

Project Update: November 2017

The fieldwork for the freshwater turtle conservation programme under Rufford Small Grant Foundation started in April 2017. We explored 25 suitable habitats for freshwater turtles distributed over different regions in Tunisia from the extreme north to the centre and the south of the country (view map). During this fieldwork, data were collected from several new sites, which were not mentioned in the literature.

During the spring and summer, the field activity was very intense, but it slowed down from the end of October 2017 because of meteorological reasons.

A total of 320 turtles were captured using non-harmful traps set for periods extending from 1- 3 days according to the nature of the site. Traps were firmly attached by a rope to the shore or vegetation, baited with sardine and bread soaked in sardine oil, and then set in such a way that trapped animals were able to breathe. The traps were checked regularly during the day and collected turtles were marked with marginal cuts on the carapace, following standard operating procedures for Capture-Mark-Recapture (CMR). Valuable data were also collected such as morphological measurements, information about threats and DNA samples and finally turtles were released at the exact place of capture.



