

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Agnese Mancini
Project title	Promoting grass-root conservation of natural resources in San Ignacio Lagoon, BCS, Mexico
RSG reference	1059-C
Reporting period	June 2013- July-2014
Amount of grant	14,494
Your email address	Agnese@boomerang4conservation.org or amancini1979@gmail.com
Date of this report	November 2014

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>Output 1.1 Capacity building for fishers and other members of the community on how to collect data for the conservation of an endangered marine species</p>			X	<p>In September 2013, in collaboration with members of Grupo Tortuguero (www.grupotortuguero.org), 3 fishermen from San Ignacio lagoon community of El Cardon were trained on how to conduct in-water monitoring of marine turtles and how to collect and report data.</p> <p>The in-water monitoring was then conducted monthly by Francisco Burgoin and his colleagues. He also involved his family and friends in the data collection and reporting process.</p> <p>For more information on the training, please click here: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2013/09/04/a-great-kick-start-training-fishermen-to-carry-out-in-water-turtle-monitoring/</p> <p>Short interviews and more info about our local team are available here: Francisco Burgoin: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2013/09/11/meet-our-team-pancho/ Chuy Lucero: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2013/09/06/meet-our-team-don-chuy-lucero/</p> <p>For more information on the monthly monitoring and local participation, please have a look at our blog that reports on monthly achievements: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/</p>
<p>Output 1.2: Standardized data on abundance and population structure of endangered East Pacific green turtles.</p>			X	<p>173 East Pacific green turtles were captured, marked and released during 11 monitoring sessions (in June, fishermen couldn't stop their activities). Data have been shared with Grupo Tortuguero and have been integrated into a regional database that includes more than 15 years of data.</p>

<p>Output 1.3: Trends on the status of this endangered population of marine turtles.</p>		X	<p>Data collected through this project has been shared with Grupo Tortuguero and has been included in a regional database that includes more than 15 years of data. One year of data is not sufficient to determine trends for marine turtles but the project and the monitoring provided important information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a spatial segregation within the lagoon: the southern and northern areas of the lagoon are used by 2 different groups of turtles. Even if it is the same species, they do not overlap much; • The southern area seems to have statistically more adult turtles than the northern tip. Adult and sub-adult turtles need special attention in terms of conservation and this project helped highlight an important aggregation area.
<p>Output 1.4: A solid foundation to implement future projects, including a broad health status study of marine turtles in the area (one of the first where fibropapilloma disease was detected) and tracking the movements and habitat use of turtles.</p>		X	<p>Discussions are underway to identify research projects that could be conducted in the lagoon on marine turtles. As for the health status, one of the first cases of fibropapillomatosis (a serious disease that affects green turtles worldwide) in the Mexican Pacific region was reported from the lagoon.</p> <p>At this stage it is important to prioritize needs and gaps in terms of local knowledge and identify those projects that would better address those needs and gaps.</p>
<p>Output 1.5: A solid foundation to develop marine turtle ecotourism projects</p>		X	<p>Mario Moreno, BSc student of Alternative Tourism from the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California Sur, studied the feasibility of implementing a local ecotourism project that could involve marine turtles and the monthly monitoring.</p> <p>More information about Mario's experience at the lagoon: http://conservingsanignaciolagoon.wordpress.com/2013/11/11/gran-experiencia-en-la-laguna-san-ignacio/</p> <p>His thesis (in Spanish) is available here: http://conservingsanignaciolagoon.wordpress.com/2014/07/27/so-what-happened-to-marios-work-on-eco-tourism/</p>

<p>Output 2.1: Create a group of young and motivated people with a growing knowledge of the natural environment and its needs</p>		X	<p>Every month activities were run in collaboration with the local schools. Children that took part to the activities said that they have a better knowledge and respect towards natural resources now. Short videos and interviews to local community members discussing about the impact of 4 years of activities in the lagoon are currently being edited.</p>
<p>Output 2.2: Spread awareness on the need and importance of preserving natural resources</p>		X	<p>Activities were run on a monthly base and covered different topics: from species that can be found in the lagoon, to artistic expression (a community mural was drawn and painted on the school wall: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2013/10/29/the-little-girl-and-the-giant-turtle/), to different educational techniques to better talk about environment (More information here: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2014/02/12/developing-intelligence-through-art-aka-dia/).</p>
<p>Output 2.3: Reduce human impacts and overexploitation of natural resources and especially marine turtles (through reduced consumption of turtle meat)</p>		X	<p>Consumption of marine turtle meat has decreased sharply in the lagoon, especially due to the children participating in our activities that are now reprimanding their parents for eating turtle meat. There is more information available about the health risks related to consuming high levels of turtle meat (especially in relation to the presence of the fibropapillomatosis virus and concentration of heavy metals in the muscles of turtles). More formal talks and surveys are needed to quantify the reduced impact and consumption scientifically.</p>
<p>Output 3.1: Create a sense of pride for living in one of the most beautiful and vulnerable areas in the world</p>		X	<p>The project has and is having a long-term impact on the people living in San Ignacio, in particular the children that every month are waiting for our team to show up with a new activity. As a way to celebrate this pride for natural resources, we usually organize a marine turtle festival. The 4th edition took place in December 2013 (see more info here: http://conservingsanignaciolagooon.wordpress.com/2014/01/01/and-finally-the-4th-</p>

