

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	Marko Nikolić
Project title	Fighting negative impacts of tradition on biodiversity by education
RSG reference	22238-2
Reporting period	May 2017 – May 2018
Amount of grant	4980
Your email address	zerocool.axl@gmail.com
Date of this report	04.06.2018

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
Buying 5 tablets and making applications for interviewing				<p>We bought five tablets for the survey on local inhabitants. Also, we have hired android developers to create an application that will make the survey easier. The reason for this is that in some rural parts of Serbia there is no Internet connection, so we needed an application that does not require it. Applications can be downloaded at this link:</p> <p>https://www.dropbox.com/s/tj7cvlzdI9sxqfd/app-release.rar?dl=0</p> <p>or can be downloaded from the website www.wildbalkans.com</p> <p>(Mock-up: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/app-android-screenshot.jpg)</p>
Design and printing t-shirts				<p>Our designer (Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković) has created the logo of the project (link: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tshirt_Illustration_Rufford2_WithOrange-Copy.jpg) and we printed 50 t-shirts for volunteers and team members. T-shirts were designed and printed for the purposes of the project. Front side of the shirt contains illustration of project trademark and Rufford Foundation logo (mock-up: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Tshirt_Design_Rufford2_mockup_Dimitrija.jpg).</p>
Making educative brochures				<p>During the survey participants were supplied by promotional and educational material in the form of three-fold brochures. Link to pdf: https://www.dropbox.com/s/cy3yg0nh3mbzq6c/RFSG_2_brochure.pdf?dl=0</p> <p>Link to mock-up: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Untitled-1.jpg</p>
Creating a web site				<p>We have created a website http://wildbalkans.com. The goal of this site is to promote the project and its activities. In</p>

			<p>addition, the site will aim to present wealth of wildlife of this part of the Balkan Peninsula. We have created photo gallery, articles about the regional biodiversity, but also on folk beliefs, myths and legends about wildlife. The site is intended for education and presentation of wildlife diversity. In this way we want to attract new users such as hikers, campers and nature admirers to visit site and read our educational material. Also, the website will serve in presenting other conservation projects. We have presented the platform http://biologer.org that is created within the RFSG booster grant "Turtles in Serbia - Population Status, Conservation and Distribution of the understudied European Pond Turtle and Hermann's Tortoise", by Ana Golubović. The development of this platform will continue through RFSG booster grant "Endangered Serbian Butterflies - Working Together", by Miloš Popović.</p>
Promotion on social networks			<p>We have not made an official project page on Facebook. The reason is that the Facebook algorithm would limit the availability of content and very few people would see our posts. Also, it takes a long time to develop a page on Facebook. That is why we have decided to promote the project through a network of partner organisations and their Facebook pages, where we shared our project content and news. Pages and groups exist for a long time and they are followed by thousands of users</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/tortoisesinserbia/ https://www.facebook.com/drsavapetrovic https://www.facebook.com/nidsbejosifpancic/?ref=br_rs</p> <p>Groups: https://www.facebook.com/groups/588362864633466/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/josifpancic/</p>
Making online surveys			<p>The online survey is placed on the website (available on the home page of the website, or at this link: https://goo.gl/forms/hq7hmuyIOvx1nbfk2)</p>

Creating and printing calendars			<p>We printed 140 calendars (instead of 100) and sent them to partner organisations and schools where we realised the education of students. We also sent this promo material to the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia.</p> <p>Model 1: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rufford-Marko-Wall-Calendar-Mockup-PSD.jpg</p> <p>Model 2: http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_9771.jpg</p>
Interviewing of the local population			<p>The interviewing of the local inhabitants was conducted in eastern and southern Serbia. The project team members and volunteers conducted a survey of the local inhabitants in vicinity of four planned cities in the east and south of Serbia: Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Leskovac and Niš. After completion of the survey respondents were given an educational brochure. The talk after interview aroused additional interest in the subjects.</p> <p>Photos:</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_4490-Copy.jpg</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_5634.jpg</p>
Making and printing publications			<p>We have made 110 brochures on interesting information we collected during surveying. Also, folk beliefs from Slovenian mythology are especially presented. The brochure has repeatedly highlighted conservation status, as well as legislation and international conventions that prohibit illegal overexploitation of the specimens from nature.</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/publikacije/</p>
Promoting the project at universities in Niš, Kragujevac, Belgrade and Novi Sad.			<p>The promotion of the project was held at four universities in Serbia. The promotion at each of the universities was held in cooperation with The Faculty of Science in Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad, The Faculty of Biology in Belgrade, as well as the following non-government organizations: BS "Dr Sava Petrović" in Niš, NIDSBE "Josif Pančić" in Novi Sad, EID "Mladen Karaman" in Kragujevac and BID "Jodif Pančić" in Belgrade. The</p>

