

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Ashan Nimantha Thudugala
Project Title	Monitoring and conservation of small wild cats in Human mediated landscapes in Hill Country Sri Lanka
Application ID	25393-1
Grant Amount	£4,965
Email Address	savefishingcat@gmail.com
Date of this Report	2022/02/15

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
Purchasing camera traps 20 units for project work				We able to purchase 25 Browning strike force cameras to conduct this project.
Memory (25) cards, Rechargeable batteries (160), cables and padlocks for camera traps				Purchased through local market and used throughout the project period.
Pilot study				We able to conduct three visits to the study site with our assistants to explore the landscape and make arrangements with the forest management officers. We also had to get official permission from Municipal Council of Kandy city to conduct this study.
camera trap field study				Details are included in attached report.
Vegetation survey and fish survey along side to camera trapping location				50% - Details are included in attached report.
Questionnaire survey for 100 houses				20% - This objective was affected by covid pandemic and allocated it to complete along side 2 nd part of the project.
leaflets and awareness materials				Pictures are attached with the report.
Two awareness rising workshops for school kids				Details attached with report.
Small wild cat youth camp program				Details attached with report.

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

Even after we received the money it took us some time to obtain necessary permission to conduct the project in protected area managed by the municipal council of Kandy city. It's mainly due to some political changes in the government. But after few months of wating we able to get the necessary permissions. And we

able to officially start the field work from January 2019. In the meantime, we conducted our youth camps and other related awareness activities to progress along with the project work. After talking with the park management, we were planning to conduct the project with two main phases since there were no intensive studies have been done in this human dominated forested areas. And we decided to use the funding from Rufford Foundation alongside other organisations to carry out this multi-year project and we able to finish the phase 1 in mid-2021 along with unforeseen difficulties.

Project work was greatly affected by Covid-19 pandemic. We had to shut down all the project work due to the months-long lockdown and even after reopening park management were maintained under minimum numbers and it also affected the progress of our work. Due to above reasons we had to transfer our social survey component to the next phase of the project.

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

1. We were able to get a proper idea about how carnivores, especially wild cats in central hills of Sri Lanka, utilise the habitats and how they co-exist with humans and other sympatric carnivores.
2. We were able to discover very rare sightings of animals in this project area, especially sambar deer and rusty spotted cats who were thought to be lost from the area decades ago. Due to that we were able to raise the profile of this landscape to improve its protection.
3. We were able to lay the foundation for future work along with the policy makers, park management and many other community-based conservation activities with the initiation of this project.

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

Through this project as a component, we had to educate the locals/ villagers who live around the protected area. We conducted the social surveys (only partially, due to Covid) and during our field work we educated them about what we were doing and how it will be also important them to reduce the conflicts occurring from wild animals.

From the above understanding we decided to start up chicken coops/community livelihood programmes with the funding of other agencies which is still undergoing.

Additionally, while conducting our field research/ camera trapping we gave a chance for the villagers/ young kinds to accompany us to field so they can get an idea about what we are doing and how important it is.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes 2nd phase of the project is already initiated with the funding from Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong. In future we planning to expand into nearby areas along with more collaboration.

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

Producing reports to be submitted to policy makers and government agencies and through scientific research papers.

Additionally, we have been producing social media content to raise the awareness of the species and what we also doing through different platforms like Facebook/ Instagram and Twitter. We able to create short videos, pictures and infographics targeting different audiences.

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

This grant was fully utilised throughout the grant period. In the beginning it helps us to get the much-needed equipment like camera traps/ batteries, etc., and until we get the necessary permission, we were able to conduct the youth camps/ education materials and other target objectives of the project.

While we conducted the project it helped to cover the transportation/ basic expenses and field assistants' expenses.

Rufford funding was utilised from July 2018 to July 2021.

For some objectives we got external support from funding agencies like Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Shared Earth Foundation and Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation to continue our work.

8. 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
Setting up information bords	200	40	-160	Still Under processing due to construction project in education building

Small cat youth camp program	350	375	+25	Cost of transportation/ food/ water and assistants
Three awareness rising workshops	474	612	+138	Awareness rising workshops along with field tours / practical sessions. Cost is related to refreshments/ resource personal/ Multimedia
leaflets and awareness materials (two sets of leaflets with colored file covers/ certificates/stationaries)	367	480	+113	To be used in awareness programs and educate the general public
Questionnaire survey for 100 houses	230	40	-190	Still have to complete) postponed due to covid)
Vegetation ad fish survey in the area	46	64	+18	
camera trap field study (Traveling 48 times per year)	184	645	+461	More frequent visits to field during phase 1 of the project and traveling to awareness / youth camp areas.
Pilot study (3 visits with two assistants/Expenses for food/ Travel)	80	120	+40	Three visits to field sites
Rechargeable batteries and chargers	220	340	+120	160 units of batteries and 5 units of battery chargers
Memory cards/ Padlocks and cables for camera traps	253	220	-33	For safety of camera traps and other related equipment's
20 units of Browning strike force cameras	2561	2200	-361	We were advised to use better brand of camera traps and we moved from covert illuminator series to browning strike force cameras. All together 25 cameras were used (5 pre-owned)
Sub-total	4965	5136	+171	
Field assistants' payments and other related expenses for field work		1800	+1800	Paid through Small wild cat conservation foundations funding
Custom and shipping cost		420	+420	Leftover money has been used to pay shipping and custom fees
TOTAL	4965	7356	+2391	

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

My next step is to raise the protection level of this kind of protected areas in the country by taking my study site as example. The study area I'm currently working is very important because it's surrounded by vast areas of urban settlements but still has wild cats and other mammals co-existing even with enormous numbers of conflicts and threats. So, my next step will be raising the profile of these kind of landscapes and protect the habitats along with its animal to future.

10. 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?

Yes, pictures are attached in the additional report. We have used the logo in printed materials, programmes we organised, and also acknowledged during the youth camps, awareness raising presentations we have conducted.

Additionally, we gave the credits to Rufford during our social media campaigns and posts

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

Project personal: -

A.N Thudugala (Myself)

Project leader – Conducting and managing the project work

B.Sc. Zoology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Postgraduate student. (Postgraduate institute of science, University of Peradeniya)

G. Ellepolla

Project officer/Research – helped to plan the project/ Assisting with youth camps and education programs

Probationary lecturer (postgraduate institute of science, University of Peradeniya)

B. Weerakoon

Ecologist – Field work

Postgraduate student's (postgraduate institute of science, University of Peradeniya)

James Cresswell

Volunteer field tech- helping out the field work

12. Any other comments?

Project work took more time to contact than we anticipated due to unforeseen circumstances. But we managed everything well and able to successfully complete the targeted project work.

This is currently ongoing/ continuing project and Rufford foundation funding money associated with 25393-1 was targeted on 1st phase of the project.

Additionally, we have presented our work in two of Rufford in country conferences that happened in Sri Lanka (2018 and 2022)