

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	Kesang Wangchuk
Project title	Habitat Status and Conservation Threats of the Red Panda in Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park
RSG reference	15374-1
Reporting period	April 2014 to March 2015
Amount of grant	£ 6000
Your email address	kwangchuk@uwice.gov.bt
Date of this report	19 th March 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
Document habitat types			Achieved	With fund support from RSG, the study found habitats available for the red panda were fir forest, mixed conifer forest, cool broadleaved forest and blue pine forest. The most frequent or available shrubs species were <i>Symplocos ramosissima</i> , <i>Eurya acuminata</i> , <i>Daphne bholua</i> and <i>Rhododendron arboreum</i> . Lichen had highest cover percentage and was observed in association with both herb and grass.
List down primary food (types of bamboo species).			Achieved	Bamboo plants are integral part of the red panda habitat as they consist of more than 80% of their diet composition. Despite of different forest types bamboos were found equally available in all types of forests. In the study site <i>Arundinaria racemosa</i> and <i>Borinda grossa</i> was found at wide range of altitude. The <i>Yushiana microphylla</i> was more or less restricted to open areas. The <i>Yushiana pintlingii</i> share similar micro-habitat but do not inhabit as high as <i>Borinda grossa</i> do.
Explore and document conservation threats			Achieved	The conservation threats on red panda were natural and anthropogenic. The current natural conservation threat was gregarious flowering of the bamboo. The event of the bamboo flowering had definitely caused food scarcity to the red panda resulting forced displacement of their existence from the area. Another natural conservation threat was wild predators. The study site was known for the presence of clouded leopard the deadliest predator of the red panda. The study site also co-share habitat with two top predators of Bhutan tiger and leopard. The anthropogenic conservation threats are posed by free cattle grazing, causing food competition, habitat destruction and disturbances. The timber harvesting

				and bamboo collection activities had damaged and destroyed the red panda habitat and pose severe conservation threats.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The implementation of this project didn't face any major unforeseen difficulty; instead it went very successfully because of gracious cooperation and support from all the stakeholders.

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

1. Habitat status

With fund support from RSG, we are able to document habitat types available for the red panda in the Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park (JSWNP). The lowest altitude of the habitat starts from 1800 m asl and highest stretches up to 4800 m asl. From the total area of 1730 sq km the potential habitat available is 929.03 sq km. Of the 929.03 sq km, 453.07 sq km is cool broadleaved, 425.64 sq km mixed conifer, 32.95 sq km mixed broadleaved conifer and 17.37 sq km is Fir Forest. Four types of bamboo species (Red panda food) recorded were *Borinda grossa*, *Arundinaria racemosa*, *Yushiana pantilingii* and *Yushiana micriphylla*. The total area covered by the four species of bamboo is 788 sq km.

2. Annual monitoring

With the outcome of this project we have found out important habitats and types of anthropogenic conservation threats. Through these results the park management (JSWNP) have developed management and monitoring strategies. The events will be implemented annually specially to minimise threats from human. The one way or other, through generous fund from RSG the red panda conservation is been enhanced in JSWNP.

3. Awareness

The awareness of the red panda status, habitat types and need of conservation action in the study area was restricted to very few and the older section of the local community. Through this project, awareness programs were conducted involving all sections and all age groups. Now at least 80% of the local community were aware on importance of the red panda conservation and this was one of the successes of this project.

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

The local communities from Chendebji village which fall within eastern region of the red panda habitats was involved in both project formulation as well as the execution of some project activities. They were fully involved during questionnaires survey and some of them in actual field samplings. They are benefitted with the cash incentives of research assistant and as meeting and training participants.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The red panda habitat in Bhutan is showing rapid decrease as many road construction project are been implemented through the mountains every year. As such, there is a need for long term study plan. In collaboration with other researchers of the red panda, I would like to study habitat available throughout Bhutan and its population and dietary habit if funding can be secured from any other sources. This will be helpful to secure its habitat in Bhutan by presenting result to high level bureaucrat which they will probably avoid to plan road construction through the habitat.

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

Besides, project report PowerPoint presentation was made in several institutes and schools to share the findings. I will further share my findings whenever workshop or meeting are been conducted on the red panda. I am also planning to prepare a short documentary film on red panda which will be distributed to schools and institutions. The documentary film will be translated to national language (Dzongkha) of Bhutan, so that this can be used for both educated and illiterate lots. Likewise the posters and brochures are been designed to share information with people who are interested to know and conserve the species.

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 using of fund was started from May 2014 to until April 2015. It took little longer than the predictable length of the project, in the sense; I planned to submit final report by end of February 2015 which is actually before scheduled time.

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
Transportation and Communication	£2000	£2200	£-200	The actual travelling has increased more than estimated.
Professional services	£1800	£2000	£-200	Additional research assistant were deputed to do questionnaires survey.
Community Meeting and Training Program	£800	£600	£200	The meeting and training were reduced as recommended by the stakeholders.
Equipment and Stationary	£1050	£1050	0	Fully utilised to procure a laptop, printers and Camera and their parts.
Report preparation, consultation and publication	£350	£150	£200	The budget was slashed to meet the extra cost of travel and researcher.
Bank Charges	0	£5	£-5	Bank charges deducted by BNB which was not projected initially.
Total	£ 6000	£ 6005	£ -5	

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

The red panda is timid, elusive and habitat specialist. They are also one of the least known and threatened animal in the wild. To conserve them we need to do long term research and monitoring on their habitat status, population status, dietary habit, and adaptation and response to climate change in Bhutan. If I could secure fund would definitely take up those programmes.

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?

Yes I used RSGF logo in various media. The presentation, posters, brochures and documentary film all have RSGF logo with proper acknowledgement of funding provided for the study of Red Panda.

11. Any other comments?

The current population of the red panda in Bhutan is not known and many road construction works are going on supposed to be its habitat. The government or some organisation should come up with strategic plan to counteract with those and I would stand to contribute my findings.

I am deeply grateful to The Rufford Foundation for supporting this project through providing grant/fund and eager to continue working with the foundation in other projects in the future. I also want to give my most sincere thanks to the local communities involved in the project, conservation authorities and technical conservation staff involved during my study.