Herpetofauna Grant Program/2024

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Total Project Budget: €4500

Amount Being Requested from Herpetofauna Foundation: €3500

Amount Received So Far from Herpetofauna Foundation: €500

Report Date: 04 April 2025

Title of the Project: Ecological Assessment and Conservation Strategies for *Firouzophrynus olivaceus* in Southeastern Iran

Summary of the Olive Toad Conservation Project

The Olive Toad, ***Firouzophrynus* (*Bufo*) *olivaceus*** Conservation Project, financially supported by the Herpetofauna Foundation with an initial allocation of 500 euros, aims to conserve and protect the Olive Toad species in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan and Hormozgan, Iran. This report outlines the activities conducted during the first phase and proposes a detailed plan for the continuation of the project. Phase 1 involved university collaborations, limited field visits to Sarbaz and Chabahar, and educational sessions with local communities and students. The project is a comprehensive initiative aimed at protecting and conserving the Olive Toad, a species of significant ecological importance in the regions of Sistan and Baluchestan and Hormozgan, Iran. This project, marks a crucial step towards addressing the pressing need for conservation efforts in these regions.

Future phases will include comprehensive field visits to map the species' distribution, enhanced community engagement, and expanded educational programs. The project seeks to ensure the species' survival by protecting habitats and promoting conservation awareness among local populations. Additional funding is required to support these expanded activities.

Background and Importance

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving amphibian species. The Olive Toad, being endemic to specific regions of Iran, presents a unique opportunity for targeted conservation efforts. By focusing on this species, the project not only aims to protect the Olive Toad but also contributes to broader biodiversity conservation goals in the region.

The Olive Toad, like many amphibian species worldwide, faces numerous threats to its survival. Habitat destruction, pollution, climate change, and human activities have contributed to declining populations and reduced habitats. Amphibians play a vital role in ecosystems as both predators and prey, helping to regulate insect populations and maintain ecological balance. The loss of these species can have cascading effects on biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Objectives and Scope

The primary objectives of the Olive Toad Conservation Project are multifaceted:

1. **Conservation and Protection**: To ensure the survival and well-being of the Olive Toad by identifying and protecting its habitats.
2. **Community Engagement**: To educate local communities about the importance of conserving the species and its role in the ecosystem.
3. **Research and Mapping**: To create a comprehensive distribution map of the Olive Toad in the south and southeast regions of Iran.

Project Significance

This project is significant for several reasons:

- **Ecological Impact**: By conserving the Olive Toad, the project contributes to maintaining ecological balance in the region.
- **Community Involvement**: Engaging local communities in conservation efforts fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, ensuring long-term sustainability of the project.
- **Scientific Contribution**: The research conducted will provide valuable insights into the ecology and conservation status of the Olive Toad, contributing to the global body of knowledge on amphibian conservation.

Project Timeline and Phases

The project is structured into phases, with each phase building upon the previous one to achieve the overall objectives:

1. **Phase 1**: Initial arrangements, limited field visits, and community engagement (**already completed**).
2. **Phase 2**: Expanded fieldwork, detailed habitat assessment, distribution mapping, and enhanced community engagement. Additionally, data analysis, finalization of conservation strategies, and implementation of long-term conservation plans will be done during this phase of the project.

Phase 1 Activities

Initial Arrangements

- **University Collaboration**: Initial arrangements were made with a local university to facilitate project activities, including access to resources and expertise.
- **Field Visits**: Limited field visits were conducted to identify potential habitats of the Olive Toad in the cities of Sarbaz and Chabahar.

Community Engagement

- **Local Meetings**: Meetings were held with local communities to provide information on the conservation status and ecological importance of the Olive Toad.
- **Educational Sessions**: Educational sessions were organized for elementary and secondary school students to teach them about the biology and conservation of the species.

Conclusion

The Olive Toad Conservation Project represents a critical initiative for protecting biodiversity in the regions of Sistan and Baluchestan and Hormozgan. By expanding our efforts to include comprehensive field research, enhanced community engagement, and educational programs, we can effectively protect this species and contribute to the ecological health of its habitats. The success of this project will not only ensure the survival of the Olive Toad but also contribute to the broader goal of preserving ecological health in the region.



Figure 1. Olive Toad, ***Firouzophrynus* (*Bufo*) *olivaceus*** in Naskand, Sarbaz, Sistan and Baluchistan



Figure 2. Olive Toad, ***Firouzophrynus* (*Bufo*) *olivaceus*** in Naskand, Sarbaz, Sistan and Baluchistan



Figure 3. Olive Toad, ***Firouzophrynus* (*Bufo*) *olivaceus*** in Bajarbazar, Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan

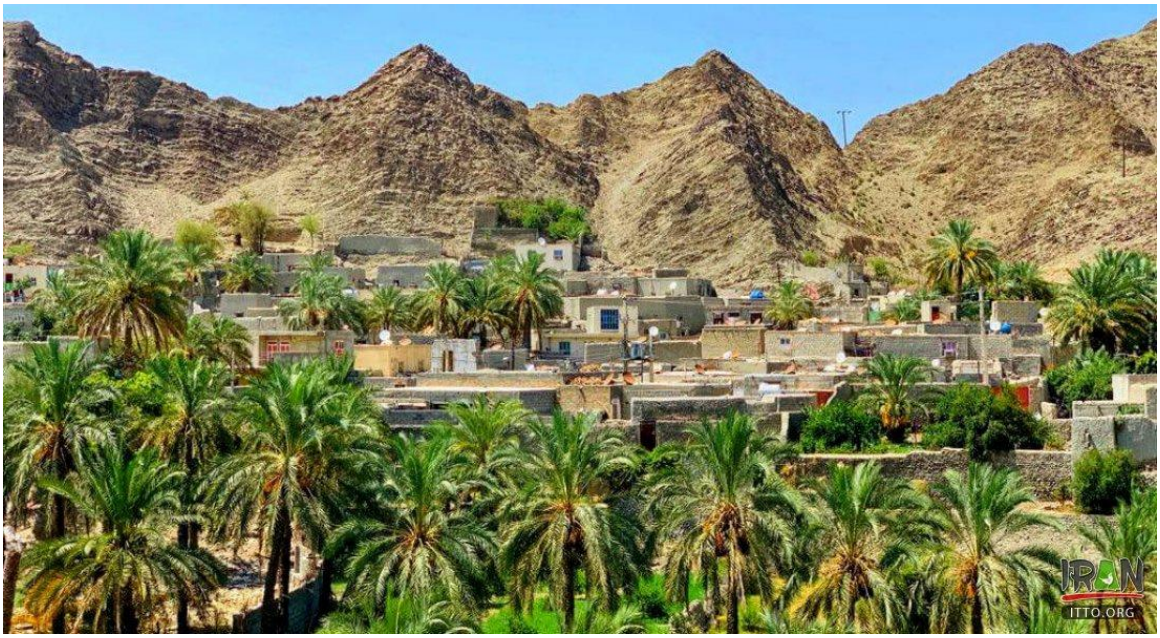


Figure 4. A view of Naskand village, Sarbaz, Sistan and Baluchistan province



Figure 5. A view of toad habitat in Vashnam Dari in Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan province



Figure 6. Accompanying local people in the Sarbaz area and providing them with environmental information on the target species



Figure 7. A view of the Oraki Bozorg village in Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan



Figure 8. Local people in the Vashnam Dari region are using local seasonal water sources for daily activities.



Figure 9. A view of the visited habitats in Vashnam Dari region on the road to Chabahar