

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	Arthur Sniegon
Project title	Building a regional base and establishing rotation system for sniffer dog presence to tackle wildlife trade in coastal Congo
RSG reference	21884-1
Reporting period	September 2017 – November 2018
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	arthur.f.sniegon@gmail.com
Date of this report	12.1.2019

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
Building and improving the kennel				Dog kennels, fencing, water system in place.
Bringing in and training the dogs				Four dogs in total (more than previewed), three fully trained, one in training.
Setting a rotation system of work upon hiring dog-handlers				Three local dog handlers were hired and their contracts assured with multiple visits of Czech canine instructors to train them and to help the coordinator to set the training and work plan of the team.
Seizing wildlife products and arrest traffickers				Due to administrative delays we have got a limited access to the checkpoints to accomplish field missions only at the Q4 of 2018. Therefore the outcomes are rarer than expected: seizures of life and dead animals (or their parts) have been made, but no trafficker has been arrested so far (limited amount of prohibited items discovered only, therefore no opportunities for arrests)

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

A few months after receiving the Rufford Foundation grant, a disaster happened to our project. The Congolese organisation, which was the guarantor of our legitimate work in the country, announced a very short notice the end of their administrative and partial financial support. This was a very dangerous situation, because the project already possessed the dogs and had responsibilities towards different stakeholders, supporters, employees and of course mainly the Congolese nature. However, due to this break of administrative support, we were no longer able to perform field activities, because we were lacking the particular permissions to do so. The time was running and it has been difficult to find a new partners which already have established presence in the country which would be willing to "adopt" our dogs and approach. Finally, we succeeded to find African Parks in the north of Congo and Jane Goodall Institute in the Tchimpounga reserve in the south/coast. The latter came just in time, so that we could finalise the objectives planned to be

covered by this grant and to allow us a restart of our field activities on different checkpoints.

This situation caused almost a year-long delay in field operations ability, and we therefore focused meanwhile on a reinforced training of more dogs and staff and on setting a solid base in the region. The difficult period is, also thanks to RF, at its end!

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

1- The most important outcome is the creation of an operational four-dog canine unit ready to be used in the region and beyond. One original dog has been trained by two dog handlers and later was joined by another one, a young puppy, which is under training now. The local dog handlers rely during the training and mission activities on the supervision and advice of the coordinator and also of the professional canine instructors from Czech Republic who arrived on multiple occasions during 2018 to spend several weeks on the ground.

2- The four-unit kennel has been completed, water system set and fencing lifted around the area to assure security.

3- Field missions commenced with delays in Q4 of 2018 and showed readiness of the team to operate in field conditions and make detections. An important 1-month joint mission has been also organised with the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in Congo to share experience and approaches.

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

The local community has been involved directly in the running the project. Two of our three dog handlers have been recruited from the rural area (the third being resident to a nearby town) and the night guardian is a local dweller from the village adjacent to the reserve as well. All these people have their jobs also thanks to the booster from RF.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The project has been since its beginning prepared as a long-term and steady activity. After this first year of difficulties (administrative constraints) we are now at the stage of being fully operational and we gradually seek for more and more (geographical and administrative) opportunities to perform our work throughout the whole region.

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

We are in constant touch with the sniffer dog project in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in Congo as well to share ideas and suggestions. Joint missions have been planned and one of them already accomplished. For the time being, two

independent filming initiatives are going on – first of them is the short movie made by the Tchimpounga reserve itself, starring our dogs and handlers and the second is the long-term footage gathering of the coordinator Arthur Sniegion who plans to publish the outcomes in the following month on either YouTube or any other online platform. In 2019, we also plan to accomplish short exchange missions to other canine projects in Africa focused on wildlife and will share our experience with them.

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

This grant has been used during the first, therefore crucial year of the permanent dog presence in this region. It has been a great booster for the activities, which partially evolved in a slightly different way (with the same objectives however) and is has been a key component of the success for building this regional base, before we will be able to expand further and seek a long-term financing.

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.

Exchange rate for budget calculation: **1 GBP = 768, 7 XAF**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Logistics	650	660	10	
Dog food	780	762	-18	
Dog transport kennels	520	683	163	Price of the kennel raised
Stationary dog kennel	780	543	-237	Construction co-financed with other resources
Phone credit team	85	82	-3	
Local transport	650	984	334	More dogs and handlers and prolonged time period
Bonuses	780	626	-154	Less field missions and arrests
Veterinary products	650	541	-109	Other sources and discounts
Digital camera	105	105	0	
Total:	5000	4986	-14	

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

With the kennel built and fenced, three dogs trained (and fourth being trained) and three dog handlers hired and trained, we now possess the capacity to intervene on a regular basis through the key points in the region. We must therefore now focus on the reinforcement of our collaboration with particular services responsible at their

respective points – either wildlife rangers, gendarmerie, customs or police. In case of need, we would have to sign agreements or MoUs with these structures to formalise this collaboration and assure long-term synergy in our activities. This will be the core of our efforts for the following months, while working on a regular, but rather small scale, basis within and on the periphery of the Tchimpounga reserve.

