

## 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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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Gabriela M Vélez Rubio
<b>Project title</b>	The endangered green turtle in a plastic sea: working from the protected areas to awareness the Uruguayan society about marine debris
<b>RSG reference</b>	17651-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	October 2015-October 2016
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4950
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:gabriela.velez@uv.es">gabriela.velez@uv.es</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	16/12/2016

**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
Characterise the marine debris ingested by green turtles stranded on coast of Rocha. (November 2015 - April 2016).				We continue with this activity. The results are already presented in different symposium and congress. And now we are working in the manuscript for publish in a scientific journal.
Conduct marine surveys in the CMPAs of Rocha and adjacent areas during all the season (December 2015 - February 2016, April 2016, June 2016 and October 2016).				For this task we had the help of university students group that realised a project about debris in the same study area.
Continue with the collaboration and contribution for the effective implementation of the management plans to guide the conservation actions and sustainable development in the CMPAs (October-December 2015).				We continue collaborating in the last steps of the management plan implementation in the CMPAs. The technician of the MPA of La Coronilla is still working in draft of this document, and probably has a final document in March 2017.
Awareness about the incidence of marine debris in coastal ecosystems and reduce the incidence in the CMPAs.				We worked with the high school in La Coronilla and with one of the primary School in Punta del Diablo. During the summer we were awareness the tourist and visitor at the Karumbe visitor centre.

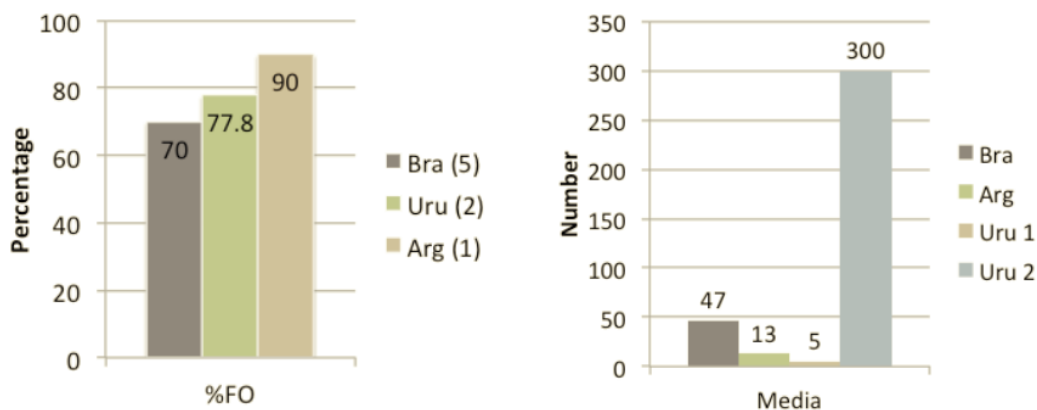
**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

We have some problems with visibility and sea conditions for the surveys in water and instead we performed more surveys on the beach and the days with really low tide we could collect the lost lines and hooks over the rocks (normally underwater). Nevertheless we detected some spot with accumulation of lost fishing lines. We also have problems to put the recipients in the areas we chose, now we are thinking to change the spots and continue with the activity in the future in collaboration with the local government.

According with the high school professors we decide to continue next year because some of the activities were coincident with the final exams; but we made a good relationship with the students and the biology professors.

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

- Characterise the ingestion of marine debris in green turtles, the most interesting results is the turtles stranded in Uruguayan coast present the highest number of ingested debris in the Atlantic region. And reflect the huge problem with debris in the ocean.



The ingestion of debris is negative correlated with turtle size, turtles less than 35 cm of curve carapace length present higher ingestion of debris.

- The instances of work with the high school and Montessori primary school. The experience of go to clean the beach with the primary school "Caballito de mar" in Punta del Diablo children were really rewarding for the children, the university students and the members our of team. We still working with the headmaster and teachers of the primary school to design a manual and for realise more educational activities next year.



- And we still working with the CMPAs workers and skateholders in the process of implementation of the management plan, luckily the final implementation will be in 2017.

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

The education and outreach proposal is based on the work with children and teenagers of the local communities. The involvement of the teenagers and children were successful and is a continuation of the NGO Karumbé work of the in the area since 2001

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

Yes, our plan is continue working with the green turtle long-term monitoring in the MPAs where Karumbé keep working since 2001. Continue with the awareness about the marine debris, keep working with the stakeholders and local government developing research and educational activities in the coastal areas. And continue the work with the coastal communities and the international scientific community with the plastic pollution.

