

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	Mariam Gabelaia
Project title	Conservation of endangered and endemic <i>Vipera kaznakovi</i> in Georgia
RSG reference	24151-1
Reporting period	December, 2019
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	mariam.gabelaia.1@iliauni.edu.ge
Date of this report	2 December, 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
<p>Scientific findings of the project will contribute to identification of current status of this globally threatened species: relevant part of the report will be sent to IUCN Red List and Georgian Red List authorities for consideration and correction of data.</p>				<p>During this project, we overviewed the available literature and recorded the species presence locations and number of individuals (10) in Georgia. We also searched in the nature-related thematic social media pages and recorded locations and the number of the found individuals (26). The individuals in social media were identified by photographs. During our field works, we were able to find nine individuals. We also found old skin in some places, but we didn't count them as a sample. We believe that field works during two seasons was not enough for evaluating the population size and trend, especially when dealing with as 'shy' species as Caucasian viper.</p>
<p>Based on the project findings, particularly on assessment of severity of different threats, corresponding adequate protection tactics and measures will be elaborated and sent to Georgia's Protected Areas authority (Agency of Protected Areas) for consideration, adaptive planning and implementation of management activities.</p>				<p>The recommendations for the species conservation in Georgia will be sent to Georgia's protected areas authority (Agency of Protected Areas). Currently it is under correction.</p>
<p>Awareness of local population, especially its young segments that daily uses internet, will</p>				<p>We used social media (Facebook, YouTube) to promote the species' conservation. We also had educational lessons in schools and</p>

be raised by regular informing through social media.				annual scientific picnic held in Georgia, where all the schools and institutions promote their activities or projects.
Suitable habitats, mapped populations				We have developed suitable habitat model and actual species distribution map.
Evaluated specific threats for these populations				The main threats are destroying by humans and habitat fragmentation.

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

The largest difficulty was the fact that *V. kaznakovi* is very 'shy' species and the probability of finding it is very low. Some regions where Caucasian viper is present are characterised by high precipitation, which is disturbing during the field work.

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

1) We have developed suitable habitat model and actual species distribution map. The suitable habitat model was based on the following factors: distance from permanent water source, effective temperature (Bailey, 1960), precipitation, average temperature, landcover, ruggedness. The suitable habitat model (Fig. 1) suggests the presence of *Vipera kaznakovi* in Eastern Georgia, but in reality, *V. kaznakovi* is not found there and is replaced by other viper species.

We also developed the actual habitat model of *V. kaznakovi* (Fig.2) which overlapped with all ~30 locations recorded during this research.

2) We have had 45 interviews with the locals. Most of our respondents were not aware of the actual species status and did not recognise the species (kaznakovi viper was often misidentified by them with other snake species in the area). Most of the respondents claimed to destroy the snakes in the area. Thus, we think that human mindset toward kaznakovi viper is an important factor.

Another threat is habitat fragmentation, which is visible in our habitat model as well (Fig. 2).

3) We created the social media accounts (Facebook¹ and Youtube²).

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/kaznakovi/>

² <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnzZrDwis1ZZH0xz3pGZKJA>

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

We have had interviews with locals and had their support in fieldwork. We had educational school lessons with children and participated in annual scientific picnic held in Georgia, where all the schools and institutions promote their activities or projects.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We plan to actively continue our educational lessons in schools, because we found that it had the highest interest rate (we were contacted multiple times after the lessons with pupils on our Facebook page with various questions about kaznakovi viper). We also plan to use the footage from the filming and post videos and other digital material on our Facebook and YouTube Pages.

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

Since the beginning of this project, we were actively spreading the information and results about this project to various events and conferences, such as: annual event - scientific picnic, which is held in Georgia and where all the schools and institutions promote their activities or projects; conference organised by the Rufford Foundation (2-4 August, 2018, Kazbegi, Georgia); conference organised by Sabuko "Capacity Building Conference for Youth in Wildlife Research and Conservation in Georgia"; schools in Charnali, Martvili and Tbilisi; Adjara TV – television interview in the nature-related TV programme.

We plan to continue our project about kaznakovi viper by educational lessons and participations in conservation or education-related events.

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 Rufford Foundation Grant was used between April 2018 – September 2019 as it was anticipated in the project initially.

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
Digital camera	450	443	7	
Driver +car rent	1000	1000		
Salary for guide	350	364	+14	

Accommodation	700	862	+162	We added additional field workdays in 2019 and used the remaining funds from petrol and snake catchers for it.
Per diem	1500	1838	+338	We added additional field workdays in 2019 and used the remaining funds from petrol and snake catchers for it.
Petrol	800	240	-560	
2 snake catchers	200	42	-158	
Designer of logo and flyers		206	+206	We had agreed with you to hire designer logo and print the flyers, which was not included in the original budget.
TOTAL	5000	4995	-5	The exchange rate was 1 £ sterling = ~3.3GEL

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

We believe that the biggest benefit to this species will be active promotion of the species through the educational lessons in schools (based on our experience the pupil interest rate was very high).

