

## Final Evaluation Report

---

We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF 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 – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

**Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.**

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

---

Your Details	
Full Name	Alejandro Matthew Bellon Lauderdale
Project Title	The Value and Costs of Jaguars to Peasant Households
Application ID	36284-1
Date of this Report	December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2025

**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
<p>Collect and analyse data on the diverse viewpoints present in Marqués de Comillas concerning human-wildlife interactions, and disseminate the results through publication.</p>		X		<p>The focus groups were completed and analysed. These were 6 focus groups (3 of men, 3 of women) with 39 participants. The results have been published in my PhD dissertation and are available to the partners who helped me do the work. I still have not managed to turn the dissertation chapter into a format for publishing in a peer reviewed journal. Published as chapter 3 in: Bellon, A. (2024). <i>The Jaguar and the Farmer: The Impact of Jaguars and Jaguar Caused Trophic Cascades on Agricultural Livelihoods in Mexico</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University).</p>
<p>Quantify the average impact jaguars and pumas have on human welfare in Marqués de Comillas, with a focus on the value that large carnivores provide through regulating their ecosystem.</p>		X		<p>The survey data were collected, analysed, and published in my PhD dissertation, appearing as Chapter 4 in: Bellon, A. (2024). <i>The Jaguar and the Farmer: The Impact of Jaguars and Jaguar-Caused Trophic Cascades on Agricultural Livelihoods in Mexico</i> (Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University). A total of 298 surveys were conducted. The analysis proved more challenging than anticipated, as respondents did not always</p>

			<p>behave in ways consistent with standard economic predictions. I am currently reanalysing the data before preparing it for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Because it was more difficult than anticipated to obtain precise estimates of the impact that jaguars and pumas have on crops and livestock, producing a precise estimate of their overall effect on agriculturalists' welfare was not possible.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the current results clearly reveal distinct stakeholder groups within the communities, each likely to be affected differently by the presence of jaguars and pumas. The latest analysis identifies a group that highly values the regulating services provided by large carnivores but is otherwise relatively indifferent to conservation; a strongly pro-conservation group; and a group that may oppose the establishment of wildlife corridors through their community.</p>
<p>Disseminate the research findings to the communities and provide them with outreach materials generated as part of the study.</p>	<p>x</p>		<p>I have created pamphlets highlighting key findings from the research project. In response to comments during the research process about resentment toward researchers and a desire for more information about local wildlife, I also produced a calendar featuring local species and a pamphlet for visiting researchers on how to engage</p>

			<p>respectfully with community members. However, I have not yet been able to return to Marqués de Comillas to present my results in person and distribute these materials. Travel to the area has been dangerous over the past two years due to cartel-related violence, and maintaining communication with my local partners has been difficult. I still plan to attempt a visit to present the results, hopefully in January.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> In January 2026, I finally managed to return to the communities with the help of my regional partner Natura Mexicana. I gave presentations of my results in 5 of the 7 communities where I worked but could not get the permission to do the presentations in the other two communities based on people's availability. Roughly around 50+ people saw the presentation in the communities. I then gave the presentation to the local volunteers who work in the communities to prevent escalation of conflict with jaguars over livestock losses, the jaguardianes (jaguar guardians) who did not exist as an organization when I first did my work. Finally I gave the presentation 3 times for members of Natura Mexicana including to the head of the organization. In conversation with Natura Mexicana I decided to not move</p>
--	--	--	---

				<p>forward with the pamphlets but did create and hand out calendars which include information about local wildlife to all the communities I worked in including those in which I could not manage to present. The calendars include a reference to the Rufford foundation.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

**2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- a). Identified the diverse preferences regarding jaguar conservation among stakeholders living around the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve.
- b). The research results have been published as dissertation chapters and the results are familiar to my main contact with conservationists working in the area.
- c). Demonstrate that emphasising the ecosystem services provided by large carnivores resonates with a demographic that would not typically prioritise large carnivore conservation in this case study. However, more research would be needed determine whether this preference can be leveraged to build broader support for large predator conservation.

**3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.**

To address concerns about survey fatigue in communities frequently targeted by conservation organisations, I focussed most of my effort on communities which had less constant contact with researchers. This had the added benefit of including voices that may not normally be as prevalent in local conversations about conservation.

At multiple points, escalating violence in the region forced me to pivot my field sites and modify travel plans to maintain safety while continuing the work.

