

## The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Ana Vujović
<b>Project title</b>	Conservation of the European pond turtle ( <i>Emys orbicularis</i> ) and Hermann's tortoise ( <i>Testudo hermanni</i> ) in Montenegro
<b>RSG reference</b>	19571-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	October 2016-October 2017
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4992
<b>Your email address</b>	hermanna85@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	October 2017

**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
Valuable data sets regarding the major threats to the health and status of European pond turtle populations and distribution at key sites in Montenegro.				At every potential habitat we established major threats to the health and status of European pond turtle populations, and registered records at six localities in Virpazar.
The development and augmentation of a European pond turtle DNA database				Tissue samples for a DNA database were collected from 25 captured European pond turtles.
Establishing presence of the non-native, invasive red-eared slider turtle				No red-eared sliders were recorded at either Virpazar (Bar municipality) or Nikšić municipality
Local community education and the promotion of conservation, via school events and workshops in the municipalities of Niksic, Bar, Budva, Kotor, Tivat and Ulcinj.				In all of this places we conducted discussions with local residents, but it is necessary to continue promotion and education in order to further increase awareness of turtles and tortoises in Montenegro. Local communities and individuals have a prominent impact on the survival of this Species.
Academic lectures at the Department for Biology and the Faculty of Mathematics & Natural Sciences at the University of Montenegro, Podgorica				Lectures were conducted with excellent levels of student attendance.
National television and media promotion				We promoted turtle and tortoise conservation on four national TV stations and on one radio station. We also participated in newspaper articles on the conservation of, and

				threats affecting, turtles and tortoises in Montenegro.
International trade control: Distribution of promotional material to, and collaboration with, the customs administration of Montenegro in order to address the problem of illegal international trade in Montenegrin turtles and tortoises.				We initiated meetings with the Customs of Montenegro in order to augment their awareness and recognition of turtle/tortoise trade, and provided them with booklets and pamphlets to share with Montenegro border control colleagues and other relevant personnel.
Project news and updates, including field research and school lectures, will be published on the Natural History Association of Montenegro website. ( <a href="http://drustvoprirodnjakacg.webly.com">http://drustvoprirodnjakacg.webly.com</a> )				All activities have been published on the Natural History Association of Montenegro website

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

A key problem we encountered was the difficulty of access to certain sites due to dense marginal vegetation, and localities that were overly muddy, preventing access to the area. At some sites the water level was either too high or dry.

We initiated a good dialogue with local residents and ascertained specific local threats (electrofishing, illegal collecting and fly tipping) and duly provided relevant advice. However we concede that only a relatively small proportion of the community are empathetic to conservation and give us the opportunity to show how important and threatened these animals are, and how they can help in their protection. We believe it is especially important to target schools and young people, and to conduct further educational events, but it is also necessary to educate more teachers and involve them in protection and conservation education.

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

1. Discovered localities inhabited by the European pond turtle at Virpazar and find out that it is not present at Nikšić, and registered the most significant endangering factors, which were subsequently used that to advise the local community and authorities about its consequences.

2. Shared information about the European pond turtle and Hermann's tortoise, as well as the project in general, with the public and with relevant institutions, therefore promoting the degree of vulnerability of these species and the importance of its conservation with RSGF and our organisation.
3. The creation of a European pond turtle DNA database, allowing the return of customs-confiscated animals to be ultimately returned to their populations of origin.

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

Local communities were keen to share information about presence or absence of turtles and tortoises, as well as detailing threats such as electrofishing and fires, and assisted us in field research. Together we saw how important the local authorities' role is in helping to protect habitat, and the understanding that the protection of turtles and tortoises as umbrella species allows us to protect co-existing species.

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

We do not plan to stop trying to conserve turtles and tortoises. We will continue with education and field work to make a better world for them.

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

We plan to share and promote our research at the Rufford conference in February 2018, and also to provide all relevant information on the NHAM website.

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

RSG was used from October 2016 – October 2017

We should note though that the grant was originally obtained at the beginning of the hibernation period, so active field research could not take place until the following spring. During the hibernation period we actively prepared promotional material and conducted education work and meetings.

**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. 1 £ sterling = 4.44 Nuevo Sol**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Binocular x 2	317	175	-140	We bought one
Bag x 2, accessories, note book x 4, paper, nets x13, gloves x 5	162	162		
Food for tortoise	95	55	-40	It was cheaper than we expected
Digital camera x 2	760	912	+152	We couldn't find for that money for turtles good and cheap than that prices
Bottles of 96% alcohol x 2, balance, nonius, medical scissors, tubes for DNA	110	110		
Boot x 2	215	250	+35	be bought three pairs
Data logger Kestrel 4000 200	200		-200	We have got used one
Printer	183	167	-16	We found cheaper
Car renting, fuel and travel expenses for field work and lectures	348	400	+52	It was higher than we expected that it will be
Phone costs	80	89	+9	
Daily allowance for field research (for food, drink, etc.) 18 GBP x 4 persons x 21 days	1512	1512		
Educational material preparation and print (leaflets x 2000, poster sx100,material, photos, design)	620	600	-20	
Daily allowance (for food, drink, etc.) for lectures at schools 2 persons x 6 days x 18 GBP	216	216		
<b>Total 4665</b>				

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

- To try to educate more professors, teachers and students in order to provide a bigger team of herpetologists.
- To organise more educational projects and research camps.
- To convince the local authorities to increase their efforts to protect turtles and tortoises in Montenegro.
- To analyse the collected DNA samples and create the DNA database.

- To collect blood samples for the overall DNA database.

**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 RF logo was used in all presentations, and printed in all booklets, pamphlets and posters prepared during the project.

RF received publicity during this project, during our field work, in the local community, among scientists and during educational lectures in Montenegro.

RF will be acknowledged in all forthcoming publications from this project.

**11. Any other comments?**

We are very grateful to RF for their support. Besides helping wild chelonians, Rufford has helped us to promote our work and the turtles and tortoises of Montenegro. The data and samples, and experience we have collected are extremely valuable and necessary for future work. We believe this kind of project is important because there are a lot of unexplored areas.