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 in flyers (which we distributed during Science Picnic and last field season). We also used the logo during the conferences, school presentations and our YouTube and Facebook content.

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

Mariam Gabelaia was a team leader, responsible for project management, purchases, field works, data analysis and writing and presenting the reports.

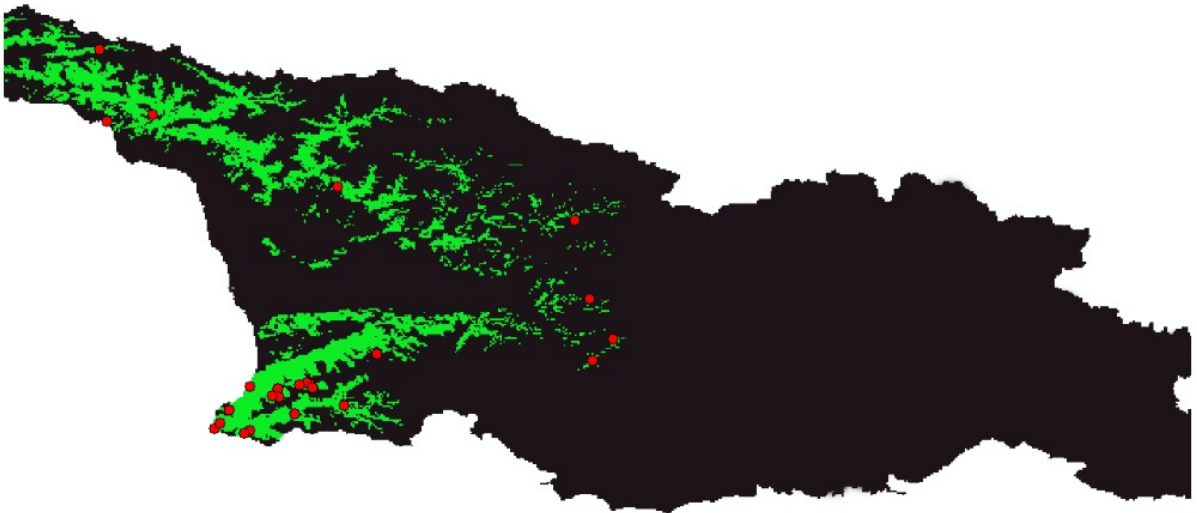
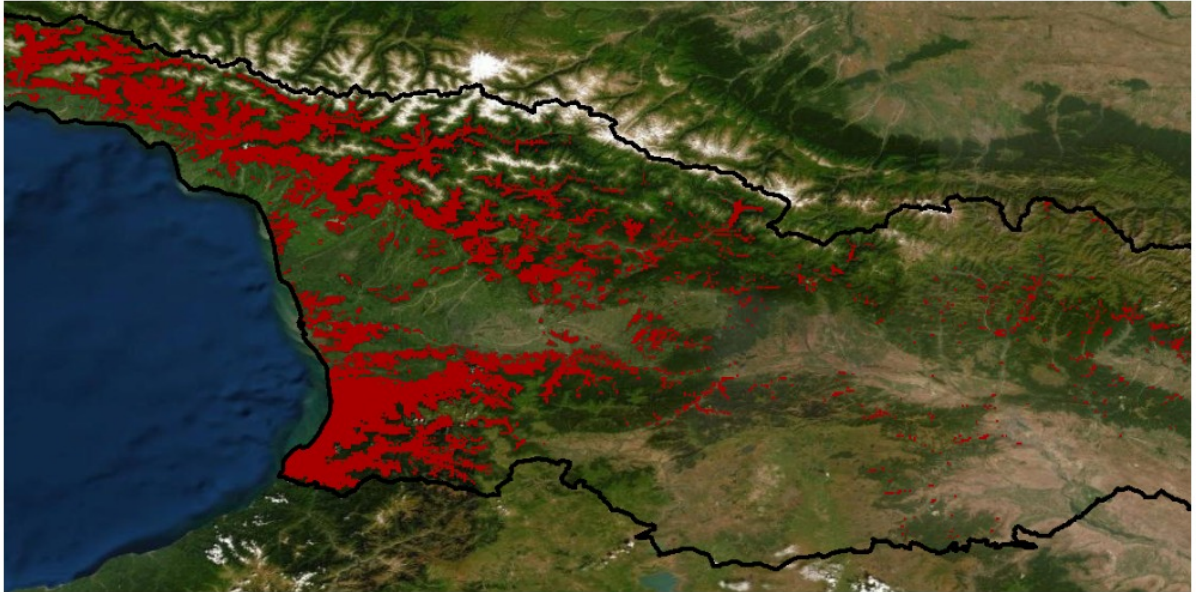
Giorgi Iankoshvili was the head of the field work, data analysis, video montage and was in charge of social media.

Zurab Janiashvili participated in field works, data analysis and was responsible for developing the suitable habitat models and mapping the population distribution.

12. Any other comments?

We are very grateful toward the Rufford Foundation for the opportunity of conducting this research and we hope this project will continue on longer pace.







Vipera kaznakovi

