

The Rufford 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	Sanjay Gubbi
Project title	Community outreach for landscape level wildlife conservation in the Western Ghats of Karnataka
RSG reference	11522-1
Reporting period	May 2012 to April 2013
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	sanjaygubbi@googlemail.com , gubbi@ncf-india.org
Date of this report	20 th May 2013

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieve	Partially achieve	Fully achieve	Comments
To improve and enhance the understanding of the need for wildlife conservation among local policy makers, key social leaders and local communities.			✓	There has been a continuous interaction with policy makers, elected representatives and key social leaders which resulted in several solid conservation outcomes. These include expansion of protected areas, improved staff welfare for frontline staff and others.
Developing public communication tools to help communicate the impacts of human activities on wildlife.			✓	Posters and handouts developed under the project have been effectively used to communicate the human impacts on wildlife. A total of four posters featuring direct threats to wildlife such as poaching, hunting using snares and responsible driving by tourists in protected areas that were developed both in English and local languages Kannada and Malayalam were used for communication activities. A total of 50 education activities in 109 villages in and around Bandipur, Nagarahole, Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Tiger Reserves and Nugu Wildlife Sanctuaries were carried out. Locations of outreach activities are shown in the enclosed map. Posters on poaching were permanently displayed at locations of regular assembly of local people such as tea and grocery shops, hotels, public water supply points, primary health care centres, veterinary hospitals, schools & colleges, local governance offices, public transport stations and other such locations. The posters featuring responsible driving to reduce

				<p>impacts on wildlife in protected areas were displayed in restaurants, hotels, bank ATMs, petrol stations and several locations near and en-route to protected areas that are frequented by tourists and are bound to attract their attention.</p> <p>Films featuring the rich biodiversity of the protected areas were screened in the bordering villages. Street theatres with scripts highlighting anthropogenic factors that threaten wildlife such as, poaching and forest fires were enacted by groups when villagers returned from field work in the evenings. A total of nine street plays were enacted in nine critical villages and 10 videos were featured in eight villages during the reporting period. Approximately, 600 people viewed the plays and video shows.</p> <p>Volunteers helped the forest department in educating and regulating tourists during two religious gathering in shrines inside Bandipur Tiger Reserve. Approximately 100,000 people take part in these religious festivals inside the protected area. Our efforts in working with the forest department, educating pilgrims helped in reducing human disturbance by 50% when compared to the previous year.</p> <p>We helped media personnel bring out 87 news reports (50 in English and 37 in the vernacular language, Kannada) to highlight conservation issues at the state and national levels during the reporting period. A total of 14 features (10 in English and four in Kannada) have been brought out in dailies and magazines addressing several pressing issues of wildlife conservation.</p>
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To inspire and encourage youth to proactively take part in wildlife conservation initiatives.			✓	<p>The PI has been constantly motivating and encouraging young wildlife enthusiasts to take up wildlife conservation activities. The project has been successful in building a cadre of wildlife enthusiasts who now have a good understanding of the ground realities of conservation. A total of 299 volunteers have taken part in our outreach activities contributing 480 person days. These numbers have increased from around 40 volunteers at the beginning of this project. However, a cadre of 30 volunteers regularly take part in various other conservation programs which has been an outcome of this outreach activity.</p> <p>The PI of the project has held six meetings during the reporting period with the volunteering groups to encourage and guide them in taking up conservation initiatives.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Local communities living in the periphery of protected areas are the ones that are severely affected by wildlife conservation through loss of agricultural crops and livestock due to conflict-prone species like elephant, wild pig, tiger and leopard. Groups that are involved in conservation outreach activities often have to face the wrath of these local communities. Issues regarding compensation claims for crop and livestock loss are raised when these groups conduct the outreach programs, often blaming the forest department or the organisations involved in conservation activities.

Volunteers have encountered such situations very often during the outreach programs. But this has helped them in better understanding the ground realities of wildlife conservation. These experiences can help them in the future when working with the authorities to bring forth serious conservation impediments.

