

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	Sachin Vaishampayan
Project title	A social perspective of cetacean-fisheries interactions on the Andaman Islands
RSG reference	17066-1
Reporting period	October 2016-March 2018
Amount of grant	£5,000
Your email address	sachinvshmpn@gmail.com
Date of this report	November, 2018

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
Examining mortalities and injury caused due to cetaceans accidental entanglement in fishing gear or fishing vessels				We were able to get information on cetacean entanglement from the fishermen. 33% (n=200) of the respondents admitted to having a bycatch incident. We were also able to look at this data across a gradient of gear types. Our questions dealt with the frequency of cetacean bycatch and the rate of mortality and the procedure followed post such incidences
Assessing any financial impacts on the fisherfolk due to cetaceans				While we weren't able to quantify data on financial impacts of cetacean activity on fishermen, we were able to find out that mostly fishermen involved in gill net (77%, n=79) operations were affected by depredation and damage to gear by cetaceans. However, for most of the fishermen, loss involved time spent in repairing the damaged gear and while some respondents did report financial loss, 83% of those said that the financial loss was not significant
Documenting perceptions, their drivers and traditional knowledge of the fishermen linked to cetaceans				To meet this objective, we assessed fisher attitudes towards cetaceans, their awareness of the protected status of dolphins and their beliefs about dolphins. 94% of the respondents reported that they thought favourably about dolphins while only 1.5% of respondents had negative views about dolphins. Remaining 4.5% of respondents said that they didn't view dolphins favourably or unfavourably. 86.5% of the respondents were aware of the protected status of the dolphins. Over 64% of the respondents were able to identify more than one species of

				dolphins. We were also able to list out areas of high cetacean occurrence. Ross Island near Port Blair, Stretch between Cinque Island to Little Andaman and Ritchies Archipelago were among such areas.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

No major problems were encountered during the project. Major challenges posed were reluctance of fishermen to take part in the participatory monitoring programme. We tackled the issue by discontinuing a logbook based programme, instead relying on the videos supplied by them to look for species commonly interacting with the fishermen. It will take long term effort to establish trust and rapport with the fishermen in order to initiate a similar monitoring programme.

Given the size and detail of the questionnaire, the rate of interviews was slow, so we reduced the sample size from 20% (400 boats) to 10% (200 boats). This however had no effect on the quality of the responses received given the relative homogeneity of respondents in North and Middle Andaman.

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

1. We were able to identify gears vulnerable to damage to gear and depredation by cetaceans and the mitigation techniques employed by fishermen to avoid such encounters. We were also able to get data on cetacean entanglement and the gears most responsible for such incidences. Gill nets interacted the most with cetaceans, while hook and line was the least affected one.
2. We were able to mark area of high occurrence of cetaceans. This can be supplement further research on diversity and occurrence and help in marking important conservation sites.
3. We were able to look into the local ecological knowledge and perceptions held by the local fisher communities towards the cetaceans.

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

As the work involved carrying out interview surveys with the fisher community, we were able to interact with them extensively. In the want of a participatory monitoring programme, we were able to get videos of dolphins from them confirming the interaction of spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops* sp.) and spotted dolphins (*S. attenuata*) with the fishing vessels. Directly the project may not have benefits to the fisher community but the baseline data generated from the project will help in asking more specific questions on cetacean fisheries interactions.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project aimed to create a baseline on cetacean-fisheries interactions on the islands. Having achieved that goal, we are willing to help researchers in their work related to cetaceans and provide guidance and support required.

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

We intend to publish our results on cetacean-fisheries interactions and the application of interview surveys for the same. We also plan to write a popular article on the local ecological knowledge and the perceptions towards the cetaceans.

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 proposed timeline for the project was from June 2016 to October 2017 (15 months). However, the project itself started November 2016 due to delays in receiving the grant as well as obtaining local permits. Further, we grossly underestimated the logistics of interviewing 200 boats across the Andaman group of islands which is a remote region with poor connectivity. Therefore, even though the original duration for the project was meant to be 15 months (November 2016 – Feb 2018) we ended up spending 2 years on 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
Accommodation charges at various parts of the Islands for 15 months (June 2016 - October 2017)	600	586	-14	
Food for 15 months (June 2016 - October 2017)	600	568	-32	
Miscellaneous expenses (Bills, Toiletries, etc.) for 15 months (June 2016 - October 2017)	480	471	-13	
Motorcycle rental, fuel and maintenance (to travel to various different landing centres on the Islands from the basecamp)	550	566	+16	
Inter-island travel charges (ferry, bus and ship)	465	477	+13	

Travel charges from Mainland India to the Islands and back (air travel and ship)	750	797	+48	
Basic Digital Cameras*3 (to lend to fishermen volunteers of the participatory monitoring programme)	360	294	-66	
Laptop Computer (for data entry and analysis)	400	464	+64	
Solar Power Charger (for charging at remote areas)	80	84	+4	
Printing Charges (Interview and cetacean identification sheets)	120	98	-22	
Log books for volunteer fishermen of the participatory monitoring programme	8	0	-8	We did not go ahead with the logbook based monitoring due to lack of interest by the fishermen, instead relying on photos and videos shared by the fishermen volunteers.
Local Student Volunteers' expenses for 15 months (June 2016 - October 2017)	150	148	-2	
Visiting Team Members Living expenses (June 2016 - October 2017)	400	418	+18	
Consumables (for batteries, stationary etc.)	37	29	-8	
	5,000	5,000		

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

While this project creates a baseline on assessing cetacean-fisheries interactions and the fishermen attitude towards the cetaceans, we feel that a field based study on cetacean distribution and occurrence would help to pin point areas of high cetacean presence.

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 Rufford Foundation logo in multiple presentations which were used during interactions and talks with student groups during the course of the project.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Sachin Vaishampayan: Principal Investigator. Undertaking fieldwork, Data entry and analysis

Dr. Divya Karnad: Supervisor. Guidance in shaping questionnaire, methodology, data analysis

Dr. S. Venu: Co-Supervisor. Helping with the questionnaire and local contacts

Ms. Nikita Jukenti, Ms. Diksha Dixit, Ms. Sohini Dudhat, Mr. Bharat Ahuja and Mr Sharad Bayyana. Volunteers. Help with the fieldwork.

12. Any other comments?

We would like to thank Madras Crocodile Bank Trust for helping with the finances and Andaman and Nicobar Environment Team for the logistical support during the field work. We would also like to thank the fishermen on the Andaman Islands for their support and cooperation.

