conservation willingly. Experiences from other local sea turtle conservation organisations has shown that in communities where the education approach was used produced better results for conservation of sea turtles as opposed to the limited successes and often poor community involvement when only top-down law enforcement activities were used.

The establishment of local sea turtle volunteer groups will also support long term conservation efforts. Volunteer groups formed from local community members will ensure that poachers or egg collectors are either peer-educated or reported. Volunteer groups may also undertake periodic field monitoring to ensure that nesting sea turtles are protected.

**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 Rufford Foundation logo was used on the t-shirts that was distributed to some community participants and project partners. During each community dialogue and stakeholder interaction, RSGF was mentioned as the funding partner for the project.

**11. Any other comments?**

Though, some of the communities initially difficult in allowing us to even discuss turtle conservation issues with them, they softened their stance and allowed us to undertake dialogues with them. This I believe is a good sign that in the long term we can achieve good results in sea turtle conservation in these areas. Moreover, we got the support of a few volunteers from the community who also want to see the end of poaching of sea turtles in their communities, another good sign of future success with continued community education and involvement.