			<p>promotion in Belgrade was also supported by the botanical garden "Jevremovac".</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DSC_0363.jpg</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DSC_2499.jpg</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DSC_0350.jpg</p>
Education			<p>We held the lectures in Donji Milanovac in cooperation with the national park "Đerdap", Kladovo, Leskovac and Niš. Also, we presented our activities at the "3rd conference of students of biology, ecology and environmental protection - EkoBioMorfa 2017", at the event "Earth Hour 2018" – Niš, Serbia, and conference "WikiLive2018" – Belgrade, Serbia.</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_20180414_150929.jpg</p> <p>We held a lecture for students of Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics in Niš via Biological Society "Dr Sava Petrović".</p> <p>http://wildbalkans.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/IMG_9914.jpg</p> <p>We entered into a collaboration with five primary and secondary schools in Nis. We agreed to periodically hold lectures, in the next school year, at the classes of biology where we will present results of the projects and current activities. The plan is also to conduct workshops and classes in nature.</p> <p>Our plan is to continue with presentation of the results at the discussions and seminars and education of local inhabitants. Also, the plan is to present the results at science conferences during 2018 ("2nd Congress of biologists of Serbia" which will be held in September in Kladovo). Then, the project will be presented on "3rd Balkan Rufford Small Grants Conference 2018". The research results will be published in the form of original research papers. In all further publications gratitude will be posted for The Rufford Foundation.</p>
Other promotion			<p>The project activities and results were disseminated in the local newspaper "Narodne novine" in August 2017, but also in</p>

				several radio shows. We were guests at the radio show "Prirodnim tempom" http://bddsp.org.rs/prirodnim-tempom-emisija-8-sezona-2/
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

As well as during the implementation of the previous project, we again had problems when interviewing people. Some inhabitants, mostly in eastern Serbia, were firmly convinced of their beliefs. The negative attitudes were mostly related to the killing of wild animals because they are considered pests and it is believed that their presence brings misfortune. Conversation with those residents, after completing the questionnaire, is usually long and without a visible and obvious progress. In most cases, these respondents were relatively young people. Talk and educational material in such cases would probably not give any results. Fortunately, such cases were not many. These cases show that the beliefs, transmitted from generation to generation, are firmly embedded in local folklore and the education of the community must be continuous process. It is particularly important to work on the education of young people and establish cooperation with primary and secondary schools for further action. Education of the community should be conducted in a significantly larger area than that covered by this project. People from rural parts of eastern Serbia are deeply involved in the local folk beliefs, and education in the future could be of great importance for the conservation of biodiversity and reduction of the negative human impact.

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

- a) Proving the presence of wild animals in local folklore believes and setting the foundation for further research and protection. People were interviewed in the southern and eastern Serbia and information was gathered about: a) use of animals in traditional medicine and diet, and b) killing animals due to superstition and/or fear and other threatening factors. We also gained insight into local community awareness of law regulations considering nature protection.
- b) Education and raising awareness of local community. At all the places we visited during this survey we talked to local people about wildlife and their attitude towards animals. Also, we held the lectures in Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Leskovac and Niš, and promoted project activities at four Universities in Serbia. A number of students and residents attended our lectures. We managed to partly change their perspective, helping them to understand vulnerability and the laws considering many species. Attitude of the local community about importance and conservation of wildlife plays a major role in restricting direct and indirect human impact on habitats and populations of endangered species.

- c) Education of young researchers and raising the level of awareness of broader community about negative influence of folk believes on wildlife and law regulations about nature protection. In the realisation of project activities 14 researchers participated, mostly biology students. The number of participants considerably exceeded our expectations. Students will be included in further research activities and projects.

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

Local communities were involved in the project in many ways. The project team has collected data and the local community had the opportunity to hear information that is not readily available, or they would have no need to look for on the Internet. The survey included residents from eastern and southern Serbia. Interviewees were open for cooperation in most cases and helped us to gain the perspective of animals' presence in local folklore. The people provided us with a lot of interesting stories and anecdotes about superstitions and harvesting animals in the few last decades, stated their remarks and told us about myths that they have heard from ancestors.

Lectures that we held had large attendance, and a large auditorium had the chance to hear what we do and to get acquainted with both the conservation status of wild animals and with the nature conservation law obligations and regulations.

We started the cooperation with primary and secondary schools in Nis, and the next school year we will continue with the education of students in collaboration with teachers of biology.

The students of four Universities in the country had the chance to hear about the project. Great interest of students led to participation of 14 researchers in the project, instead of planned seven researchers. The response was much greater, but there was no way to engage more people, so we hope that in the future we will be able to engage even larger number of interested students in the research.

