

## Final Evaluation Report

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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).

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Your Details	
<b>Full Name</b>	Laura Borsellino
<b>Project Title</b>	Reducing the impact of dogs on wildlife in protected areas of nor-Patagonia. Multidisciplinary contributions for awareness and collective actions
<b>Application ID</b>	44145-1
<b>Date of this Report</b>	12 December 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
Socio-ecological investigation with rural inhabitants			x	I interviewed 80 residents of the Manso Valley – including key actors and institutional representatives - and we registered approximately 200 owned dogs in the area
Study with camera traps to monitor wildlife and dog/livestock movements		x		As anticipated in the proposal, this activity has been central during the year of the Rufford grant. With over 60 camera traps now in place—which is sufficient for the project—there is still a substantial amount of fieldwork to be carried out. This constitutes a mid-term objective (2–3 years), which aligns with the duration of my doctoral studies.
Campaigns, strategies, and materials that bring awareness in the community and decision makers, based on the information of the two previous objectives.		x		Details in several parts of this document.

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

**a).** Through interviews, we were able to determine approximately how many dogs live in the study area, their health status, whether they roam freely, what role they play, which breeds predominate, and the types of tasks they perform. We also learned what other fauna, both domestic and wild, coexists with the dogs and the residents, and what conflicts arise from this coexistence. We published a paper with some results in *Letras Verdes Latin American Journal of Socio-Environmental Studies* ([doi.org/10.17141/letrasverdes.37.2025.6257](https://doi.org/10.17141/letrasverdes.37.2025.6257)).

**b).** We are now analyzing the information collected through interviews and camera traps. At the moment, we are working on creating maps where we observe overlapping species, hotspots where we recorded a greater presence of dogs and areas with the presence of huemul and pudu, and conflict maps: areas with the presence of exotic species like wild boar and livestock, where dogs could be more prone to encounter vulnerable native species and attack them.

**c).** We successfully organized a vaccination campaign for 50 dogs in a key sector of the study area, together with technical staff from the national park and veterinarians from the province. We used the vaccination campaign to distribute health cards, educational posters (20 so far, with 20 left to distribute for the next vaccination campaign), and to promote environmental education. We also installed six information signs (one at each entrance to the national park) about the prohibition of bringing dogs into the national park, this action was very welcome by the local residents, who noted that tourists bring dogs into the protected area and recognized that this problem required greater involvement from the national park and more education for visitors. I was invited by technicians from nearby national parks to share this work experience so that it can be replicated in other protected areas. We are working together with the INTA (National Institute of Agricultural Technology) technicians who train sheepdogs to carry out a series of sheepdog training workshops for students of the technical school and interested residents, which we hope to hold during the first months of next year.

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

1) A wildfire affected the main study area in December–January 2025, and the authorities closed the area, so the start of camera work had to be postponed until March 2025. Data is still being gathered, downloaded and processed from these cameras.

2) Delays in administrative and import processes. We initially faced difficulties securing an institution that could manage the Rufford funds without converting them into rapidly devaluing Argentine pesos, which threatened the project's budget. We ultimately relied on InnovaT, but had to pay an overhead fee and experienced delays due to their limited and inconsistent communication system.

3) Institutional limitations—for example, within partner organisations - in handling emergent issues have also affected the project. For instance, when we schedule vaccination campaigns for dogs in rural areas, their participation is often cancelled due to other urgent matters, the unavailability of trained personnel, or similar circumstances.

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

My team and I have established strong relationships with several local families, who have gradually supported our efforts by granting access to their lands for camera trap deployment. This trust provides a solid foundation, and we anticipate that these families will actively support—and even defend—further conservation actions on their properties and surrounding areas. The impact of this trust has been far-reaching: we are now being consulted by residents from other sites in the study area, where we have not yet been able to work, about our plans to reach those locations. We consider this a very positive indicator of success among local communities.

It is crucial that residents feel genuinely involved, as the project's long-term impact could be weakened if they do not. For this reason, we believe progress must be gradual and deliberate, avoiding “parachute science” by ensuring we do not simply take local knowledge and perceptions without actively engaging with the community and providing guidance or solutions to some of their needs.

Regarding animal health, most local residents have been reached through vaccination campaigns promoted by the project. Other benefits for the communities may take longer to materialise—for example, the shift from purely productive economies to more balanced systems that incorporate wildlife tourism, recreation, nature appreciation, and quieter, more respectful forms of tourism may not be evident in the short term. Nonetheless, our project has initiated this process.

Besides adult population, a key component of this project involves two local agrotechnical secondary schools, where we aim to empower young people to lead initiatives for human–wildlife coexistence (see Section 7: Looking ahead...). The success of this effort will depend partly on the level of engagement from each school and the communication tools students develop. To support this, we have built strong relationships with school authorities and teachers, who are highly motivated by the project, as well as by the involvement of students and their families.

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

Yes.

