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	Anton S. Vlaschenko
Project title	*Nyctalus lasiopterus* in the Eastern Europe: inventory of current status, proposals to revise the species status in IUCN Red List and conservation
RSG reference	12176-2
Reporting period	January 2013 – August 2013
Amount of grant	£ 5770
Your email address	vlaschenko@yandex.ru
Date of this report	April 2014

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
Field training on bat (*N. lasiopterus*) radiotelemetry in Hungary.	+			We had not time on this activity in over busy summer 2013. I had not time to open visa to Hungary. But this year will the overtake arrears.
Deep study of roost ecology of *N. lasiopterus* by radiotelemetry in Russian in Samara bend the Volga River (Samara region).		+		Unfortunately we had problems with administration of Zhyguly Reserve which includes the Samara bend. Director of the Reserve wanted to have salary from the money of grant of Rufford. Such shocking requirements could not be used to perform under any reasons. Our Russian partners Dr D. Smirnov and V. Vekhnik changed their plans about collaboration in the Rufford project; they did some telemetry research by themselves. In the frame of the project this objective was not achieved, but in general deep stream of *N. lasiopterus* study was achieved. Dr D. Smirnov's team found a tree roost of the bat species and will publish the data soon.
Inventory of localities where *N. lasiopterus* was recorded in past in European part of Russia.			+	The most difficult and most successful part of the project activity. Six locations in Russia and one over in Ukraine were surveyed by mist netting in July 2013. Four teams (15 persons) worked by the same methodology. The bat capture effort was 68 mist netting points and 639 mist netting hours at total. 1376 individuals of 12 bat species were caught. Two young (♀&♀) *N. lasiopterus* were caught in different locations: Voronezhsky State Biosphere Nature Reserve, Voronezh region, Russia, and Yakovetskoe location,

				Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, Kiev region, Ukraine.
To pick the tissue samples of *N. lasiopterus* from genetic research (the phylogeographic study).			+	The tissue samples from *N. lasiopterus* from the North Ukraine and the West Russia were collected at first. These samples will be sent to Dr Javier Juste (Spain). He will conduct phylogeographic research on this species in Europe.
To get additional support and continue the project.			+	We got additional support from two foundations: 1) student programme The Youth Activity Fund of The Explorers Club (USA), project leader Alexander Klochko, and 2) EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EU) project leader Anton Vlaschenko. The support from The Youth Activity Fund allowed us to make more distant expeditions than we planned. The support from EUROBATS Projects Initiative was gotten in mid summer of 2013 and allows us to continue the project in summer 2014.
To get data about structure of bat assemblage in forests with different history of management and protection status.			+	The most comprehensive and interesting part of the project results. We used the uniform methodology of bat mist netting that has provided us with accurate data on the bat assemblage. We got clear data on bat assemblage for three forest Reserves (Bryansky les, Voronezhsky and Oksky) at first. We caught the project target species in large and not destroyed forests. It may indicate that we correctly chose *N. lasiopterus* as an indicator for forest ecosystems. Unfortunately, we are unlikely to develop Action Plan for management of the Eastern European both for Russia and Ukraine. There is no space for

				dialogue between our countries now.
Reporting process.		+		The summary of progress on the project was given in mid-October 2013. To prepare a full report to January 2014 has not been possible, because of the difficult situation in Ukraine. At this stage the project can hardly be considered complete. The additional funding will allow us continue fieldwork in 2014. Full and final interpretation of all the collected data will be possible only after the completion of fieldwork 2014.
To achieve the change the *N. lasiopterus* IUCN status and to highlight the problem of conservation of forest-dwelling bats and old forests.		+		At this stage of the project we gathered enough arguments in favour of our hypothesis, which *N. lasiopterus* is extremely rare species and is need of a higher conservation status than it has now. e.g. 1) only three confirmed breeding centres of the species on the line Kiev-Voronezh-Samara 1400 km; 2) very low frequency of occurrence, one individual per 600 bats of others bat species; 3) fidelity of *N. lasiopterus* to wide and natural woodlands; 4) extinction over most of the species range for last 50-80 years. All these arguments will be presented in publication prepared by shared results of the project. At this stage, we presented our achievements to Dr Christian Dietz (Germany). He included the current range of *N. lasiopterus* in new edition of Bats of Europe ("Die Fledermäuse Europas und Nordwestafrikas…"). It is a significant step toward dispelling of scientific myth that *N. lasiopterus* has continuous range in the east, in Ukraine and Russia.

