



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	Lida Elena Pimper
Project title	Assessment of the population structure and conservation management of Commerson's dolphins on the coasts of Southern South America.
RSG reference	02.02.07
Reporting period	August 2007 – August 2008
Amount of grant	£3020
Your email address	liditas@gmail.com
Date of this report	10/November/ 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
Collection of samples in Tierra del Fuego, Chile			X	We collected biopsy samples in the field, and bone samples from Museum and University collections in Punta Arenas, Chile
Collection of skin biopsy samples in Falkland Islands	X			Permit from the Environmental Committee not achieved.
Laboratory Analysis of samples in the University of Buenos Aires (DNA extraction, Amplification and sequencing of mtDNA control region)		X		We still need to extract DNA from Bone samples, but we are still waiting for a reactive that is needed for that purpose (it needs a lot of paperwork for importation).
Microsatellites analysis of the whole set of samples (dry skin, bones, teeth and biopsies).		X		We still need to amplify 4 more Microsatellites in the whole number of samples.
Molecular data analysis		X		We have analyzed the mtDNA data in most of the samples. We still need more analysis of the nuclear DNA (Microsatellites).

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

We've received the RSG on February last year (actually received the funds on July the same year because some delay banks transfer). We've worked in the application license for sampling in the Falkland Islands for several months. It was going and coming back from here and the Environmental Planning Department in the Falkland Islands. We answered many questions they were concern with...but after one Environmental Committee meeting, they decided not to give us the permit to sample Commerson's dolphin there. So, after all of this, we were able to sample only in Tierra del Fuego-CHILE and not in the Falklands, as we said in our grant application.

We still need to finish with laboratory and molecular analysis due to some delay: In chemical purchase for DNA extraction of bones and teeth samples; and Microsatellites reading in sequencing machine at the University of Buenos Aires.

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

This is the first study on the conservation of Commerson's dolphin in their southernmost distribution, including samples from Argentina and Chile. Results need to be published first...and we are still working on them, but what we have found so far is the existence of local populations (not isolated from each other) of Commerson's dolphin along short distance. The recognition of evolutionary significant units within species is of main importance to guide management strategies. The impact of localized gillnet mortalities should be managed on a local scale in this region.

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

In Argentine waters, there have been many reports of incidental capture of Commerson's dolphins in gillnets, trammel nets and mid-water trawls. The east coast of Tierra del Fuego is used for artisanal shore-based nets, with an incidental take of small cetaceans each year. The results from this research will be used for Reports to the province regarding conservation of Commerson's dolphin and the interaction with artisanal fisheries.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. We plan to continue with this research and finish the molecular studies in this region. We also want to compare results with the northern distribution of Commerson's dolphin. At the moment, isotopes and tooth studies are carried out with Commerson's dolphin in the AMMA group.

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

At the moment, we are writing a draft of a paper with the results obtained from the mtDNA sequences. We will submit the manuscript for publication in peer reviewed journals during the next months.

We'll also be attending scientific meetings and conferences, to share and publish these results and the ones to come with nuclear DNA.

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

We had planned to do the fieldwork from March to April 2007. However, we could only start after the funds were available in July 2007. At that time, we were still dealing with sampling permission in the Falkland Islands. When we decided to sample only in Chile, we have to wait until Carlos Olavarria was available in his country (he was the contact person in Chile and the one with the experience in the biopsy sampling technique). So, for all these reasons, we did the sampling during May 2008.

We are still using the funds of the RSG. We have to complete the molecular analysis and finish with the research. The project took a bit longer than foreseen.

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£ = \$6.035

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Travel 1 round plane ticket Buenos Aires, Argentina – Ushuaia, Argentina	120	120	0	
Purchased services Zodiac for sampling Fuel for transport in Punta Arenas	1000	640 53	+307	Zodiac renting was cheaper in Chile than budgeted for the Falkland Islands.
Laboratory Analysis in Buenos Aires DNA extraction reagents, mtDNA sequencing, Microsatellites primers and lab material Partial cost of a new UV Transilluminator (Labnet)	1400	1700 507	-807	We used the money budgeted for plane tickets to the Falkland Islands for purchasing instead part of new laboratory equipment needed for our analyses.
TOTAL	3020	3020		

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

To define management units in the southern distribution of the species (Tierra del Fuego-Argentina and Chile). To study any interaction with northern populations and Falkland Islands. To define Conservation plans in Argentina and Chile, and update CITES status of Commerson's dolphin.

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?

We haven't used the logo of the RSGF yet, but will do that as soon as we present any posters with the final results at scientific conferences and meetings. We'll also acknowledge RSGF in any scientific publication of our production.

RSGF did receive publicity from us, during field work and courses we took.

11. Any other comments?

We are very grateful for the support and confidence of RSG to our project.