The complexity of the data also proved greater than anticipated, which led me to scale back some of my initial analytical ambitions. I have also gone through multiple rounds of working out the best analysis before attempting to publish in peer reviewed journals. As a result, data analysis has taken significantly longer than expected, but I have chosen to prioritise rigour and accuracy over speed.

The worst failing is I have been unable to return to the study communities for several years. The area has had security concerns due to cartel activity over the last two years. It also has been difficult to organise a return trip, however, I am still

attempting to do so since I know the communities I worked in do want to know about the research produced based off of work in the area.

**4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project.**

I provided a platform for the perspectives of a broad cross-section of the local community, many of whom have strained relationships with local conservation groups. However, I am not aware that this led to the productive, ongoing dialogue I had hoped to foster.

At least in the moment while conducting the research I did manage to have conversations about jaguar conservation with a wide range of residents, many of whom don't typically engage with the topic and some of whom felt actively excluded from conversations about jaguar conservation. Nevertheless, after leaving the area, it has been impossible to assess whether this engagement had any long lasting positive effect. Based on this experience, I recommended exploring alternative venues and approaches for outreach since the methods employed at the time clearly missed people who might otherwise be interested in being involved in jaguar conservation. During the course of the study 2 students local to Chiapas and 1 local to the study area were trained to assist with data collection.

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

The immediate plans are to continue the work by publishing the results in peer reviewed journals and returning to the communities to share the results of the research. The work is still of interest to me but it has been difficult to judge whether any sort of continuation would be of interest to the communities given I have not been able to return.

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

The results are currently available as part of my published dissertation. Antonio de la Torre, head of Jaguares de la Selva Maya, who works on jaguar conservation in the area and served on my PhD committee, has access to all of my results and worked with me the dissertation produced from the research. For broader availability among conservation practitioners, I am still working to publish the findings in peer-reviewed journals.

The main limitation of the project is that I have not yet been able to return to Marqués de Comillas to present the results in person. The current plan is to return in January given the security situation has improved. I will first share the findings with a local organisation focused on jaguar conservation, Jaguardianes, and then organise talks in each community where I conducted research, open to anyone interested. At these talks, I plan to make all the materials I have developed as part of the project available to attendees.

**Update: I finally managed to return last month (January 13th-27th). I wrote about it above in the table under the section on disseminating research findings.**

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

The most important next step is to return to the communities to present the results and share the materials. One concern voiced by community members is that they rarely get to see the outcomes of the research in which they participate.

In line with the goals of this project, a logical next step would be to build on the finding that some stakeholders would be more positive about jaguar conservation if they understood that jaguars help protect their maize. Investigating the empirical impact of jaguars on maize, and whether demonstrating a positive effect would encourage pro-jaguar behaviour in the community, would be important steps for translating the results of this research into improved conservation outcomes.

**8. 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?**

The Rufford foundation logo was used during the focus groups and surveys on the consent forms during data collection, and Rufford was thanked and acknowledged during my dissertation defence which heavily featured the work funded by Rufford.

**9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.**

Alejandro Bellon - Supervised other members, led focus groups, administered surveys, performed data analysis, wrote up results. prepared outreach material.

Griselda Esteban - Note taker for the focus groups and carried out surveys.

Jose Manuel Marroquin Carrillo - Note taker for the focus groups and carried out surveys.

Alonso Romero Garcia - Carried out surveys.

**10. Any other comments?**

This project has taken much longer than I anticipated, and I feel it remains incomplete, although I continue to work on publishing the results and returning to Marqués de Comillas to share the findings. The data analysis proved far more complex than in previous projects I had undertaken. The project has been successful as a research endeavour that generates new knowledge, which may prove useful for conservation in the medium to long term if further built upon.

Part of my takeaway from the project was getting a broad view of the conservation challenges in the area without being able to address them in my project. These include challenges such as negative attitudes toward the local conservation

organisation among certain segments of the population. Demonstrating care for the community by returning to share my results would be helpful, but it is by no means a complete solution. I also found that I lacked the capacity to meaningfully address many of the major issues of interest to people related to wildlife-caused damage to agriculture that concern local people—for example, providing technical assistance to improve agricultural practices and reduce pressure to deforest, or enhancing the trustworthiness of insurance programs for predator attacks. Addressing the range of issues raised in the focus groups would require multiple projects that do not neatly connect to this project.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**  
**[Intentionally removed]**