

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. 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	Arun Kanagavel
Project title	Assessing the population and threats to two forest-dwelling chelonians in the southern Western Ghats
RSG reference	9190-1
Reporting period	14 th October 2012
Amount of grant	£5950
Your email address	arun.kanagavel@gmail.com
Date of this report	1 st January 2012

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
Abundance of two chelonian species		✓		Abundance of the two chelonian species was ascertained at the Kerala region. No chelonians were encountered in the Tamil Nadu region proposed in this study
Distribution of two chelonian species			✓	Distribution of the two species was assessed across the two study areas including through stakeholder questionnaire surveys
Threats to the two chelonian species			✓	Threats to the two chelonian species were ascertained through questionnaire surveys with local communities and forest department officials
Social and cultural factors that affect chelonian consumption			✓	These factors were analysed at local sites within areas of species occurrence, urban towns and cities.

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

The research permits from the Tamil Nadu Forest Department to survey the Theni Forest Division and the Palni Hills took an exceptionally long time to attain (8 months) and the short period granted towards the survey gave rise to difficulties in surveying the Tamil Nadu Region effectively. Also the expenditure utilised in the process to attain the research permits was above what I had expected. This was tackled to an extent by utilising the funds set aside for equipment for undertaking the surveys.

The multi-stakeholder questionnaire surveys were successfully administered with the local communities and forest department officials. However the researcher-based questionnaire surveys, which were distributed via e-mail, received a bleak response with only one valid reply.

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

- i. Distribution of the two endemic chelonian species was ascertained at the two study areas and their abundance was generated at the Kerala region.
- ii. Threats to the two species was understood in both the regions from the perspective of local communities and forest department officials
- iii. Social and cultural changes that affected chelonian consumption were understood in Kerala and Tamil Nadu

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

Local communities were an integral part of this study whose perceptions towards the two species assisted in understanding the distribution and the threats these chelonians faced. The local guides on this project in the Kerala region were mostly from indigenous communities. These individuals benefited monetarily and were also trained in undertaking surveys and morphometry.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project has resulted in identifying the major threat to the species i.e. human consumption. I plan to continue this work with a focus on reducing this threat and increase our understanding of the population dynamics of these species.

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

A report of the results will be submitted to the respective state Forest Departments. In terms of scientific publications, one manuscript is currently under-review while another has been accepted for publication in *Reptile Rap*, a newsletter of the South Asian Reptile Network. Two other manuscripts meant for scientific journals are currently under preparation. A popular article based on chelonian consumption is also under preparation.

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

The project period was 14th October 2011 - 14th October-2012. The project continued for roughly 3 months after this period until December 2012 due to the delay in research permits from the Forest Department.

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. (1GBP=INR 85)

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Accommodation	900	1157	-157	The increased prices are due to an increased stay during the visit to local Forest Stations, Division offices and the main forest department office at Chennai in order to get research permits
Food	1120	1240	-120	The increased prices are due to an increased stay and consequent food charges during research permits stage
Two field assistants	1400	1400	0	
One local guide	800	800	0	
Jeep Rent	650	650	0	

Bus/Train Travel	330	760	-430	The increased prices are due to increased travel to local Forest Stations, Division offices and the main forest department office at Chennai in order to get research permits
Internet communication and	175	210	-35	The increased prices here are due to increase in communication during the research permits stage
GPS Garmin 60	150	0	150	This equipment was not purchased in order to integrate the increased expenses from the other items
Printing and Stationary	75	90	-15	Increased printing costs during the research permits stage
Field-related equipment	200	0	200	This equipment was not purchased in order to integrate the increased expenses from the other items
Photography-related equipment	150	0	150	This equipment was not purchased in order to integrate the increased expenses from the other items
Tamil Nadu Research Permits	0	120	-120	INR 10000 was submitted to the Forest Department as charges for undertaking the research. This was not budgeted earlier
Total	5950	6427	-477	

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

The next important step is to focus on the prevalent chelonian consumption in Kerala and to try and improve chelonian conservation in the region through awareness and outreach initiatives

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?

No materials were printed with respect to this project. The RSGF grant approval letter was submitted to the respective forest departments and RSGF features as the sole financial support in all such documentation with the forest department. All the scientific publications accepted or under review feature RSGF in the Acknowledgements section for the support provided. The final report that will be prepared for submission to the Forest Department will feature the RSGF logo.