				san-ignacio-lagoon-sea-turtle-festival/)
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

After more than 4 years of experience working in the lagoon, we realized that most foreseen and unforeseen difficulties could be tackled thanks to the support of the local community. During this particular experience, most problems were due to climatic events (twice the lagoon was hit by hurricanes although not directly, however the heavy rains made difficult to access the lagoon and/or to run planned activities), and staff of invited organizations that sometimes (rarely) did not come to the lagoon as planned. Nevertheless, alternatives were found in each occasion.

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

The three most important outcomes of the project are:

1. The request from the local school teachers (encouraged by the school district) to integrate environmental activities within school hours and the active participation of the teachers in field trips and workshops;
2. The creation of a turtle monitoring group in an unexplored area of the lagoon that helped increasing our knowledge of endangered species but also served as a tool to spread awareness about conservation of natural resources in general;
3. The involvement of literally all groups of people living in the lagoon in our activities: teachers, children, fishermen, local companies, women, parents, etc.

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

This project is all about the community. As mentioned before, many different stakeholder groups within the lagoon took part to our activities with a more or less active role (from data collector to simply observer). I believe that this project is benefitting the community by providing more information about their own natural resources and the impact we have, training people and increase their capacity, and finally providing a baseline study for the implementation of an ecotourism project with turtles that could provide an alternative income source.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We are planning to continue this work but focus more on the educational component. Ideally the monthly activities will be shaped in the form of modules that together will form an environmental education course that could be used also in other local communities around Baja California Sur. The monthly monitoring of marine turtles will continue as long as possible in collaboration with Grupo Tortuguero, while we are discussing with a local organization on best options about how to implement and run a community-based ecotourism project on turtles.

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

We created a blog, where we published all the activities:
<http://conservingsanignaciolagoon.wordpress.com/>

This blog was connected to social medias like Facebook and twitter and was integrated into our website (www.boomerang4conservation.org).

The turtle monitoring group will be presenting part of their results in the upcoming Annual Grupo Tortuguero Meeting (February 2015).

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

August 2013 to March 2015 (with a break in September and October during which the educational activities were redesigned).

As we spent less money than planned, we are planning to conduct 3 more educational activities (Jan-Feb-Mar 2015) and the 5th San Ignacio lagoon sea turtle festival (Nov 2014). RSG funds will be merged with other local contributions that we received during the course of the project.

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
Equipment for in-water monitoring	1,560	1560	0	
Running costs for in-water turtle monitoring (estimated 210 per month)	2,100	1509	591	When the funds were received, the exchange rate had changed and allowed us to spend less on certain items.
Field coordinator (excluding food and accommodation while in the field)	3,100	2593	507	When the funds were received, the exchange rate had changed and allowed us to spend less on certain items.
Monthly activities (including allowance, accommodation, transportation, field trips, living, invited organizations)	6,343.50	7315	-972	As we spent less than what planned we decided to carry out activities for 12 months instead of 10.
Festival	990	431	559	When the funds were received, the exchange rate had changed and allowed us to spend less on certain items.
Communication et al.	400	236	266	Funds for communication et al. also included emergencies. Luckily nothing major happened and we were able to under spend money for this item
Total	14494	13644	850	

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

I think it is important to continue motivating the young scholars and increase the number of students that can have access to our activities. We also need to work with the teachers to train them, so that they will be able to run some of the activities on their own.

From a scientific point of view, it is necessary to continue the turtle monitoring for 4-5 years at least to be able to detect trends and have a better overview of the situation at the lagoon (including trends on impacts).

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSG logo was included in the blog and all the material that was distributed during the activities (e.g. t-shirts printed for the marine turtle festival). As we are also preparing short videos where people from San Ignacio explain how this project was important for them. The RSG logo will be included in all the videos.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to thank you everybody at RSG for the continuous support throughout the years. With a videographer, we are preparing short videos on this project where people talk about how this project is important and how it somehow changed their perceptions of natural resources. This is the most important achievement we reached and it's mostly thanks to your support.