

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 | Outhai Vongsa |
| Project title | Impacts of wildlife harvesting on the recently described 'living fossil', Kha-nyou (<i>Laonastes aenigmamus</i>), an endangered, endemic rodent from central Lao PDR |
| RSG reference | |
| Reporting period | RSG Booster Grant |
| Amount of grant | \$8,782.80 |
| Your email address | <u>Outhaiwcs@yahoo.com</u> |
| Date of this report | 01 July 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 |
|--|--------------|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| <p>1: Build capacity within the National University of Laos (NUoL) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ field and laboratory-based training and development of a support network with WCS and WWF Laos and the Harrison Institute; • enhancing literature and reference material. | | | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | |
| <p>2: Research (Feb/March-October 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kha-nyou <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using methods of Participatory Biodiversity Surveys (PBAs), conduct interviews in about 40 villages in and around Phou Hin Poun and Hin Nam No NPAs (mainly Khammouan Province), and limestone areas just north of Phou Hin Poun (Bolikhamxay Province). ○ Ask researchers in other limestone areas of Laos to make local inquiries about the presence/absence of kha-nyou. ○ Live trap in areas where information from villagers in the main study area is inconclusive to refine and corroborate information gathered from the PBAs. ○ Map the species' distribution ○ Identify priority conservation interventions to ameliorate the identified threats to the species. ○ Use the results to draft an updated IUCN Red List assessment for Kha-nyou. | | | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | <p>See attached</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies of other rodents and bats will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ compile an inventory of species sold in local markets ○ highlight threats to endemic, rare and/or conservation dependent species | | | | |
| <p>3: Data dissemination (June 2009- April 2010) to stakeholders, including: Submission of thesis. 2 workshops in Lao PDR to disseminate data to all involved organisations.</p> | | <p>√</p> <p>√</p> | | <p>The thesis is not yet defended Research result workshop has not yet been held</p> |

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

Initially, problems were encountered obtaining permissions from the Provincial Agricultural and Forestry Office for the surveys to be undertaken. However, this was overcome through consultation with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Once the surveys were underway, it was found that fewer sites were able to be surveyed than initially proposed due to the presence of unexploded bombs from former conflict on the Laos PDR / Vietnam border. The sites which were able to be surveyed were found to not be as accessible as initially thought, and as such local hunters were enlisted to provide expertise in negotiating the difficult terrain.

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

The three most important outcomes of this project are:

- It is known that the Kha-nyou are found predominantly among limestone boulders on hillsides, and so have quite specific habitat and ecological requirements. This study found population numbers in the areas surveyed to average less than 3 individuals per hectare, which would highlight the need for conservation measures to be taken to ensure numbers do not decrease further.
- From information gleaned from villagers during interviews conducted during this project, it is considered that conservation of this species is dependent on public awareness, local education and possibly law enforcement, as hunting for food appears to pose the most serious threat to the Kha-nyou.
- This study has provided a more in depth understanding of the hunting threats facing the Kha-nyou. Interviews with locals were conducted in 67 villages across 6 provinces. Information has been gleaned regarding hunting techniques, frequency of hunting and what captured individuals are used for. This information will be invaluable when forming an action plan regarding re-education of locals with respect to the Kha-nyou.

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

In total, interviews were conducted in 67 villages in 6 provinces, with 42 of these villages (in 5 provinces) reporting the presence of Kha-nyou, and therefore the interview process alone highlighted the conservation needs of this mammal to many local villagers. Subsequently, 10 survey regions were selected, and local villagers facilitated access to these areas, as well as contributing valuable information regarding habitat, diet, mating season, hunting methods and traditional use of the Kha-nyou populations. This collaboration helped those villagers involved in the surveys to have a better understanding of conservation and moving forward, village authorities are keen to put in place village conservation management plans.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Continued research is planned to further monitor the ecological requirements of the Kha-nyou populations. In addition, in order to maintain the momentum generated by involving locals in the study, a poster campaign is planned to highlight the conservation needs of the Kha-nyou. It is hoped that this will help in the ultimate aim of establishing a Kha-nyou conservation protected area, which will in turn generate income for the local populations from eco-tourism.