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

- The larger targeted outreach activities have helped bring in several positive outcomes for wildlife conservation. For instance, the PI has been successful in convincing the policy makers and the forest department in providing insurance facilities for the frontline staff of the forest department. Spending a greater part of their time patrolling and staying in remote anti-poaching camps with bare minimum facilities, the frontline staffs get meagre payment and often struggle to maintain their families. In their commitment to duty, they face illness and a range of injuries from wildlife and from timber smugglers, wildlife poachers, some as serious as losing limbs, and even losing their lives. Without any form of government-funded social security, their families are often unsupported in case of emergencies. The insurance scheme, the first of its kind, helps boost the morale of these frontline staff by creating a sense of security. The PI has worked in convincing the policy makers and the officials of the forest department to implement this scheme which provides insurance cover for wildlife park guards, anti-poaching patrol members, and other frontline enforcement staff working throughout Karnataka's five tiger reserves and thirty two protected areas.
- The project has been successful in building a network of conservation enthusiasts who are motivated and dedicated to take up conservation initiatives. Local youth have also been participating in our outreach activities and have started to understand their key role in wildlife conservation efforts. In the long term, a strong network of such dedicated enthusiasts would help in identifying threats at the local level and tackling them effectively, which act as a sustainable contribution for conservation. Conservation efforts need to be consistent and every available opportunity needs to be converted into conservation success. A group of such volunteers from various sectors of life, at different levels in these efforts, would be a great boost to fight against the increasing threats to wildlife and forests. The project has achieved great success in this attempt.
- The project proponent has been engaged in connecting media, policy makers and local communities and has been successful in convincing and motivating them into supporting the cause of wildlife conservation. Compared to the larger outreach activities, media directly reaches millions of people and hence becomes critical in conservation outreach. The PI has maintained a positive relationship with media personnel by providing timely, evidence-based information on conservation issues that includes both threats as well as positive outcomes of the activities carried out by the forest department. Orientation programmes for the media personnel, including state and local level media personnel for the print and electronic media working in and around protected areas, has built a team of sensitized media personnel who are supportive of wildlife conservation. This has helped in bringing out scientific and factual news about wildlife which in turn helps in better understanding of the threats and issues by policy makers and local communities.

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

The outreach activities under the project target participation of local communities to support the efforts of wildlife conservation. The outreach activities are successful in building confidence among some villagers who are now interested in supporting conservation. Local media personnel have been motivated to view wildlife positively and have been approaching us for facts and inputs. Several conservation issues around protected areas are keenly followed by these media personnel and they have been supporting us in bringing out facts helpful to wildlife.

Some staff of the forest department have also been participating in our street plays which help in bringing frontline field staff and communities together. They are also taking initiative in co-ordinating our activities in critical locations around protected areas that face serious issues of poaching, forest fires and human-wildlife conflicts. Students from schools and colleges close to the protected areas are always involved in outreach activities which has been motivating and helping in building the local cadre that supports wildlife conservation.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The project aims to ensure continued support of key players, policy makers, media and local communities in its conservation efforts. The interactions have to be continuous and the efforts have to be consistent in the rapidly changing scenarios and to convert all available opportunities positively for conservation fruitfulness. The project will continue to ensure that such support is constantly available and more enthusiasts are encouraged and supported to take up long term wildlife conservation initiatives.

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

The results of this project are long-term. The project would meet its objective if more enthusiasts take up science-based wildlife conservation initiatives and are able to positively route policy makers and local communities into supporting the cause of conservation. The conservation success achieved by our outreach activities are great learning opportunities for people dedicated for conservation. The experiences in these efforts are shared with young enthusiasts through orientation programmes, field visits, group meetings and individual interactions, with each case being unique in its way, where they learn on working with several sections of the society and working on an all-round approach to achieve conservation success.

These interactions have motivated two of our active volunteers to quit their highly lucrative jobs and take up conservation work as a profession. Several other volunteers have been serious in pursuing conservation work as a full time initiative. They have also been taking up departmental exams to get into the forest service which in the future would ensure (if they get through) continued support from the department for science

based conservation initiatives. Volunteers have dedicated great part of their personal time in conservation activities which has grown to form a major part of their daily schedule.

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

The Rufford grant was used during the reporting period starting from May 2012 to end of April 2013. However, the outreach activities taken up under the project have far reaching and long lasting impacts in the long run. The reporting period contributes a part of the project period which is continued to enhance conservation efforts and ensure support of local communities, key policy makers and the media in the future.

