

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	Cansu İlkılınç
Project title	Determination of Threatening Factors and Stranding Frequency for Cetaceans Conservation in the Central Aegean Coasts
RSG reference	25713-1
Reporting period	27 September 2018-25 May 2020
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	ilkilincansu@gmail.com
Date of this report	25.05.2020

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
Meetings with local communities/stakeholders				<p>The areas where strandings were most common in the study area were identified. The fisheries cooperatives were interviewed in these areas. Stakeholders were informed about the project. The contact number was given, and mobile application was introduced. When they found a stranded animal, posters were hung showing the steps they had to follow. Informative leaflets were distributed. Some municipal veterinarians who intervened in the cases were contacted. The NGOs, which have an active role in the study area, were contacted to work together with Ecosystem Protection and Nature Lovers (EKODOSD) and to be informed of the cases that came to Sea Turtle Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (DEKAMER). The coast guard command was informed about the project and the stranding case report line.</p>
Conduct informal interviews and raising public awareness				<p>Information was given to the site administration, cafes, and the public in the fieldwork area, a contact number was given, brochures were distributed, the application was promoted. Interviews were undertaken with fishermen and fisheries cooperative heads in the area where strandings were frequent. Past records that</p>

				belong to previous stranding cases were collected.
Established a stranding network with creating an application				In order to establish a regular network in the region, a mobile application has been created for iOS and Android operating systems for stranded marine mammals and live observations. An active functioning fixed phone number was obtained for notifications. Application and communication information was given to all the stakeholders and the students at the school where the education was given. Despite this short process to establish a communication network, we received seven reports under the guidance of scientists in NGOs who informed the project in this process. This showed us that after the application has spread in the long term, a stranding network can be created that active and regularly works.
Created a database by collecting samples during the fieldwork and gathering data from other studies related to marine mammals				A database was created within the mobile application. Information on past cases was collected in the notifying process. No dead individuals were encountered during the coastal surveys. In the incoming reports, samples were taken from three carcasses.
Determine current and potential threats				Since the establishment of the communication network took a long time and the duration of the project was shorter compared to this period, we did not receive enough the number of notifications to identify the current and potential threats. We were only able to take samples from three incoming reports.

Education for students				46 science high school students were trained on 'Marine Mammals and Stranding Case'. Educational materials were distributed including brochures, posters, bags, stickers, and 'Marine Mammals of the Aegean Sea and Stranding' booklets. At the end of the training, intervention training was provided with an inflatable dolphin, a towel, and an umbrella, providing the participation of the students.
Coastal Surveys				As planned, coastal surveys were carried out in five different areas in four seasons. Due to the weather, the survey in the two areas was cancelled in terms of safeness due to waves in the winter season.

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

In the project, we encountered a legal problem for coastal screening in drone-designated areas: the violation of privacy after an incident in the use of drones. According to this rule, it is necessary to have a licence to use drones, official records for each drone at the system and also obtain permission from the gendarmerie, especially in the fields that are usually used to study, mostly seaside's, open fields, and public areas (Pamucak and Dikili Coast where people enter the sea especially in summer). Moreover, getting a drone licence is an uncalculated and extra cost for the project. For this reason, we cancelled the drone purchase and agreed with a cameraman who is shooting drone video.

One of the last activities of the project is to raise awareness in designated pilot schools and conduct training on the ecology of cetaceans. This activity could not be done as planned, as the period we asked permission from the Ministry of Education to provide education to the schools, but we did not get a response from the ministry. And in this process closure of the schools coincided with the extended Ramadan holiday (the 9-day holiday decision was made by the state shortly before the holidays). We also interviewed private schools, but since the schools did their programmes at the beginning of the semester, we were not able to implement the training programme within the specified time. We were able to transfer the programme to the next school term. For this reason, we asked for an extension.

The boat we used at the beginning of the fieldwork was the inflatable type. For this reason, it was incredibly challenging both for the team and for the time to carry it to

the water and to inflate it in the other area and it was a threat to the team in rough conditions. It was only used safely in the range of 0-2 knots, which was a challenging factor, especially in the winter, as the sea is generally rough. In addition, at least 4 people were needed as it was difficult to install and carry the boat. Gathering the time when the weather was good and a team of 4 people at the same time created a challenge for each survey planning.

The company with which we agreed during the project application for mobile application software, increased its price until the project was accepted. This caused us to look for another software developer. The second software developer stopped programming the application, stating that he could not conduct the business 3 months later. This situation lost us 5 months. This was a negative development that disrupted the process for the stranding network to be established.

There was a delay as the last payments coincided with the Covid-19 process.

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

1. The communication network has been laid the foundation in this area where the subject of stranding has not been studied regularly. Now, the relevant places, cooperatives, and fishermen in the studied area know where to contact when they see a dead or injured stranded marine mammals.
2. The first report mobile application available for both the Android and iOS operating systems for stranded marine mammals in Turkey was developed. Thanks to the application, both the dead and live stranded animals can be reported directly. Thus, in the next steps, when the communication network gets stronger, scientists working on the subject will be able to reach the animals that stranded and information more easily.
3. There was no recent regular study on the subject in the region. Thanks to this study, the stranding cases during the project were recorded regularly and the data records of the stranded animals have gathered not only for the coasts of the Middle Aegean but also for the entire Aegean Sea. In this study, it was concluded that coastal screening is not efficient for this region, and it is more functional in terms of tourism and that carcasses can be reached more easily by communication.

