

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

| Grant Recipient Details |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Your name               | Rodrigo Villalobos Aguirre   |
| Project title           | Developing a community base conservation management to protect wildcats in a high depredation conflict area in Chile |
| RSG reference           | <b>16929-2</b>   |
| Reporting period        | Final report   |
| Amount of grant         | £5000  |
| Your email address      | rodvillalobo@hotmail.com   |
| Date of this report     | February 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   |
|---|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--|
| Implement livestock protection measures to decrease poaching and retaliatory killing upon wildcats. |              |                    | YES            | We delivered six trained livestock guard dogs (great Pyrenees) to local farmers who have high level of conflict with cougars. To date, we noticed a decrease depredation events, poaching and retaliatory killing behaviours, as well as, events of wildcats killed by dogs were not reported.   |
| Assess conditioned taste aversion (CTA)   |              | YES                |                | The use of Thiabendazole was difficult due to the lack of product in Chile and permissions to import it. In addition, the lack of opportunities to use it, were almost absent due to delays in depredation complaints. In order to use it properly and to have results to assess it, will be necessary to create better communication ways to respond quickly in depredation events.   |
| Develop a wildcat monitoring and conflict resolution programme                                      |              |                    | YES            | During the first part of the study, we confirmed the presence of the Endangered Andean cat ( <i>Leopardus jacobita</i> ) by camera traps at the study area. We achieved three new records in a region without presence data before. This helped to create awareness and involve local communities in a better way due to the importance of the discovery. Workshops and training related to wildcats monitoring and response on depredation events were develop for government staff (n=10) and local farmers (n=308). The lack of funds to continue the programme by government staff was something that we need to resolve in ahead. |
| Improve conservation awareness in children  |              |                    | YES            | We performed three mural paints in three local schools at the study area. A team of five professional artists painted together with children. We used a mixed technique related to paint and mosaics. The subject of murals was related to endangered species such as Andean cat and human-wildcat conflict. Talks at each   |

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|  |  |  |  | educational level at schools were given. We reach at least 150 children and their parents due to educational materials. We used and gave to children stickers and posters to continue the conservation message. Finally, we produced a short film with time-lapse technique of all conservation activities. |
|--|--|--|--|---|

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

During the first time of the project, at the north of the study area occurred one of the big floods in the last time in Chile, where many people died and disappeared. Highways and local routes were destroyed, and people was trying to overcome this difficult situation. Thus, this event delays all activities programed, and we decided postpone data collection and activities for more ahead. We begin working at the south zone of the study area. Unfortunately, a few months later, a big earthquake (8.4 Richter scale) ravaged the entire area, causing deaths, blocked routes, and people concerned for other things. Thus, we decided to postpone for a while the project again. Even so, project could run and develop all the activities proposed at the study area.

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

- Confirm for first time at the region the presence of the IUCN Endangered Andean cat (*Leopardus jacobita*) in three new places of the region and involve local communities in its knowledge and protection. By means of this new record, the news published the discovery which helped to recognise the species by a person who photographed the wildcat in another region. Thus, Andean cat distribution was extending significantly and its knowledge too.
- Create knowledge and awareness about different species of wildcats present at the region. Local communities understood the importance of these new Andean cat records asking for pictures and educative materials (posters and stickers) to learn more about the species. We discussed the different effects on endangered wildcats when retaliatory methods are willing to use them. Local communities raise awareness about to difference between wildcat's species and its conservation categories. Children saw for first time pictures of Andean cats, Pampas cats, Guiñas, and cougars alive. In addition, children learned the ecological role of each species at the environment. The knowledge was supported by the final mural activity in each school visited, which helped to develop a short conservation film.
- Develop a base to begin a wildcat monitoring and mitigation conflict programme together with local communities and government staff. By means of mitigation measures (great Pyrenees guard dogs) given to specific farmers, the people knew the effectiveness of this measure and they realized about the ways to protect livestock and improve its management. In addition, government staff realised that this mitigation measure is possible to implement due to positive results. Training talks to government taught about the basis to wildcats monitoring programme with camera traps and identification of depredation events. Local farmers learned about to use camera traps and its role within a monitoring wildcat programme.

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

Local communities were highly interested in mitigation measures for human-wildcat conflict. We delivered guard dogs to representatives of farmers in order to create an example to the others and generate awareness about existence of different alternatives to avoid depredation. Currently, the use of great Pyrenees guard dogs has been successful, which helps to decrease depredation events upon goats by cougars mainly.

The wildcat's knowledge together with education activities taught to children to develop conservation awareness to protect its biological heritage to the future by means of overcome the first obstacle that is the unawareness.

In addition, children at local schools communicated to their parents about mural paints. For this reason, children and parents were aware of these artistic activities. They realised about the conservation message given by mural paints and educative materials. In addition, mural paints have been focus of interest by tourism due to an article published in a regional touristic magazine.

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

Because we realised about the positive attitude about a mitigation human-wildcat conflict programme by farmers and government staff, we are planning to continue the project by the application of different funds given by different organisations such as, Patagonia, Wildlife Conservation Network, Rufford, and Chilean Government. Firstly, we will propose to develop a breeding local programme for guard dogs, and to continue with conservation activities such as mural paints. In addition, all the activities helped to strengthen the idea to create and consolidate our own NGO ([www.andesmahuida.cl](http://www.andesmahuida.cl)) to continue our work with local communities and wildcat's species. For our thinking, the presence of the Andean cat, and to resolve its current new threats are mainly important for the research team.

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

Our activities have been shared by Facebook webpage of Alianza Gato Andino and will be posted soon at the Andes Mahuida webpage too. Youtube will share our documentary film in ahead. In addition, local magazines and radial interviews have shared our message and project results.

**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 grant was used from February 2015 at January 2016. The length of the project was shorter than expected in spite of all difficulties related to natural disasters.

**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.**

In order to complete our activities, we used funds from Wildlife Conservation Network and its partner Andean Cat Alliance. In Chile 1-pound sterling = 952 Chilean pesos.

| Item                                       | Budgeted Amount | Actual Amount | Difference  | Comments                |
|--|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Field assistant stipends                   | 384             | 420           | 36          |                         |
| Artist and Designer stipends               | 320             | 788           | 468         |                         |
| Mural paints materials                     | 64              | 210           | 146         |                         |
| Educational materials<br>Printing          | 0               | 525           | 525         | We used funds from WCN. |
| Mitigation measures<br>(guard dogs mainly) | 1120            | 2000          | 880         |                         |
| Camera traps                               | 640             | 1576          | 936         |                         |
| Housing and meals                          | 1896            | 3151          | 1255        |                         |
| Fuel                                       | 576             | 1366          | 790         |                         |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>5000</b>     | <b>10036</b>  | <b>5036</b> |                         |

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

The conflict between farmers and wildcats is a current fact that is highly threatening endangered species such as the Andean cat. For this reason, the next steps are to follow with monitoring programmes to both, mitigation conflict measures and Andean cat population. Because this is a new threat to the species, we need to spread the word about this and to connect with researchers and conservationist about the importance to develop multidisciplinary teams to resolve the conflict. In addition, looking for new funds and proposals development will be essential and mandatory.

**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?**

We use Rufford Foundation logo on an educative poster that has been attached in this final report.

**11. Any other comments?**

As a team, we would like to express our gratitude to The Rufford Foundation and its willingness to support us. We consider that without your help this project could have been impossible to function. New Andean cat's knowledge, less wildcats killed, less depredation events, and its corresponding improvement of local economy is thanks to your support.