

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. 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. 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	Graziela Dotta
Project title	Biodiversity conservation and land use management in the Pampas Grasslands
RSG reference	28.02.10
Reporting period	October 2010 – July 2011
Amount of grant	£ 5,900
Your email address	grazidotta@rocketmail.com / gd333@cam.ac.uk
Date of this report	29 th July 2011

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 richness and densities		X		I have found 115 species of birds in all my sites together. Now I'm working on the densities estimates but most probably I will have to complete this estimates after my final fieldwork campaign (from October 2011 to February 2012) in order to have enough observations to do the analysis.
Dung beetles richness and densities		X		Dung beetles identification is still being carried out. This process is taking more time than expected because of the large number of samples I have (a total of 240 traps).
Asteraceae richness and frequency of occurrence		X		Asteraceae identification will be finished in a couple of weeks and so I will be able to start doing the remaining analysis.
Economic data		X		So far I have economic data for 14 out of my 24 sites. I will complete the remaining information during my final fieldwork campaign (October 2011 – February 2012).
Density-yield functions	X			I will only be able to start fitting the density-functions after having all species densities estimates, on which I am still working on at the moment.

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

The main difficulty during my project was to find sites of natural grasslands. As the strict protected areas (categories I and II according to IUCN) in the south grasslands of Brazil and Uruguay are non-existent I have to look for sites with low use (e.g. low cattle stock) and it proved to be hard to find those areas considering that the main activity in the grasslands are cattle ranching. Another difficulty was to get permission from companies to work in some of the areas. It took longer than expected but fortunately I could resolve everything in time to complete my first campaign successfully.

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

The most important outcome of my project will be reached after I complete my final fieldwork campaign and finishing all the analysis, with the density-yield functions fitting. I will be able to check the species densities responses to each production system and classify then as follows:

1) Supersensitive: Species that occur only in unmodified habitats. These species have an L-shaped density-yield function since its population density is equal to zero at any yield higher than zero.

2) Sensitive: Species that show a sharp decrease in population density with increasing on yield. These species have a convex density-yield function.

3) Tolerant: Species that are able to survive in low-yield farming, showing high population densities on farmed areas than in unfarmed. However, any further increase in yield results in a decline on the population density. They have a concave density-yield function.

4) Weeds: Species that have higher population density under high yields but that doesn't show the highest density at the highest possible yield.

5) Superweeds: Species that have the highest population density at the highest possible yield. Another outcome of my project is that I will be able to construct scenarios based on land use changes and so verify which option could be better to maintain the higher density of species at a specified production target (e.g. to fulfil the demands for protein, energy and paper pulp/timber).

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

I am working in areas of an agribusiness company and of a forestry company. I will present reports of my results for both. Moreover, some farms are part of an association (Apropampa, in Rio Grande do Sul) and I will make a presentation of my results to provide them a feedback on the work I have been doing inside their properties.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, RSG was used to complete my first fieldwork campaign and now (from October 2011 to February 2012) I will carry out my final campaign. After finishing all the data collection I will have enough data to complete proposed analysis and finish my project. After finishing it I will certainly continue working in this area, since I have well-established partnerships and will be based in a university in the region.

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

As mentioned, I will present reports for the companies where I am conducting my research and will make a presentation to the landowners of the association (Apropampa). During the first campaign a local newspaper journalist interviewed me and I also intended to publish the final results in a local newspaper. Moreover, this project is my PhD thesis, which I will finalise next year and it will be available at the library of the Department of Zoology (University of Cambridge). In addition, I have presented it to professors and other PhD and post-docs at the Department of Zoology and I will continue doing presentations with the results updates. Presentations will also be done in the Brazilian and Uruguay local universities (PUC - Rio Grande do Sul, UFPEL – Rio Grande do Sul and CUR – Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay). Finally, after finishing my project I will write a manuscript to be submitted to a scientific journal.

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

The RSG was used from October 2010 to April 2011 when I carried out my first fieldwork campaign for my PhD. From April I have been working on the species identification and on the first data analyses. The RSG was used on the proposed period and till now the project is on time to be finished next year.

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
Field assistant	£ 1,678	£ 1,678		The amount of money was enough for covering the cost of three field assistants during my first fieldwork campaign.
Air ticket	£ 738	£ 738		
Vehicle	£ 2,850	£ 3,474	£ 624	Total cost for vehicle was estimated in £ 5,495.50 but it costs £ 6,120.33. I complete the difference with personal savings.
Fuel	£ 400	£ 600	£ 200	High cost of fuel and large distances among study sites resulted in a greater consume of fuel. Difference was covered by other financial support.
Consumable items for dung beetles	£ 234	£ 234		The amount was enough for buying all the material.
TOTAL	£ 5,900	£ 6,724	£ 824	

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

I am going to complete my final fieldwork campaign for data collection from October 2011 to February 2012. After this, I am confident I will have enough data to complete the proposed analysis and to end up with conservation strategies for the Campos grasslands of South Brazil and Uruguay. I am in contact with conservation practitioners, local Universities and NGOs, as well as with the person in charge of a Protected Landscape (classification according to IUCN category for a Brazilian APA) near my study sites, at the Brazilian Environmental Institute (ICMBio). I believe I will have enough support to widespread my results and will help providing some information to implement best practices to conserving grasslands in the region.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

I have used the RSGF logo on all presentations I have done of my project during this period. I intend to use it on future posters I will do for scientific congress/events. As I am working in partnership with

so many different institutions, the RSGF was publicised in all of them (local Universities, NGOs, and other associations).

11. Any other comments?

I would like to thank the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for helping me in this important phase of my project. I couldn't have done it without your support! I would also like to commit myself to giving you a proper final report after finishing all my analysis. Thank you very much!