

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Lía Bernarda Altamirano Ponce
Project Title	Integrating fisher's local ecological knowledge for the identification of key ecosystems for threatened shark species' conservation in the Galapagos islands.
Application ID	43343-1
Date of this Report	06/02/2025

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
Collect and add value to fishers' LEK about threatened shark species in the Galapagos using participatory methods			X	Participatory observation, guided interviews and participatory GIS were used to approach fishers and collect their knowledge, with great amount of participation.
Expand threatened shark species' ecological knowledge			X	New information regarding common areas for shark sightings and nursery areas were mapped. Information regarding their conservation status helped to create a baseline.
Promote knowledge dissemination between the scientific and civilian domains			X	An intersectoral approach was used involving fishers, touristic guides, scientists and conservationists.

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

a) Mapped areas where it is common to sight each species. Putative nursery areas for hammerhead sharks.

b) Perceptions regarding conservation status of shark species compared to years before the creation of the marine reserve and establishment of legislations that affect the fishing sector while promoting shark conservation.

c) Start changing the narrative; Fishers are part of the solution to conserve shark species, not a threat.

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

The grant proposal didn't consider initially how the results would be shared with the community. The percentage of expenses for each thing was replanned to fulfil with

this necessity. For example, trips between islands were made by speedboat rather than by aircraft to save money in that part of the research and be able to elaborate a dissemination campaign for the community. This implied spending more hours traveling between islands but allowed to save enough money.

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

This research involved the local community from the beginning of the project, appreciating their past experiences with scientists and researchers, respecting their limits, and valuing their contributions. I believe that with this project they started noticing how valuable their knowledge is for conservation, changing their own perception because the research was focused on empowering them.

For the dissemination of results, it was considered what they said to be the best way to share information, so I visited schools and local tourist agencies to share graphical material for them to use as educative visual material.

For example, during the research it was clear that most people didn't know about shark species which are difficult to sight, only fishers had sighted them in open waters. They wanted to know their names and learn to recognize them, so some of them suggested sharing this information in schools, and posters of these shark species with their common and scientific names were created and shared with different schools in the three islands.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

It would be valuable to continue this work along the region, but for the moment there are no clear plans to do so.

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

I have already been part of conferences and university presentations. I plan to continue doing so, participating in congresses as well, and publishing a scientific paper soon.

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

Developing the scientific paper and participating in conferences and congresses to share the results and reflections of this research.

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, I used it in the printed material that was shared with the local community. It could be considered publicity as some people asked about it and I told them what the Rufford Foundation is and what it does. As well, while performing field research, during the interviews some people asked who financed me to do the research and I told them about the foundation and the grants it offers.

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

- Salvatore Pappalardo (PhD), thesis supervisor from University of Padova (Italy).
- Alex Hearn (PhD), thesis co-supervisor from Universidad San Francisco de Quito.

10. Any other comments?

I think something nobody prepares you for is having to face a complete crisis in your own country—unexpectedly and without preparation—while carrying out your research project. Considering all the challenges I personally faced during the research, which in some way influenced the project, I am very thankful to the Rufford Foundation. The grant enabled me to complete this research, and without it, achieving everything I have done so far would have been impossible.

Additionally, due to my master's timeline, I had to begin my research earlier than expected. Jane was incredibly kind in guiding me and ensuring that the grant reached me while I was already conducting fieldwork. This was especially important given that I was in the middle of the Pacific, with limited internet access, restricted banking support, and few available options. She represents the Foundation exceptionally well, and I just wanted to highlight her invaluable work.