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	Pablo Garcia Borboroglu
Project title	Conservation and management of Magellanic penguins in northern and central Patagonia, Argentina
RSG reference	69.09.08
Reporting period	Dec 2008 – Dec 2009
Amount of grant	£11,137.0
Your email address	pgborbor@cenpat.edu.ar pablo@garciaborboroglu.com.ar
Date of this report	30th November 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
1) Carry out censuses			√	We censused 7 penguin colonies and discovered a new one.
2) Monitor breeding performance			√	We estimated breeding success at 5 and will obtain it in the other 3 colonies in January 2010.
3) determine body condition			√	We determined body condition at 5 colonies and will do it in the other 3 in January 2010.
4) Search for known-age banded birds			√	We counted 73,000 left flippers and found animals born in one colony breeding in others. One female was 21 years old.
5) Interpretation and integration of collected info		√		We are in the middle of the breeding season and we will be collecting data until March 2010. We analyzed already collected data but will wait to integrate all the information.
6) Implement strategies to improve penguin management			√	The Punta Tombo Advisory Commission is working very well and the data we obtained will be very useful for the management Plan of the New National Marine Park.
7) Involve Biology students and decision makers			√	Our field crews were composed by many University Biology students and provincial bureau staff members.
8) Transference of information to Government and community			√	We submitted technical reports to the Government and offered a course for wardens. We organized two Symposia at two cities for decision makers and public, published several articles on newspapers (including *The Washington Post*), gave national and regional TV and radio interviews, and filmed documentary films for the German, French and Argentinean TV channels.

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

Weather conditions did not allow us to reach Leones Island last year. We had to travel 600 km to census another colony. But this year we tried three times and finally completed the census of that remote Island.

The top authorities in the conservation and tourism bureau were replaced due to internal political struggles. Fortunately, the Advisory Commission of Punta Tombo is in place to foster continuity of actions and promote knowledge and experience accumulation in the management of penguin colonies.

The new penguin colony (only 14 nests) was established in a placed visited by fishermen or other kind of visitors. The site is full of garbage (diapers, broken bottles and cans, plastic bags, etc) and even some bushes where penguin nest were set on fire to make barbecues. We got the owners of the Ranch interested in protecting that piece of land until adequate management is implemented, but we are having some legal problems when trying to limit access to the colony.

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

1) Main penguin colonies populations in central and northern Patagonia were updated allowing us to estimate growth trends. The second largest colony decreased by 50% since 1995. We found a new colony in the north. We found evidence that penguins are moving from southern colonies to the north, potentially linked to a change in food availability induced by climate change.

2) The creation of the Advisory Commission helped us buffer political instability and is becoming a structure to ask for advice for other penguin colony management.

3) We conducted a strong campaign to transfer knowledge to the community, government and enterprises, educating about environmental issues through penguins.

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

Penguins are one the main touristic highlights in Argentina. We work to improve management of colonies minimizing the tourism impact. We broadcast our findings to educate people about penguins, wildlife and habitat value. We assist decision makers to make a wide use of the knowledge available and we train wardens so they can give people a valuable conservation message.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We want to prepare protocols so that colonies can be monitored regularly, and we want to foster the formalization of the Punta Tombo advisory Commission.

The environment could be a priority even in developing countries if we educate local communities and give them skills to work with and benefit from wildlife. This way, penguins, the environment and people would all benefit and win. We aim at generating opportunities to secure incomes through sustainable responsible touristic activities. We plan to organise systematic courses to insert people

into the touristic industry, so they do not end up begging out of hotels but instead receiving decent incomes for a service they would be trained to provide.

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

We did that through technical reports to governments, popular articles, participation in TV and radio programmes, offering courses and lectures. We are very committed to ensure that scientific data are not only available in scientific journals.

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

The Booster Grant was used for a 12-month period. Due to the breeding cycle of the Magellanic penguins, we will end up collecting data and integrating results for 3-4 more months. As regards the scientific objectives, we have to continue this work for the next 2 years to come up with a complete image of the way Magellanic penguin population are behaving and reacting to major threats: climate change, marine pollution and fisheries mismanagement.

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
Communications	410	269.87	140.13	We contracted a cheaper service than the one in the budget
Stationery	340	338.98	1.02	
Truck rental	1,875	1,923	-48	
Boat rental	1,400	1,430	-30	
Truck-boat drivers per diem	1,875	1,977	-102	Bad weather conditions made us contract technicians for more days
Travel and Field (Food/Fuel/Travel costs)	3,905	3,886.97	18,03	
Field equipment	680	596	84	
Insurance	216	207	9	
Contingencies	503	473.66	-67	Not expected logistical expenditures were included here
TOTAL	11,137	**11,131.82**	-5.18	

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

We need to work at different spatial scales. In the regional scale some objectives were detailed in question 5.

At a higher scale penguin are also reflecting the world ocean's major problems; they are perfect indicators of the ocean and coastal health. Besides, they are charismatic creatures that generate people interest catalysing political support. They can be a vehicle for integrated marine conservation, allowing the protection of environments and associated marine species. To address big scale problems, we have to find big scale solutions. One step is to monitor key colonies in this geographic sector and other future step is to census colonies that have never been visited before.
At the highest level, this research effort could be interlinked with other efforts in the world through the Global Penguin Society, an international coalition for the protection of all penguin species.

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?

The RSGF was included in all our presentations and mentioned in all our broadcasting activities and public events.

Moreover, I always talk about RSGF in meetings or interviews as an example of how important it is a long-term support to achieve some conservation and research goals. Some scientific evidence requires a minimum amount of years to be found. Also, some goals may require years to accomplish as only over time can we achieve social and political support I some countries. RSGF provides the means to be persistent and be able to see and measure the impact of our projects.

11. Any other comments?

As a general comment I think all conservationists have a great challenge now. In an uncertain and unmanageable environmental scenario ruled by global warming, the key is to increase wildlife resilience (the ability to come back to the original state after an impact). We should do that by making our best effort to reduce impacts from anthropogenic activities.