

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	Aparna Lajmi
Project title	Assessing diversity and distribution of three families of lizards in the dry zone of peninsular India
RSG reference	15328-1
Reporting period	1 year
Amount of grant	5992 pounds
Your email address	aparna.lajmi@gmail.com
Date of this report	18.09.2015

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 systematically sample across the dry zone of peninsular India for the three families of lizards to document distribution of different species			This was the first part of the project, and has been completed.	Our first objective was to carry out a systematic grid based sampling. However, we could not always stick to this design. We did anticipate this, given the large-scale land conversions into agricultural land. Most of the plains were converted to agricultural land and a lot of the rocky outcrops are undergoing mining for stone.
Describing the diversity		This work is ongoing, as DNA sequencing of some samples is still pending		While we have worked on certain groups of lizards and discovered many new species, some manuscripts are accepted, some are under review and some still have to be worked on.
Pictorial Field guide	We are working on the pictorial guide. This should be done by end of May.			We have the first draft of the book ready.

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

The only unforeseen difficulty was the time it took to acquire the permits in some of the states. This delayed our work by a few months. However there were no other major issues, thanks to the cooperation of forest departments.

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

1. Building a baseline data of lizard species in Peninsular India along with their distribution.
2. Discovery of several undescribed lizard species, especially in the genus *Hemidactylus*, *Sitana*, and family Lacertidae
3. Making a comprehensive guide to lizards of Peninsular India with distribution maps targeted towards forest departments.

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

NA

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. We are only beginning to understand the diversity of lizard species in the dry zone. These are the largest group of vertebrates in the dry zone, and are a suitable model system to monitor the health of the habitats that these lizards are found in. Now that we have a baseline data for this group across Peninsular India, we can focus our work towards addressing specific questions. There are many species that are point endemics and were discovered only during the course of our work. The next step would be assessing the conservation status of these species by monitoring their populations.

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

One of the main outcomes of this project is a comprehensive guidebook to lizards of the dry zone of peninsular India. This book will be distributed among forest departments as a way of introducing them to these lesser-known groups.

Apart from this, the new species descriptions are being published in international journals to reach out to the scientific community. Describing undiscovered diversity is the essential first step towards conservation.

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

The RSG was used from 2014 July to 2015 July for fieldwork. While we had proposed to finish fieldwork in the first 9 months of the project, the actual sampling took 12 months. The completion of the fieldwork was necessary for the follow up molecular work, and hence the actual completion of the book only ended by April 2016.

This was a very ambitious project which needed the involvement of multiple researchers and wide spread sampling. In spite of which, we have sampled across the dry zone in a large number of locations as per our plan in the proposal.

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
Field assistants salary (GBP 4.9/day for 80 days)	392	720.82	-328.82	This also includes driver's salary, which we did not take into account at the beginning of the project. In addition, we hired locals apart from our regular field assistant.

Food and lodging (for team members and field/local assistant)	1465	1154.98	310.02	The forest department guesthouses were provided to us at a very reasonable price, which reduced lodging prices considerably.
Vehicle maintenance (repairs and servicing)	680	110.92	569.08	The organisation we routed the money through allowed us to use the money only for a few minor repairs, but not servicing.
Hiring Vehicle (GBP 26.6/day for 15 days)	400	115.77	284.23	We did not end up hiring vehicle. Instead, some of us used public transport, which helped us cut costs.
Fuel cost (GBP 14.65/day for 100 days)	1465	1393.60	71.40	
Field equipment	390	490.92	-100.92	Apart from the field equipment, we also needed other consumables like jars, labels, Tissue papers, ethanol etc. which have been added to equipment list.
Booklet Designing and publication (200 copies) (GBP 6/copy)	1200	1545.59	-345.59	We are planning to use all the money that is now left in printing the pictorial guide book. Any remaining funds will be used to print more copies of the booklet.
TOTAL	5992	5533	459	

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

Now that we have a baseline data on the species that are found in the dry zone and their distributions, the next most important thing would be to monitor species with small distributions or are point endemics. Apart from that, there is an urgent need to educate the forest department staff and policy makers about the huge diversity that exist in the dry zone. This dry and arid landscape is practically attributed to be wasteland in India and converting this land to agricultural fields and for mining purposes in rampant.

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 in all the presentations that we made. This includes work presentations in the department, at conferences and to the forest department staff. The RSGF logo will also feature on the guidebook that will be published by the end of May 2016.



11. Any other comments?

We are extremely grateful to RSGF for the support and patience that they have shown towards us during this project.

