

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	Matthias De Beenhouwer
Project title	Unravelling Amphibian diversity in montane rainforest remnants of Southwest Ethiopia
RSG reference	24037-2
Reporting period	June 2018 – May 2019
Amount of grant	£ 4,950
Your email address	Matthias.Debeenhouwer@binco.eu
Date of this report	28/04/2019

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
Increase the biodiversity knowledge and biological priority of the Sheka forest				This has been achieved. A scientific paper was published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa on bird diversity in Sheka forest. A paper on the amphibian species will be the next paper in the pipeline.
Sample a specific unknown frog species				Permits were successfully applied for, this frog was found and sampled in situ. Once molecular analyses are finished, the samples, currently with NHM in London, will return to Addis Ababa for safe keeping at the EBI (Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute).
Indicate the presence of globally threatened and/or endemic species in Gura Ferda (Bench Maji) forest				In Gura-Ferda, 15 species were found that are globally threatened according to the IUCN. These include eight bird species, three amphibian and four mammal species. Moreover, several endemic species of amphibians, reptiles and birds were found. Although not red listed or endemic, one bird species was found that is new for the Ethiopian bird list and can be considered highly range restricted within Ethiopia.
Compile data to assess KBA status of Gura Ferda forest				See above. Data compilation is ongoing and, with the length of the review process in mind, will still take a while before an outcome is known. We have now published a concise Biodiversity Express Survey report with checklists for each species group assessed. This is freely accessible through the Rufford and BINCO website, and on Research Gate. A first KBA assessment has been included in this report.

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

Prior to 2018, the biodiversity in the area was only assessed once on a visit by Ethiopian researchers specifically looking at plant diversity. Although not considered a difficulty, the occurrence of two similar expeditions to Gura-Ferda, independent of each other, was unexpected to say the least. These expeditions were conducted by the New York University of Abu Dhabi in June 2018 (2 days) and by the Natural History Museum of London in July 2018 (1 week). We are now collaborating with these institutes to get the most out of the data gathered.

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

1. One unknown frog species (*Leptopelis* sp.) sampled, with photos and sound recorded in situ, habitat data gathered and (sub) populations mapped. Molecular identification based on toe clips and voucher specimens is still ongoing.
2. One bird species new to Ethiopia (*Columba delegorguei*) found, sound and photo recorded in situ and habitat identified.
3. Fifteen globally threatened and sixteen endemic vertebrate species identified in the area researched. These data will be crucial to assess potential KBA status of the area.

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

The local community was involved in different ways. First, all fieldwork was guided and assisted by people from the local villages. Second, the local relevant government officials were kept informed on the purpose of the fieldwork and were given opportunities to join. Third, the approval of the local kebele heads was necessary to ensure our safety and that of our camera traps.

Through stakeholder meetings at the national, regional and local level, we were able to explain our aims and already briefly highlighted some of the results.

Finally, we included the local NGO MELCA in our sampling in Sheka forest, and the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute has been involved through their herpetologist, Abeje Kassie, who joined in on the majority of the fieldwork done.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, on several scales. There are plans to continue working in these forests to further our understanding of biodiversity patterns and threats. Also, we have had promising contacts with Rainforest Trust (Africa branch) with whom it would be most interesting to work on the long term conservation of these forests. We sincerely hope that the Rufford Foundation is willing to provide additional funds for future work (baseline data) in this respect.

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

We are working on several scientific publications for dissemination at researcher level. Whenever a publication is approved, a short blog post will be distributed through our (BINCO) social media channels highlighting the results for the general public. We are also working with MELCA and EBI to make sure our results reach relevant persons (decision makers) at the national level (government). Moreover, we held a presentation for the general public in Belgium.

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 10 months with a strong focus in July – August 2018. This compares very well with the anticipated duration of 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
Sub-grant to M.Sc.	330	325	+5	This was paid to Abeje Kassie, who supported us with field work and is doing his PhD on Amphibian diversity in the highlands of Ethiopia.
Stakeholder meeting	400	428	-28	As expected
Local labour	1,100	1,217	-117	Used to hire local labour, including guides, translators, porters and guards.
Accommodation	750	558	+192	We saved on accommodation because we were able to rent a house in Bibita cheaply
Flight tickets	750	752	-2	Brussels – Ethiopia – Brussels + visa
Sampling material	1,120	1,271	-151	Used for consumables, torches, photography and camping equipment.
In country transport	500	525	-25	Used to hire a 4x4 and driver to get to the remote parts of the country
SUM (TOTAL)	4950	5076	126	Extra costs were taken by the PL

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

The first step now should be to assess potential KBA status of the area with the data gathered. This can be done as soon as the molecular data are made available. In the short term, it will be important to disseminate the results as widely as possible, taking into account that different “media channels” will reach different stakeholders. In the medium term, it will be crucial to assist the local people to safeguard their forest from the potential threat of foreign investors and other outsiders.

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, the logo was used on different occasions and the RSGF received publicity during the course of our work. This will continue in the future through our scientific publications, and subsequent blog posts, where the Rufford Foundation is acknowledged. Up to now, the logo was used for a presentation to the general public, Belgium. Furthermore, the logo is used in our output, e.g. in the Biodiversity Express Survey (BES 8) detailing the findings of the fieldwork. Lastly, the Rufford foundation is also permanently acknowledged on our website (<https://www.binco.eu/projects/ethiopia/gura-ferda/>) in the project specific sections.

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

Ruben Foquet:

Volunteer Ornithologist, assisted with the fieldwork as a BINCO volunteer.

Abeje Kassie:

Herpetologist and PhD student, assisted with the fieldwork. Employee of the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute.

Zerihun Dubale:

Guide and translator in the field. Teacher at Mizan Tepi University.

Dr. Matthias De Beenhouwer:

Project leader, BINCO volunteer.

12. Any other comments?

We thank the Rufford Foundation for the opportunity provided. This project has not only enabled to fulfil the projects objectives. It has also been a great opportunity to meet more people working in similar fields, both locally and internationally (NHML, Rainforest Trust). I'm confident this will therefore result in more collaboration between these parties in the near future. Finally, a first detailed BES report, including species lists (BES 8) is now available on our website (www.binco.eu/publications/reports/).