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
Salary for personnel	2370	2300	70	
Travel	600	1249.5	-649.5	Travel exceeded the budget amount as activities undertaken far exceeded the committed numbers of 50 villages and conducted activities in 109 villages.
Lodging and meals	550	545.7	4.3	
Communication	100	49	51	Communication budget was supported under some funding sources which made us to reduce cost in this budget head.
Equipment	1000	1920.4	-920.4	Equipment which was one of the major expenses under the project also exceeded the proposed budget. However additional funding was supported through other funding sources.
Supplies	1380	1300	80	
Total	6000	7364.6	-1364.6	Exchange rate: 1£ = 80 INR

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

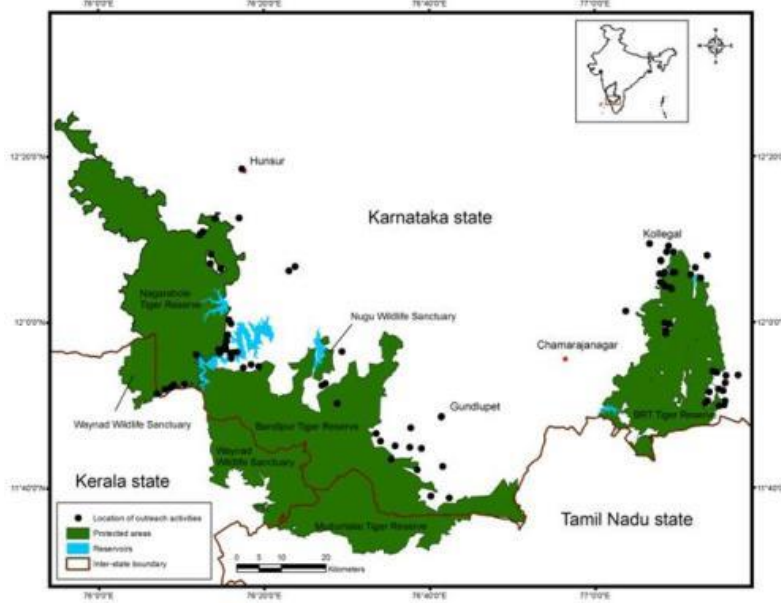
The outreach activities, since they are long term and they need to be consistent, ensuring continued support to carry out such activities would be the next immediate step. We are very confident that these activities have achieved significant outputs and will continue to do so for on-ground conservation changes. We are looking forward to continued support from Rufford Foundation for this activity.

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 information campaign activities carried out under this project have been using public communication tools, both in English and vernacular languages Kannada and Malayalam, such as posters, handouts and banners. All these communication tools use RSGF logo.

11. Any other comments?

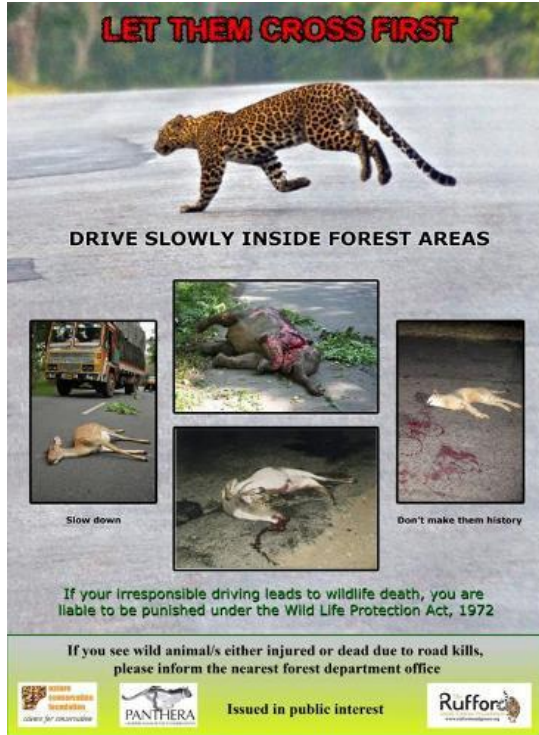
We would like to thank Rufford Small Grants Foundation for the grant and the support given during the reporting period and hope for similar support in the future as well.



Locations of outreach activities in and around Bandipur, Nagarahole and Biligirirangaswamy Temple Tiger Reserves and Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary.



Posters deigned under RSG for outreach awareness activity



നിൽക്കുക!
ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക!!

