



WILDLIFE IN NEED

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TO: Jane Raymond
FROM: Gail Laule
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SUBJECT: Final Report – WIN/Aytas Wildlife Conservation Initiative
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The following is the final summary report on our project, “WIN-Aytas Wildlife Conservation Initiative” funded through the Rufford Small Grants for Conservation. The primary goal of the project was to launch a campaign against the illegal wildlife pet trade here in Subic Bay, Philippines. The approach was twofold: 1) to develop and distribute a poster and give presentations to the community on the wildlife pet trade, and 2) partner with the local indigenous Aytas on the development of two alternative livelihood opportunities – environmentally sustainable beekeeping, and training them as guides for a Forest Walk offered to visitors to Subic Bay Forest Zone. These methods were compatible and interrelated as the Aytas are responsible for providing a significant number of animals for the illegal wildlife pet trade. This project was the first step in reducing the number of animals taken from the forest by the Aytas for this purpose. We identified 5 specific objectives for the project, and the following are our results.

1. Launch a public awareness campaign with poster and community presentations on the illegal wildlife pet trade.
We designed a full-color poster, which includes the Rufford logo, entitled “Keep Wildlife Wild” to raise public awareness on the tragic consequences of the wildlife pet trade. We produced 500 copies, 200 in English and 300 in Tagalog, and distributed to local businesses, clubs, hotels, restaurants, community centers, and schools. The feedback we’ve gotten from Ecology Center and others in regard to message and impact is positive and encouraging. We also received interest in our posters from organizations in other areas of the country and especially after hosting a workshop for the Zookeepers Association of the Philippines. So we produced 200 double-sided posters, one side in Ilonggo and the other side in Bisaya (Cebuana) that are being distributed in a number of areas outside Subic. We are committed to continuing to produce and distribute these posters on an ongoing basis.

2. Offer public presentations on the project to local schools, community organizations, businesses, and the general public.

We gave presentations at several businesses in the area, the Chamber of Commerce, local community groups, and school groups in the area, as well as 4 schools in Manila. To increase the effectiveness of our public awareness program on the wildlife pet trade, we developed a 15 minute presentation on the macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) at our Rescue Center. While they are engaged in a variety of environmental enrichment activities we provide some natural history and behavioral information then highlight individual personal stories of the animals that were rescued from the pet trade. The talk is given twice a day to visitors to the Rescue Center, and is very well received. The Keep Wildlife Wild poster is displayed on either side of the large macaque cage.

3. Produce and install 3 educational graphics panels at WIN.

We produced and installed 3 large tarpaulin graphics at the Rescue Center.

- “WIN in Action” highlighting the activities of WIN and acknowledging Rufford.
- The “Keep Wildlife Wild” poster that is the centerpiece of our wildlife pets campaign.
- A second poster on the wildlife pet trade provided to us by Negros Forest and Ecological Foundation that is dramatic in its graphic imagery – providing an effective contrast to our poster.

4. Develop a Forest Walk for visitors and train a group of Aytas as guides.

The Forest Walk led by the Aytas is now being offered to visitors to Subic Bay, and we have added a second, more challenging hike to Visay Falls, also led by the Aytas. Of our original pool of 8 individuals that we trained, 3 have shown the greatest interest and have developed into competent guides. Throughout the grant period we used these individuals on weekends and holidays as proposed. When we developed the macaque presentation we also had the Aytas develop a demonstration on the use of natural forest products, primarily bamboo, to make a fire, cook, make utensils, and so on. That was offered immediately following the macaque presentation. These demonstrations have been an effective means of promoting the Forest Walk. The success of the hike and demonstrations has since led to the hiring of one Ayta full time at the WIN Rescue Center as lead guide. We hope to hire a second individual full time in the near future.

5. Develop a sustainable beekeeping and honey collecting project with the Aytas.

This project has proven to be a significant challenge. Sixteen members of the Ayta village attended the original training workshop on Tropical Beekeeping provided by experts from the National Center of Excellence for Bee Research and Development. Participants learned how to construct hives, gather bees, form and manage colonies, and harvest and process the honey. They also learned how to sustainably harvest honey from forest hives.

We provided 3 follow-up visits by the experts at the Ayta village working directly with the individuals who attended the workshop. However, interest on the part of the Aytas seemed to rise and wane. After buying supplies and offering assistance to the Aytas to build the boxes, they turned out to be too difficult to build to the

necessary specifications, so we had to buy boxes from the experts. Some of the hives were not maintained, and when queens died or left, they were not replaced. The primary hive caretaker we hired to manage the project left halfway through the project. So, we reassessed and made the decision to move the bee-keeping operation to WIN and hire a fulltime hive caretaker to work out of WIN. This proved to be a good solution. There he has much greater support and ongoing supervision than we could provide at the village. We brought the experts back for the last 3 visits, and his project is going well. He is close to 20 functioning boxes and is building skills and competence in all aspects of beekeeping. We will continue to provide follow-up visits by the experts on an as-needed basis.

Although this is not how we envisioned the project going, it has met some of our initial objectives. One family is committed to the project and it is our hope that as their success grows, others will choose to get involved. I believe that one of the problems with this project is that the financial return on the front end is relatively small until colonies are built up and healthy, and enough boxes are functioning to bring in substantial profit (probably closer to 100 boxes).

However, the greatest benefit of the project was in training the 16 individuals to collect forest honey in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way. By providing them the equipment they needed and the training to use it, the gathering is easier, more productive, and hives are no longer being destroyed in the process. The second season of gathering forest honey is beginning now, so we are hoping for a good harvest.

Finally, members of the WIN board met with Josh Cole in September in Manila. They presented a power point presentation and discussed the project results with him. It was a good opportunity to meet one another, and to express our gratitude to the Rufford Small Grants for Conservation for supporting our project. We at WIN are committed to continuing the campaign against the illegal wildlife pet trade, and supporting these and other alternative livelihood opportunities with the Aytas. We hope to have the opportunity to work with Rufford again in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Laule
President