

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	Nabajit Das
Project title	Population Status, Ecology and threats of one of the least known primate species: Bengal Slow Loris (<i>N. bengalensis</i>) in the Protected Areas of Assam, India
RSG reference	08.10.07
Reporting period	February 2008 to March 2009.
Amount of grant	£4862
Your email address	nabajit_das1@rediffmail.com & nabajit_das@sify.com
Date of this report	14.08.09

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
Survey the present distribution and population status as well as demography of slow loris in the Protected areas (PAs) of Assam.			Fully achieved	Survey completed in 12 protected areas of Assam. We are unable to do our survey activities in Karbi Anglong WLS as civil administration did not allow us due to insurgency problems there. Instead of this area we have covered Laokhowa and Burachapori WLS.
Survey the habitat status of Slow loris in the PAs of Assam.			Fully achieved	We completed the habitat survey where there is a direct sightings of lorises occurring in the PAs. Habitat survey also done where there is sign or any indirect evidences of slow loris.
Know the feeding ecology of slow loris including their diet, quantity of forage and estimating their home range.		Partially achieved		Primatologists have begun using radio collaring to study the behavioural ecology of the nocturnal prosimian primates. But we are not using radio collar for studying the slow loris because we have no permission at that time for radio collaring of slow loris. Due to Bengal slow loris's small size, and the fact it is solitary in nature and nocturnal in habits, it is almost impossible to follow in wild without radio collaring. But some sort of feeding ecology and behavioural data are collected through this project. We have completely failed to collect the data about the home range of Bengal slow loris because of not using Radio collar.
Evaluation of threats from various angle i.e. (a) population, (b) demography, (c) quality of habitat and (d) behavioural ecology.			Fully achieved	A total of 223 household interviews in fringe villages of 12 PAs were conducted. Various parts of slow lorises are widely used in some area for medicinal purposes and data are gathered by interviewing the villagers. Hunting pressure on primate is also assessing during this part of works.
Provide training work experience on Slow Loris research to members of the			Fully achieved	This project is the first ever nocturnal research work in Assam, India and through this project two new persons have gained their expertise, who acted

survey team as well as the forest staffs.			as researchers. Moreover the forest staffs who act as guard during our survey in different protected areas and behaviour study works in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary acquired a new kind of knowledge and working environment in night with us.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The project could be completed in time as some unavoidable reasons, i.e.

- a) During survey period I was forced to stop our activity due to heavy rain and flood that occurs in Assam. Moreover, civil administration did not permit me to do night activity in some parts of some protected areas for insurgency problems and security reasons.
- b) In March – April 2009, I was selected to present my slow loris survey works in the ‘Student Conference of Conservation Science’, organized by Cambridge University. I presented a poster on my slow loris survey works in five protected areas of Assam with due acknowledgement to Rufford Small Grants Foundation. After that I was also selected by Cambridge University to do a one-month internship programme on nocturnal primates at Oxford Brookes University, UK under Dr. K.A.I. Nekaris, a renowned nocturnal primatologist.

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

The project team confirmed by direct sighting, two slow lorises in the westernmost areas of Manas National Park, Assam, which is the outer most areas of Bengal slow loris distribution range as per IUCN *Nycticebus bengalensis* range map (2008).

Before this survey in Nameri National Park, Assam, there was indirect evidence about the presence of slow loris in that park. I and our survey team is the first ever to confirm the presence of slow loris in Nameri National Park with some good photographs of slow loris.

The greatest outcome from this project is that a long term studies on Bengal slow loris behaviour, feeding ecology including its home range will be started very shortly by using radio collars and this study will be the first ever on Bengal slow loris distribution range. Study of any primate species using radio collars will be the first ever of this kind in Assam, India.

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

Not relevant

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, there is a plan to study about the behaviour, feeding ecology and home range of Bengal slow loris using radio collars.

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

I have shared the loris survey results of five protected areas of Assam with the wildlife biologists during my presentation in Cambridge University Conference. Some loris behavioural results were shared during a primate ethics conference in Oxford Brookes University with some of the famous primatologists.

I am planning to share the results with other researchers and primate conservationists through presentation papers during the Primate Research conference of Gottingen University, Germany (8th - 11th December 2009) and the Conference of International Primatological Society to take place in September 2010 in Japan.

Publication in academic journals (such as *Asian Primates*, *International Journal of Primatology*, *Biodiversity and Conservation*) with due acknowledge to Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

The detailed technical report of this project are in preparation with some sort of recommendation for the conservation measures of slow loris, will be reflects in its conservation action plan.

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

The project was expected to commence for 14 months from January 2008 to the end of February 2009. Unfortunately, the fund from RSG was released in February, hence, project implementation started on March 2009. Therefore, the project was implemented in 14 months (from 1st March 2008 to 31st April 2009), with the difference of two month from the anticipated time.

Moreover I was in UK during March and April 2009, hence the project was actually completed at the end of June 2009. This is because of my absence from the field with prior intimation to RSGF.

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
Per Diems /Honorarium	£1500	£1500	0	
Local Salaries	£650	£650	0	
Travel /transport	£1300	£1370	−£70	The fuel price changed abruptly in response to the world market.
Accommodation	£ 180	£ 110	+£70	Free accommodation in some PAs.
Equipment	£ 390	£390	0	
Stationary	£ 300	£ 300	0	
Logistics/unseen cost	£100	£130	−£30	Duo to some unavoidable circumstances.
Administrative	£ 442	£442	0	

TOTAL	£ 4862	£ 4892	-£30	The difference was contributed by Principal investigator.
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9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

Bengal slow loris emerges as new study areas for Assam, North-eastern India through this project. There is much more to learn about its ecology and without radio collaring it is practically almost impossible to find out a slow loris in forests, because it is only found in tropical evergreen forests. Hence I am going to utilize radio tracking methods to study this nocturnal animal in my next steps.

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 used RSGF logo during my Bengal slow loris poster presentation in Cambridge University's Student Conference and Primate Ethics conference in Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK in March – April 2009. I have also used logo in the Bengal slow loris sticker and poster.

11. Any other comments?

Before starting this project I had a misconception about the nocturnal working environment in Assam for the present situation. From this project I have learnt that where there is will there is a way to complete the works. Now I am determined to do my research activities exclusively on nocturnal mammals especially on Bengal slow loris and its conservation.

Appendix



Slow loris in Gibbon WLS



Slow loris in Manas National Park



Slow loris in Dehing Patkai WLS



Slow loris Borajan-Bherjan WLS



A slow loris hiding his face in Gibbon WLS.