

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Sarita Kendall
<b>Project title</b>	Community conservation for the Amazon water world
<b>RSG reference</b>	34.03.08
<b>Reporting period</b>	July 2008-June 2009
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5468
<b>Your email address</b>	saritaken@yahoo.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	July 2009

**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
Turtle conservation patrols, transfer of nests and liberation of hatchlings			X	555 hatchlings liberated (1 <i>Podocnemis expansa</i> nest, 30 <i>P.sextuberculata</i> nests, 8 <i>P.unifilis</i> nests); reduction in the local sale of turtle eggs and turtles, endorsement by the community for monitoring. Loss of one <i>P. expansa</i> during patrolling period.
Manatee monitoring and counts			X	Sightings increased by 58% compared to the previous year; the number of manatees sighted in a simultaneous count (Nov 2008) was up to 20 individuals, compared with 17 in 2007. No animals were hunted in the study area.
Pirarucu mapping and counts		X		Mapping of nests showed a shift away from more populated fringes; the counts were incomplete due to sudden rise in river level and lack of funds to bring count expert to the Amazon, but instead the community kept records of sightings and identified 2 lakes with significant pirarucu populations.
Production of DVD on manatees and their conservation			X	The 15 min. DVD (Spanish and English) is already in use for local education and visitors at the Interpretation Centre.
Education work in local communities			X	Environmental education classes with all primary and some secondary children throughout the year, about 900 children a week. Visits to communities for turtle and manatee campaigns, use of the Natutama manatee certificate award. Natutama Week festival, celebrating the cosmos and the aquatic world. The education team expanded to incorporate new educators and we ran a new training programme for all the educators.
Production of 6 jigsaw puzzles for education			X	7 jigsaws with original paintings on hardboard, 60cmx45cm, showing turtles, manatees, pirarucus and dolphins. These were produced by our team and are in use
Puppet shows and theatre			X	Two puppet/theatre presentations with conservation messages related to turtles and manatees were developed and presented in Puerto Nariño and other local communities.
Diffusion of Natutama model			X	Exchange with an Ecuadorean project based on the Natutama model, with visits by Quichua Indian to Colombia; 2 members of the Natutama team went to the river Napo to help mount the

				Ecuador Interpretation Centre.
Interpretation Centre – new module			X	While not part of the Rufford project, the development of the new Interpretation Centre module on the Beach by Night was completed and has strengthened turtle conservation as well as leading in to climate change education work.
Towards a culture for conservation		X		We have made progress with particular species but only a permanent, long term commitment can bring about lasting changes in conservation and management strategies.

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

- We were not able to carry out the pirarucu counts as planned due to the absence of the person to lead these expeditions (lack of funding by her counterpart for air ticket to the Amazon) and to the sudden, unexpected rise and fall in Amazon River levels which upset the programming. However, we experimented with sightings reported by people in communities fishing in pirarucu areas; although this did not produce a full count, it was a useful exercise in promoting pirarucu conservation with the community and identified the 2 lakes with most pirarucus during the high water period (we used the count money for this purpose).
- During the turtle patrols one *P. expansa* was captured, though the nest was saved and transferred to the artificial beach. Normally patrols were carried out by 2 people but on this night, there was only one person, which resulted in the loss of the turtle. The group discussed this event and agreed that one person should never patrol alone. We are still not satisfied with our turtle conservation strategy and plan to make changes.

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

1. The success of manatee conservation (with no animals hunted) has been widely commented on by local people and is attributed to the role of fishermen as guardians. This has led to further concrete conservation actions focusing on locally identified problems. During the project this process resulted in an agreement to protect the giant Ceiba trees where herons (*Ardea cocoi*) nest in large colonies. The previous year all trees with nesting colonies had been cut down and the herons killed for meat and feathers - no herons were seen during the year. After discussing the problem with the Indian authority and the local community, three nesting colonies were protected and by July 2009 all the herons from one tree had flown.
2. We used puppets and theatre as conservation tools far more extensively during 2008-2009 and found this very effective with schoolchildren and in communities. Both the Tapir-manatee transformation story and the Mother Turtle story (based on local Ticuna myths) were presented at a cultural festival, then in local communities. We also used street theatre on climate change to raise awareness and we are currently developing a puppet show for very young children focusing on unsuitable uses of animals (e.g. bird feathers for crafts). We found that the teamwork involved in creating and mounting these performances helped consolidate the educators' group and their success increased self-esteem.
3. While we lost one of the big turtles during patrolling (see above) we found that our persistence in campaigning for turtles and the egg transfer programme have produced visible results. In addition, local authorities are now giving the problem more attention and we helped in the release of many confiscated turtles during 2008. However, the use of turtles and turtle eggs as food is very deeply rooted in the communities and we are not

