

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. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other 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. 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. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. 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	LAURA MARINA REYES
Project title	Marine Conservation Program for Central Patagonia, Argentina: Science, Education and Policy
RSG reference	52.04.09
Reporting period	July 2009-March 2010
Amount of grant	£24,971
Your email address	lreyescnp@gmail.com
Date of this report	July 2009-March 2011

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
Increase ecological knowledge on key species in northern San Jorge Gulf			X	<p>We deployed seven satellite transmitters on penguins determining from four of them how these seabirds are using the marine areas near the colonies. This is particularly important for the Leones Is. colony, which declined more than 50% in the last 15 years.</p> <p>We complete the information on steamer duck and small cetacean distribution in Golfo San Jorge, which is crucial for the planning process of the MPA.</p>
Establishing awareness baseline.			X	<p>We performed an opinion poll in Comodoro Rivadavia, Camarones and Puerto Madryn (600 enquiries, 31 questions). Most people are worried about the conservation of the marine environment, 62% think that oil production is damaging the environment, 82 % think that we should prioritise health of environment instead of economic development. More than 95% does not know anything about the Golfo San Jorge park, but when informed by the enquirer, more than the 70% agreed with its creation.</p>
Design and develop effective communication strategies			X	<p>The opinion poll shows that newspaper and radio are the most effective channels of communication. Whales, penguins, sea lions and dolphins, were identified as the main marine flagships to produce effective communication strategies.</p> <p>We produced newspaper articles, leaflets, and give talks on marine conservation in local radios. We lectured courses for biology students, teachers and tour guides.</p>
Supply schools with materials on marine wildlife			X	<p>We visited four schools, providing them with books on marine wildlife and conservation. In addition we gave talks, leaflets and posters on marine wildlife. The schools benefited were the school of</p>

				El Riacho, school of Camarones, and two schools of Puerto Madryn (Rosa de Corea, and N° 42). We also gave books on whales and dolphins for each kid of 4° degree at the school Rosa de Corea. Around 300 books were bought and given!
Organising school trips to natural areas			X	In Nov 2009 and Nov 2010, we took the children of 3° and 4° degree of the school of Camarones to Cabo Dos Bahías Protected Area. Many children visited the area for the first time. Before the trip, we gave them talks. After the trip, the teachers developed activities on marine wildlife, and produced an exhibition for the families. In November 2009, 20 adolescents from the school 528 (Puerto Madryn) were taken to the Península Valdés Protected Area
Meet landowners to involve them in conservation issues			X	We met with land owners M. Soriano, A. La Regina and V, Von Tungen, fostering their commitment with the conservation of their own coastal lands, and working with them in conservation activities, such as the planning process of the Northern San Jorge gulf MPA, or the Punta Tombo management.
Continue university students training			X	Students worked on the field, and in different activities. Including the opinion poll. We lectured two courses on marine conservation and on marine mammals to biology students.
Contribute with the government to the proper planning of protected areas		X		We were invited by the National Parks Administration to workshops in Buenos Aires, to provide information and recommendations for the planning of the San Jorge Gulf MPA. We advised decision makers in relation with the Punta Tombo Interpretation Center exhibition. We worked in the Punta Tombo Advisory Commission, fostering the implementation of its management Plan. We met with the Governor M. Das Neves and explain him the importance of implementing the MPA around Punta

				Tombo. Hi agreed with us and give us his support to initiate the planning We submitted technical reports to the Government and offered a course for provincial wardens.
Work in synergy with other conservation initiatives, scientists and governments			X	We worked in synergy with Fundación Patagonia Natural, Global Penguin Society, Animal Latitude Assoc, Sea and Sky Project, Penguin Project (UW), Proyecto Sub, Secretary of Tourism and PA of Chubut, Administration of National Parks, Schools of Riacho, Camarones and Pto. Madryn, Municipality of Camarones and Comodoro Rivadavia, Centro Nacional Patagónico, Nautical Club of Rada Tilly. We share our information in the 2 nd International Symposium on San Jorge Gulf with colleagues and decision makers We gave a training course to on board observers to detect marine mammals and avoid them during off shore seismic operations of Pan American Energy in San Jorge gulf.

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

In the field, the bad weather conditions were the main difficulty we should faced. The strong wind and waves forced sometimes to interrupt navigation and field work. In addition, we lost two from the three satellite transmitters deployed in penguins in Leones Is. However, we returned next season and deployed other four transmitters, obtaining data from three of them.

By the other hand, the scarce commitment of the government in conservation issues, sometimes dishearten us. Economic urgencies, political struggles, instability, and even inability of some decision makers, jeopardise genuine interests and actions in conservation. However we persisted in our objectives, trying to encourage politicians to appreciate the value of conservation for the local people. The awareness baseline was an excellent instrument to show them the high conservation awareness of local people, and to motivate them.