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

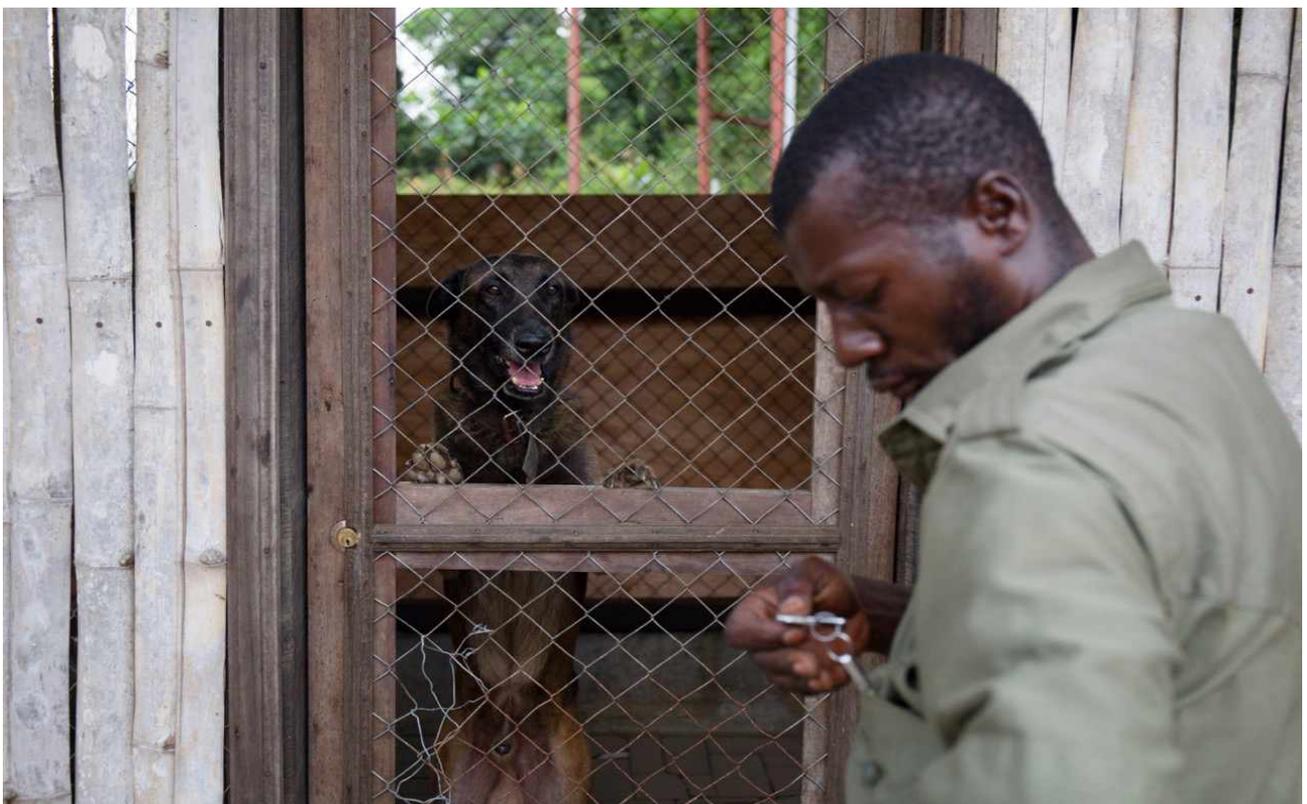
The Rufford Foundation logo has been presented on a printed material used for awareness during the field missions. If desirable, we can add the logo as well to our short videos about the sniffer dogs we are going to publish on a YouTube channel in the following months during the further development of the project.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Arthur Sniegon	coordinator of the project
Hana Bohme	regular canine instructor support
Martin Sterba	sting mission canine instructor with the police background
Lenka Colobenticova	training assistant, twice present to the project during the period
Platini Bolende Buissi Buissi	local dog-handler and wildlife ranger
Kaviouka Dieudonné Narcisse	local dog-handler and wildlife ranger
Serge Pouaty	local dog-handler and veterinary assistant



Building a regional base and establishing rotation system for sniffer dog presence to tackle wildlife trade in coastal Congo
Project Photos





Holy, the donated Czech sniffer dog female creates a core of the pack



Rick, a malinois male has been second to the canine team in Tchimpounga



The coordinator of the project Arthur selecting a german shephard puppy to add to the team



Our Congolese doghandlers with the trained puppy - a female called Bil' few months later



The sniffer dog team with instructors by the new kennel in Tchimpounga



Part of the pack of the sniffer dogs in Tchimpounga reserve during their play-time on the beach



A joint mission to inspect the poaching situation and logistic issues in the Conkouatti national park



A young Czech pan-African traveller Tadeáš Šíma on his bike to raise awareness about the project