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

The results of this project will be shared in the following ways:

### Diffusion to general public

- During the summer season (January-April 2017) the results will be share with the tourist that visit the marine turtle centre of Karumbé in La Coronilla. This year we had some beach cleaning activities in Punta del Diablo with the local community and we could share the goals of the project.
- The students of the university that help with the project realised a documentary about the work in the school to promote reduce and reutilisation of plastic items.

### Workshops

In the next International Sea Turtle Symposium in Las Vegas, March 2017 we will organise the workshop "Sea turtle & Plastic Pollution". The aim of this workshop is to share the knowledge and experience from the international experts. The orators will present the current global panorama and the edge research in the matter as well as it will be discussed the potential action plans to mitigate the debris impact. A debate will be opened at the end of each presentation in order to discuss these issues.

### Academic activities

One our student Natalia Teryda presented her Bachelor Thesis at the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (Argentina) and now she is a final candidate for a Fullbrigth scholarship for a Master degree. And we are planning to prepare at least two research articles that will be published in a peer review journals.

### Results were presented in national and international conferences

1. 36th International Symposium of Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtle, Lima,
  - a. Perú. 2016 - Teryda N, Rodriguez D, Vélez-Rubio GM (In Press) Marine debris ingestion by green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Uruguayan coastal waters. Conference paper, 36th Annual Symposium on sea turtle biology and conservation. Lima, Perú
  - b. Teryda N, Rosa L, Vélez-Rubio G, Prosdocimi L, Guimarães SM (In Press) POLLUTION AND SEA TURTLES IN SOUTH WESTERN ATLANTIC. Conference paper, 36th Annual Symposium on sea turtle biology and conservation. Lima, Perú
2. III Jornadas Interdisciplinarias de Ecología y Biodiversidad. CURE---Rocha. 11/28 to 12/02 2016

3. Part of the information obtained in this Project and in others research of green turtle feeding ecology will be presented as part of my PhD in early 2017 (University of Valencia, Spain and CURE Maldonado, Uruguay)

**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 RSG was used over a period of 12 month as I was planned

**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
Fuel for monitoring turtles (for car and boat)	500	500	0	
Bus tickets for workshop and meetings from Montevideo to the study area	250	300	-50	We had some extra tickets for the student but the University covered
Internal transports for Environmental and Research Activities at CMPAs	250	270	-20	We had some extra tickets for the student but the University covered
Food supplies during research and education activities	600	650	-50	We had some extra tickets for the student but the University and NGO Karumbé covered
Lodging for monitoring turtles and educational activities	0	0	0	
Equipment for monitored strandings and sample collection consumables	600	650	-50	We had some extra cost but the NGO Karumbé covered
Equipment for analyse the gut contents	500	500	0	
Equipment for scuba dive transect	500	500	0	

Graphics designs for manuals, brochures and posters	650	200	450	We not finished the manuals
Printing of manuals, 800 brochures and posters	500	0	500	We are waiting for the manuals design to printing
Recipients to collect the fishing lines and hooks for recycling	400	0	400	We collected the lost lines and hook and recycle but we didn't put the recipients yet
Administrative costs	200	200	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4950</b>	<b>3770</b>	<b>1180</b>	

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

Increase the studies to understand the real impact of marine debris in the marine turtle population, putting together all the knowledge of each region and work with the stakeholders and governments. We are on time to find a solution to reduce the impact of plastic debris in the sea.

Continue with the "Long term monitoring of marine turtles in Uruguay" in Cerro Verde Scientific Base that started in 2001 by the local NGO Karumbé. And keep working with University students groups to form human resources in this kind of research activities.

### 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. We used de RSGF logo in:

- Il Jornadas Interdisciplinarias de Ecología y Biodiversidad. CURE-Rocha. 11/28 to 12/02 2016
- Oral presentations in the 36th International Symposium of Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtle, Lima, Perú. 2016
- Talk to students in La Coronilla and Punta del Diablo
- As well, the logo will be included in documents and video of the students project
- Also The Rufford Foundation appears in all our acknowledgements in published articles in refereed journals

### 11. Any other comments?

Thank you very much to keep helping researchers in countries with few economic resources to work with megafauna' conservation.