

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Agnese Mancini
Project title	Home range and incidental fishery of East Pacific Green Turtles at San Ignacio Lagoon.
RSG reference	10.03.10
Reporting period	July 2010 – March 2011
Amount of grant	£11,504
Your email address	<a href="mailto:amancini1979@gmail.com">amancini1979@gmail.com</a>
Date of this report	June 1st 2011

**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
Study EPG turtle movements and diet inside the lagoon to reduce interaction with fishery.			X	From June to December 2010 we tagged 50 turtles, all of which captured in the middle and high region of the lagoon. At the same time we mapped the seagrass distribution and the area used by fishers with the lagoon. There is a strong overlap between the area used by turtles and the one used by the fishers. The reason behind this is quite simple, fishers set nets to catch guitarfish which live in seagrass beds. East Pacific green turtles feed predominantly on algae and seagrass.
Involve local young people in sea turtle research and thus have possibly an impact on future consumption rate.			X	We organised a 3-day summer camp during July 2010, where we invited 15 kids from 9 to 12 years old. During the camp we gave them short presentations about marine turtles and the threats these animals have to face since they are born. We alternated many outdoor and indoor activities to the presentations. The summer camp ended with the kids presenting a story they wrote about a sea turtle that was caught in a net and then was released by the kids of the Sea Turtle Summer Camp. In November 2010 we organised the 1 <sup>st</sup> San Ignacio Lagoon Sea Turtle Festival. More than 150 people participated in the event and all the community got involved in the preparation activities. The day started with the release of six turtles caught a couple of hours before for our tagging/tracking project. We were able to give a practical view of our work and explain the reasons behind it. During the afternoon, we conducted activities with the kids and in parallel we had presentations for the adults. During these presentations we talked about our project and presented some of the results. We also gave a talk on the risks associated to turtle meat consumption

				and answered a lot of questions from concerned people. The day ended with the delivery of prices to those people in the community which out-standing participation made all this possible.
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

Our main problem was related to the wind which made it impossible to go out with the frequency we should have gone out in order to recover our tags more regularly. This was not an unforeseen difficulty as the area is known to be windy, however in 2010 it was more windy than usual.

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

I think that our most important outcome is that we managed to convince fishers to use a different type of net to reduce the incidental catch of turtles. Fishing with nets within the lagoon is illegal but: 1) there is no enforcement; and 2) the weather conditions do not always allow fishers to go out. We reached an agreement with the fishers in the sense that they are still fishing within the lagoon with nets (which still is illegal) but at least they changed the mesh size going from 4 inches to 2.5 inches (no impact on sea turtles).

During the festival, when we had a chance to present our results, we got a lot of interested feedbacks from the people and finally everybody had a clear idea of what we were doing and why. The results from this project will also be presented during a meeting of the local fishing cooperatives in order to be sure that fishers will keep on using the small-mesh nets.

During the festival, we also had a chance to talk about the risks associated with the consumption of turtle meat which still is very common in the area. I think that at least we managed to convince people to think about this issue, especially presenting images of a sick turtle found very close to the lagoon and another one found within the lagoon (the first turtle reported to have fibropapillomatosis in Baja California Sur).

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

The local community was involved in the data collection (our guides were fishers from the local community) but also during the social events (Summer Camp and Sea Turtle Festival). During the social events, people were not only guests but they helped in the organisation of the activities and contributed to the preparation of prices and food. Especially for the Festival, we organised it as a birthday party and everybody was very helpful.

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

There are no plans to continue the tagging/tracking work as we think we achieved what we wanted to achieve. The live turtles monitoring programme carried on by Grupo Tortuguero on the other hand will continue, however they will modify the methodology.

We will continue to support social events in the local community to promote environmental conservation. We are planning a “Month for Conservation” in November 2011 which will end with the 2<sup>nd</sup> San Ignacio Lagoon Sea Turtle Festival. For this festival we obtained the support of 4 local NGOs (CostaSalvaje, ProNatura, Reserva de la Biosfera de Vizcaino, Grupo Tortuguero); each organisation will organise conservation activities for one weekend. During the week, on 2-3 days, our team will organise workshops and excursions for the kids from the local community.

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

We shared our results with the local community already during the festival, and we will present an update in November 2011. Preliminary results were also discussed during the Annual Meeting of Grupo Tortuguero in January 2011. We are now working on a scientific article with major outputs, however this last will be directed more to the scientific community.

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

We had to stop the project at the beginning of December 2010 because the weather conditions made it impossible to work in the field for longer. However the analysis of collected data took longer than foreseen and we are still finishing it.

**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
Material for GPS/VHF tags	1,600	1,600	0	
Material for benthic sampling	690	690	0	
Material for TurtleCameras	6,400	3,000	+ 3,400	We bought a different type of camera, being this more expensive we bought only 1 instead of the 5.
Summer Camp	2,244	2,500	-256	
Salaries (for locals)	570	570	0	
Sea Turtle Festival	Not in the budget	2,100	- 2,100	As we had extra money because of the turtle camera, we decided to organise a second social event.
<b>Total</b>	11,504	<b>10,460</b>	(+ 1,044 GBP)	If you agree, we are planning to use this money to organise the Month of Conservation and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sea Turtle Festival. The total budget for this

			project was calculated at around £3,000 and we already obtained £1,500 from a private donor.
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**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

The fishery is becoming more and more unsustainable at the lagoon, according to the fishers, now they have to go very far out in the open sea and set more nets than they used to do in the past for a catch that is much less than what was in the past. The expenses are more and more important while the gains are lower and lower. This is the main reason why some fishers are setting nets within the lagoon.

Sea turtles are a precious natural resource and could be exploited in a non-consumptive way, so the next step in my mind is to implement a local ecotourism project based on turtle watching. At present Grupo Tortuguero and fishers from one of the local cooperatives are working together to set up this project and thus providing another source of income.

If the TurtleWatch project will start, the community itself will watch over the good status of their turtles.

**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?**

We used the RSG logo in all our presentations and acknowledged RSG in all our reports (and future articles). We also used it in the certificates we distributed to the participants of the Summer Camp and Sea turtle Festival.

**11. Any other comments?**

I would like to thank all of you for your support during all these years. Without it I wouldn't have been able to do most of the things I did.