Online survey was distributed via the website and Facebook pages of partner organisations, and that enable us to interview people around the country. This survey has not shown statistically useful data yet, but it will be active on the website and will serve for data collection in the future.

Certainly, we confirmed the presence of myths and legends about wild animals in other parts of the country that are not planned within this study. This is an extremely important motif for further including of a much larger territory in our further research. Previous cooperation with the residents in our research is a huge stimulus for continuation of our education programme. In this way, we can gain much bigger success and influence on raising the awareness about preservation of biological diversity.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, our team is the first in Serbia that began a systematic research of influence of local beliefs on biodiversity and one of the few teams who are actively working to educate and raise the level of awareness of local population.

My opinion is we did a good job because we confirmed the impact of presence of myths and legends in the local population, moreover we have gained new insight and formed a good foundation of knowledge about the beliefs and attitudes in the local population. These beliefs and attitudes can be the cause of harvesting and killing endangered and protected animals species. Also, we have worked intensively on education of students and individuals from the local community, and we started a long-term cooperation with schools. Local community education should become one of the priorities in the sphere of nature conservation, so we will endeavour, with help of foundations such The Rufford foundation is, to enable further research, as well as continued education of the locals, aiming to preserve biodiversity.

In the future, we will work on proceeding with the investigation of influence of local beliefs and local folklore on overexploitation of representatives of the wild fauna of Serbia and gathering as much relevant information as possible about the reasons for their overexploitation. The tools that need further attention are online surveys. It is necessary to increase the network of people who will contribute to our research. The great potential is in the partner organisations and their online pages, so we will continue to work on that in the future.

On the other hand, in cooperation with Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics University of Niš and Institute for Biological Research University of Belgrade we plan to establish a long-term monitoring program on the populations of Hermann's tortoise in eastern and southern Serbia. We hope to develop a monitoring programme on all four research sites that we worked on the first RF project. Besides the chosen sites, similar programmes are being conducted on few other localities in Serbia, also with the help of the Rufford Foundation. It should be strived to developing of continued monitoring programmes on all sites and monitoring the populations in the wild. All gathered data are of great importance for upgrading the information about illegal poaching and conservation of the species whose numbers in Europe are declining.

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

The plan is to statistically analyse collected data and publish the results in the form of original scientific papers. Also, the plan is to present the results at science conferences, first during September 2018, at the "2nd Congress of biologists Serbia" which will be held in Kladovo, Serbia. The research results will be published in the form of original research papers. In all further publications gratitude will be posted for The Rufford Foundation.

The results of conducted surveys will be consigned to different institutions in Serbia, such are libraries, government institutions for conservation of nature, NGOs of biologists, nature lovers, elementary and high schools. Publication is freely available online, too, and can be found on the website <http://wildbalkans.com> as well as on

the sites of partner NGOs. All news and future activities will be available on the website of the project. As I said, the goal of this site is to promote the project and project activities. In addition, the site will aim to present wealth of wildlife of the Balkan Peninsula. We have created photo gallery, articles about the nature of the Balkans, but also folk beliefs, myths and legends about wild animals. The site is intended for education and presentation of wildlife diversity. In this way we want to attract new users such as hikers, campers and nature lovers to visit the website and read our educational material. This website will be a place to gather all conservation activities on the territory of Serbia, and the whole Balkan Peninsula.

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

	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Buying 5 tablets														
Making applications for interviewing														
Design and printing t-shirts														
Making educative brochures														
Creating a web site														
Promotion on social networks														
Making online surveys														
Creating and printing calendars														
Interviewing of the local population														
Making and printing publications														
Promoting the project at universities in Niš, Kragujevac, Belgrade and Novi Sad.														
Education														
Other promotion														

(press media)															
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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
Buying 5 tablets	500	550	+50	Exchange rate fluctuations
Making application for surveying	100	100		
Printing 3000 3-fold brochures	170	160	-10	Print price was lower than expected
Supplies material	100	100		
50 T-shirts	120	120		
Printing 100 calendars	150	150		We printed 140 instead 100. We chose another model and printed more calendars for same price
Web site	180	180		
Surveying – Donji Milanovac (5 researchers, 12 days = accommodation + food + fuel costs)	735	735		
Surveying - Kladovo (5 researchers, 12 days = accommodation + food + fuel costs)	735	735		
Surveying – Leskovac (5 researchers, 12 days = accommodation + food + fuel costs)	450	450		
Surveying - Niš (5 researchers, 12 days = accommodation + food + fuel costs)	300	300		
Printing publications	800	800		Print price was lower than expected and we print 110 publications instead of 100.
Costs for a holding lectures in Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Leskovac and Niš (12 days = accommodation +	480	440	-40	We all finished in 10 days, instead of the planned 12.

