

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Ilona Stepanyan
Project title	"Current protection status of Armenian amphibians and elaboration of measures of their conservation including public awareness rising"
RSG reference	Ref: 13769-1
Reporting period	August 2013 – August 2014
Amount of grant	£ 5885
Your email address	stepanyanil@yahoo.com
Date of this report	8.09.2014

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
Create GIS-based database on current distribution, assessment of abundance and conservation status of amphibians of Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Vayots Dzor, Lori, Tavush, Syunik Provinces of Armenia			X	Database was created and all the data obtained during project implementation as well as all other available data were included.
Collect data on current distribution, some ecological and biological data on two threatened amphibian species of Armenia			X	All necessary data were collected.
Carry out assessment of current conservation status for each amphibian species in eight Provinces of Armenia			X	On the base of data on distribution and abundance of amphibians and using IUCN Red List Criteria assessment was done for all seven Armenian species.
Perform public awareness rising activity		X		Special training on public awareness activity with students involved into the project was done. Meetings with local communities' authorities and staff of all Protected areas of the study area were carried out; lectures in selected schools of eight towns and 30 villages of eight provinces of Armenia were performed. Educational materials were disseminated. Due to rather short time of project implementation, this activity could not cover all the settlements of eight provinces.
Develop recommendations and draft Action plan for conservation of amphibian fauna, particularly for 2 threatened species			X	Respective documents were elaborated.

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

Actually there were no real difficulties during project implementation. Only sometimes due to bad weather conditions we were forced to spend more time than it was planned or repeatedly visit some localities.

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

1. GIS-based computer database of amphibians in Armenia, including data of current distribution, assessment of abundance and conservation status, some peculiarities of biology were created and developed; distribution maps for each species were produced.
2. Recommendations for conservation of two threatened amphibian species of Armenia (*Ommatotriton ophryticus* and *Pelobates syriacus*), including proposals of development of protected areas system of Armenia was elaborated.
3. Assessment of current conservation status for each amphibian species of Armenia was made. This allows, in particular, provide information for improvement of data on amphibians distributed in Armenia in IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

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

Special training on public awareness skills with students involved in the project was done. Local communities were partly involved in project implementation, authorities of communities supported our activity, organising meetings with their staff and representatives of local schools, in particular, with young generation. Illustrative and didactic materials distributed during project' implementation can be continuously used in educational process in all visited communities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Due to rather short time of project implementation and large study area not all the localities possibly populated by amphibians were investigated. We need to continue the field research activities to fulfil respective gaps collecting the additional biological and distribution data on the amphibian species of some Armenian Provinces. Besides, I'm planning to investigate three provinces of Armenia which was not covered by the project.

In addition, project revealed low level of public awareness on importance of amphibians and on necessity of their protection among local people. We are planning to continue distribution of educational materials in local communities and schools. We are going to continue teaching students of MSc course in taxonomic and conservation herpetology (part "Amphibians"), and future involve them with skills obtained in public awareness programs.

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

1. The project results (report, recommendations, draft Action Plan) will be submitted to Scientific Council of Scientific Centre of Zoology and Hydroecology of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, to the staff of Armenian Protected Areas and to the Ministry of Nature Protection for further discussions and harmonization. Presentations and lectures will be

carried out in the high educational institutions and selected schools in Yerevan, Alaverdi, Dilijan, Vanadzor, Ararat, Armavir, Eghegnadzor, Kapan, etc.

2. Draft recommendations for conservation of two threatened amphibian species of Armenia will be shared among stakeholders.
3. The project results will be shared with scientists in different conferences and workshop, in particular it is planned to report some results in the conference “Biological diversity and conservation problems of the fauna of the Caucasus” which have to be held in coming September in Yerevan, Armenia. Respective publications presenting both scientific and social results of the work are:
 - Stepanyan I.E., Pipoyan S.Kh. 2014. Biodiversity of amphibians in North-Eastern Armenia (Lori Province) and proposed conservation measures.
 - Nikoghosyan G.N., Arzumanyan M.V., Stepanyan I.E. 2014. Color morphs and color pattern variations in several populations of Armenian tree frogs.
 - Arzumanyan M. V., Stepanyan I.E., Arakelyan M.S. 2014. Phenotypes diversity of marsh frogs (*Pelophylax ridibundus* (Pallas, 1771) in some mountain populations of Armenia.
 - Petrosyan R.P., Arzumanyan M.V., Stepanyan I.E., Arakelyan M.S. 2014. New data of sizes of body and erythrocytes of *Pelobates syriacus*, Boetter, 1889 from Ararat valley, Armenia.

Scientific papers will be prepared and published in peer-reviewed journals.

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

RSGF was used during period of: end of August 2013 - end of August 2014, which corresponds to anticipated length of the project.

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
Purchase of Garmin GPS	200	132	+68	Garmin was bought in Russia by price cheaper than in Armenia
Purchase of Digital Thermometer	58	132	-74	More advanced (Waterproof and multifunctional: pH, EC, TDS, ORP, C ⁰ /F ⁰) Tester was bought.
Purchase of Digital Balance Weight Pocket Scale	10	30	-20	Two Digital Balance Weight Pocket Scales were bought to provide second member of group with instrument
Purchase of Digital Caliper	42	40	+2	
Purchase of Video camera	800	600	+ 200	Video camera was bought in Russia by price cheaper than in Armenia

Fuel: £0.9/L x 15 L/100 km x 5000 km/30day (7 trips)	675	714	-39	One extra field trip was carried out in August, 2014.
Car rent and driver: £35/day x 30 days (7 trips)	1050	1120	-70	One extra field trip was carried out in August, 2014.
Per diems: £7/person/day x 5persons x 30 day (7 trips)	1050	1120	-70	One extra field trip was carried out in August, 2014.
Publication of: informational flyers, calendars, posters, booklets, didactic materials	2000	1998	+2	
Total	5885	5886	-1	

The rate of £sterling / Armenian dram (AMD) was from 635.00 to 668.9 AMD/£.

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

The following steps can be considered as most important:

Continuation of completion of GIS-database for making it maximally comprehensive.

On the base of data generalisation and analysis select areas most important for conservation of Armenian amphibians and harmonize these areas with already known Important Bird Areas and Important Plant Areas. This will allow elaborating comprehensive and coordinated protection measures for areas of general conservation value.

Carrying out investigations in three yet unstudied Provinces of Armenia. Continuation of public awareness rising activity by involving students, local authorities and people with special attempts to educate schoolchildren and young people; inclusion into educational programs special issues on amphibian's conservation.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

We used the RSGF logo in all the materials published (informational flyers, posters, booklets, calendars). In all of our lectures, meetings and discussions RSGF role was accented.

11. Any other comments?

We are thankful for support of RSGF, which allows obtaining new information about amphibians of our country, especially of endangered species, and distributing information on importance of these nice animals and necessity of their protection among local people, especially among young generation.