making progress as fast as we would like. Our monitoring of the turtle beaches has also revealed that birds that nest on the beaches are losing nearly all their eggs to people who sow summer crops and fish on the beaches. In general, more intensive use of the beaches and associated backwaters also affects manatee low water habitat, as boat traffic through these areas has grown considerably. All this suggests we need to rethink strategies for protecting turtle and bird nests on the beaches and associated backwaters.

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

Local communities were involved in every aspect of the project:

- environmental education with the Ticuna indigenous educators (12) in local schools covering over 900 children on a regular basis
- all monitoring and conservation actions carried out by Indigenous fishermen (10) with the agreement of local communities
- coordination with local Indian authorities and school system as well as regional environmental authority

Benefits include employment for some 25 local people; the Interpretation Centre as an attraction for tourists visiting the area with local guides; the increasing debate and acceptance of conservation actions and management for key species; local perception and favourable comments on the fact that the populations of certain species (manatees) seem to be increasing.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

This is ongoing work; we are trying to build on our experience and respond to local needs; we shall continue (and expand, we hope).

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

Our work is shared with the local population on a permanent basis, through the education programme and the Interpretation Centre. An educator in Bogotá diffuses our work in schools. We are also developing a radio programme for weekly local broadcasting.

During the project 3 TV programmes featured our work. We had visitors from Brazil, Peru and Ecuador who wanted to learn from our experience. Manatee research was presented at the Sirenia workshop at the IMMC 2009 meeting in Washington. We shared results with other Amazon projects aimed at creating management and conservation strategies and we plan to publish aspects of our work.

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

The funding was used from July 2008 to June 2009, for one year as planned.

**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
Manatee counts by fishermen	£400	£399.31	69pence	
Pirarucu counts	£198	£182.89	-£15.11	See above re counts, some extra spent on mapping (see next item)
Pirarucu mapping	£80	£91.44	+£11.44	
Turtle patrols	£600	£588.30	-£11.70	
Turtle coordinator	£150	£152.41	+£2.41	
Educators	£1.800	£1818.26	+£18.26	
Education supervisor	£500	£502.95	+£2.95	
Petrol	£300	£303.84	+£3.84	
Jigsaw puzzles	£72	£70.10	-£1.90	
Manatee DVD production	£800	£800.15	+15pence	
Puppet/theatre shows	£280	£279.83	-17pence	
Air ticket	£240	£232.38	-£7.62	
Refreshments	£48	£46.52	-£1.48	
<b>TOTAL</b>	£5.468	<b>£5468.38</b>	+38 pence	Exchange rate: £1 = 3.280.60pesos

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

We feel that the way towards a culture for conservation is to have constant presence in the area and therefore be able to respond to conservation issues that arise from the community. This means:

1. Continuing with and expanding the environmental education programme in schools.
2. Showing that progress can be made by small-scale conservation actions over time.
3. Involving local communities ever more in our programmes.
4. Expanding to new communities and encouraging people in other areas to take on issues such as manatee hunting which can be reduced or even eliminated if there is sufficient commitment.

**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?**

The manatee DVD acknowledges RSGF funding, likewise the poster presented at the Sirenia workshop in Washington. In addition, visitors to the Interpretation Centre frequently ask about funding and are told of RSGF backing. However, we did not use the logo as printed materials were not part of the project.

**11. Any other comments?**

We found the RSGF funding process very efficient and straightforward, with immediate response when needed. This is an important bonus for a project in an area without easy access to internet etc.! RSG funding made a big difference to what we could accomplish.