

**The Rufford Foundation  
 Final Report**

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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<b>Grant Recipient Details</b>	
<b>Your name</b>	Dr. Esther van der Meer
<b>Project title</b>	Finding the cheetahs of Zimbabwe; cheetah population and human-cheetah conflict survey in southwest Zimbabwe
<b>RSG reference</b>	15237-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	January-December 2014
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5700
<b>Your email address</b>	esther@cheetahzimbabwe.org
<b>Date of this report</b>	15 February 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
Determine the status and distribution of the cheetah population in southwest Zimbabwe			X	We interviewed 691 wildlife professionals, farmers, communities and others about 190,000 km <sup>2</sup> of land. This has given us sufficient and reliable information to determine the status and distribution of the cheetah population in southwest Zimbabwe.
Determine the conservation challenges the cheetah faces in this part of the country			X	Based on the questionnaires and the conflict reports we went through at the various problem animal control stations, national parks and campfire offices we can say that human-cheetah conflict is virtually non-existent in this part of the country (we came across two recent cases).
Address mitigation methods for human cheetah conflict in areas where this conflict occurs			X	Because human-cheetah conflict was virtually non-existent we did not have to address mitigation methods for cheetah specifically. However, we did come across areas where conflict with other carnivores, like lion and leopard, was a problem. In these areas we addressed this conflict by explaining how to mitigate conflict and by leaving 'how to live with predators' booklets.
Provide in situ education to raise awareness and educate field staff about cheetah			X	At each field station we spend time explaining how to differentiate between the various carnivores, we left educational material and, at the end of our stay, showed an educational cheetah movie to the staff and their families.
Collect information on the status and distribution of twelve other carnivore species			X	We interviewed 691 wildlife professionals, farmers, communities and others about 190,000 km <sup>2</sup> of land. This has given us sufficient and reliable information to determine the distribution of 12 other carnivores in southwest Zimbabwe.

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

Unlike previous years when we had to deal with delays due to paperwork and elections, this year we had an extremely efficient field season without any 'political' delays. We wasted 3 days at a camp site because the car broke down and we had to wait for the spare parts to arrive.

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

- 1) We have been able to collect sufficient and reliable information to determine the population and conservation status of the cheetah in the south of Zimbabwe, an area for which previously no reliable and up to date information was available.
- 2) We have been able to provide *in situ* education at the field stations and build capacity by working with local Zimbabwean students. This has resulted in a new collaboration with the Mushandike Wildlife College, the training college for the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management employees.
- 3) The information we have so far collected (both in 2013 and 2014) is already being used in policy making and conservation. This year the information was used to; update the IUCN Red list status of cheetah and other carnivores (African wild dog and brown hyena) and make cheetah a priority species in the Hwange National Parks Management Plan (the largest cheetah population resides in Hwange National Park).

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

As part of the questionnaire-based survey we visited communities bordering wildlife protected areas. Although not with cheetah, a lot of these communities experience conflict with other carnivores, especially lion, leopard and spotted hyena. As a result we have spend a considerable amount of time on discussion with community representatives and the authorities dealing with conflict about how to mitigate this conflict. In addition, we left 'how to live with predator' booklets which explain about carnivore conflict mitigation methods, materials on how to distinguish cheetah from leopard and 'I'm a cheetah' posters for the local schools.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Certainly, in 2015 we will cover the remaining 30% of the country with our questionnaire based survey, after which we will write a final report with recommendations on where to set priorities for the conservation of cheetah.

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

There are several ways in which we share our results:

- Our annual report which is being send to all participants in the survey, the local authorities, colleagues, sponsors and other interested parties.
- Articles in the local media to inform the national public about our work and preliminary results of the survey.
- Social media to inform the international public about our work and preliminary results of the survey.
- Via our website (currently being revised and updated).
- Once the nationwide survey is completed a final report will be written which will be as widely distributed as possible at both a national and international level.
- Papers in peer reviewed scientific 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?**

The majority of the Rufford Foundation grant was used between April and November, prior to and during our field survey. This corresponds with the anticipated length of our 2014 field season.

**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.**

Local exchange rate: 1 GBP = 1.53 USD

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Spoor reference guides plus shipment and import duty	850 £	678 £	+172 £	We managed to get discount on the spoor reference guides
CCPZ stickers	50 £	30 £	+20 £	
Projector	450 £	417 £	+33 £	
Protective case	70 £	20 £	+50 £	We found a plastic case that was cheaper than the metal case we had in mind
Inverter, battery and extension cord	80 £	184 £	-104 £	We had to buy a separate (heavier) system to run the projector from an additional car battery making it more expensive than anticipated
Food and lodging	4000 £	3937 £	+63 £	

Satellite phone airtime voucher	200 £	197 £	+3 £	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5700 £</b>	<b>5463 £</b>	<b>237 £</b>	We used the remaining 237 GBP to print sighting sheet holders for the National Parks stations with cheetah (6 x = 40 GBP) and CCPZ stickers (1000 x = 120 GBP) to hand out to participants in the survey

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

The important next steps are:

- Covering the remaining 30% of the country with our questionnaire based survey.
- Analyse our results and put a solid final report on paper with sensible advice on how to improve the conservation strategy of the species.
- Share this report as widely as possible.
- Follow up this report by lobbying the local authorities.
- Keep the cheetah momentum going by generating PR and providing information via social media.
- Keep the relationships and collaborations with colleagues going in order to facilitate data sharing and joined carnivore projects.
- Build capacity in carnivore conservation by working with people in the field, e.g. via the collaboration we have recently set up with the Mushandike wildlife college (unlike university students the rangers attending the college already have a job in wildlife, therefore all education provided can be used directly in the field).

### 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?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used in our annual report 2014, our website and on our 'how to tell the difference' posters.

### 11. Any other comments?

No further comments, except that we would sincerely like to thank you for your support, without this support we would not have been able to do our cheetah conservation job!