

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	Alasdair Harris
Project title	The development of community marine turtle conservation in south west Madagascar.
RSG reference	7823-2
Reporting period	June 2010 – August 2011
Amount of grant	£5981
Your email address	al@blueventures.org
Date of this report	19/08/2011

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
Continue to profile of the regional turtle fishery before, during and after conservation measures to assess status			✓	The turtle fishery has been successfully profiled in over 20 villages in two locations in southwest Madagascar using local data collectors.
Locate and monitor nesting sites in the region to focus patrolling and conservation activities			✓	A series of interviews and participatory mapping reveals historic and current known nesting sites. No regular nesting sites have been located within 'Velondriake'. The one known nesting beach from 2008 remains protected although no nesting was reported during this period.
Increase awareness of marine turtle conservation issues to promote community marine turtle conservation			✓	A marine turtle festival has been held throughout <i>Velondriake</i> and will be held in the marine extension of Kirindy Mite National Park in October/November 2011.
Evaluate current awareness of turtle protection legislation to assess community perceptions and potential conservation and management issues		✓		Awareness within the community of the legislation has been assessed. This objective was increased to incorporate an evaluation of marine turtle protection legislation within Madagascar after the national meeting in the capital highlighted a lack of knowledge regarding marine turtle legislation throughout the government bodies and other NGOs. The report will be finalised in September/October 2011.
Determine the social and economic importance of the turtle fishery to assess community perceptions and potential conservation and management issues			✓	A series of key informant interviews and focus groups were held to assess the social and economic importance of the marine turtle fishery.
Develop community-led management strategies for turtle		✓		Meetings have been held with community members and <i>Velondriake</i> is attempting to prevent the sale of turtles for profit. At the national marine turtle

<p>conservation to establish a strategy that will be accepted by the Vezo</p>				<p>workshop in February 2011 community members from <i>Velondriake</i> were invited to present their strategies for marine turtle conservation. A management plan for <i>Velondriake</i> has been completed by the community, within which marine turtles are a component.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

It is still difficult for people that are not from the local community, in particular non-Malagasy members of the research team, to interview turtle fishers. Therefore Malagasy staff were used to interview fishers wherever possible, although the presence of a ‘foreigner’ may still have altered the dynamic between interviewee and interviewer, and their responses to certain questions.

Whilst assessing community perceptions and potential conservation and management issues with turtle fishers we found that many people would talk about what they thought you wanted to hear, rather than the actual situation. For example, many fishers, when questioned about the turtle fishery would discuss in depth the associated cultural rituals practised by the Vezo when hunting turtles. However, it is well documented that very few of these rituals are still observed, although it remained a topic that the majority of fishers interviews would talk about, despite being irrelevant to the turtle fishery today.

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

Regional festival to raise awareness of marine turtle conservation

A festival to raise awareness of sea turtle conservation was held in May and June 2011 in the Velondriake Locally-Managed Marine Area (LMMA), southwest Madagascar. The 2-week festival built on the success of the 2010 *Vezo Aho* (I am Vezo) social marketing campaign, which aimed to combat the use of destructive fishing methods in the region. The turtle festival used the same information collection techniques developed in ‘Vezo Aho’ in order to create targeted conservation messages to bring about behaviour change in turtle fishing practices.

The slogan for the festival *Fano Lany, Vezo Manegny* (If turtles run out, the Vezo will regret) was designed to compliment the 2010 *Vezo Aho* campaign by building on communities’ pride in their Vezo cultural identity and heritage, and encouraged communities to consider the preservation of the unique Vezo culture for future generations. Campaign materials and activities, including a theatre production, songs, presentations, films, t-shirts and merchandise all carried the same slogan; targeted at both adults and children across Velondriake’s 24 villages.

It is estimated that over 2000 people attended the activities, which were also broadcast over the regional radio station from Morombe, spreading the message along over 150 km of coastline. Plans are underway for the replication of the campaign elsewhere in southern Madagascar later this year.

Continuation of data collection to profile the regional turtle fishery

The project is the only one of its kind to profile a turtle fishery to this level within the Western Indian Ocean. The collection of data is vital to the management of the turtle fishery within the local context, where legislation protecting turtles is ignored by local communities and government officials.

A review of the marine turtle legislation within Madagascar

In February 2011, Blue Ventures helped to organise the first ever national marine turtle workshop in Antananarivo, Madagascar (http://www.ioseaturtles.org/feature_detail.php?id=362). Throughout the workshop it became apparent that the legislation protecting marine turtles was not clear and that there was confusion amongst participants from the government and NGOs. Therefore Blue Ventures have taken it upon themselves to review the current status of legislation within Madagascar. This will be completed by September 2011 and will be disseminated to all workshop participants, relevant government agencies and NGOs.

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

The local community are integrated into this project in a number of ways.

To profile the turtle fishery a network of local data collectors have been hired in over 20 villages. The two project assistants, responsible for collating the data each month, are also members of the local community.

