The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. 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. 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	Marine Arakelyan
Project title	Conservation of the last surviving lizard population in the Caucasus – the racerunner *Eremias arguta transcaucasica* in Armenia
RSG reference	ref: 25.03.08
Reporting period	August 2008 - September 2009
Amount of grant	£5980
Your email address	arakelyanmarine@yahoo.com
Date of this report	10 Sept 2009

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
Perform GIS mapping, spatial analysis of the racerunner distribution area and identification of key conservation sites by using the GIS technologies			X	Identification of reliable racerunner presence sites is essential for initiation of stringent conservation efforts
Assess the up-to-date abundance of racerunners			X	
Assess the environmental factors (soil and vegetation cover), higher plant flora and vertebrate fauna which affect the racerunner status		X		Research on lizard microhabitats still needs to be continued to better understand spatial requirements and find suitable places for translocation
Identify and describe the limiting factors faced by the racerunner population			X	
Develop recommendations for conservation		X		

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

Unusually cold and rainy spring and summer 2009 made the field surveys less efficient than expected. For example, during 5-6 days spent in July 2009 in the field only one was suitable for field work. Three trips in May and 2 trips in June were almost unproductive.

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

1. The modern data of abundance of rarest endemic lizard was obtain
2. The most critical site of their distribution was delineated using GIS.
3. The recommendation for conservation of this subspecies was determined.

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

Local communities were not yet fully involved in project implementation but will participate during the project follow-up activities. At this stage, we paid more attention to capacity building by bringing up the biology students of the Yerevan State University.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project has revealed the imminent threat of extinction of the racerunner population in Armenia. We need to continue the field research activities, promote population surveys in known and new areas, start-up population monitoring and awareness-raising initiatives and initiate the focused conservation measures.

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

1. The project output (report, publications) will be submitted to the Ministry of Nature Protection and Institute of Zoology of Armenia.
2. The project results will be used in preparation of the racerunner factsheet for the brand-new edition of Armenia's Red Data Book
3. Scientific papers will be prepared and published in peer reviewed journals
4. The project results have already been shared with scientists in different conferences and workshops and this practice will go on

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

Duration of field work in this project was prolonged for 1 month because the rainy and cold weather in 2009 did not allow us to carry out efficient population sampling (see above).

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
Purchase of Garmin GPS with accessories	400	370	30	The price was cheaper than planned
Purchase of digital photo camera	200	200	0	
Purchase of Pentium 4 notebook with accessories	700	600	100	It was a discount for winter sale prices

Purchase of tent (1 unit) and sleeping bags (2 units)	200	100	100	We didn't buy the sleeping bags
Purchase of 1:25000 topographic map	110	45	65	The cheaper site was found
Purchase of licensed Arc GIS 9.0	1280	2448	-1180	The price was higher due to additional modules, but this is an important acquisition allowing to build the technical capacities of the Department of Zoology, Yerevan State University
Fuel and driver: (£0.6/L x 15 L/100 km x 300 km/trip x 10 trips)	270	250	20	Sometimes we used gas instead of petrol
Car rent: £26/day x 7 days/trip x 10 trips	1820	985	835	The advantageous offer of car rent office was accepted
Per diems: £5/person/day x 4 persons x 5 days/trip x 10 trips	1000	1000	0	
TOTAL	**5980**	**5998**	**18**	

The rate of £sterling / Armenian dram (AMD) was 612.53 to 622.88 AMD/£.

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

The most important step of protecting the last surviving racerunner population in Armenia is to start-up the captive breeding programme, identify and describe the potential release sites and translocate juveniles into the wild in protected area(s). This approach appears to be the most efficient conservation measure to avert the population extinction.

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

Yes, we used the RSGF logo in the oral presentation "The last population of racerunner *Eremias arguta transcaucasica*" by Anna Vardanyan (student YSU) in the Conference of Biology Students, Yerevan on 2-4 March 2009.

11. Any other comments?

Thanks to RSGF, we are beginning the first conservation actions on the most endangered reptile in Armenia which should be promoted to stimulate conservation of other wildlife species as well.