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

- A workshop is due to be held in Vientiane, Lao PDR to present the results of the research to the Wildlife Conservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund, IUCN and other international NGOs and organizations in Lao PDR.
- A workshop is due to be held to present the results of the study to the Division of Forest Resources Conservation at the Department of Forestry, the Forestry Section at the Provincial Agricultural and Forestry Office, and the District Agriculture and Forestry Office. This will involve the 5 provinces where the Kha-nyou were found and is intended as a platform to both deliver the results of the study and to initiate a Kha-nyou Conservation Management Plan.
- The results of the survey will be available online in order for other researchers to utilize the results of this study.

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

The actual timescale of the project differed from the proposal as follows:

- The approval for the budget for field equipment and materials took longer than anticipated and therefore the field survey needed to be moved to the rainy season. As a result, the surveys were more difficult to conduct and so the project finished later than originally planned.
- A further delay was encountered during the dietary analysis, which was carried out in the laboratory, as it took time for budgets to be approved for chemicals and equipment.

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 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|--|
| 1. Equipment | | | | |
| -Map (Scale 1:50.000) | 20 | 50 | + 30 | |
| -Digital camera and accessories | 300 | 300 | | |
| -Tent | 60 | 60 | | |
| - Sleeping bag | 80 | 80 | | |
| - Flash light | 40 | 40 | | |
| - Printing survey form | 50 | 50 | | |
| - Note book | 8 | 8 | | |
| - Pen and pencil | 12 | 12 | | |
| - Live traps | 500 | 300 | - 200 | |
| - GPS | 300 | 200 | - 100 | |
| 2. Per diem | | | | |
| - Per diem for Outhai | 620 | 620 | | |
| - Per diem for Bounsavane | 0 | 160 | +160 | |
| - Per diem for supervisors | 500 | 500 | | |
| - Per diem research assistant | 550 | 550 | | |
| - Per diem for Phou Hin Poun government official | 550 | 550 | | |
| - Payment for villager | 500 | 500 | | |
| 3. Transportation | | | | |
| - Hire a truck for trapping | 1,000 | 1,400 | | To be reimbursed early April 2010 |
| - Hire a motor bike for interviews | 300 | 300 | | |
| - Fuel costs | 800 | 712.80 | - 87.2 | |
| - Local transportation | 100 | 100 | | |
| - Transportation for supervisor | 0 | 500 | + 500 | |
| 4. International travel | | 1,170 | +1,170 | To be reimbursed by Dr. Paul Bates on early April 2010 |
| 5. Dissemination of data | | | | |
| - Promoting media coverage | 0 | 200 | +200 | |
| - Workshops | 100 | 300 | -200 | |
| 6. Final report production | 720 | 120 | - 600 | Increasing copy expensive |
| TOTAL | 7,110 | 8,782.80 | | |

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

- To ensure a conservation management plan is put in place in collaboration with local villagers and the relevant authorities in Lao PDR. This will hopefully reduce the degree of hunting currently facing the Kha-nyou populations.

- To disseminate the results of the current study, both in the form of scientific publications and as data published on the web, to make the information widely available to the scientific community.
- To undertake further research to gather more information regarding the ecology of the Kha-nyou.

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?

