

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants 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	Daira Ximena Villagran Chavarro
Project title	Conservation action for the bats species in Soata Colombia
RSG reference	20.12.07
Reporting period	2009
Amount of grant	£2510
Your email address	daxiluna@yahoo.com
Date of this report	March 17th 2010

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
Make an inventory of bat species present in Soatá.				During the project, we conducted monthly surveys of 10 days each, which included a preliminary survey of bat species present in the upper stop Soatá (Oak Forest) and in the bottom of Soatá (xerophytic dry forest). At the moment we are writing a paper on this study. It is necessary to continue long-term monitoring of bat species present in the region, for more records of species distribution and conservation status.
Identify key sites for bat conservation.				Oak forests and the xerophytic dry forest region of Soatá are remnants of forests of the Andes mountain range, so are ecosystems that are in danger of extinction, like species of bats that live there. These ecosystems are vital ecological, cultural and natural heritage of this part of Colombia. It is therefore necessary for more efforts to prioritise conservation areas in the municipality and create and make a reservation of civil society in each of these forests.
Identify the main threats affecting the survival of the bats and their habitats				The main threats identified in the oak forest and xerophytic dry forest landscape, are deforestation, cattle ranching and plantations of snuff and potatoes. It is necessary to carry out educational campaigns aimed at the pursuit of economic resources without harming the environment. Education campaigns that we want for this project in the long term are: programmes for recycling, organic garden, composting and education and training of environmental leaders for ecotourism programmes.
Promote conservation recommendations to rural communities.				Each month we conducted workshops and ecological outputs with rural community, where we implemented several workshops for children, youth and adults. The results for this period were positive. It is necessary to continue

				with strategies for environmental education to the community, and implement the above programmes such as organic garden, recycling and ecotourism.
Community participation to collect information of the problems and possible solutions for conservation of bats through participation, decision making and action of the community rural.				The rural community of the region has engaged positively in the activities we have developed together, where participation, decision making and action by the community has been reflected in their perceptions against what is the environment and the urgency and importance of conserving species like bats and their habitats of ecological, cultural and natural throughout the region.

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

The team had no difficulty during the execution of the project. Identified potential risks were addressed and mitigated proactively immediately. Also we take control of potential hazards for each team member, facing in a timely and preventive manner.

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

The best results during the execution of the project were:

1. Inventory of bat species found in oak forest and xerophytic dry forest.
2. At present we are working on the production of a tutorial on the conservation of bats and their habitats.
3. We educated children, youth and adults about the ecological importance of bats and the need to preserve and protect their environment. Environmental education strategies were fully developed and we implemented environmental activities related to the rural community. We prepared workshops and teaching strategies for the communities who actively participated throughout the design process.
4. This research aims to monitor in the short, medium and long-term species diversity in the Soatá municipality, in addition to continuing educational work with the participation of communities and schools involved in the study, so that they get knowledge and basic concepts relating to ecology and conservation of bats and their habitat.
5. With this work we contribute to Colombia a project which involves active participation of the community in the municipality of Soatá in bat conservation and environmental protection.

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

The project from its inception was discussed and endorsed by the rural community, both in the field and through developing teaching strategies that were carried out successfully thanks to the continuing participation, enthusiasm, motivation and leadership of the community.

Each of the workshops from January to June 2009 showed a lot of activity by children, youth and adults involved in the conservation and protection of their environment. The success of this first phase of the project would not have been fully achieved without the cooperation and enthusiasm of the community.

We believe that the fact of becoming friends of people and communities living in the region creates bonds of solidarity and support that are reflected during the execution of the project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I do. The main goal is to continue the project development environmental education strategies for the conservation of threatened forest bats of Soatá.

The main objectives to achieve this goal are:

- Monitoring and evaluating the medium and long-term action plan for conservation of bats in threatened forests.
- Continue the inventory of bat species of the two ecosystems (forest oak forest - xerophytic dry forest).
- Work on ecological aspects of the benefits of bats in the restoration and conservation of ecosystems.
- Promote campaigns for environmental protection, such as ecological gardening and recycling.
- Strengthen environmental leaders and promote the region will promote an awareness of conservation and protection through active participation and community action.
- Contribute towards the implementation of a National Strategy for Conservation of bats in Colombia.

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

The project conducted during 2009 was exhibited at the X International Congress of Mammalogy held in Mendoza - Argentina in August 2009. Also we are doing a mini-guide on the ecological importance and conservation of bats of Soatá. We are also developing a document on the results of the project which will be published in a scientific journal.

We plan to continue the project to share all kinds of information related to the conservation of bats and their habitat. We also want to display and promote environmental education campaigns, through brochures, posters, mini guides, didactic books for children and all informative and constructive publicity as required.

Once obtained the expected results of these will be published in national and international journals, was also in symposia or conferences of interest to the conservation of biodiversity.

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

The period was 2008 – 2009.

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
Travel, food and field and Guides	£ 1450			
Education and awareness raising activities	£ 500			
Education materials about Bats	£ 560			
Total	£ 2510			

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

Monitoring in the short, medium and long term the conservation project on threatened bats in forests, showing results that can be applied and added to the national program for conservation of bats for Colombia, which was created this year.

Where we are:

* Perform inventories and ecological studies of major groups of fauna (beetles, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals), which is the basis for proposing in the region is Soatá strengthening scientific basis of reserves.

* Strengthen work with the community and promote environmental education campaigns. The advances developed in 2009 are solid foundations we can use to continue working for the conservation of bats in the municipality of Soatá.

*Continue with the identification of environmental problems in the region through research, participation, decision-making and working with communities, schools, colleges and local and environmental authorities to provide possible solutions to conservation problems.

* Conduct studies on ecological aspects of the importance and benefits of bats in the restoration and conservation of ecosystems.

* Assess the state of conservation of the remnants of the oak forest and xerophytic dry forest in the region of Soatá.

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

Yes, I used the logo for environmental education in local places of Soatá; for example in workshops and educational activities with the community.

Also we used the logo in the work presented in poster form at the X International Congress of Mammalogy held in Mendoza - Argentina in August 2009.

11. Any other comments?

This project is a scientific basis for future research in other regions of the country. In addition the project intends to be part of the program National Conservation Bats for Colombia, since Soatá is a privileged area for the conservation of Colombian fauna and flora.