

## 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>	Murthy Kantimahanti
<b>Project title</b>	Conservation Status Survey of Rusty-spotted Cat in the Eastern Ghats of South India.
<b>RSG reference</b>	21302-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	One year
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5000
<b>Your email address</b>	klnmurthy25@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	February 5 <sup>th</sup> 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
Establish the presence of a natural population of rusty-spotted cats through direct hands-on involvement of local people				We found the presence of rusty-spotted cats in two isolated patches of Eastern Ghats by using local youth volunteers and field assistants through spotlight surveys at night and track surveys.
Documentation of prevalent threats				We observed that hill quarrying, agricultural intensification and road kills as main threats.
Collection of direct and indirect evidence of rusty-spotted cat occurrence along with documentation of historical knowledge and records				We found rusty-spotted cat evidence at multiple locations but couldn't get any camera trap images due to the extremely elusive nature of cat, tough terrain and relatively short favourable period for camera trapping in a year.
Development of GIS-based habitat maps for rusty-spotted cats in south India				We could only develop map for two locations as we needed more records across the region from other sites.
Promotion of awareness among local schools and local people				We educated hundreds of school children and local community members across the project site.

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

The field conditions in some patches of the Eastern Ghats turned out to be more challenging than we thought. We bushwhacked using machetes to travel through impenetrable thorny scrub. Also, the tiny size and elusive nature of the cat made it extremely difficult to photo-trap on cameras and so we decided to fix camera traps upon tree branches and other sites where we recorded indirect evidence for extended periods.

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

- Identification of two critical sites for conservation of the rusty-spotted cat in the northern Eastern Ghats region.
- Documentation of direct threats to the habitat.

- Local capacity building by engaging rural communities in camera trapping, field surveys and education programmes.

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

The village youth from rural communities received training in fixing and monitoring camera traps as well as field surveys using tracks and signs techniques. They are now "empowered citizen scientists" who can not only collect data on distributional records of small wild cats but also help in conservation of the species by reaching out to their communities and educating them.

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

Yes! We would like to expand the program to several other sites across the Eastern Ghats region in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha in India which barely have any studies on rusty-spotted cats.

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

Through popular articles and anecdotes in scientific newsletters.

**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 over a period of 1 year. This is an initial study which decided the next steps as part of the long term conservation programme for rusty-spotted cats across the region at several other sites.

**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 Equipment	2000	2000	Nil	
GIS Studies	1500	1500	Nil	
Field work Expenses	1200	1200	Nil	
Education Programs	300	300	Nil	

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

This pilot project revealed some interesting observations on the sightings of the rusty-spotted cat on the fringe zones of human habitation transitioning to vegetation

which seem to be critical areas for occurrence of the species. We also documented human-induced threats that need interventions. We believe it's important to chalk out a tailored conservation programmes to protect the last remaining populations of rusty-spotted cats in the region.

**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?**

Yes we used the logo in designing invitation flyers for volunteers and in educational materials. The Rufford Foundation also received publicity in couple of popular online articles published on websites as well as in presentations and talks at international symposia and conferences.

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

- Murthy Kantimahanti** – Overall project coordination and implementation
- Kanna Kumar S** –Community outreach and education
- Mithun Raj** – GIS based studies and field work.

