

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	Rachel Brittain
Project title	Development of a Hawksbill Marine Monitoring and Observation Reporting Network on Guatemala's SE coast
RSG reference	11406-1
Reporting period	October 2013 to July 2014
Amount of grant	£5,999
Your email address	rachel@akazul.org
Date of this report	12 April, 2015

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
Generate and assess spatial data for hawksbill sea turtles present in Guatemalan waters.			Yes	Spatial data collected during the project has determined the distribution and habitat of juvenile hawksbill turtles in Guatemala. Results suggest that juveniles are utilising mangrove channels and estuaries on the SE coast as foraging sites. Majority of hawksbill reports came from fishermen that had incidentally captured individuals in static fishing gear within the mangroves.
Assessment of hawksbill bycatch in artisanal fisheries.			Yes	A significant number of juvenile hawksbill turtles recorded in the project were captured in mangrove and coastal gillnet fisheries. Reported incidental captures did not result in mortality and all turtles were released alive. This is information is encouraging for conservation.
Identify priority habitats utilised by hawksbill sea turtles.			Yes	We were successful in identifying an important area utilised by juvenile hawksbill turtles. The area is located within a mangrove estuary and provides unique habitat on the SE coast that may be used for foraging.
Capacity building and training to cultivate participation of community members and fishers.			Yes	The project has improved the capacity of Pacific coast artisanal fishermen to report hawksbill observations at sea. Several fishermen across Guatemala's Pacific coast continue to voluntarily carry project staff to observe fishing practices and record turtle encounters as well as using data recording kits (consisting of GPS devices, cameras, tape measures, turtle ID cards and notebooks) to enable them to record detailed information on any hawksbills they encounter whilst fishing.
Improve environmental awareness of coastal inhabitants, artisanal fishers, government officials, as well as the general public and international sea			Yes	During the project we visited 20 communities across the Pacific coast and carried out a range of activities to improve awareness of the hawksbill turtle in Guatemala. Activities comprised of: delivering an education programme to school children focussed on the endangered hawksbill sea turtle of the

turtle community.				eastern Pacific, workshops with artisanal fishermen, one to one visits within the communities to provide details of the project and provision of educational materials to improve awareness.
-------------------	--	--	--	--

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

In general, it was extremely difficult to organise any community activities in advance and were rescheduled many times before they actually took place. Further to this a number of strikes led to postponement of activities within local schools.

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

We have identified a “hotspot” on the SE coast of Guatemala that is utilised by a small number of foraging juvenile hawksbill turtles. The area is located within a mangrove estuary and has a range of potential food items such as corals, sponges, and molluscs that are food items of the eastern Pacific hawksbill. This area will be a focal point for future studies and conservation activities.

Through project activities, i.e. workshops, education days and interviews with local artisanal fishermen, we increased the awareness of coastal inhabitants regarding the critically endangered hawksbill turtle and the importance of reporting encounters.

We have provided several genetic samples collected during the project to ICAPO colleagues that will contribute to regional genetic assays. With this information we will be able to identify the origin of juvenile hawksbill turtles that were encountered during the project.

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

A total of 20 coastal communities were involved in project activities, which included workshops, interviews, education activities and participation in several stranded turtle liberations. As a direct result of project activities community awareness of hawksbill turtles greatly improved which led to an increase in reporting of encounters. The capacity of community members has improved with regard to successfully identifying hawksbill turtles and basic data collection.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We are continuing to work with local fishermen who continue to collect information on any hawksbill encounters. Since the successful identification of a hawksbill hotspot we aim to seek further funding in order to conduct habitat surveys at this site and carry out research to further knowledge on this particular life stage of the species.

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

Findings from the project will be used to write a journal publication for dissemination to the wider scientific community.

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

There was a delay commencing the project and overall project length was less than anticipated. The project ran for a total of nine months from October 2013 to July 2014.

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
Handheld GPS x 20	£1799	£1144.50	£654.50	We saved money by purchasing GPS trackers rather than handheld units and purchased in bulk.
Digital Camera x 20	£540	£638.70	£-98.70	One camera was damaged in the field which we replaced and made us over budget.
Data recording kits for fishers x 20	£300	£480.30	£-180.30	Due to unreliability of electricity supply at project sites we purchased solar chargers for use with GPS trackers.
Info leaflets/posters promoting reporting of hawksbill sightings	£250	£250	0	
Workshop materials (with fishers)	£110	£110	0	N/A
Dissemination of results presentation	£200	£200	0	N/A
Fieldwork travel and subsistence (30 GBP per diem) x 90	£2700	£2800	£-100	We under budgeted for transport costs.
Project consumables	£100	£100	0	N/A
Permits and shipping costs for exportation of genetic samples to the USA.	£0	£190	£-190	We had not originally budgeted for this expenditure but felt that it contributed positively to project outcomes.
TOTAL	£5999	£5913.50	£85.5	1.00 GBP = 12.83 GTQ.

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

Findings from the project have helped us to identify a hotspot for juvenile hawksbill turtles and this provides a unique opportunity to study this life stage. Further work would determine the significance of this habitat for the juvenile life stage, identify individual turtles utilising the area and provide further information on the ecology of this life stage within the ETP. This information would be extremely beneficial in developing a management plan for hawksbill turtles in Guatemala,

perhaps even establish a protected area to ensure that this small, vital population receives adequate 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 was used on all materials produced in relation to the project including; presentations given to fishermen and local communities, turtle ID cards, website and hawksbill educational posters handed out to local schools. We publicised the support of RSGF on our social media sites and will acknowledge the financial assistance provided in our peer-reviewed journal publication. We have also used the logo on the project website: <http://www.thehawksbillproject.org/about-the-hawksbill-turtle-project/>

11. Any other comments?

We would like to take this opportunity to thank RSGF for its financial contribution to this project, without this support we would not have been able to carry out this important work in Guatemala. Findings from the project will be invaluable in future recovery efforts of the critically endangered hawksbill turtle in the eastern tropical pacific. Further information of our work can be found at: www.facebook.com/RedCareyGuatemala