

Project Update: September 2019

Just to let you know that my plenary at the International Equid Conference in Prague was well received – many positive comments and lots of interest in the project. And of course the Rufford Foundation was gratefully acknowledged (see below)!

Acknowledgements -organizations

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Conference abstract:

Population ecology and conservation of Hartmann's mountain zebra

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Hartmann's mountain zebra is a sub-species of mountain zebra that occurs mainly in Namibia. The core of its range is the mountainous escarpment that runs the length of the country from North to South. There is some genetic structuring of the national population and HMZ differ from Cape mountain zebra, found only in RSA, in a few private alleles. The population was reduced to low levels in the 1980s but has recovered steadily and is now locally abundant. Zebra populations can be impacted by anthropogenic factors, particularly where they compete with livestock, and also by a range of natural factors. A key recommendation of a recent IUCN assessment was the need to better understand the factors limiting HMZ populations throughout Namibia to better inform their conservation management. In this talk I will outline some early results from a study of limiting factors. These data are from long-term research and monitoring at 5 main study areas, selected mainly for variation in rainfall and the occurrence of key predators. The approach is individual-based and uses investigation of key population processes within study sites (such as age specific mortality rates), and a comparative approach between them. The results emphasize the importance of variation in rainfall in a country that is prone to periodic drought and of freedom of movement to patchy, ephemeral grazing. The significance of

these findings for the future conservation of the sub-species, and the potential impact of climate change will be considered.