

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	Jose Gomez Penate
Project title	Conservation of sea turtles of Ivory Coast
RSG reference	16757-1
Reporting period	2 February 2015 – 2 February 2016
Amount of grant	£4 800
Your email address	gomezp_jm@hotmail.com
Date of this report	01/24/2016

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
Mani sea turtle scientific data will be compiled, updated and made available, and, at least 234 hours/week of monitoring			X	
One student at the PhD level, five Naval Police agents and at least 13 members of the local protection committees trained in conservation on marine turtle populations			X	
Protection of at least 1000 nesting females and their nests		X		Leatherback frequentation this season is less intense than usual
Release offshore of all the turtles caught in the nets of the Grand Béréby fishermen.			X	
A local law to protect sea turtles will be signed by the local authorities of the villages and the Naval Police;			X	
At least 600 villagers will benefit from information, education and communication activities in three villages surrounding Mani beach			X	
Four panels produced announcing the presence of marine turtles and their nests on the beach			X	
At least two conventions with hotelkeepers or travel agencies will be signed to develop ecotourism activities;			X	
10 decision makers met, at least 1 collaborates with the project.			X	

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

The main difficult we have is the mortality of sea turtles in fishing nets. It is necessary to take actions to reduce the sea turtle mortality in fishing nets around Mani beach; a not insignificant number of turtles run aground dead on the beach.

We think that these turtles die in the nets of the fishermen, but the possibility exists as well as they die by ingestion of plastic. We need to learn to make autopsies, and to establish a TED (Turtle Excluder Device) system in the fishing vessels.

With regard to the diminution of leatherbacks this year, we think that it is due to natural causes, because the nearby projects made the same report. Besides, an increase of the leatherback mortality by not natural causes is not compatible with the increase of the olive ridley and green nesting activities this year.

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

- Poaching against sea turtle and their nests almost disappeared not only in Mani beach but too in Pitiké beach and Kablaké beach thanks to the project. As a consequence, more than 700 nesting sea turtles and their nests have been protected. This means around 50 000 little turtles attempted the sea.
- There is not sale anymore of eggs or meat of sea turtles on the markets of Grand Béréby, Mani, Rock, Dawa, Pitiké and Kablaké. This means a very important change in behaviour in the area.
- The project is contributing to improve the wellbeing of the populations through a water supply project with solar energy in Mani, an electricity supply project with solar energy in Pitiké and Kablaké and the rehabilitation of the primary school of Mani.

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

The project is based on a participative method. In most of the field activities, including the bio-monitoring and protection aspects, the local community is strongly involved.

The project made a success of the support of the traditional leaders and the population of the villages of Mani, Pitiké and Kablaké. The project employs 15 young people of five villages and is promoting tourists' arrival in villages concerned. Around 160 tourists came to look the turtles during the duration of the project. Three partnerships agreements with hotelkeepers have been signed to promote the visits of tourists to our project site.

- A local law about interdiction of sea turtle poaching and consumption has been validated by the village chiefs of Mani, Pitiké and Kablaké. Its application is effective.
- An awareness campaign has been implemented. It has been six IEC sessions, two in each village surrounding Mani beach: Mani, Kablaké, Pitiké, and Roc. Lots of people come to follow the projections of movies about the turtles.
- A water supply project with solar energy has been achieved in the village of Mani. It includes the installation of a water tower with a capacity of 20 000 litres, five solar panels and a solar pump. The system is already functional.
- A project to rehabilitate the primary school of Mani has been submitted to the "Self-Help" program of the Embassy of the United States in Abidjan. The project has been approved. The rehabilitation works are already finished.
- A project to supply solar energy to the villages of Pitiké and Kablaké and to distribute solar lamps to the villagers has been submitted to the FEM/SGP. This project has been approved by a total amount of US\$ 16 000. The works are in progress.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we want to perpetuate and to spread our activities because we consider that this is a very successful project strongly contributing to the sea turtle conservation in Ivory Coast and to improve the wellbeing of the local populations.

Our field officer Dah Alexandre is very committed with the project and wishes to become established at Grand Béréby with his family. We hope that in 2017 he can support his PhD about the sea turtles, the first one in Ivory Coast.

We're doing steps to establish a partnership with organisations working in sea turtle conservation in Liberia, Sierra Leona and Ghana to improve the functioning of the African sea turtle conservation network, the standardisation of field work methodology and the establishment of scientific collaborations.

We are currently working to submit à cross – border project to Darwin Initiative and/or to Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

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

Efforts are made to integrate all the stakeholders in sea turtle conservation in Ivory Coast. These include the governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in the implementation of research and conservation programs, in the management of protected areas, and in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources, including the Ministry of the Environment, UNDP, GIZ (German Cooperation), the French Cooperation, the US Embassy, etc.

Besides, we're trying to increase information exchanges and develop activities with other countries part of the West African sea turtle conservation network.

We're currently in touch with the following structures:

- Association for Turtle Conservation and Hope (Ghana)
- Sea Turtle Watch Liberia (Trokon Saykpa)
- Sea Turtle Conservation Programme (Conservation Society of Sierra Leona – Edward Aruna)
- ONG Nature Tropicale (Benin).

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 nesting season for sea turtles in our area runs from September to April.

The funds were received in February 2015. The Rufford Foundation grant was used in February, March, April, May (to take into account the surveillance of the last nests) September, October, November and December 2015 and January 2016.

The Rufford Foundation grant was used at the same time that the FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) grant. FWS is the other donor of our project.

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
5 persons local of protection committees	2 100	2 100		
Bio monitoring equipment for five persons	600	600		
Building two hatcheries	600	600		
Field coordinator Dah Alexandre	560	560		
Communications	290	290		
Training session	300	300		
Four information panels	200	200		
Movements naval Police	150	150		
Total	4 800	4 800		

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

- To consolidate gains, in particular the stop of the poaching in the beaches of Mani, Pitiké and Kablaké through the bio-monitoring activities.
- To find a source of funding to perpetuate the monitoring and the protection activities, like controlled ecotourism activities.
- To attempt the declaration of the project zone as « community managed protected area » being a part of the buffer zone of the Tai National Park. In this way, the activities of biomonitoring would be taken care by OIPR (National Office of Parks and Reserves)

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, we use the RSGF logo in the panels.

11. Any other comments?

This project allowed us to reinforce our activities in Mani beach and to spread them to the nearby beaches of Pitiké and Kablaké.

We are very grateful to Rufford Foundation for their support!