

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Fethi Bengil
Project Title	Interaction of Cetaceans with Fisheries: An assessment for conservation of the species in Turkey
Application ID	26566-B
Grant Amount	5,015 £
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Date of this Report	28/03/2020

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
Building information and volunteer network				Frequent visits and using social media provided us with a wide volunteer network from towns of fishery ports.
In-situ observations				Since having some technical problems after acceptance of the project, we missed the fishery period before prohibition in the spawning season. Observations were performed for landing by project team and volunteer team for limited time period
Field work				There were no available encounters with individuals of cetacean for identification during sea efforts. Additionally, no new or rare species were recorded during observations from opportunistic platforms.
Increasing awareness of fishers and local communities				Using the advantage of wide and great volunteer team, we reached various interest groups from local communities as well as fishers. In other way, that is also helped to expand our volunteer team. Social media was used efficiently for this purpose. Most of materials were prepared in digital media. Even though we proposed to have activities in eight towns, interviews and other activities were also organised more than 30 towns with fishery ports with great support of volunteer team
Evaluation of interaction between fishers and cetaceans				Using the advantage of wide and great volunteer team, we performed interviews with fishers from 45 fishery ports, even though some of them had not enough number of interviews for statistical analysis. Such an extensive interview made also available to evaluate differences of interaction between fishery types and cetacean as well as temporal patterns of impacts.

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

Obligation of NGO based application (for financial processes) that RSG has started to follow just after initiation of the project, provided some difficulties for the project. There was no preliminary preparation for this issue. Additionally, very limited number of NGO knows RSG from Turkey, so it took more time than we expected to find an NGO for financial process. Finally, the project started after 2.5 months with local contribution of Ecological Research Society. Now, there has been built strong bond with society and their members. After this project, we developed some new proposals together with coming up ideas.

We missed in-situ observation for interaction between fishers and cetacean because of having unexpected delay in kicking off, as mentioned above. To tackle this, we conducted more observation and talks with fishers during landing operations as contribution of our local volunteers.

The main motivation of the project is increasing the knowledge on fishers' reactions in less known fishery ports of Turkey. Communication with these communities were more difficult than we expected. To overcome this difficulty, we visited towns more frequently than we designed. Additionally, building volunteer and information network helped us significantly. In case of not reaching high numbers of fishers in a fishery port, our volunteer team and their local bonds provided us more fishers from various fishery ports.

Our preliminary fieldwork did not allow us to provide available sightings to support outcomes from previous projects. After this outcome from our preliminary fieldwork as well as provided opportunities of volunteer team, we decided to go on these work package with external and volunteer supports and transferring our main budget to reach more interaction work package fishers over coasts of Turkey.

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

1. Even though there were some scientific studies from sea regions around big cities of Turkey, requirement of holistic evaluation for interaction between fisheries and cetaceans was obvious. The project provided an important outcome for this information gap. Interviews with fishers who use different fishery methods indicated that the interaction is strong. We found that there are no fishers who have not had interaction with cetaceans during their yearly efforts.

2. Another outcome from this project is pattern in the interaction. The interaction can be described as "phenological interaction between fishery and cetacean" for the seas around Turkey, especially for the Aegean Sea and the Levantine Sea. It can be clearly saying that interaction between cetaceans and fishery type depends on seasons, which is probably because of prohibition in spawning seasons. For instance, while it is reported that cetacean interaction is more frequent with artisanal fisheries in spring and summer, industrial fishers reported that it is more intense in winter and autumn. On the other hand, industrial fishers from international waters in late spring and summer also reported interaction. Therefore, we concluded that preference of

cetacean individuals is industrial fishery, probably, due to reaching more prey per unit effort. Prohibition in spawning season determines this phenological behaviour.

3. One of the most important outcomes of the project is to obtain understanding attitude of fishers against cetaceans. I can happily say that fishers mostly like cetaceans. In regional assessments, it can be concluded that most friendly fishers were from the southern Aegean Sea and the north-eastern Levantine Sea. Relatively intense reactions came from fishers of the Black Sea. It should be probably due to having higher interactions, consequently more costs for fishing gear. A serious consideration must be done for future projects in this region. It must be also pointed out that we should develop more conservation-based project in this region as conversation scientists of Turkish community. As conclusion, fishers mostly understand cetaceans' needs and respect sharing fishes in sea. However, most of them ask for any method to prevent damage in their fishery sets and catches.

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

Project provided us an opportunity to spend more time with local communities from fishery towns. This communication also provided us some young candidate conservation specialists from local communities for effective conservation strategy in the future. Besides, fishers and people from local community realised that humans are not alone as top predator of marine ecosystem. They also realised that dolphins are not only beautiful creatures in the sea, but also suffer from our activity in the sea. Most of them agree that we should find solutions together.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Project is going to continue based on our digital media with support of our volunteer team. Outcomes of the project have also brought us some new idea to fill relevant information gaps as well as requirement of baseline data for other marine species. We can clearly say that there are too many gaps on marine biodiversity and required future studies to contribute developing conservation and management strategies. However, as coordinator of the project, I prefer to support young and new conservation specialists for future projects. Personally, living abroad required spending a high portion of amount in project budget as transportation. I believe supporting some projects of young conservation specialists or developing more specific project will be more efficient as future strategy.