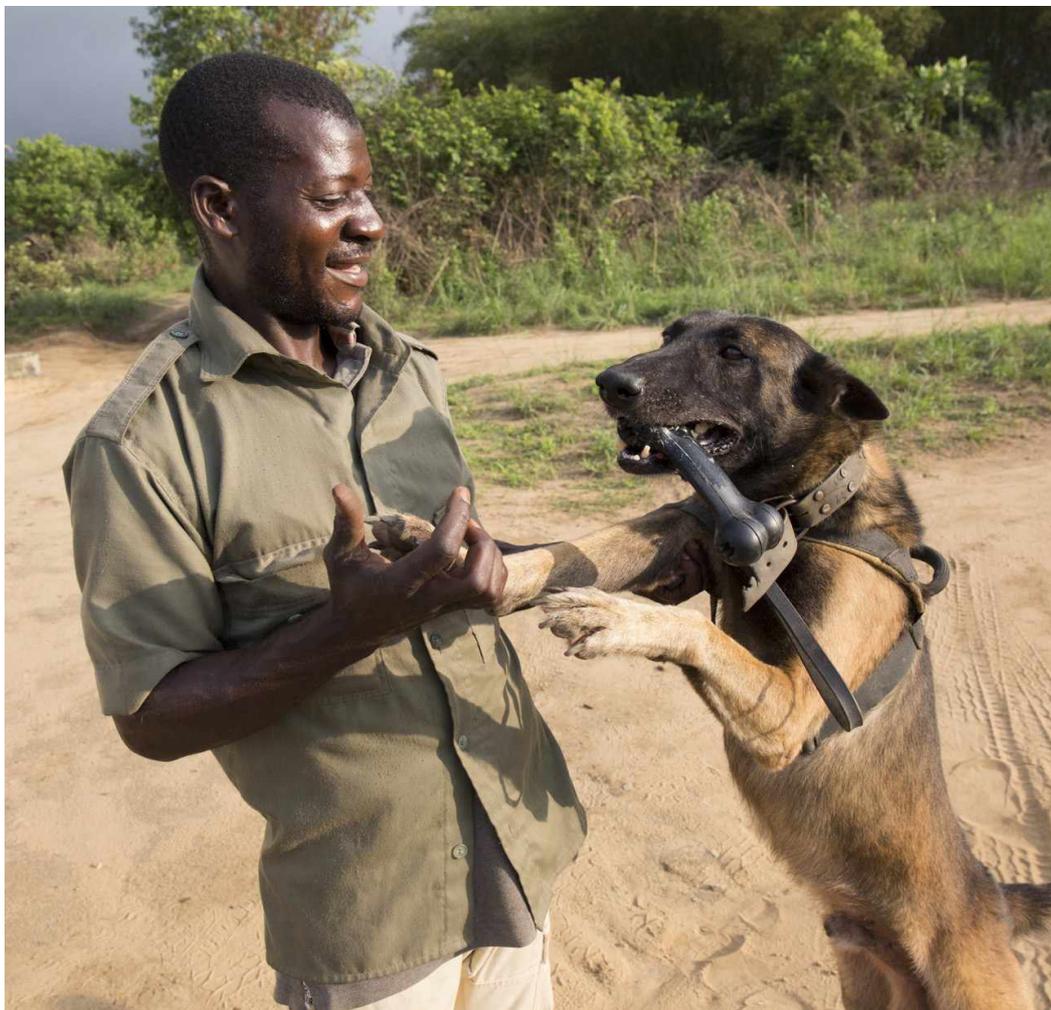
A Czech canine instructor during a field mission in Odzala-Kokoua with his previously donated and trained sniffer dog



The canine instructor having a rest with the original two dogs Holy and Rick



The second Congolese dog-handler with Rick inspecting the content of a bag ... and a reward for the dog for positive detection for suspicious content





The original pre-2018 kennel in the Tchimpounga Nature Reserve in coastal Congo



The work progress in summer 2018 to expand the kennel to four dogs



The finalised 4-compartment kennel for our sniffer dogs in a newly fenced area in Tchimpounga





Rick searching in and around a transport vehicle in the reserve



Rick approaching a bag containing little quantity of dissimulated bushmeat



A routine search in the luggage compartments of a public bus



The search in the luggage compartments of a public bus overseen by a canine



Our three sniffer dogs, four Congolese dog-handlers and three Czech canine instructors approaching the kennel in the park



Part of the team during a joint field mission by the checkpoint in Odzala-Kokoua National Park



Seized *Cercopithecus* monkey from the public bus being transported to Brazzaville



Seized smoked duikers during the open hunting season in Congo



A bunch of flying foxes (vectors of ebola, for instance) seized on a checkpoint



Over one hundred freshly killed flying foxes seized during our mission at the checkpoint



The brown-cheeked hornbill (*Bycanistes cylindricus*) seized in a vehicle



The seized purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*)



The seized dwarf crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*) and its release to the Mambili river



Most of the seized bushmeat has been directly burnt nearby the road as awareness for bypassers