

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 | Kunal Patel |
| Project title | Present status and population estimation of rusty spotted cat, <i>Prionailurus rubiginosus</i> in the Reserved Forest of Kevadi, Gujarat, India. |
| RSG reference | 45.01.09 |
| Reporting period | 12 Months |
| Amount of grant | £6,000 |
| Your email address | aranyapro@yahoo.co.in |
| Date of this report | 8 th August 2010 |

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 |
|---|--------------|--------------------|----------------|--|
| Systematic survey | | | ✓ | With the help of field assistants, systematic survey has been conducted successfully. Besides Kevadi forest, this survey revealed wider distribution of this cat in various sorts of habitats in the region. |
| Camera trapping for density estimation | ✓ | | | Only four photos were obtained through camera trapping. Mine is the first of its kind of research on the rusty spotted cat, therefore lack of experience, lack of relevant other studies done on this cat which could have guided me during my research to improve results and also constant presence of locals in the forest where I had installed camera traps, affected my intensive camera trapping. (Traps were disturbed by its position). Second reason also I have supposed which yielded poor results by selecting larger intensive area for camera trapping. |
| Preferred habitat | | ✓ | | Due to the lack of quantitative photographic documentation and with the help of results only generated through systematic survey, the preferred habitat of rusty spotted cat, poorly understood. |
| Inventory of rodents | | | ✓ | 10 species of small rodents were identified during study period. |
| Conservation awareness among students, researchers, forest department | | | ✓ | As the rusty spotted cat is still very rare and elusive for the subcontinent, students, researchers and forest department eagerly participated in every debate arranged for conservation of this cat. |
| Conservation awareness among local community | | | ✓ | The role of the rusty spotted cat as predator to control rodent population and thus save grain for locals has been successfully highlighted. Furthermore, how forests are important for this cat along with other wildlife and therefore also for us, interpreted as awareness sensibility and not as teaching. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Strengthening conservation network for rusty spotted cat | | | ✓ | As the part of the conservation network for the rusty spotted cat and also to give benefit to the locals who are keen to save this cat as well as its forests, collaborative ventures have taken shape in the form of conservation based eco-tourism offered by True Luxury Tours of the United States. Currently, I am discussing radio collar tracking options with a friend from Netherlands for my next study on this cat. |
|--|--|--|---|--|

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

Various research projects have been conducted since 1998 by me around the Kevadi Reserved forests. This time in this project, the use of all 15 camera traps in certain areas and also appointing local personnel to vigil on the installed traps by wearing RSG logo printed uniform, became a hot discussion issue among local community and they eagerly and innocently visited the installed camera sites and therefore we received unwanted photos and really wasted our efforts and resources. All my camera traps are film-based and not digital. It took two months to modify the situation in our favour after many meetings, but we suffered with this issue an entire study duration.

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

1. Systematic survey has revealed that the population of the rusty spotted cat is not in isolation in the region. It is more widely distributed than assumed. It is also not a habitat specialist, so it does not depend upon only one particular forest type or habitat.
2. This cat is very common for the region, but due to its elusiveness, nocturnal and arboreal habits its sightings are very difficult and it is therefore difficult to estimate numbers. Individual photographic profiles of this cat could not generated satisfactory through camera trapping due to selected larger intensive study area for camera trapping - in this study intensive trapping area was selected as 25 km².
3. Our observations revealed small rodents as principal food item for the rusty spotted cat.

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

One of the objectives of the study was to lead conservation movement for the rusty spotted cat and its forests through local community involvement. Two locals from Kevadi village namely Chatur and Paniyo have been appointed as team leaders of conservation movement and they have a responsibility to motivate other community members regarding protection of forests, anti-poaching patrol and any information connected to the rusty spotted cat sightings in and around the Kevadi Reserved forests. For the above mentioned purposes and also for the long term execution of the rusty spotted cat research project, a financial provision of £500 has been adjusted from the budget. This financial provision has made intensive camera trapping still in practise though the project period is over. My move has boost up local's courage in involvement of conservation movement as well as realising their responsibility to protect the forests for everyone. The message also

disseminated as locals can also grow socio-economically like Chatur and Paniyo, if the rusty spotted cat persists insistently in the forests of Kevadi.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. As the end of the project we have come to know that Kevadi has a really sizeable population of this cat than compared to any other distribution site within its distribution range. This population size can act as an important source population for further detailed research as well as conservation prospectus. This project was the first of its kind of a project on small cats especially the rare, elusive and rare attempted Rusty spotted cat. Therefore one year was inadequate. There are many questions regarding ecology of this cat to be answered before making any definitive conservation guide line for this smallest cat.

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

A complete report is being prepared for sharing with the scientific world as well as with the enforcement agencies. The state forest department is already giving their help for long-term support in conservation. News clips are already coming in the local newspapers. Good articles are on the way to being submitted in magazines for popularizing our project in other places.

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

This RSG was used for 15 months. We have extended our field research for three extra months. A detailed report also will be submitted.

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 |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| Camera trap equipments- Trailmaster | 903 | 957 | -54 | Custom clearance and shipment charges were paid. |
| Per diem for the investigator @ £ 4/- X 270 days. | 1080 | 1080 | 0 | Used as proposed. |
| Travel expenses for intensive survey, campaign and monitoring. | 1500 | 1650 | -150 | Fuel prices increased by 10%. |
| Field Assistant 3 X 180days X @ £ 2/- per day. | 1080 | 1430 | -350 | Since the field work has extended for an additional period of 3 months and it is still going on, we have supported two local field assistants throughout this period. |

| | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| Preparation of campaign material and communication. | 937 | 437 | +500 | We could not cover anticipated number of school programmes due to various reasons. |
| Living expenses and contingency. | 400 | 400 | 0 | Used as proposed. |
| Report writing. | 100 | 50 | +50 | Detailed final technical report is under preparation and will be submitted in a month's time. A layout, design and printing charge of the report meets less than proposed. |
| TOTAL | £ 6000 | £ 6004 | £ -4 | * Local exchange rate at the time of grant receipt: 1£= INR 73.3 |

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

- Establishing baseline data for the rusty spotted cat population in the entire Kevadi region using a reliable scientific method. I am also looking forward a radio-telemetry study to find out more ecological aspects of this cat.
- Adjoining Ratanmahals Wildlife Sanctuary is also potential rusty spotted cat habitat. These areas are vulnerable to disturbances from the surrounding human habitations. At the landscape level, long term conservation planning in these areas by involving the local community and sensitising them towards conservation of the rusty spotted cat is imperative.

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?

Yes. We have used the RSGF logo on the dress designed for local field assistants. RSGF was used on the banner for the workshops. We acknowledged RSGF support in our presentations during the workshops. RSGF support has been also acknowledged in our final report to be submitted to the various scientific journals and the forest department as well.

11. Any other comments?

This project has also received worldwide attention and publicity through True Luxury Tours. Please visit website: www.trueluxurytours.com/conservation%20projects.html for further details.