

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole**

**Grants Director**

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#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Marine Arakelyan
<b>Project title</b>	Development and implementation of conservation measures for a unique lizard population: the racerunner <i>Eremias arguta transcaucasica</i> in Armenia.
<b>RSG reference</b>	9868-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	May 2011-June2012
<b>Amount of grant</b>	5970 £ sterling
<b>Your email address</b>	arakelyanmarine@yahoo.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	26 June, 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
Environmental education programme.			✓	25-minutes class seminars were conducted in eight classes at the schools, which were included information sessions for children from target village. The talks with local people and distribution of promotional materials was improved the environmentally-friendly thinking among locals. We made two scientific presentations that were organized by Young Biologists NGO meetings
Capacity building programme		✓		The project was contributed to the development of research potential in Armenia. This was be achieved by involvement of young scientists, recruitment of students of universities; in special training courses and field work which were organised during implementation of project.
Population monitoring in order to adequately follow the wild population			✓	Many sites were surveyed, however only nearest to main population was recognised as satisfied for translocation of young lizards from agricultural field to safe places where possible organize their protection.
Preparation of a translocation programme		✓		The programme of translocation is ready; however, we still need distribute it among scientific community. The opinions of different specialists will take account under consideration for future action of protection of population of rare lizard
Publications of scientific articles regarding ecology and conservation of <i>Eremias arguta</i>		✓		One scientific article was published in Biological Journal of Armenia. Currently are preparing next one for publication in international journal.

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

The severe climate of Sevan Lake many times had changed our field plans and time of work. The camping on 5 days was allowed use the sunny time more efficiently. The absence of lizards on surface and under the shelters during some summer days was unexpected and stopped our research. The main results were received during field works in September.

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

During implementation of project, we obtained following main outcomes:

1. The scientifically substantiated translocation plan lizards to places where will possibly organise the protection measures were prepared.
2. The environment education programme among locals changed the negative attitude towards reptiles in audience of schoolchildren.
3. Capacity building programme was initiated. The staff and students at Zoological Department Yerevan State University have established collective research which are important start point for organisation research group to study biodiversity in hotspots.

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

Reptiles are usually not to be appreciated by humans. The talks about importance of reptiles and neighbour lizards' population are essential among local community. Seminar was conducted with local schoolchildren; however, we need expand our audience of target group of local people.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes! The next steps of conservation plan for saving the endemic population *E. arguta transcaucasica* from extinction is urgently required. We plan monitoring population of *E. a. transcaucasica* and set up the pre-conditions for creating special protected area in place of habitat of this species.

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

The main results of this project will be distributed to all local and academic authorities. The electronic version of the booklet will be posted on the YBA website ([www.yba.am](http://www.yba.am)). The following scientific paper is already published and next is in stage of preparing:

Arakelyan M. 2012. Conservation status of the last Armenian population of racerunner *Eremias arguta transcaucasica*. Biological Journal 1(64): 6-9

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

I used the RSG between May 2011 and June 2012. The prolongation of project timescale was connected with late period activity of lizards which started in 2012 from middle of May.

**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
<b>FIELD EQUIPMENT</b>				
Purchase of Field Microscope: JJ-Optics Digital Lab Mobile USB	221	0	+221	We have not bought a handy microscope at a specified price
Purchase of hydro - thermometer Hygro-Thermo Extech EA25	320	310	+10	We have bought three hydro-thermometers by lower prices which are useful for our team.
Purchase of netbook HP Mini 5103	284	580	-296	We have bought the notebook Samsung NP300U1A which had higher price than netbook.
Purchase of projector: Pico Usb Mini Projector - PCLit-S	145	416	-271	We bought a high-quality projector Acer111
<b>FIELD TRIPS</b>				
Fuel: £0.6/L x 15 L/100 km x 350 km/trip x 12 trips	378	440	-62	The price of fuel was increased from £0.6 till £0.8 The searching ways for looking the convenient habitats for lizards were longer then calculated.
Car rent: £27/day x 3 days/trip x 12 trips	972	590	+382	Sometimes we had short-time trips where were used only my own vehicle.
Per diems: £5/person/day x 6 persons x 3days/trip x 12 trips	1080	1225	-145	The team of staff and student volunteers that joined the field work were 15 instead 6 which increased the cost of per diems.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM</b>				
Seminars for locals (rent of premises, transport, per diem, etc.)	945	610	+335	In schools we did not pay for rent of premises
Print of 500 calendars	189	282	-93	We printed 600 calendars by price 0.47
Print of 100 posters	126	240	-114	We printed 600 booklets by price 0.4
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION</b>				
One -week trip of Dr. Claudia Corti to Armenia: airfare (£820), per diem (7days x £70)	1310	1310	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5970</b>	<b>6003</b>		

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

The preliminary morphological and molecular data confirm that single known population of *E. arguta transcaucasica* is unique, differ from others and represent an Evolutionary Significant Unit. Our data of monitoring have shown that number of populations is decreasing. The urgent conservation measures have to consist of the translocation of lizards to special protected area and environmental education programme among local people. The involvement of youth from local communities in conservation action and creation, support and development of youth environmental local teams village will be the most effective conservation activity which allow establish long-term protection of biodiversity of vicinity of village where is habitat of *E. arguta*.

**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, the logo of RSGF was used in promotional materials (booklets and calendars) which were distributed in framework of this project. I also used the logo in a school presentation in target village. The RSGF logo has been included in section of Acknowledgment of Bachelor presentation which was defended in May 2012 in Yerevan State University.

The RSGF became famous among scientific community of zoologists and botanists of Armenia and encouraged some of us submit new projects: for example, the project of my colleague (Ashot Aslanyan) was approved by RSGF while next project of other colleague now in process of submission.

**11. Any other comments?**

With the high concentration of plant, fungi and animal species, Armenia occupies one of the first places in the world, with an index of more than 100 species on 1 km<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, such richness is currently menaced: many Armenian ecosystems are under threat. I wish to thank the Rufford Small Grant Foundation for possibility made the first step of creation of interdisciplinary biodiversity research group in Armenia, which could professionally catalogue biodiversity and determine environment conservation issues which will provide orientation for conservation measures.