

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	Maurice Ogoma
Project title	Local Initiative for conservation of Blue Swallow, <i>Hirundo atrocaerulea</i> , and its habitat range in Kenya
RSG reference	10277-1
Reporting period	August 2011 – August 2012
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	blueswallowkenya@gmail.com
Date of this report	3 rd October 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
To investigate the populations of blue swallow in its Kenyan non-breeding sites		Partially achieved		Population status of blue swallow was fully investigated in Ruma NP. In Busia, our team could not cover all the grassland patches but managed to do so in three grassland areas due to local logistics, increased fuel prices and general inflation of the Kenya Shilling during the survey period.
To assess prevailing threats and local people's perceptions on conservation			Fully achieved	The local community co-operated with our team during field data collection. They also participated actively during focus group discussions and interviews.
To establish site conservation groups (SCGs) at Busia and Ruma			Fully achieved	We worked closely with Nature Busia (BECEP) and transformed it into site conservation group. In Ruma, we successfully established Ruma site conservation group. The group is currently undergoing official registration process.
To build capacity of established site conservation groups			Fully achieved	Training workshops and field training sessions were conducted for the Ruma site conservation group and BECEP. However, this is inadequate owing to the infancy stage of these SCGs. We recommend more training to strengthen their local capacity for conservation in the near future.
To network established site conservation groups with IBA programme at Nature Kenya			Fully achieved	We introduced the IBA programme to the CIGs during the training sessions. The SCGs were trained on filling IBA basic monitoring forms that they will use annually to feed into the national IBAs database at Nature Kenya.

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

Field surveys in Ruma NP were negatively affected during the rainy months from April to June due to flash floods. We however conducted our field surveys during dry spell months, and intensively in August when the blue swallow winters at Ruma. In Busia, the grassland patches were located far distant apart, some several kilometres away from each other. This limited our ability to conduct surveys in all the patches due to logistics constraints and the inflation of the Kenya Shilling that negatively affected oil prices and other consumables during our surveys period. We however concentrated our surveys in three patches that were strategically located to collect baseline information on the blue swallow and its local habitats.

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

Our project produced the current population status of the globally threatened Blue Swallow in Kenya, particularly in Ruma NP, the first one of its kind since the 2003 surveys conducted by Ndanganga (2007). In particular, we counted 87 individual Blue Swallows cumulatively in Ruma NP but we however believe that the mean of 43 birds were encountered on the minimum during our survey. However, we did not count any blue swallows in Busia in the three sites surveyed within the IBA. This information will be instrumental as a baseline for future species and habitat studies in the non-breeding sites of the Blue Swallow in western Kenya.

Lake Victoria Birds Working Group (LVBWG), a community based organisation was formed by the project team as a local CBO that will co-ordinate the activities of the newly formed site conservation groups in both Ruma and Busia. The activities of this CBO whose aim is to promote conservation of natural resources with emphasis on grassland and wetland biodiversity in the Lake Victoria region will be co-ordinated by the project co-ordinator, Maurice Ogoma. With support for the development of its institutional capacity, we believe that this CBO will promote local conservation by involving local conservation groups in action-oriented research and management of local resources. This project also documented the perceptions of local people towards conservation. This coupled with the local threats to biodiversity and habitats recorded during the project period, will act as a basis for further research and conservation work. One of the key outcomes from the focus group discussions was the willingness of local community to sell part of their land to promote local conservation as long as livelihood options are availed to them and supported. This option for habitat conservation will be ideal especially for the Busia Grasslands IBA that is currently experiencing habitat loss due to massive encroachment of grassland areas for farming activities and settlement of the increasing local population.

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

Local communities were directly involved in this project in many ways. We worked with community members as field assistants in both Busia and Ruma. Through this, the capacity of local field assistants on hands-on data collection was built for future data collection and conservation work. We trained members of local community during our training workshops and field training sessions in Busia and Ruma. In Ruma, we also trained local KWS Park Rangers on bird identification and data collection. During our series of focus group discussions, we engaged local community on various thematic issues including their role in local biodiversity conservation. Through these discussions, the community was able to realise their potential in improving their livelihoods through improved management of the local resources.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I intend to continue this work. I shall apply for a second RSGF grant to tackle some of the proposed future work and interventions identified by this initial work. These include but not limited to:

- Work with local communities to conduct annual blue swallow population surveys to determine population trends and its basic ecology during its non-breeding season in western Kenya.
- Initiate learning exchange programme for communities with other communities who have succeeded in community-based management of natural resources near protected areas (Ruma) and settled habitats (Busia).

- Initiate conservation awareness activities including the involvement of schools and village-based theatre
- Improve local governance by building local capacity to promote natural resource management and train local youths to become community guides to support the capacity of KWS rangers in tour guiding at Ruma.

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

I intend to publish part of the results of my work in a peer reviewed journal to be available to the international community. The results of this work will also be published on the Trends and Status Report published by Nature Kenya annually in collaboration with the Ornithology section of the National Museums of Kenya. I have also submitted the detailed final project report to RSG for publication in the project website for public access.

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 for the entire project period from August 2012 to August 2012. The project design fitted within the expected duration of the project successfully.

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
Reconnaissance & Datasheets	69	69	0	
Field & training equipment	1662	1662	0	
Survey field mobility & training of field assistants	1231	1431	200	The cost of fuel increased tremendously in Kenya during the project period as a result of inflation. This increased transport/logistics cost. We however covered these extra costs from our project contingency.
SCGs trainings	1330	1453	123	Transport re-imbursements increased due to increased transport costs. Also, cost of other consumables and food increased due to inflation. However, we covered the extra costs from the project contingency
Project team monthly stipend	923	923	0	
Communication & co-ordination	185	185	0	
Project reporting	92	92	0	
Monitoring & Evaluation	185	185	0	

Contingency (5%)	323	-323	0	
Total	6000	6000	323	

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

This project needs post project follow-ups and continued logistical and financial support. Fundraising for additional project activities and follow-ups is mandatory. The capacity of the newly formed Lake Victoria Birds Working Group (LVBWG) need to be build and strengthened to spearhead conservation work within the western Kenya and Lake Victoria grassland and wetland habitat sites. There is need to monitor the registration process of the Ruma SCG and technical support for BECEP for biodiversity monitoring. Annual surveys of the blue swallows in their western Kenya wintering sites, to be spearheaded by LVBWG need to be conducted to determine their status and ecology. Support for alternative livelihoods within Busia and near Ruma NP need to be initiated. As a result, financial support is critical to the success of these activities in the near future.

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, RSGF logo was used in all the public and training presentations of this project. RSGF was also highly acknowledged for the financial support to the project in all literature related to the project and also in public forums e.g. meetings with stakeholders, requests for research permits/permissions etc.