

## 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>	Meri Arzumanyan
<b>Project title</b>	Initiating Research and Conservation of Terrestrial Molluscs in Armenia
<b>RSG reference</b>	23120-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	January 2018- January 2019
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5000
<b>Your email address</b>	arzumanyan.meri@ysu.am
<b>Date of this report</b>	17/01/2019

**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
Analyze scientific literature and museum collections of the terrestrial molluscs in order to organize existing information and make it widely available				All possible literature and museum collections were analysed to get a good base for organising future fieldwork and to map species distribution.
Conducting field work to fill the gaps in the knowledge of species distribution and threats facing local populations of molluscs;				During the project, we have had a lot of field trips from northern to southern parts of Armenia to collect mollusc shells, understand the local threats to species habitats and popularise mollusc species among local communities.
Identify and map threats effecting on molluscs which will help in planning future conservation activities for those molluscs species;				One of the good parts for us was that during the project, we found new locations for several species and also some rare species were not found in the areas where they were recorded before. These types of results will help us organise this species' protection in future.
Organize training courses for a field research team including students recruited from Yerevan State University in order to enhance the interest in these diverse, threatened although the overlooked animal group in Armenia.				During the project, students from our department were trained to collect, preserve and analyse mollusc species. We have created a new terrestrial species collection in our Museum of Zoology at Department of Zoology, YSU.

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

Our team during the project was faced with different types of difficulties. Basically, the main problem was lack of time. We have collected a lot of material during the field trips and with a large amount of materials it also took a lot of time to analyse it. Currently, we have finished all material treatments and need more time for analyses.

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

This project was one of the most important in the case of mollusc study. We have got a lot of important results for some terrestrial snails.

One of the most important outcomes of the project is that we created our own museum collection, which will allow the data to be used not only for future research but for educational purposes too.

Second, now we have organised a database for numerous terrestrial snails of Armenia; this is a good base to continue our future research.

Third, most important outcome is that students from YSU are going to continue doing research on mollusc species and we are enthusiastic because more and more students are interested to collaborate not only from our university but from regions as well.

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

Local community involvement was one of the most important parts of our project. During the project, we visited local schools and distributed flyers to popularise mollusc species. Also, currently we are going to continue working with local educational organisations such as schools, colleges and universities. We believe that this is one of the most intensive ways for conservation to have long term local support.

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

We are planning to continue our work on this group on animals to enlarge and also move to the freshwater mollusc conservation and research. This project was a good base to show that mollusc species research needed to be continued as a lot of things were changing during the time, especially species distribution and abundance. We are going to apply to different international and local foundations to continue to popularise and study this species.

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

One of the best ways to share the results of the work is publishing scientific articles and attending conferences. We already have attended three conferences in 2018, two of which were international. During these conferences, we shared some of our data with local scientific community and international ones. One of the most important international events was attending the 20<sup>th</sup> Malacological Forum organised by Malacological Society of London which specialised in molluscs only. During these meetings, we have experienced that a lot of scientists all over the world are interested in Armenia as one of the biggest biodiversity hotspots. This allowed us to create new collaborations and increase future mollusc research

potential for Armenia. Moreover, the important step also will be preparation of scientific papers to share our results.

**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 2018. Some research needed to be continued due to confirm the hypothesis, and we will publish the main results of the project during 2019.

**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
Publication of brochures	475	475	-	We have published as many flyers as was planned.
Fee for scientific publication	625	625	-	Currently, only part of this amount spent, we will use it in future publications also.
Digital binocular microscope with a camera	950	950	-	-
Tubes and field consuming	650	600	-50	This amount was enough for collection tubs and field consuming because we have got support from our department too.
Food and accommodation	1250	1150	-100	As we increase the duration of the field trips we were needed to cover petrol cost.
Transportation	1050	1200	+150	This included car rent and petrol amount which has changed due to field trips increase.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5000</b>		

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

For me, one of the most important next steps is submitting scientific papers and summarising all the results, as well as continuing fieldwork and research for some threatened and endemic snails to finalise the results we have got during the project. We are planning also to finalise and make our museum data available online for students from Armenia and abroad. This project is an important step for us to show

that these species need more attention than expected so we will continue recruiting students from Yerevan State University and other universities of Armenia to continue mollusc research and conservation. Also, it is important to continue communication with local communities and different organisations to strengthen species conservation locally and globally.

**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?**

We used the Rufford Foundation logo on the project related flyers, conference presentations, posters and lectures presentations for students and pupils.

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

Our team consisted assistant professor, PhD, Master, Bachelor students from Yerevan State University and volunteers from different organizations. All of the team members have had active support and participation during the project.

**Assistant Professor Aslanyan A.** was coordinating during the fieldworks and supported with the material collection. Students **Hovhanyan A. Abrahamyan Z. Shushanyan R.** and **Verdyan N.** were active during field trips, material treatment.

**12. Any other comments?**

I would like express thanks for RF to support my research works on mostly neglected in Armenia group of animals like molluscs, where many species need in study and in conservation merit.