വന്യജീവി നിയമപ്രകാരം
വന്യമൃഗങ്ങളെ വേട്ടയാടുന്നത് നിരോധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു



വന്യമൃഗങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ സമ്പത്താണ്;
അവരെ സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടത് നമ്മുടെ കടമയാണ്



പൊതുജന താല്പര്യങ്ങൾക്കു അനുചിതം





Posters developed under the program are displayed at places where people gather. © Vanya



Street theatre were enacted to bring out anthropogenic factors affecting wildlife © Vana Jaagruthi



Video shows were screened to bring in support of people living in the fringes of protected areas. ©Vana Jaagruthi



SANJAY GUBBI

On the elephant's track

The new parliamentary committee should probe ways to mitigate railway hazards

AS THE year 2012 came to an end, heartrending images filled newspapers as five elephants were killed by a speeding train in Ganjam district, Orissa. More deaths were to follow in Uttarakhand and North Bengal. In a similar incident in 2010, the deaths of seven elephants in Jalpaiguri district raised a public outcry. Trying to protect the calves that were stuck on the tracks, the mother and other members of the herd were also killed by the speeding train.

Linear fragmentation threats such as railway tracks, highways, power transmission lines pose a threat to wildlife survival in a number of ways. They act as barriers to the movement of species, especially those that need contiguous tree canopy, such as the lion-tailed macaque, the loris, the Malabar giant flying squirrels, the flying snake, or smaller animals, such as turtles, that find it hard to cross railway tracks. This restriction on movement limits access to food sources and nesting sites that are spread across the forests, apart from causing the genetic isolation of populations. But the most noticeable impact is the killing of animals by speeding trains.

Elephant mortality due to train accidents is high in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Orissa and Uttarakhand. Because of their large size, elephant deaths are bound to be noticed. The deaths of several smaller animals go un-

detected. But there are records of tiger, leopard, deer and several other species being killed in train accidents in various parts of the country. Casualties will be particularly high at night and at curves where visibility for engine drivers is poor.

Care needs to be taken when some of the proposed railway lines pass through ecologically sensitive areas. The government of Kerala is pushing for a line through Bandipur Tiger Reserve to upgrade connectivity between Mysore and the Wayanad districts. There are already two highways through this tiger reserve, and a train line parallel to these highways would further fragment the wildlife habitat.

Railway tracks were laid in the mid-19th century, when there were no serious threats to wildlife conservation.

Despite the suggestion by the railways that an alternate route would be better suited, local leaders and a few "environmental" organisations are promoting this project and have filed an application in the Supreme Court.

Similarly, the North Bengal-Sikkim line, along the foothills of the Kanchenjunga and the Teesta river valley, which passes through Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, the Chamarajanagar-Mettupalayam line in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and the upgradation of the railway line in the Periyar-Agasthyamalai corridor in Kerala and Tamil Nadu will impede the

movement of wildlife.

To mitigate the impact of such projects, it has been suggested that electric fences be built along the railway line to prevent elephants crossing the tracks. This will be more detrimental to the elephants and other animals as it interrupts their migratory patterns. Though reducing train speeds, early warning systems and other mitigation measures are partially effective, long-lasting solutions are better suited. The priority in ecologically sensitive areas should be to ensure that we make them spaces where there is little disturbance to wildlife. No new train lines should be proposed or approved by the railways in these specific areas.

The country can now afford the realignment of railway lines to preserve wildlife. Where realignment is not practical, mitigation measures should be strictly implemented, based on a solid understanding of wildlife issues. However, we need to be clear that measures such as monitoring the movements of elephants to warn train drivers are perhaps impractical. Elephants and other wildlife are not domestic livestock that could be monitored or herded round the clock.

Concerned over the rising number of elephant deaths on railway tracks, a parliamentary committee

has now been appointed to assess and recommend measures to mitigate this serious threat. It is important that the committee consults those involved in saving elephants from various threats. That would give it a broader picture of the threat and the possible solutions. The flawed environmental impact assessment (EIA) process needs to be rejigged, and agencies implementing the projects should not be funding the EIA studies as the reports are very likely to be in favour of the funding agency.

