

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

Your name	Prakash Chandra Mardaraj
Project title	Identifying Key issues for the Conservation of Sloth bear (<i>Melursus ursinus</i>) in Rajnigiri, Odisha, Eastern India.
RSG reference	15063-1
Reporting period	2014-2015
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	pmardaraj@gmail.com
Date of this report	19 th September, 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
To identify key issues for human-sloth bear conflict			Yes	The main problems which primarily responsible towards the human-sloth bear conflict in Nilgiri have been identified and documented.
To quantify the nature and intensity of conflict			Yes	Information on human causality and mauling by sloth bears were collected from the forest department, Nilgiri hospital records and also from interactions with the villagers.
To study the local people's attitude towards the sloth bear conservation			Yes	We surveyed 18 villages and interacted personally with the local people and also conducted group meetings to know the people perception towards the conservation and protection of sloth bears.
To organise conflict awareness and conservation educational programmes		Yes		We conducted one painting workshop for local schools, two training sessions for forest field staffs, two sloth bear rescue operations and several village meetings for increasing awareness and conservation prospects.
To develop strategies and a conflict conservation plan for minimising the conflict			Yes	Prevention and mitigation strategy has been suggested with a proposed conflict conservation plan to the respected agencies for long term co-existence of human and sloth bears.

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

Gathering and arranging the meetings. The villagers are mainly labourers, so during village meetings we have to adjust time frame according to the availability of the locals. The process was lengthy, but we managed.

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

- I. The intensity of conflict was identified, and conservation village clubs were formed in the high conflict prone villages to implement the mitigation plan which have been suggested.
- II. The problem and the conflict situation were raised in an international platform highlighting the status and profundity of the problematic sloth bear population.
- III. The capacity building of the locals and the forest staffs were done with special reference to the conservation of sloth bears and its habitat.

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

- With the formation of Bear Club, the young locals were very active in the conservation works.
- The villagers who were unaware of the compensation schemes, were informed and explained about the procedure.
- The meetings and workshops enlighten the importance of wildlife in human being life and also its need for balancing the ecosystem.
- The forest department was informed regarding the high and medium conflict villages so that the forest fringe areas can be monitored for reducing human bear interactions.
- The village heads (Sarpanch) were informed to put streetlights under government schemes.
- The forest department initiated the reforestation schemes with special reference to sloth bear conservation.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we will continue this work involving more people in programmes on sloth bear conservation, monitoring and formation of new bear clubs. We will also measure the biotic pressure on the sloth bear habitats and quantify the food availability for the bears in the area.

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

- Articles on bear rescue activities were published in Local newspapers for local people awareness.
- The study results were published in a national level conference organised by Odisha State board of Biodiversity during 22nd May 2015.
- The research work was presented in SCCS-Bangalore an international conference on Conservation Science during 8-11 September 2015.
- A conflict conservation plan will be submitted to divisional forest officer for implementation of human-sloth bear conflict mitigation propagations
- We are also working on manuscript for publication of the outcomes of the research work in journals.

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

The Rufford small grant work was proposed for 12 months, started from July 2014 but the project work continued for 13 months (July 2014-August 2015).

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 (1£= Rs.101)
Establish baseline				
Desk study	80	80	0	Printing and photocopying of data
Collecting information	55	80	25	were little more than

				expected
Field surveys				
Hiring vehicles	1450	1530	80	During tourist seasons vehicle charge were high.
Field stays	1000	980	(-20)	There was a cancellation of trip due to roadblock.
Field assistants	945	980	35	We had to hire more persons from village during 20 field visits.
Awareness campaigns				
Meetings	600	695	95	The number of people attended the meetings were more than we assumed.
Workshop	700	750	50	The workshop materials were in demand.
Posters	655	655	0	
Stationary and Reporting	250	250	0	No changes.
TOTAL	5735	6000	265	

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

Important next step will be to guide the Bear Clubs and monitor them. We will help the local people to gain benefit from any forest reforestation work initiated in their area. We will further development our further work in quantify the population status of the sloth bears and its group structure, status of bear habitat, movement pattern, food habits and socio-economic status of local villagers in the Nilgiri wildlife range. We will further work more on awareness and education programmes on conflict mitigation activities for the locals of the conflict areas

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, we have used the RSGF logo in the distributed and awareness materials. In our study area people were not aware of Rufford Foundation. People were informed about the Rufford Foundation objectives and its activities in the conservation field. During our project work we used the RSGF logo in the posters, leaflet, stickers and presentations.

11. Any other comments?

First and foremost, to begin with I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Rufford Foundation for giving me the privilege to pursue this study. Several individuals have made this study on sloth bear a success and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who directly and indirectly helped us in completing this project.