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

Ports in the region where frequent stranding took place were given priority in terms of communication. Fisheries cooperatives and fishermen were very sensitive to the issue. People in the area did not know who to call when they saw a stranded animal. Cooperatives and fishermen also said they did not know who to inform when they found a stranded animal. Thus, they conveyed that it was useful for them to learn about the existence of a team that they could call and intervene. Interviews in

the promotional film of the project revealed that people need a main centre to report when they see a stranded animal.

At the same time, some of the veterinary teams of the municipality were contacted in and out of the area. They expressed that they want to work together that there are subjects they want to research in carcasses. They stated that they can help on the subject, they are open to cooperation.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project helped to meet the deficit in the region. We are planning to work on the development of this communication network, the foundation of which has been laid, and the spread of the application.

In addition:

- When we got in touch with the municipal vets, they stated that they wanted to work with us on the carcass and participate in the examinations,
- Employees of the Directorate General of Nature Conservation and National Parks stated that they have received reports of many stranded sea turtles in the Gediz Delta region where we conduct field studies. They proposed to combine these denunciations with the stranded dolphins in a joint study,
- During the meetings where the project was promoted and the contact information was given, it was stated that if a stranded marine mammal was seen, they would have contacted us from now on.

We plan to continue this work to meet all these demands.

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

The results of this study were presented in WMMC'19 World Marine Mammal Conference Barcelona 2019 as a poster titled 'The Evaluation of Cetacean Stranding on the Mediterranean Coasts of Turkey between 2009 and 2019' and shared with scientists that studying marine mammals subject.

The promotional film prepared was shared on the social media platforms Mediterranean Conservation Society (MCS).

Links:

Instagram TR : https://www.instagram.com/tv/CA7uS_MAdtY/?hl=tr

Twitter TR: <https://twitter.com/akdenizkoruma/status/1267804196507660289?s=21>

YouTube TR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfQjVGC9xjE>

YouTube ENG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vdzp3gzPO0>

Linkedin TR: <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/akdeniz-koruma-derne%C4%9Fi-kalbim-egede-durdu-activity-6673584886126850048-elmq/>

The promotional video was also shared with relevant academicians and associations.

The results from this project were used in the master thesis titled 'Marine Mammals Strandings on the Aegean Sea Coast of Turkey and Governance Model for Their Evaluation'. The results of this project will be shared with the article of the thesis to be published.

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

The money was spent between December 2018 and May 2020. The project has been extended due to some of the above-mentioned negativities. There was some delay in final payments due to Covid-19.

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
Fieldwork materials	1480	553	-927	In the project, we encountered a legal problem for coastal screening in drone-designated areas the violation of private life after an incident in the use of drones. According to this rule, it is necessary to have a license to use drones, official records for each drone at the system and also obtain permission from the gendarmerie. We did not receive a drone due to the additional cost and restriction. We considered that the promotion will be more effective so we transferred the increased money from here to the application that is considered to

				be more important for the project, drone shooting in the coastline surveys, and the promotion film.
Awareness raising materials and application	1045	2622	+1577	For the application, we got a price far above the price we received before the project started. The mobile application, we wanted to make was for both the android and iOS operating systems, and the iOS operating system cost was more than calculated. We prioritized the mobile application to establish a systematic communication network in the long term. Nowadays, these kinds of applications attract people's attention so we thought that we can reach the public, the students we will train, and the stakeholders more easily. For this reason, we transferred the increasing budget from other items to mobile application development and awareness-raising materials.
Food and Accommodation	1270	709	-561	In general, because the areas close to each other were visited on the same day, the accommodation was less than expected.
Renting Charges & Fuel	1205	1102	-103	Due to the weather, a few surveys were canceled in order to avoid danger.
Total	5000	4986	-14	

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

There is no specific centre for cetaceans stranding events on the Turkish Mediterranean coasts. Since it takes quite a long time to create and spread a stranding network in a region that has quite a few studied, the most important step will be to cooperate with stakeholders and ministries to disseminate information by staying stay loyal to this constant centre created. When people see a stranded cetacean in this region, they do not know exactly which institution to contact. We tried to lay the foundation of this communication network in the region. However, more information will be available when this information is disseminated through

studies, and more information will be obtained on the deaths and therefore protection of cetaceans in the region.

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

We used the Rufford logo, in the poster presented in WMMC'19, in posters and brochures distributed to stakeholders for information, in training materials such as bags, brochures, presentations, and booklets. We also used the logo in the mobile application created, in the promotional video of the project prepared, in t-shirts that are used by the team in the field and distributed to fishermen and fisheries cooperatives.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Cansu İlkılınç: Project lead/facilitator

Erdem Danyer: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. He is an expert on marine mammals stranding cases on Turkish coasts. He informed us of stranding reports that he received within the boundaries of the studied area. He performed a necropsy and analyzed the samples taken.

Dr. Barış Akçalı: He helped in all seasonal coastal surveys and used the boat.

R. A. Remzi Kavcıoğlu: He helped in all seasonal coastal surveys.

Arzu Korkutan: Entomologist. She helped in seasonal coastal surveys.

Efe Sevim: WWF-Turkey Marine and Wildlife officer. He helped in training.

Dilara Arslan: She found suitable people for application software and logo design.

12. Any other comments?

We thank the Rufford Foundation for giving support that enables us to carry out work in this area in Turkey. Thanks to this support, we had the chance to close a gap in this less studied area.



You can access the mobile application produced under the project from the links below:

For iOS:

<https://apps.apple.com/tr/app/haber-ver-ya%C5%9Fat/id1475639859?l=tr>

For Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dimnida.akd>



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