food + fuel costs)				
Presentation of results at four universities in Serbia: Novi Sad, Belgrade, Kragujevac and Niš (fuel costs for 1500km + food + accommodation)	160	160		
TOTAL	4980	4980		

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

Next step is to continuously research and inform population about negative human impact on wildlife, harvesting and killing wild animals because of superstitions and because of traditional purposes. Since these beliefs exist for a long time, it will be necessary to invest great effort to raise awareness about vulnerability of wildlife. The influence of traditional beliefs can be a significant reason for illegal catching and killing of protected and strictly protected species. Education of young people, students, and local inhabitants, should become a priority in the sphere of nature conservation, so we will endeavour, with help of foundations such The Rufford Foundation is, to enable further research, as well as continued education of the locals, aiming to preserve biodiversity. Also, it is necessary to establish a long- lasting monitoring programme on populations of Hermann's tortoise to establish the intensity of human impact on these populations over a long period.

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 RF logo was used on promotional material made for the project (t-shirts, brochures and calendars), it's available in the section 12. RF was also publicised on websites and pages of partner organizations (e.g. <http://bddsp.org.rs>), and all promotional lectures in Serbia. Furthermore, it was acknowledged in publication prepared from results 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.

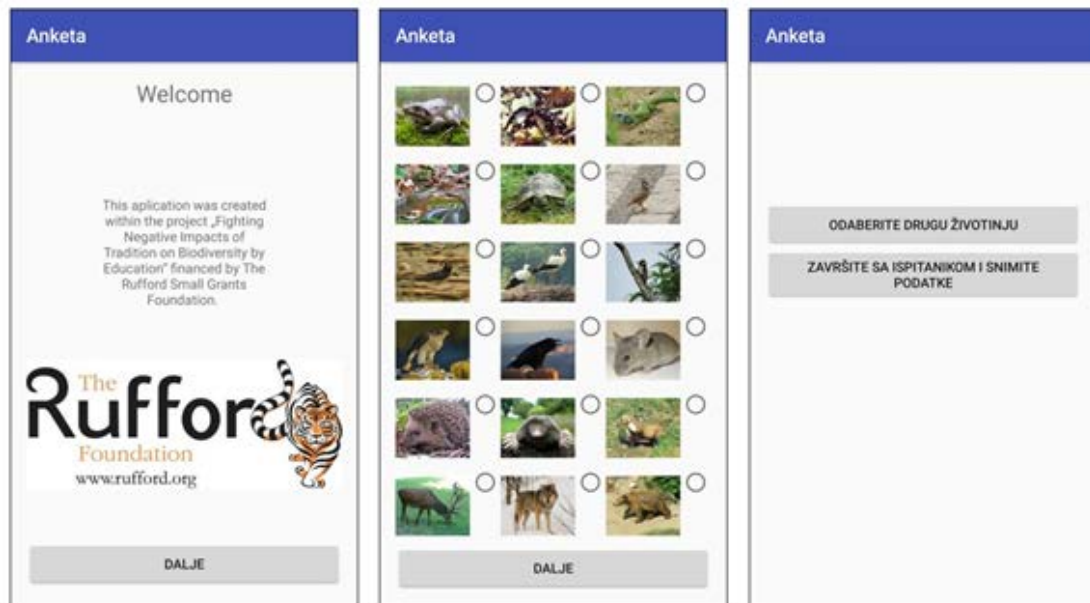
- Planning research, selection of sites, defining target groups for research and statistical analysis of data: **Marko Nikolić, Jelka Crnobrnja-Isailović and Miloš Popović.**
- Design of T-shirt, project logo, brochures, calendars and other promo-material: **Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković**
- Analysis of literature data and preparing publications: **Marko Nikolić, Stefan Petković and Jelka Crnobrnja-Isailović**
- Population survey: **Stefan Petković, Jovana Cvetković, Jelena Conić, Jelena Stanković, Dimitrija Savić, Dunja Čirić, Jelena Jovanović, Katarina Matkić, Slobodan Marković, Milan Ilić, Mladen Milić.**

12. Any other comments?

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the RF for given opportunity to realize my second small grant project. Thanks to the RF financial support, my team and I discovered a lot of new findings that could be of great importance for protected and strictly protected species in Serbia. It was a great experience for us, and we are sure we will continue to research within this field, hopefully with the RF financial support.



Logo of the project.
Design by Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković



App screenshots (Anroid developer: Aleksandar Rajić)



Mock-up of T-shirts



Interviewing local residents in Donji Milanovac. The project team members in addition to the monument "mammoth" in Donji Milanovac



Tri-fold brochures



Design by: Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković



Our calendar in the laboratory at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Nis



Mock-up of publication