Railway and transmission lines, as well as roads, are necessary for connectivity, power and communication. However, a sensitive approach towards wildlife, both in planning and implementation, is currently lacking and a more holistic developmental approach is indispensable. Railway tracks were first laid in the mid-19th century, when forest tracts were extensive and there were no serious threats to wildlife conservation. However, in the changed socio-economic scenario, achieving ecologically sustainable developmental goals should be one of the priorities. This is an opportunity for the parliamentary committee to put things on the right track.

The writer is a wildlife biologist working in the Western Ghats and a member of the State Wildlife Advisory Board in Karnataka
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Sample news report brought out in popular dailies

THE HINDU • THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2013

Questions raised on feasibility of Nanjangud-Nilambur rail line

The line will cut through the Bandipur National Park

R. Krishna Kumar

WISDOM: The grisly death of six elephants that were mowed down by a speeding train in Odisha in the early hours of December 30 has raised questions on the feasibility of the Nanjangud-Nilambur railway line being planned by state highway authorities to provide a new link between Karnataka and Kerala.

The demand for the railway line, which will cut through the Bandipur National Park, has been pending for many decades now.

The demand for Channarayana-Mettur railway line was shelved due to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) on environmental grounds as it would have passed through dense forests.

Wildlife activists are perturbed as there is growing pressure on the State authorities to give clearance for the Nanjangud-Nilambur line in recent months. The position stepped up following the closure of national highway passing through the Bandipur forests for night traffic (9 p.m. to 5 a.m.).

Survey

Through the feasibility survey conducted by the highway authorities, it is not considered viable, stakeholders are pressing for it on the grounds that it is socially desirable.

The Rs. 3,284-crore project entails laying 231 km of tracks. Nearly 22 km of it will cut through the Bandipur forests, recognised by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as one of the best landscapes for tiger and elephant conservation as it is contiguous to a large landscape, including Mudumalai

CONCERN: Nearly 22 km of the 231-km Nanjangud-Nilambur railway line will cut through the Bandipur forests, recognised by the National Tiger Conservation Authority as one of the best landscapes for tiger and elephant conservation. — PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

There is growing pressure on the State to give clearance for the project in recent months

Activists, who are worried that it will devastate wildlife, have appealed for dropping the plan

In Tamil Nadu, Wayanad in Kerala and Nagarhole in Karnataka.

Compressed Timmappur of Wildlife Ministry, as NGO spearheading the cause of wildlife conservation, told The Hindu that the after-effects of fragmenting wildlife habitats were glaringly obvious in the number of wildlife deaths due to railway lines in Assam, West Bengal and Jharkhand and the new railway line proposal forbodes a similar fate for wildlife in Bandipur.

150 elephant deaths

Citing statistics from the Elephant Task Force report prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Mr. Timmappur said India had lost more than 150 elephants as a result of train hits since 1987.

The propensity of wildlife deaths due to train accidents is greater near Bandipur and Nagarhole, given the high density of animals compared to other landscapes in the country. Also, wild animals need to stray from their natural habitat and do not restrict their movements to the limits of the national parks. Man-animal conflict is rampant in the area and wildlife straying into human landscape as close as Mysore, which is about 60 km from these two national parks, is common, according to Mr. Timmappur.

Activists are worried that the Nanjangud-Nilambur project will devastate wildlife and have appealed for dropping the proposal.

Eco-sensitive Zone

Incidentally, the MoEF has notified Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ) in areas around Bandipur so far which no activity intended to wildlife and the existing environment can be taken up. The ESZ ranges from 0.5 km to 1 km from the national park boundary and has a geographical spread of 479.18 sq. km, covering 123 villages in Gundlupet, Nanjangud, R.D. Kote and Channarayana talukas. Change of land use from agriculture to industrial is not permissible in this zone. Bandipur is intersected by two national highways — NH 212 and NH 67 — and animal deaths due to speeding vehicles were common. However, after the State banned the movement of vehicles on the two highways from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., the number of animal deaths has significantly reduced.

Sangeetha, wildlife biologist and member of the State Wildlife Board, said, "Protected areas such as Bandipur form only a per cent of the country's geographical area and we need to have a hands-off approach from these wildlife-rich landscapes. Bandipur already has four major roads passing through it and we cannot afford to fragment it any further."

Mr. Timmappur pointed out that an alternative road via Harand, Geyloppu, Rotta and Kartikadai had been proposed. The State government had released Rs. 20 crore for taking up the work, he said and added that this project should be postponed instead of seeking new projects.