

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. 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	Anita Aisenberg
Project title	Arachnids of Uruguay: from fear to knowledge and conservation
RSG reference	10083-1
Reporting period	June 2011- June 2012
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	anita.aisenberg@gmail.com
Date of this report	July 2012

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
General goal: Implement an educational programme directed to teachers, professors, park rangers, and community in general to create consciousness on the importance of preserving arachnids and their natural ecosystems in Uruguay.			Yes	We could fulfil our planned specific goals and work on the planned educational programme. We generated links with educational institutions along the whole country.
Specific goal I: Print the 'Guía de Arácnidos del Uruguay' (Arachnids of Uruguay field-guide), a guide about arachnids or our country and their habitats, enlightening their importance as free insecticides, biological indicators, tools for biological control and as part of our natural patrimony.			Yes	We printed the book 'Guía de Arácnidos del Uruguay'.
Specific goal II: Perform interactive activities in selected locations along the country, sharing the knowledge about arachnids and sensitizing about the need of laws for their conservation.			Yes	We dictated more than 24 talks about 'Arachnids of Uruguay' along the country. We visited protected areas of Uruguay. We delivered for free a total of 86 exemplars of the field-guide 'Arachnids of Uruguay, covering the 19 provinces of Uruguay and handing the book to park-rangers, teachers, professors, and educational training institutes.

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

We did not suffer any difficulties along the project.

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

One of the most important outcomes was to print of the field guide 'Arachnids of Uruguay' that was presented to the public on a special event in our research institute (Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Clemente Estable, Montevideo, Uruguay) and at the Fourth Latin American Arachnology Congress, held at Armenia, Colombia. The field guide has 256 pages, with information about more than 100 arachnid species that can be found in Uruguay. It also includes 29 articles by specialists about topics such as behaviour, ecology, dangerous species, arachnids and culture, traffic and conservation. A second important outcome was to share our knowledge about topics related to arachnids with students, teachers and professors, and be successful in attracting their attention to these animals and their importance as part of the ecosystems. We delivered the field guide to the institutions and organised workshops about arachnids of Uruguay, their function as insecticides for free, their general harmless condition and conservation problematic. We gave 24 talks along the 19 provinces during the one year period of the project and delivered 86 field guides. We handed out field-guides and dictated informative talks to Uruguayan park rangers that work at protected areas. Our third outcome would be to gain attention from the press and through this, to reach the community at a broader scale. During 2011-2012, we gave 12 interviews to radio programmes, two to TV channels and three interviews to local newspapers, where we expressed our main concern about arachnids in our country and their value.

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

In every occasion we contacted educational institutions and/or protected areas, they showed enthusiasm towards our visit and took charge of the organisation of the logistics. After each talk, we delivered exemplars of the field-guide for the institution and provided an email for contact to respond for further questions, or report cases of traffic. The assistants to the talks showed deep curiosity on these animals, and made many questions after the talk. They learnt about what animals can be dangerous to humans and what they need to do in case of an accident with an arachnid. Assistants also showed concern about spider traffic and the lack of laws protecting them in our country. In two cases, high school students decided to start projects using arachnids as models. Most of the assistants reduced or lost their negative feelings towards arachnids after the workshops and were surprised to find so many positive aspects surrounding these animals, for example their importance for controlling insect populations.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We plan to continue our work of divulgation on arachnids of Uruguay. We are willing to organise workshops of 3 days work, with theory and fieldwork, on selected points of our country where there is negative impact on vulnerable arachnids. We also plan to make new samplings on four localities sampled a decade ago, to determine the current situation of populations of *Grammosotola mollicoma*, the tarantula most affected by traffic as pet. As a continuation of this project, we are working on documentary film project about arachnids of our country. The variety of sizes, colours and behavioural displays of a singular beauty, turn arachnids in subjects to be captured with its whole splendour in an adequate film recording. The name of the project is 'Arachnids of Uruguay:

stories from a world of eight legs', under the Direction of Marcelo Casacuberta, a recognised Uruguayan photographer, director and film-maker. We believe that the film will be a useful tool for divulgation of knowledge about Uruguayan arachnid fauna and will contribute to reinforce conservation efforts to protect this group of animals that is hugely undervalued in our country.

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

Through handing in the exemplars of the field guide in educational institutions the 19 provinces of Uruguay, in interviews to the press and during the workshops. Also, we will share the information through articles of divulgation in national and international magazines.

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

The present project took place 1 year, from June 2011 to June 2012, as was originally planned.

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
Printing the Guide of Arachnids from Uruguay	3968	4128	- 160	Differences in the value of the currency, since the initial budget*
Printing additional educational material	682	539	+143	Minor amount of printed material due to less money available, due to currency conversion differences
Field trips: Fuel and car renting	350	900	- 550	Differences in fuel costs since initial budget and additional expenses due to car renting for 3 field trips
Accommodation	315	147	+168	We found free accommodation for several field trips
Food expenses	685	400	+285	We were invited to lunch in several of the places we visited, especially in schools
TOTAL	6000	6114	- 114	Little difference due to additional expenses (see other items). This differences were afforded by the responsible of the project

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

As was stated before, we plan to continue with our educational programme on 'Arachnids of Uruguay' through more extensive workshops including new localities along the country. We also feel as essential to compile the necessary information to reinforce the need to protect spiders that are being affected by pet-trade. The project of the documentary film about 'Arachnids of Uruguay' has already obtained financial support for the photography and filming. We hope to get financial support to finish with the edition of the material, with the idea that the final product will be projected on TV

and along the country. The beauty of the images will open a new door to the audience to the beauty of these charismatic animals.

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. The RSGF logo is included in the back cover of the printed field-guide 'Arachnids of Uruguay'. Also, RSGF was acknowledged during our talks and the logo was included in the presentations during our workshops along the country.

11. Any other comments?

You can watch the trailer of the documentary film 'Arachnids of Uruguay' at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HKwIWciXyM&feature=youtu>