

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole**

**Grants Director**

<b>Grant Recipient Details</b>	
<b>Your name</b>	Igor Gajic
<b>Project title</b>	Spiders of Vršac Mountains – Research and Conservation of Spiders Living on the Highest Mountain in Vojvodina
<b>RSG reference</b>	15648-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	August 2014/September 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4994
<b>Your email address</b>	igyargiope@yahoo.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	16.09.2015

**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
Collecting spiders and creating initial list of species			x	We organised comprehensive fieldwork in the protected area. Fieldwork was based on collecting material using pitfall traps, beating and sweep netting techniques. As a result, we made a first inventory list of spider species for this area and proposed a future monitoring plan. This initial study is a guideline and starting point for all future researches and protected areas of this region.
Making initial recommendations in order to create a monitoring plan			x	We gave our propositions to the management team of the protected area. All our propositions were accepted. But, fulfilling all legal obligations is difficult because of unstable situation in Serbia. Because of that, we are expecting that everything will be done till the end of the year.
Education, lectures and working with students and schoolchildren			x	Spiders are quite difficult group to work with. Laboratory work, especially determination demands spending much time so students were partially interested in it. Some of them could not spare more time to watch and learn, but there are few of them who are now well prepared to continue the research and start their own project. We had excellent experience with schoolkids too. They were very interested in lectures about spiders, their biodiversity, venom and collecting techniques. After the lectures they wrote small school papers about what they have learned. They also started their own collecting on one locality in order to create the first school spider collection so the other kids can learn about them and maybe get interested enough to

				become arachnologists one day. Their teachers are interested in future cooperation and educational fieldtrips.
Promotion to general public	x			Getting a positive feedback from the media was very difficult and we had many problems. Spiders are not so popular group of animals and biodiversity is hardly in focus because of migrants in our country and political situation. Promotion in media is delayed for some time and we hope that this will change and could be possible in future projects.
Promotion and publication of the results			x	Promotion was very well done. Lectures were positively accepted. We had a very positive feedback and interest in further discussion so we left a good impression. Preliminary results of this research were presented at the 29 <sup>th</sup> European Congress of Arachnology in Brno, Czech Republic in August 2015. During poster presentation many arachnologists were interested in our research so we can say the results were very well accepted.

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

- **Fuel and terrain conditions:** Because of huge amount of rain during 2014 we had to rent jeeps in order to drive on a very slippery and wet ground, so we spent more money for fuel than expected.
- **Getting attention from the media:** Sadly, biodiversity and science in general is not so important theme in our country right now because of political situation and migrants. Project promotion in media could not be done but we hope that this will change for future projects.

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

First and most important outcome of this project was to create initial list of spiders for this area, and we succeeded. This is a crucial element for developing a conservation and/or management strategy in any protected area. Without it, we cannot know which species we have, how rich biodiversity is and therefore we can't develop a plan for adequate protection. This list that we have created is now a starting point for all future researches, conservation measures and monitoring plans. Based on this list, we gave an initial proposition of monitoring plan, the first one in Serbia. Second outcome was to educate students and schoolchildren and get them interested in this unpopular group of animals.

Lectures were surely accepted, schoolchildren got interested in spider collecting, started their own school collection and they are interested to learn more about spiders. Some students are now prepared to start their own project and continue the research.

Third income was to present results of the research. We had a poster presentation at the 29<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Arachnology in Brno, Czech Republic in August 2015. Results were very well accepted by European arachnological community which means that this kind of research is not important only for Serbia but for Europe in general.

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

N/A

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Absolutely yes! This research was conducted on a south region of the mountains so we cannot say that we have complete impression of spider biodiversity on that site. More surveys are needed to create a final list of species and to cover all areas in this region. Northern parts of the mountains have very interesting habitats so in the future we are planning to cover all of it and expand this list of species. We are planning to use some other methods of collecting in order to examine arboreal fauna and species living under the bark.

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

First of all, we had a poster presentation at the 29<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Arachnology in Brno, Czech Republic. Second, scientific paper will be written in order to publish our data. Results will be included in the Serbian biodiversity database and in national databases such as 'Fauna Europea' and 'Araneae – Spiders of Europe'.

Brochures and posters were sent to schools, given to the management of the protected area, Scientific Research Society of Students of Biology and Ecology "Josif Pančić" from Novi Sad and Natural society GEA from Vršac.

Complete list of species will be sent to management of the protected area so they could fulfil legal obligations of monitoring some species and/or their habitats.

Collection will be deposited at the Educons University Novi Sad and in Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Switzerland so everyone who shows some interest in spiders could see what we have found.

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

RSG was used from August 2014 till August 2015 which corresponds to the anticipated length 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
Wages for fieldwork 24 days x 10£ x 3 persons	720	720	/	
Wages for laboratory work 24 days x 10£ x 2 persons	480	480	/	
Wages for presentation work (6 days x 10£ x 3 persons)	180	180	/	
Fuel (1260km per month x 6 months; total 7560km)	626	711.87	-85.87	We had problems with terrain during rainy season so we had to spend more money on fuel than expected. Money was redirected partly from budgeted amount for lunch and partly from accommodation costs
Car rental (24 days x 50£ per day)	1200	1200	/	
Lunch (24 days x 10£ per day (for 3 persons))	240	209	+31	These resources were transferred to fuel costs
Accommodation costs (12 days x 3 persons)	311	0	+311	We decided to sleep in our tents or in a car so we could spare money for equipment and fuel. So, these resources were redirected partly for fuel and the rest of it for the equipment.
Material for pitfall traps (cups, wire, wood sticks, plastic roof, storage bottles, backpack for fieldwork)	127	127	/	
Expendable laboratory material (Alcohol, formaldehyde, tweezers, laboratory glassware and plastic ware)	100	100	/	

Stereomicroscope (STM-8T Stereo Microscope with camera and micrometer)	760	1016.13	-256.13	Resources for equipment were redirected from accommodation costs. Also, we bought cheaper microscope STM-7T and for the difference of money we bought additional equipment for it (ring light, oculars and protective bag).
Printing posters and brochures (100 posters and 200 brochures)	200	200	/	
Printing costs, Reports, Literature, Protocols	50	50	/	
<b>TOTAL</b>	4994	<b>4994</b>		

Note: Conversion rate for transferring EUR to GBP was 1.24 (since I got whole amount in EUR, but I was instructed to give final budget report in GBP)

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

Spiders in Serbia are very poorly explored. Every conducted research gives more new data for our fauna. Pure faunistic researches are important and needed so we could get complete impression of spider diversity in Serbia. If we don't know what we have, we certainly can't protect it. Education of students is very important so we could compose a team of arachnologists who could help us. Future pure educational projects could help to gather such teams of young scientists and enthusiasts.

#### 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?

Of course. RF Logo was used on printing material – brochures and posters for schools and local scientific and nature-protection organisations. It was also used on a poster at the European Congress of Arachnology in Brno, Czech Republic.

#### 11. Any other comments?

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Rufford Foundation for the opportunity to do this project and complete the survey. My country is not properly explored and science in general is neglected. There is so much work to be done here which could not be possible without this kind of grants. Organising projects like this is important for Serbian fauna because there are a lot of areas with stunning beauty and great scientific potential which are already under great threats. We could lose so much without even knowing what we have lost. It was a great pleasure to work under your sponsorship.