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	Judit Elisabet Dopazo
Project title	Developing control tools for chytrid fungus in amphibians of southern pampas, Argentina
RSG reference	ID: 19965-1
Reporting period	March 2017 to March 2018
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	juditdopazo@gmail.com
Date of this report	April 4th 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
Assess the extent of chytrid fungus in amphibian populations of southern Pampa grasslands.				We were able to sample 12 sites and three of the five native species of native amphibians. We are still processing samples. The results will be available soon, and then we have now a better idea about the extension of chytrid fungus in our region.
Test the effectiveness of an antifungal treatments				We found resistance from wildlife veterinarians to conduct the experience with chloramphenicol, and we decide to cancel it. However, we conducted a successful experience in the lab, where the treatment worked. We were delayed with our experience with colloidal silver, and results will be soon.
Develop a protocol to control chytrid fungus in public and private grassland ponds.				We produced a draft of a protocol based on all known alternatives of management for chytrid fungus.

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

The setup necessary to process the samples in situ (an essential requirement for the experiments) took us much more time than budgeted. The delays in the importation of the reagents and the necessary material delayed the execution of the project in months.

At some point we considered the option of analysing the samples in laboratories outside the country, but decided to commit to consolidate our independence, even knowing that we sacrificed time.

We found considerable resistance from the community of wildlife veterinarians and some colleagues to conduct our field experiments. Even when there are promising results in the use of chloramphenicol for the treatment of chytrid, we fail to convince decision makers to authorize our pilot test in the field.

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

1. We have a preliminary assessment about the extent of chytrid fungus in amphibian populations of southern Pampa grasslands
2. We strengthened our amphibian conservation team by providing the necessary knowledge and technology to conduct a rapid monitoring of chytrid fungus in our country. Now we are assisting other amphibian conservation initiatives by processing samples from their regions.
3. We advance in the exploration of alternatives to the treatment of chytrid, which are more environmental friendly.

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

The local conservation NGO and some local students collaborate with us in fieldwork and promotion activities. We developed a solid relationship with the local university, especially with two different research teams. During fieldwork, some local volunteers helped in data collection.

I was able to show my project in the national congress of herpetology. It was an incredible opportunity to meet other amphibian conservation initiatives, and then establish a cooperative network.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Definitely my goal is to consolidate myself as a leader in conservation. I am aware that I am taking my first steps, but my goals are clear. I am planning to continue working in the region looking for solutions to the conservation problems of amphibians. I wish to determine the extent and level of infection of wild populations, and at the same time to test management alternatives that allow to reduce the prevalence of chytrid fungus in the wild frog populations. This first grant from the RSG allowed me to make the leap I was looking for, and I am very grateful for that.

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

I already shared some partial results in two scientific congress, and I conducted some presentations in local media, talking about our project. Now I'm working in two manuscripts; one describing the results of the chloramphenicol treatment in the lab, and another describing the current infection of wild amphibians of the region. Once we get the final results of our test with the colloidal silver, we probably will write an article about that experience.

I am also working in a report to prevent and control the chytrid fungus in local ponds.

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 grant was used during the whole year. Perhaps my lack of experience led me to underestimate the times. Some stages of the project required much more time and money than I had estimated. Actually, some of the objectives still need more time. Luckily, I achieved the support of other organisations to continue this initiative and be able to conclude the first steps in my vision about the conservation of amphibians in the region.

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
Fieldwork: Lodging and meals	2025	2800	-775	
Fieldwork: Fuel and vehicle maintenance	1750	2055	-305	
Fieldwork: Vehicle rent	1120	1120	0	
Sampling & lab mat	1545	2238	-693	
Promotion of protocol	580	390	+190	

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

I feel we need to explore other management techniques (i.e., alternatives to chemical control) to remove or reduce the infection of ponds. In our region, we must test management actions over the ponds, as the use of fences, artificial desiccation, and the providing of salt and zooplankton.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did The Rufford Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The logo was used in all activities and talks. We also print it in several flyers, and in the posters presented in two congresses during this period (posters are attached):

Dopazo J, Arellano ML, Alzola PG, Felipe A, Berkunsky I. 2017. Preliminary morphological and morphometric observations of the tegument of the striped frog (*Leptodactylus gracilis*). XII Jornadas de Biólogos en Red**.** November 2017, Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dopazo J, Arellano ML, Belasen A, Myers J, Velasco MA, Kacoliris FP, James TY, Berkunsky I, Felipe A. Prevalence and intensity of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in the Laguna Raimunda frog (*Atelognathus reverberii*). V Congreso Nacional de

Conservación de la Biodiversidad. September 2017, Las Grutas, Río negro, Argentina.

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

Throughout this period, María Luz Arellano and Mariela Achaga actively participated in all activities of this project. María Luz provided her knowledge and experience with chytrid fungus. Mariela showed enthusiasm and interest during all this time, participating in the sampling at the field and in the lab work. This experience helps us to consolidate as a team, and we are grateful to have been working together.

12. Any other comments?


Juan Lavornia


Juan Lavornia


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