

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	Anna Barashkova
Project title	Creating a base for monitoring Pallas's cat in Kazakhstan
RSG reference	10530-2
Reporting period	September 2011 – September 2012
Amount of grant	£5910
Your email address	anna@sibecocenter.ru , yazula@yandex.ru
Date of this report	2012-09-15

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 Pallas's cat number and distribution in at least five characteristic areas using snow-tracking method		X		Because of unusually cold weather in Kazakhstan and quite huge areas (our plans occurred to be disproportionate to real possibility) we made snow-tracking only in the eastern regions of the country though from north to south
- to interview data from target local people groups (e.g. hunters and herders in winter and summer cattle camps and ranches)		X	x	A set of interviewing data was obtained may be not much as we planned but it was conditioned by the extremely sparsely populated area and so impossibility to interview enough local people. At the same time we organised interviews of zoologists and other specialists (from research institutes, anti-plague stations)
- to update the database and GIS on Pallas's cat locations, habitats and densities in Kazakhstan			x	
- to assess more carefully threats to Pallas's cat			x	New data on Pallas's cat deaths cases were obtained
- to identify areas of high priority, in which the species' status is of greatest concern, and to suggest urgent measures to protect Pallas's cat in these areas			x	The eastern part of Central Kazakhstan Upland was identified as an area of high priority. It is necessary to include Pallas's cat in permanent censuses of animals and to establish new steppe protected area for protecting Pallas's cat as well as other species of special concern
- to develop a monitoring system and network for Pallas's cat		X		We found possible collaborators but as it occurred one year was not enough to develop such monitoring system. We intend to continue this work
- to create map of the species' locations and distribution (e.g. different habitat types, hot spots, critical areas and other important results) in GIS format			x	Map is existent in ArcView GIS 3.2 and ArcGIS 9.3 (ESRI, CA, USA)
- to propose protection measures for areas of high conservation value (including possible proposals for creating new protected areas)			x	Recommendations on protection measures for Pallas's cat will be given to corresponding authorities (wildlife agencies and conservation institutions)

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

We've faced with some methodological problems during the work. Our field research was based on our previous experience we obtained during Pallas's cat investigations in Russia. Thus the main method - interviewing local people – was used not as effective as in Russia because Kazakhstan is quite less populated. So interviewing data was gathered more sparsely – sometimes we couldn't find anybody to ask through large areas seemed to be suitable for Pallas's cat.

We couldn't estimate Pallas's cat density by the results of snow-tracking censuses – there was not obtained enough data on tracks counting. But we understood winter conditions in the surveyed areas. We could compare them and data obtained with investigated areas in Russia and with interviewing data to say about less density of Pallas's cat population here and possibly more patchy distribution. We need much more snow-tracking data in order to estimate the species density.

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

1) On the whole actual Pallas's cat distribution in Kazakhstan was clarified – there were outlined three range fragments in the country. Pallas's cat habitation wasn't confirmed in the north-western part of the country (Northern Caspian Sea area), where the species was recorded last time in 1940s. A map of Pallas's cat distribution and hotspots was made in GIS.

2) The main Pallas's cat population is situated in the eastern part of the country mostly in the eastern part of Central-Kazakhstan Upland and foothills of high mountains on the south-eastern border of Kazakhstan (Trans-Ili Alatau Mnts.). Pallas's cat habitation is limited here by the distribution of Mongolian pika and flat-headed vole in the northern part of this range fragment and by gerbil species that live in hilly and stony habitats in the southern part of the fragment.

3) Protection measures for Pallas's cat were proposed. The recommendations on Pallas's cat monitoring in the existent protected areas where Pallas's cat was recorded were developed. Thorough investigations in the eastern part of Central-Kazakhstan Upland are needed in order to establish new protected area for Pallas's cat conservation (as well as other steppe species of special concern).

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

We made the educational campaign among local communities. During interview surveys local people were informed about Pallas's cat and given with poster about this species. Also the posters were distributed via our Kazakhstani partner, Association for Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan (ACBK), local authorities and wildlife agencies (regional branches of the Wildlife and Forestry Committee of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Agriculture), and anti-plague institution.

Two members of local NGOs participated in our field work, they were trained in data obtaining and treatment.

