

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Ismet Ceyhun Yildirim
Project Title	Status Survey and Conservation of the Striped Hyena Populations and Habitats with Active Public Participation in Turkey
Application ID	25380-1
Grant Amount	£ 6000
Email Address	icy@uludag.edu.tr
Date of this Report	02.03.2022

1. 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
Species status assessment				The distribution patterns and main drivers, such as pastoralism, the occurrence of caves of occupancy on a large scale through Anatolia has been revealed. Hyaena presence was confirmed by questionnaires (interviews with more than 300 people), signs and camera trap surveys, cave explorations and opportunistic sighting reports. Reconnaissance surveys were kept short in areas that could be considered marginal distribution or where there has been no indication of its existence for years based on interviews and also due to Covid-19 restrictions.
Wildlife Tracking Training				Local people were trained in tracking in the villages where hyaena groups were detected and potentially detectable.
Community-based conservation efforts				At a local and regional scale, people have gained awareness of the importance of hyaenas and have undertaken the responsibility of monitoring and protection. Meetings with village residents and local official units helped inform people about the striped hyaena.
Monitoring and protection network				Network setup extended to a longer-term due to Covid-19 restrictions.
Conservation action plan				Cooperation with regional government agencies during the project did not go as expected. However, The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has recently launched a new initiative to draw up such action plans for critically threatened species.

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

The biggest misfortune during our project was the coronavirus disease. The pandemic has affected the mobility and travel plans of the team members during the fieldwork period. This limitation has caused us to focus more on specific parts of

our project area based on data provided by questionnaires. We focused on the regions where sighting reports were mainly compiled. Another limitation was that the striped hyaenas were not well known in some places and the project was viewed negatively. For this reason, it was evaluated what kind of improvements can be made in the socio-economic conditions to ensure the support of the local people and their integration into our project.

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

Revealed the current distribution

The distribution data of the species has been updated. No presence data could be obtained in western Anatolia, possibly due to extirpation. It was understood that the westernmost distribution region was Kahramanmaraş province, and the northernmost distribution was formed by Sivas province. Accordingly, the source population is located in the south-eastern Anatolia region. The striped hyaena population in Turkey can be considered a metapopulation due to severe to moderate human induced habitat fragmentation.

Trained hyena scouts

Local scouts involved in the hyaena reconnaissance surveys have learned to track signs. In addition, they are conscious pioneers to detect hyaenas and enable other people in their region to contribute to monitoring and conservation efforts.

Effectiveness of written and visual media increased interest and sensitivity about hyaenas

An article on the Anatolian hyaena project and its results have been published in Atlas (a popular monthly Turkish magazine, with accentuated photographic and other imagery content, covering a range of subjects from geography and environment to history and culture). People's interest and sympathy towards hyaenas has increased with the help of social media posts and website content related to the project. In addition, TRT (Turkish Radio Television) Belgesel-Documentary channel focused on the hyaena individuals (Pekmez and Pestil) discovered and named by us. They contributed to hyena protection by making a short documentary film. They became the focus of attention of youtubers who are interested in wildlife.

4. What do you consider to be the most significant achievement of this work?

5. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.

People's attitude towards hyenas is regionally varied across Turkey. Local communities provided us valuable data about the presence of hyaenas in their environment. We realised public interest and affection about hyaenas are comparatively better throughout south-eastern Anatolia (the main distribution area). Striped hyaenas and their habits are well known compared to the western regions of Turkey.

Sustainable livestock farming means a sustainable hyaena population. We believe that hyenas will survive if livestock activities are supported and continued. The biggest problems of animal husbandry in arid environments are water scarcity and barren pastures. In the interviews we had with the local people dealing with animal husbandry, we noticed that the most important need was to water wells for the region. In consultation with local government units, we attempted to drill a water well in Karadağ, one of the most critical distribution areas of the species. As the result of our endeavour, a water well was opened in the region. This work serves as a model to receive local community support in wildlife conservation. Our local trackers and volunteers are now sending us observation reports more often.

6. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. If we can raise another funding, we hope to reach more people and encourage them to protect hyenas and their habitat.

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

The information gathered with this project regarding the situation of this critically endangered species will be shared with official units to be used in the conservation action plans to be prepared.

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

The workflow did not go as planned mainly due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Fieldwork was carried out opportunistically and based on the data gathered by questionnaires. In other words, the works are shaped by logistics, accommodation, welcome, and the perspective of the local people rather than a regionally determined work schedule.

9. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Food	3000	3000		The amount allocated for food expenses covered the cost incurred.
Fuel	1000	1000		Airline tickets (about £286 /6 flights) were purchased when possible and necessary by making use of the fuel budget for remote work sites. The

				remaining part of the budget was used to cover the fuel costs of the vehicles that were provided from the areas free of charge and belonging to us.
Camera Traps	2000	1953	-47	The camera traps were (about 1953 sterling) supplied from abroad due to the volatility in exchange rates and supply constraints.
	6000	5953	-47	

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

We think that hyaena groups can be monitored by the establishment of local and permanent units, and more lobbying can be done for this. In this context, we will increase our efforts to establish a monitoring and protection network. We wish to hold meetings with local nature conservation units and administrations and to accelerate monitoring and conservation efforts. So, in the next phase, the most important thing is to integrate more people into the project within the scope of citizen science.

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

We only used the logo on the project website.

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

İsmet Ceyhun Yıldırım, Project management -fieldwork planning, meeting with local authorities and villagers, camera trapping, tracking, publication, video and photographs

Eray Özkan, Wildlife Technician -interviewing target audience (shepherds, hunters, farmers) setting up and controlling camera traps, wildlife tracking and training of people, video and photographs

Zafer Kılıçoğlu, Wildlife Photographer -making questionnaires, survey analysis, wildlife tracking, website design, video and photographs

13. Any other comments?

This project was the first step in which we were able to evaluate the current situation and distribution of the striped hyaena in Turkey. It allowed us to gain field experience while dealing with sociological, logistical and some unexpected issues. Most importantly, we are able to limit the scale of our work area with the data we collect. If the opportunity is given, we will intensify our work by integrating more people from

the areas where the main population is located and where there is potential for hyena-human conflict.

Project website: <https://www.anadolisirtlanprojesi.org/>