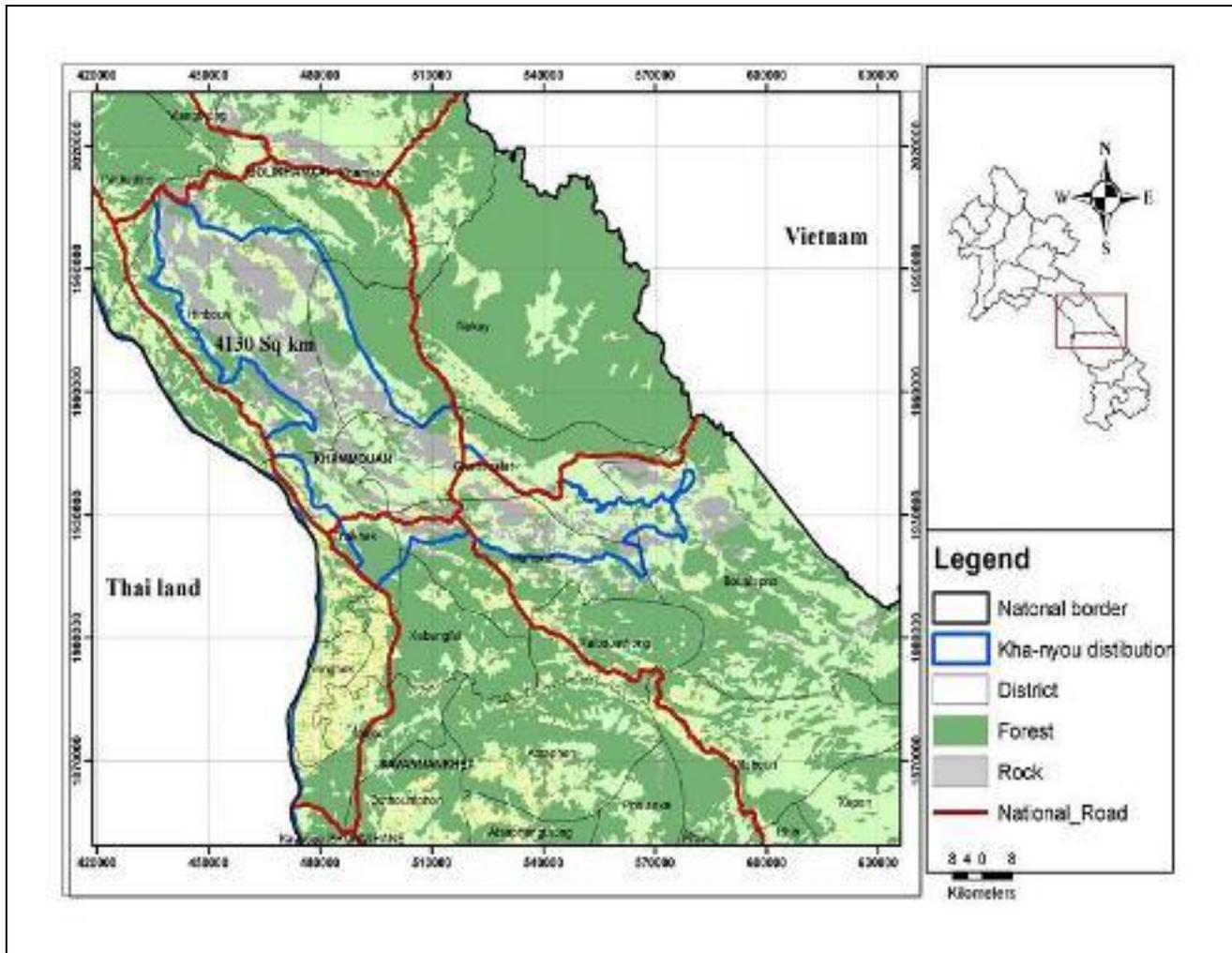
The RSGF logo was used on the survey report and equipment used during the field survey. In addition, the proposed poster campaign will use the RSGF logo.

11. Any other comments?

Several important issues have been raised as a result of this study and it is hoped that a long-term conservation initiative for the Kha-nyou can be put into place. This species is currently listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List (Aplin & Lunde, 2008 www.iucnredlist.org), so ideally the area inhabited by the Kha-nyou would be designated as a protected area in the future. This would need to be run in tandem with an education programme for local villagers to highlight the status of the Kha-nyou. Additionally, the livelihood of local villagers would need to be developed, for example in terms of eco-tourism possibilities.

The current study has been a vital first step in implementing the wider long term plan outlined above, and I would like to sincerely thank the RSGF for supporting this project.

Distribution Map for Kha-nyou



Kha-nyou Educational Poster



Project Photographs



Conducting interviews with villagers



Working with local trackers



Conducting interviews with villagers



Kha-nyou habitat



Working in the field



Limestone Karst