

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 | Okan Ürker |
| Project title | Reviving Oriental (Anatolian) Sweetgum Forest in Southwestern Turkey |
| RSG reference | 26671-B |
| Reporting period | November 2018-November 2019 |
| Amount of grant | 10000 Pound Sterling |
| Your email address | okan.urker@gmail.com |
| Date of this report | 18.11.2019 |

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 |
|--|--------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Birds, Bats and Forest Spiders' Researches | | | | These wildlife researches were fully achieved and now on the process of scientific paper submissions. Also related data was sent to the Sweetgum Action Plan while its activities and sub-activities were being designed. |
| Sweetgum Afforestation Events | | | | We'd continued these events during our booster grant project as previous Rufford projects. |
| Sweetgum Forest School | | | | We had done this objective. Now we are preparing a wider nature education programme that is supported by Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Institute. |
| The Private Property Acquisition Campaign | | | | Although we have started to collaborate with some private companies in Turkey, unfortunately we couldn't achieve the purchase of any occupied land due to the rising economic crisis. But we've increased our network capacity with World Land Trust as international partner. Next year we will apply to a new international fund (IUCN Netherlands) for this objective. |
| Actuation of the Sweetgum Action Plan | | | | The action plan was fully completed with the help of this Booster Grant. The plan has started to implement within this year. |

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

Since last year the private sector in Turkey has started to avoid social responsibility expenses. This situation has affected our land purchasing strategies. At this step, we need to wait as national scale. But we are continuing to apply the international funds.

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

Effects of Wildlife Research: These studies which have been continuing since 2012 (the year that we had our first Rufford grant) filling in the related knowledge gap and knowing that the governmental body accepts NATURA as local authority about sweetgum conservation issue.

Sweetgum Forest School: At the end of this activity NATURA have earned 10 active young volunteers. Now they are like our right-hand men in the field.

Sweetgum Action Plan: Cumulatively, the most important conservation approach of all our conservation efforts were to prepare an action plan which will be collected to all conservation efforts and goodwill. Briefly, NATURA is one of the strongest partners/stakeholders of Sweetgum Working Group for nearly 3 years. The group has nearly 30 different stakeholders (government bodies, NGOs, city councils, municipalities, universities etc.). Now NATURA is one executive committee member of this group. The group has prepared an action plan for between 2019 and 2023. The plan has 20 different application targets and 60 activities and sub-activities. NATURA will be responsible for 10 activities and sub-activities of them directly or as supervisory which are generally related with the conservation biology, wildlife research, private landownership, environmental sociology and local history, art for nature and nature education programmes.

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

With this grant we had focused to young locals (They are forestry students at the local vocational school in the project region) to create a long period conservation network. That's why we had organised the Sweetgum Forest School Activity. Now ten of them are our active volunteers. Lots of them will continue to work in and around the project region.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Firstly, we will continue to apply and monitor the Sweetgum Action Plan. In this case we will also benefit from governmental funds while we implement the activities which are under responsibility of NATURA. Secondly, we will continue to disseminate the Sweetgum Forest School Activity by using national scale nature education budget programmes. Secondly, we will purchase an occupied land by using international funds.

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

We've submitted the results of our works to;

- Two peer-reviewed articles - one of them was related with the large mammals of sweetgum forests, and it had been published in Fresenius Env.

Bulletin. The other one is related with the birds of sweetgum forests, and it has been sent to the Journal of Field Ornithology. Now it is on the edition process.

- One national scientific article related with the bats of sweetgum forests, and it has been sent to the Journal of Forestry Research, Turkey.
- One Rufford Conference at Beypazari, TURKEY, 4-5 May 2020.
- We are still preparing the scientific papers related with the results of spiders of sweetgum forests.

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

The project period was between November 2018 and November 2019. Immensely, we had followed the timescale.

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 |
|---|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| Cargo | 250 | 250 | | |
| Stationery and Press | 200 | 200 | | |
| Communication | 250 | 250 | | |
| The Private Property Acquisition Campaign | 750 | 750 | | |
| Sweetgum Forest School + International Bat Night Events | 3000 | 3000 | | |
| Sweetgum Afforestation Events | 500 | 500 | | |
| Forest Spiders' Researches | 1250 | 1250 | | |
| Bat Researches (Bat Houses) | 1500 | 1500 | | |
| Bird Researches | 1000 | 3000 | +2000 | We had taken 1000 Pounds sterling from OSME (Ornithological Society of Middle East) for the bird researches. |
| Publications | 250 | 250 | | |
| Equipment | 550 | 550 | | |
| Coordinator | 500 | 500 | | |
| TOTAL | 10000 | 12000 | +2000 | |

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

We want to develop the capacity of young volunteers for next years. We want to fully complete the Sweetgum Action Plan in solidarity way. And finally, anyway and somehow, we will purchase occupied land.

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?

Of course, the most visibility as local degree was during our Sweetgum Forest School Activity. But on the other hand, as national level the most attractive activity was bat forest research. During those activities logo of RF was visible. We've submitted two peer-reviewed articles, one national scientific article and one Rufford Conference during this project. And the related supports of RF were declared within all of them.

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

Okan Urker – Coordinator – Anatolian Sweetgum Forest Ecologist (PhD, CEO of NATURA): He managed the all team and the project. He supported the experts on the field studies.

Yasin Ilemir – Mammologist (PhD, Vice Chairman of NATURA and Mugla University): He continued to study wildlife researches of previous Rufford Project and organised the bat surveys.

Tora Benzeyen – Bird Expert & Bird Illustrator (MSc, Member of NATURA): He managed the bird surveys and gave lectures to the students who had joined the Sweetgum Forest School event about Art for Nature, Bird and wildlife illustration, conservation and art relationships etc.

Mert Elverici (PhD, Middle East Technical University) and **Kadir Boğaç KUNT** (Anadolu University – Arachnologist (Entomologist): They are entomologist and specialist on the spiders. They managed the forest spider surveys and analyses.

Ozlem Parlar Urker (MSc, PR Officer of NATURA): She managed the lobby issues such as networking with Sweetgum Working Group, following the Sweetgum Action Plan, campaign to purchase the occupied land, organising the Sweetgum Forest School event.

Tarkan Yorulmaz – Bat Specialist (PhD, Cankiri Karatekin University): He was the advisor for the bat surveys. He managed the bat nests' set up, field surveys and using and analysing of the bat detectors.

12. Any other comments?

Thank you so much.