The key conservation messages and campaign slogan for the turtle festival were developed using focus groups and key informant interviews with members of the local community. All messages created were then discussed again with the community to check for their suitability. The festival was then held in six main villages and town along 60 km of coastline and included two days of activities for the children and adults of the community.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

There are plans to continue this work as it is in the only marine turtle and conservation programme of its kind within Madagascar. The project plans to continue to profile the marine turtle fishery and will expand to a third area in western Madagascar, the Barren Isles. The Barren Isles have been highlighted as an area of extreme conservation importance and reports from 2009 indicated that a small turtle nesting population remained.

The marine turtle festival has been designed to be replicable within Vezo fishing communities all along the west coast of Madagascar. Therefore there are plans to hold the awareness-raising festival not only in the Kirinde Mite National Park but also in the Barren Isles. Partner NGOs working on the west coast of Madagascar will also be approached to potentially replicate the festival further.

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

An article on the turtle festival will feature in the IOSEA e-News for September 2011 and in the September edition of the WIOMSA Newsbrief: (http://www.wiomsa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=248&Itemid=84).

There will be further short publications and reports on the historic level of nesting within southwest Madagascar and the review of Malagasy legislation. Reports and publications are distributed to partners and featured on Blue Ventures' website.

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

RSG funds were used between July 2010 and August 2011. This was 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 (RSGF)	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Travel to villages to conduct workshops on turtle education and conservation	£360 (£360)	£329	£31	NA
Meetings in each village	£360 (£360)	£247	£114	The scope of the awareness raising activities were increased and therefore more village meetings were required.
Printer cartridges, paper for community meetings	£90 (£90)	£816	- £726	Funds were shifted from the 'travel to nesting beaches' budget line to allow for equipment purchase to facilitate community meetings.
Accommodation and food during workshops	£360 (£360)	£196	£164	
Travel to nesting beaches	£1800 (£1800)	£145	£1655	Once visits to each village confirmed that nesting was now a very rare, unpredictable occurrence, some funds budgeted to this line were used to purchase equipment for the facilitation of community meetings, such as a generator.
Production and printing of educational materials	£376 (£376)	£527	- £151	The scope of the awareness raising activities was increased to include a greater variety of materials, e.g. t-shirts.
Travel to villages to conduct socioeconomic interviews	£432 (£432)	£38	£394	Travel was combined with other activities and cost reduced.
Travel from London to research site project leader	£1550 (£550)	£1548	- £48	NA
Field rate per diem for project leader	£315 (£315)	£389	- £74	NA
Accommodation for community workshop	£400 (£400)	£373	£28	NA

attendants				
Consumables for community workshops	£60 (£60)	£64	- £5	NA
Consumables of workshop to present results to relevant Malagasy institutions and governmental bodies and the scientific community	£200 (£200)	0	- £200	After writing this grant, IOSEA organised a national marine turtle workshop in Madagascar. Blue Ventures helped to coordinate the workshop but the workshop costs were covered by IOSEA.
Communication costs	£228 (£228)	£265	- £37	NA
Printing and distribution of report	£100 (£100)	£0	- £100	The cost of developing and printing the Velondriake management report fell under a separate project budget.
Data collection trips in Morondave region	£1356 (£0)	£1444	- £88	NA
Travel to villages to collect data in Andavadoaka region	£144 (£0)	£209	- £65	NA
Salary for data collectors	£1074 (£0)	£2121	- £417	The costs of data collection was higher than anticipated due to more data collected than the previous year.
Accommodation and food for field coordinators when collecting data	£384 (£0)	£288	£96	NA
Salary for project assistant, Andavadoaka	£350 (£350)	£739	- £389	The project assistant was given a pay rise during this period.
TOTAL	£10569 (£5981)	£9,739		

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

There are three important next steps within the scope of this project that we hope to achieve in the coming year.

To create a live database of turtle fisheries data using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The project already uses digital camera to register landed turtles and combining mobile phone technology would be a logical progression of the data collection.

To replicate the marine turtle conservation and awareness festival along the west coast of Madagascar at partner NGO research sites. This would enable one coherent conservation message to be spread amongst the Vezo fishing community. A small follow up festival should also be replicated in areas where the first festival has taken place in order to reinforce the key conservation messages.

To replicate our work in a new region in west Madagascar, the Barren Isles. Blue Ventures has just started working in the Barren Isles where the marine resources are considered to be in better condition than elsewhere along the west coast of Madagascar. This means that there are currently

large numbers of fishers migrating to the islands to take advantage of the relatively rich marine resources. Whilst nesting turtle populations are low or non-existent within *Velondriake* and the Kirindy Mite National Park, a small nesting population is still known to exist within the Barren Isels are in critical need of protection.

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?

The RSGF logo appeared on the t-shirts created for the turtle festival (please see photos sent separately). RSGF was also acknowledged in our research update on the event.

http://blueventures.org/images/downloads/research/updates/Research_update_Summer_2011_FINALWEB.pdf

11. Any other comments?

Blue Ventures are grateful to RSGF for their continued support of our marine turtle conservation work.