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

Unfortunately we had problems with administration of Zhyguly Reserve which includes the Samara bend. Director of the Reserve wanted to have salary from the money of grant of Rufford. Such shocking requirements could not be used to perform under any reasons. Our Russian partners Dr D. Smirnov and V. Vekhnik changed their plans about collaboration in the Rufford project we had not time on this activity in over busy summer 2013. I had not time to open visa to Hungary.

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

I. It was confirmed two breeding centres of *N. lasiopterus* in Ukraine and Russia. It was clarified that these centres are distant from each other for hundreds of kilometres and the population of the species is very low.
II. Established contacts with three Natural Reserves of Russia. Research in bats of Voronezhsky Reserve was conducted by our team after the 30-year break. Work for future years was scheduled.
III. Data on the community structure of bats of Eastern European forests received uniform methodology were obtained at first.

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

We worked in three large and well known reserves in Russia. Scientific staff all of them were familiar with our work and we are preparing a joint publication. It is not “local communities” in the classical meaning, but it is local scientific communities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?
The project is already on the stage-terminated, but is not yet completed. We continue joint work with Hungary and on the territory of Ukraine in 2014. After completion of the field season will be prepared full final report on the results of 4 years of work. In addition to reviewing a detailed report will be prepared for the IUCN. After this, we will develop an algorithm of further actions.

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

First of all, we plan to prepare a review on the status of this species in Eastern Europe with a full outlining the data and information obtained during the project. The widely publicized of the results of the project on internet sites of Russian and Ukrainian Bat Groups was planned, and will be implemented soon.

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

We had no problems with the terms of implementation the fieldwork part. The final report was delayed as a result of difficult and stressful situation in our country.

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
Equipment for radiotelemetry	750	750	0	10 transmitters @ 75£
Field research in Samara bend	2315	0	+2315	
Consumables materials (the main batteries to lanterns and other equipment)	250	310	-60	
Mist-nets	500	500	0	10 mist-nets@100£
Field work in Voronezhsky and Oksky Reserves	_	1310	_	Food: 4 persons @ 33 field-days @ 5£ Transport: train tickets Kharkov-Voronezh-Ryazan and back 650£
Field work in "Bryansky les" Reserve	_	390	_	Food: 4 persons @ 12 field-days @ 5£ Transport: train tickets Kharkov-Bryansk and back 150£
Field work in Nizhni Novgorod	_	750	_	Food: 3 persons @ 10 field-days @ 5£ Transport: train tickets Kharkov-Nizhni Novgorod and back 600£
Total: Inventory work in 4 locations in European Russia	*1920*	*2346*	*-426*	
Medicine	35	45	-10	
Field equipment	0	745	-745	2 field tent 150£, 2 rucksacks @ 100£, 4 sleeping bags @ 40£, field minutiae: axes, boilers, mosquito repellent, mosquito nets, etc. 85£
Mini digital camera	0	125	-125	
Equipment for bat catching	0	181	-181	fishing rods, fabric for bags, etc.

Headlamps	0	100	-100	2 headlamps @ 50£
Maps, notebook, paper etc.	0	24	-24	
GPS	0	550	-550	2 Garmin Gpsmap 62Sc @ 275£
Total	5777	**5780**	+3	

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

The closest step will be the completion of the planned work on field season 2014. The nest step will be publication the overall data on the species status in Ukraine and Russia. In 1 or 2-year outlook will be construction of a model of *N. lasiopterus* distribution in Europe (which should include data on climate, altitudes, composition of tree stands and square of forest areas etc.). On the basis of this modeling, we plan to evaluate potential forest areas or regions where this species can inhabit yet. Is possible that *N. lasiopterus* dwelling place may be in Romania and Belarus at that.

Just a few years perspective, we would like to return to Chernobyl Exclusion Zone and to Voronezhsky Nature Reserve and apply experience and skills in telemetry that we obtain this summer.

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?

At the moment we do not use the RSGF logo. But soon we will present information on the projects progress on the internet sites of Russian and Ukrainian Bat Groups and there is sure to be the logo.

11. Any other comments?

When we started this project the East Europe World was different. Even if you study bats you can not be outside of geopolitics, especially if you do international projects and your objects fly hundreds of kilometres. We very much hope that all will get better soon and peace between our countries (Ukraine and Russia) and will restore as before. And will be able to do the research free on both sides.