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

The first awareness baseline for the Patagonian coastal zone was an outstanding outcome, showing the importance that Patagonian people give to ocean conservation. Surprisingly we found that 82% of the people Comodoro Rivadavia and Puerto Madryn, and 53% in Camarones, prioritise marine environment conservation, even if protection could slow economic progress. Despite their interest, more than 95% does not know anything about the recently created Marine Protected Area in San

Jorge gulf, but when informed by the enquirer, more than the 70% agreed with its creation. This result strengthen our idea that the authorities should inform people about the area, and to involve local stakeholders in the planning as soon as possible.

To be invited by the National Parks Administration to participate in the planning process of the San Jorge Gulf MPA was an important outcome, and a clear sign of acknowledgement to our work. We were invited to workshops in Buenos Aires together with other key stakeholders, in order to provide information and recommendations for the planning of the San Jorge Gulf Marine Protected Area. This was the first step of the government to plan the MPA in a participatory way.

Educational trips to protected areas were the most gratifying experience of this project. Children from low income families of Camarones were taken to the Cabo Dos Bahias Protected, in an exciting experience that they will never forget. In addition, we took 20 adolescents with different physical disabilities to Península Valdés protected area. We are convinced that this outcome will be a long lasting contribution for the conservation of the area, due to the high impact that the experience had in the children.

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

5.

Marine wildlife is one the main touristic highlights in Patagonia. We are working to improve management of coastal areas, educating people about wildlife and habitat value, and assisting decision makers to make a wise use of the information available.

Specifically, we worked with children at schools, nautical clubs, teachers, university students, and conservation agents, as well decision makers. Schools and teachers are being benefited with new books, educational materials, and direct experiences such as educational trips. University students are being benefited by achieving new experience and skills to work in conservation. Conservation agents (mainly wardens and marine observers) are benefited with training, taking the challenge of give people a valuable conservation message.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Educating and creating awareness is the best way to make a long lasting difference. We are determined to continue our work mainly educating local communities at different levels: university students, decision makers, wardens, teachers, and other citizens, fostering their awareness conservation, and giving them skills to solve hard choices between natural and human interests. Particularly, the creation of the new MPA in San Jorge Gulf opens new opportunities for local people to develop touristic activities, but they need to be carefully informed about the consequences that irresponsible tourism and mismanagement can imply for the wildlife. In addition, we will continue working with the government promoting the creation and implementation of new MPAs (such as the MPA around Punta Tombo) and contributing with the planning of MPAs.

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

We worked always in synergy with several colleagues, sharing our experience and results. Throughout technical reports to governments, meetings with authorities, popular articles, courses

and lectures, participation in symposiums and radio programmes, we are assuring that our results could be available for others.

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

The Continuation project timescale was designed to be carried out in 18 months (July 2009-Dec. 2010). However, we extended our schedule up to early March 2011, because we should postpone the lecturing of an international course on marine mammals (activity carried out in cooperation with the Animal Latitude Association, Spain).

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.

Local exchange rate: 1£ = 1.63 USD; 1 USD=3.803 ARS

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Communications	450	238.19	211.81	This extra was allocated to the opinion poll
Stationary, educational materials, reports production-freight	1897	1873.12	24.12	
Opinion poll	2300	2563.11	-263.11	We included Puerto Madryn, which originally was not budgeted
Travel cost	3000	2985.82	14.18	
Truck rental	900	909.10	-9.10	
Boat rental and driver	900	909.10	-9.10	
Food and accommodation	800	811.98	-11.98	
Fuel	962	1015.61	-53.61	
Equipment	6900	6887.00	13.00	
Insurance	92,5	73.11	19.39	
Stipend	4860	4860.00	0.00	
Mapping	721	682.33	50.86	
Contingencies	1189.1	1179.56	9.54	
Total	24971.6	24988.04	16.4	

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

Most conservation goals require years of persistent work, as only over time we can achieve social and political support.

Marine mammals are highly charismatic beings that generate great people interest, catalysing political support. Since we started our project, we acknowledge them as vehicles for integrated marine conservation, allowing the protection of environments and associated marine species.

So far, we conducted a **bottom-up strategy**. We invested our time and resources to empower the communities in different ways: participatory management plans, effective communication strategies, educational trips, courses, etc. Now, the next crucial step is to complement it with a **top-down strategy**. We will deal with the top authorities that make the decisions: legislative bodies, and executive power representatives. This plan will be applied to accomplish more challenging goals, such as the creation of the Punta Tombo MPA.

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 was always mentioned and its logo was included in all our presentations, scientific and popular articles, press releases, books donated, and public events. We appreciate RSGF is providing a long term support to achieve conservation goals that usually need time and persistence to be concentered.

11. Any other comments?

In a world harmed by global warming, where economic interests seems to be the only priority, and where conservation efforts are hampered by the lack of political will, conservationists are facing an enormous challenge: the challenge of create a new ocean conservation ethic, a new way of thinking about ourselves and nature. This can only be achieved through long time education strategies, the training in conservation biology of new professionals, and a persistent work with governments. We are doing our best efforts to advance in this direction.