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

An efficient sharing has been done with local community through social media. We prepared special web area on google documents-forms to share our results from interviews. There is an RSG Conference that plan to organise in Turkey in 2020 or 2021 for regional conservation specialists. The project will also be presented there. We also plan to prepare a scientific paper for a conservation – biodiversity-based journal in this year.

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

The RSG Booster Grant was used during time period of the project from April 2019 to February 2020. Even though outcome showed phenological behaviour for cetacean and indicated multi-annual monitoring, the grant successfully provided initial booster for the idea and filling the gap for conservation.

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.

Budget for project was received by NGO in Euro. Amount was sent to recipient in TRY as two instalments based on progress of work packages in April and July 2019. Currency rate of 7.2 is assumed approximately between TRY and GBP to report, here

Item	Total Budget	RSG Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Print material for conservational, awareness and fundraising	150	75		+75	We found local sponsors for materials that were produced for the projects.
Boat rental and fuel	900	1800	200	-1600	We found local volunteer for first part of field work. Only fuel was paid.
Accommodation	1400	840	575	-265	Extensive volunteer network reduced expenses
Aerial transportation	3930	1000	2800	+1800	As an advantage of extensive volunteer network for the project, data was provided from 45 different fishery ports all over coasts of turkey. A part of transportation for volunteer were paid
Road transport	1950	1300	945	-355	Volunteer contributions reduced amount that expected
Contribution margin of received NGO	515		495		As unexpected cost was paid with implicit approval of authority of RSG since project was accepted just before decision on application with NGOs.

Marine transport	650				Local volunteers were responsible for observations on opportunistic platforms
Total	9495	5015	4520	-495	

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

1. Future studies that have motivation on mitigation interaction between fishery and cetacean have to developed and applied.
2. Regional differences in attitude against cetacean also indicated that more activities are required to increase awareness of local communities, especially fisheries in the Black Sea.
3. As social animals, population size and structure of cetaceans are still unknown in seas around Turkey. Therefore, number of studies to provide scientific baseline on cetacean should be encouraged.
4. Based on success in volunteer network, activities such summer school and training course have to be initiated in Turkey, Thus, conservation of nature will be prioritised in community and it will provide opportunity have more candidate for conservation specialist.

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, we did. Any digital, printed material contained The Rufford Foundation logo. Support of the Rufford Foundation was pointed out and its contribution to Turkey were mentioned in any oral presentations, as well. This acknowledge will also be continued activities or scientific papers after period of project.

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

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fethi Bengil – Project coordinator. He took responsibility to co-ordinate work packages and activities under project. He performed field work and all analysis under work packages.

Dr. Murat Özaydınlı – He organized activities in the Black Sea Region. He also took a part in field work He trained volunteers from the Black Sea region, conducted interviews and contribute awareness activities with coordination of using social media for the project. He also provides important contribution to set connection with NGO that was required to initiate project.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Grace Tunka Bengil – She contribute to project with helping to set information network with fishers. She especially provides significant contribution for building volunteer network for each geographical region. She also took a part in field work and other work package in the Aegean Sea region.

Dr. İsmet Saygu: He mainly took a responsibility to organize activities in the western part of the Levantine Sea region. He managed social media communication with volunteers and local community in Levantine Region. He also trained volunteers from this region,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sinan Mavruk – He performed to develop and apply interviews in the Levantine Sea region.

Volunteers: We had many volunteers for the project, mostly students from marine school of Girne American University. Their contribution was merit to reach such successful outcomes under this project. List of our volunteers were presented, here to honour them.

Volunteer Team	
Ahmed Semih Maden	Gönül Arık
Aleyna Avşar	Hacı Omer Ozcan
Ardahan Yemenici	Harun Alişan
Atacan Tüfekçi	Koray Alp İşli
Ayşe Eronat	Lale Güvenli
Bahar Şeker	Mehmet Soylu
Berkay Kökalan	Mert Dağ
Berkay Ural	Nizamettin Özdemir
Beytullah Kayış	Ozan Tığ
Burak Yucal	Özgür Can Avcı
Çigdem Tekeli	Raşit Topaloğlu
Halil Özalp	Selim Emek
Fatih Durmaz	Süleyman Erkek
Fırat Tomrukçu	Yağmur İrem Baybal
Yeşim Saygu	Barış Üstbaş

12. Any other comments?

We would like to appreciate the Rufford Foundation for its contribution to conserve Turkish wildlife. Its contribution is not only for supporting conservation projects, but also help to meet community of conservation specialists. Because of network through RSG, we, conservation specialists, knew each other and, furthermore, implemented well developed project in order to conservation of Turkish nature. Even though it aims to provide initial movement for conservation of species and habitats, we would like to suggest that consideration of more advance projects will provide more significant outcomes for conserving nature as well as the opportunity for collaboration among specialists in the community.