

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	Monica Valeria Pia
Project title	Influence Of Environmental And Antropics Factors On Top Predators Density In Rocky Mountains Of Central Argentina
RSG reference	19.03.06
Reporting period	Final report
Amount of grant	£ 4285
Your email address	monicavpia@yahoo.com.ar
Date of this report	March 28, 2008

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
Environmental And Anthropoc Factors Evaluation		X		We continue with this evaluation until 2009. Partially data analysis will be at the end of this year.
Mountain Lion Monitoring		X		The monitoring will be continuing during this year until 2010.
Endemic Culpeo Fox Monitoring			X	We concluded this monitoring, the Argentine National Park Service will continue with this search.
Camera - Trap Study		X		We continued with the installation of camera trap, the next site it is outside of the national park. We look for differences in carnivore occurrence at sites with more livestock abundance.

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

We don't have difficulties, except for those related with the weather that delays the field work.

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

One of the most important outcomes of the project is that we go the third year consecutive of relative density of puma and culpeo fox monitoring inside the park and at the end of the year 2007 we add a sector of monitoring outside the park in the Achala Hidric Reserve.

During the year 2007, we implement the use of other monitoring technique for culpeo fox, the scent stations. This research help to training park rangers to carry out the culpeo fox monitoring inside and outside the park, and also, which threw interesting results.

Because to the techniques of sampling used for mountain lions and culpeo foxes, we could realize monitoring plan in order that the national park rangers could carry out, and this way be able to estimate the population trends of these carnivores inside and out of the park. This is important since it is a very useful tool to observe increases or declines in the populations of carnivores, and the method is of low cost and already used successfully in other parts of the world. On the other hand, these measurements of trend will serve of baseline information to elaborate carnivore control and / or management plans.

By means of the camera traps, two individuals of mountain lions could photograph for the first time inside the park. Also we could find differences in the species photographed between the installation sites inside the park. We installed the cameras in three different places, in the sites near roads and humans settlements there be not visit of carnivores. At sites, far away from humans settlements and

roads with a low livestock abundance (related with outside the park), carnivores visit more the camera traps, and were photographed more times. In spite of the fact that the study it is where has not concluded even, there exists a trend of these species to avoid sites with human presence and with roads availability.

The locations of the camera traps that photographed mountain lions will be use for the selection of sites for trap installation for capturing cougars. The objective of captures it is to be able to place GPS-VHF collars to follow them with telemetry, and study mountain lions population.

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

The local settlers inside the park, cooperate actively with the mountain lions and culpeo foxes monitoring with line transects. Also, I train a settler of the community one who is employed at the park, with the tools necessary to carry out the scent stations monitoring of culpeo fox. They are going to be in charge of this future monitoring if the authorities of the park continue realizing them.

On the other hand, I work with some of the integrant of local community reporting predations events of livestock for mountain lions. I deliver a material kit with a form for register this event, and a camera for photograph the livestock killed for carnivores and they dead for other causes, for in the future can estimate a predation level at this sites.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This work is a part of my Ph D thesis, and I planned to continue with the samplings to field for two years more at least.

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

We are present the corresponding reports to the Argentine National Parks Service, which are at the disposal of any person who wants to use them. Also when the monitoring and data analysis finish, we will share our results and conclusions in scientific magazines.

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

The RSG was used over the period September 2006 to February 2008.

The RSG, provided a very important help to us for the continuity of our project, since the field expenses sometimes make the samplings very difficult. Thanks to RSG we could develop our second year of monitoring puma and foxes in Achala, and waited they continue supporting us to continue the monitorings that are absent between the year 2008 and 2010.

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 used: 1 £ = 6.39 Peso Argentino

Item	Budgeted Amount *	Actual Amount **	Difference ***	Comments
Accommodations and food	1200	854	346	
Fuel	800	560	240	
Vehicle Maintenance	600	430	170	
Field and laboratory equipments and supplies	800	713	87	The differences owed to the inflationary increases of supplies as the photo rolls, prints and batteries for the camera traps.
Long-distance transportation costs (bus)	400	337	63	The differences owed to the increase of the fuel and to that trips were realized more of waited in the study area
Office supplies	110	114	-4	The office supplies also suffered increases
Communications	125	70	55	
Bibliography and maps	100	73	27	
Unanticipated expenses	150	71	79	
TOTAL*	4285	3222		

* The local exchange rate in 2006 was less than the actual one (rounding 1£=5.25). For this motive, there is undervalued the real quantity of the funds that were used for the study on it having gone on to pounds. The bank transfer the funds in the year 2006 to my account in pesos Argentinos.

** Calculated with the local Exchange rate

*** The difference is bigger than the real one, due to the difference of local exchange rate

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

To continue with the carnivore monitoring inside the park, estate emphasis in what it happens out of the park also, since it is a critical site of carnivore survival. Though the mountain lions relative density is increasing inside the park, the preliminary information of its relative density out of the park is very low. It is necessary to continue with the monitoring in this zone to be able to warn in time the mountain lion population level, since they are very hunted out of the park because the livestock predation, and that the park could act as refuge of a small number of these carnivore population.

Because of it, it is important also to begin with the study of mountain lions telemetry to know the distribution, home range, and habitat use, with the aim to obtain tools that allow us to approach and mitigate the human - carnivore conflict. The Argentina National Park Service, has purchase the GPS telemetry equipment, and we plan start this research in the present year.

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?

Yes. I use the RSGF logo in a poster presentation at the Argentine National Congress of Ecology. Also, we present the mountain lion project of Cordoba Province in the Second Mountain Lion Meeting at Cordoba, together with other groups that study felines at Argentina.

11. Any other comments?

I wanted to be immensely grateful with RSGF for bring to us the opportunity to realize this study, which allows us to continue knowing to our wildlife and to obtain tools to guard over his conservation. Without RSG's help, we could not generating knowledge on carnivorous, and we do not count with the actual information, that give us a small vision of the wildlife conditiono in a province of the Argentina where there is little known of the current situation of the large part of mammals. The RSG really made a difference for many of us as it enabled us to do so many activities in conservation which we hope to continue doing for ever.