I am currently well advanced in my five-year PhD in Social Sciences (specialising in Socioenvironmental Conflict), with approximately a year and a half remaining. I have completed all my doctoral coursework. At present, I am dedicating considerable time to analysing camera trap images retrieved from the field and

integrating them with information gathered from local inhabitants, while continuing to deploy cameras in new locations with the support of my team. This work is expected to continue for at least the next six months.

Starting in about a semester, my focus will shift primarily to drafting my thesis, while also committing substantial effort to educational and outreach activities, drawing on the socio-ecological field data I am integrating. These activities will be directed towards promoting effective management of domestic animals in the areas of my work, thereby reducing interactions with native wildlife. I have already observed improvements in attitudes and practices regarding livestock management and dog ownership, with a focus on benefiting the Huemul and other wildlife. However, the workflow between different institutions—such as the National Parks Administration, provincial NPA staff, field technicians, Environmental Health offices, and the local communities involved—is not yet as smooth as I would like. Therefore, fostering involvement and coordination among decision-makers, citizens (primarily rural residents), tourism operators, and other stakeholders will be my main contribution in the next phases of the project, extending beyond the completion of my PhD.

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

Sharing our findings through widely accessible platforms is a priority for our team. We regularly disseminate updates via social media (@beap\_arg on Instagram) and our website. However, as most of our target audience is rural, social media are not effective for reaching everyone. Therefore, we also employ other strategies, such as in-person workshops and direct, hands-on experiences—for example, demonstrations on training working dogs and similar activities—to communicate our messages.

Once Objective 2 is completed, we intend to develop management guidelines in collaboration with local landowners, provincial authorities, and National Park staff, which will be refined through dedicated workshops.

I have also conducted initial classroom activities related to this project, which I plan to expand and reinforce over the coming year. Additionally, I have delivered presentations to staff at partnering institutions, sharing updates and progress of the project with technical audiences (see attached picture from Lanín National Park).

Publishing our research in international peer-reviewed journals is a central part of our scientific approach. We are currently preparing a manuscript based on the interview data (Objective 1). We are also producing integrated thematic maps that combine species distribution, key ecological corridors, local threats, and human presence to highlight opportunities for conservation and ecotourism. Both outputs will serve multiple purposes: (1) scientific publications (in English), (2) institutional reporting (e.g.,

for authorisation processes), (3) accessible reports in Spanish for local stakeholders, and (4) chapters of my dissertation. Other products are expected in the future.

With the technical guidance of my advisors and other institutional experts, I have produced graphic materials (posters, brochures, flyers) aimed at specific audiences, such as tourists (example attached). We have also designed an immunisation record for dogs and cats in the campaigns we promote; these cards include information on the most vulnerable deer species in the area and guidance on how to care for them (attached).

Finally, the placement of metal signage in the work areas (see photos attached), which are heavily visited during the summer tourist season, provides a highly effective way to maintain a visible presence with our messages. Some are already installed, and others are in the process of being put up.

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

In particular, I aim to strengthen links with formal education spaces. I will foster on-the-ground conservation activities with the active participation of rural youth, teachers, and technicians from key local agrotechnical schools located near huemul populations and high-value habitats. By actively engaging young people in conservation, I will seek to foster local stewardship.

If possible, and based on the experience gained in my pilot area, I would like to extend this project to other settlements and rural valleys in the surrounding area, which are including in the North Andean Patagonian Biosphere Reserve that constitutes the Huemul corridor.

#### **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?**

Yes, some examples can be seen in the attached pictures, as well as in the logos of the supporting NGOs and institutions displayed at the end of our [webpage](#).

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

**Dr. Laura Chazarreta (Biologist, PhD, Grant Advisor)** – Staff member of Administración de Parques Nacionales (APN). **Role:** Multiple responsibilities including academic guidance, data analysis, and fieldwork with camera traps (specialist in this area).

**Dr. Gabriela Klier (Biologist, PhD, Co-Advisor)** – Full-time researcher at CONICET. **Role:** Academic guidance and participation in fieldwork, primarily conducting interviews.

**Dr. R. Freire (Agronomist, APN Staff) – Role:** Fieldwork with camera traps, vegetation assessment, and evaluation of productive systems.

**Juan Karlanian (Field Technician, APN Staff) – Role:** Support in field activities, including troubleshooting electrotechnical issues.

**Dr. Valeria Ojeda (Project Collaborator, CONICET researcher) – Role:** Fieldwork and academic guidance

#### **10. Any other comments?**

Although I acknowledge that I should have written to you to clarify the expected date for my final report in my particular case, I would like to explain that the delay in submitting this report is due to delays in the implementation of the proposal itself. First, the funds were received by my administrator on 6 September 2024, and they only became available to me in mid-October of the same year (13 months ago). It was only then that I was able to begin incurring expenses, the most significant of which was the purchase of camera traps, which I arranged immediately. However, I then had to wait for the import and delivery of the cameras from China. Once the cameras arrived in Bariloche, I was able to carry out the project, beginning in December 2024.

**ANNEX – Financial Report**  
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