The specialists from the Institute of Zoology of Kazakhstan Republic and Institute of Archaeology (Almaty) participated in snow-tracking surveys as volunteers. The rangers of East-Kazakhstan branch of the Wildlife and Forestry Committee accompanied us in interview surveys.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We need to continue obtaining data on this wild cat species – to interview local people and conduct field observations. We plan to thoroughly investigate Pallas’s cat habitats in the Eastern range fragment (mostly northern) in order to outline exactly new protected area and to establish it.

Forthcoming winter period we want to carry out snow-tracking research by the strength of inspectors of the Karaganda branch of Wildlife and Forestry Committee of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Agriculture. WFC conducts winter censuses of game species every year, but Pallas’s cat is not included as Red Listed species. But we talked to the point of recording also Pallas’s cat signs during the censuses and have had to an agreement to make such “experiment” this year. Ideally we need to have Pallas’ cat censuses officially included to permanent winter snow-tracking conducted by appropriate institutions.

We also plan to introduce monitoring of Pallas’s cat to the work schedule of protected areas it inhabits accordingly to our recommendations we developed during this project.

We need to investigate also more carefully the interactions between Pallas’s Cat and other small wild cat species, especially Asian wild cat, as they can inhabit the same habitats.

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

The results of the work will be published at our web site of Pallas’s Cat Study and Conservation Program <http://www.savemanul.org>

The article about project’s results will be published in the Steppe Bulletin - work bulletin on conservation of steppe ecosystems and sustainable use of steppes publishing by the NGO “Siberian Environmental Center”.

The report on field work will be given to the regional departments of the Wildlife and Forestry Committee of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Agriculture and other interested institutions

The recommendations on protection measures on Pallas’s cat conservation will be given to corresponding authorities. They will include recommendations on Pallas’s cat monitoring for protected areas and recommendations on creation new protected areas in the places of high conservation value for the species.

The presentation of project’s results was made at RSG Conference in Erevan, Armenia, 27th-30th September 2012

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

The RSG was used for one year –from September 2011 till September 2012 – as was anticipated and planned.

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
Salary: Principal investigator, £220*12 months	840	800	-40	A part of salary was paid to the driver
Salary: Assistants/guides, £150*2 persons*3 months	600	600	0	
Salary: Driver, £200*2 months	400	440	40	We needed to pay driver more than for 2 months of work
Travel allowance, £6,5/1 day*6 persons*60 days	2340	2340	0	
Fuel, £0,65/liter*20 liters/100 km*6000 km	780	720	-60	Actually this figure was bigger but it was covered from other sources
Train/Bus	250	327	77	Train tickets were more expensive than suggested
Vehicle repair and some spares	150	150	0	Vehicle repair took much more means but they were covered from other sources
Consumables (paper, pens, notebooks, etc.)	100	102	2	
Posters and calendars preparing and publishing	400	386	-14	Publishing posters and work pictures with wild cat species
Report publishing	50	45	-5	
Total	5910	5910	0	

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

Along with continuation of obtaining data on Pallas's cat sightings all over country the next important steps should be: 1) detailed investigation of Pallas's cat habitats in the places of high conservation value in Kazakhstan (particularly in the eastern part of Central-Kazakhstan Upland) in order to make the grounds for creating new protected area (as well as negotiate with appropriate authorities about it); 2) organising educational work with local people (particularly with schoolchildren) in the districts that are situated in the eastern part of Central-Kazakhstan Upland (carrying out art and other competitions, lessons, etc.); and 3) extending Pallas's cat survey eastward (Zaissan Lake area and the South Altai)

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 have used the RSGF logo in the poster on Pallas's cat (in Russian and Kazakhstan languages).

11. Any other comments?

During project's realization there were raised additional funds that allow adding of new activities to Pallas's cat investigation in Kazakhstan. Thus we've used camera traps in summer surveys (four camera traps were provided by Pallas Cat studies, preservation and breeding program of Moscow Zoo, two were borrowed from Mikhail Paltsyn (Altai-Sayan office of WWF Russia) and another two were purchased on the grant of the Small Wild Cats Foundation). Also the grant of the Small Wild Cats Foundation allowed enlargement of territory investigated (additional fuel and food expenses).