

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	Dilek Şahin
Project title	Assessment of seasonal and daily movements and numbers of Yelkouan shearwater in the Marmara Sea
RSG reference	12524-1
Reporting period	November 2012 – November 2013
Amount of grant	£5535
Your email address	dileks@ymail.com
Date of this report	18 November 2013

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
Data collection to reveal seasonal changes in movements and in numbers of Yelkouan shearwater in the two straits of the Marmara Sea			X	The team stuck with the plan and achieved to perform a dense fieldwork schedule. A total of 24 and 12 coastal counts have planned for the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles respectively, and the team was conducted 41 and 15 with 23 volunteers. These counts were performed in different periods of day in order to better understand the movements.
Data collection on the behaviour of Yelkouan shearwater in the Marmara Sea			X	This part was especially important for us in terms of predicting potential breeding sites and behaviour. For this purpose we planned and conducted additional evening counts in chick raising periods in the Bosphorus.
Conducting at sea surveys in order to produce a basic inventory for Marine IBA's in the Marmara Sea		X		We experienced some problems in finding appropriate ferry lines. Since the ship's speed and the route are extremely important in European Seabirds at Sea surveys it was took a bit time to find a ship lines that is both accepting observers on the deck and have the desired features. We planned to start at sea counts in January but we started in April. It was also another problem to train the volunteers properly as this method is a bit complicated and requires a lot practice. But for now we are working with a RoRo company, they are giving full support and we are planning to continue to complete the scheduled programme.
Establishment of Marmara Seabirds at Sea GIS database			X	We will be sharing it with relevant associations after published the collected data.
To train birdwatchers in seabird research methods			X	23 volunteers have joined our surveys and trained in coastal and at sea count methodologies.

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

The most challenging struggle that we had was the delay in finding a ferry line in which at sea surveys will be done. We aimed to find a line that covers the Marmara Sea lengthwise and decided to use RoRo lines (big ships that are carrying cargo trucks to shorten their distance) because of their suitable speed and routes. But the companies were not so keen to accept the observers on the deck since it has a lot of risks for them. It took us few months to find this company that is giving us full support. And also the difficulty of the survey method took us a bit more time to be confident with it. Another struggle that I had as project leader was to find volunteers especially in midterms. Since the vast majority of our volunteers are students who have moved into Istanbul for studying it was challenging to find a lot of volunteers for the counts when they moved to other cities to visit their families. We have been working on finding more volunteers that are based in relevant cities.

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

1- Improved knowledge on Yelkouan movements in both straits: To better understand the movements of Yelkouans in the Bosphorus, to see yearly trends in numbers and to have an idea on the numbers and movements of the species in the Dardanelles. To predict potential breeding regions of Yelkouans around the Bosphorus using the insights of late evening counts. Also to see that populations that are using the Bosphorus and Dardanelles are probably different –we will be sure after we tested the data.

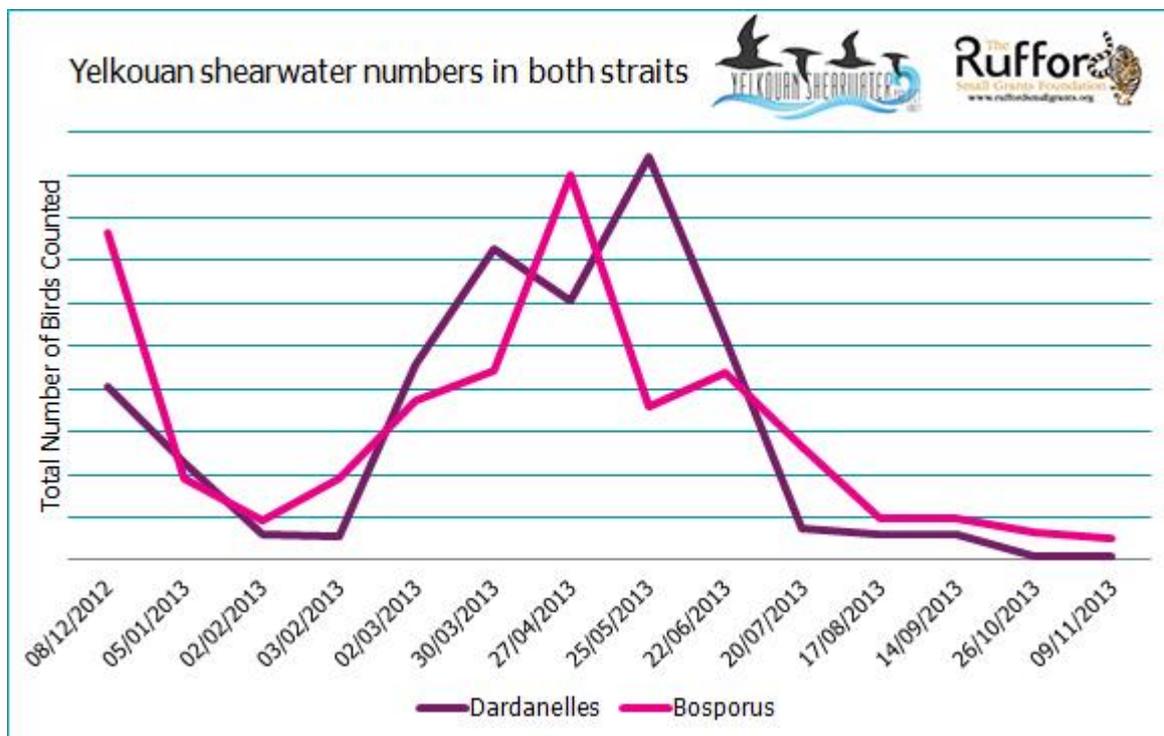


Fig: Comparison of total Yelkouan shearwater numbers counted simultaneously in both straits

2- Establishment of Marine IBA Database for the Marmara Sea: To have the data that will probably reveal that the Marmara Sea is one of the potential Marine Important Bird Areas in terms of seabird densities and seabird and cetacean associations – we will confirm it after analysed the ESAS data.

3- Raised public awareness about seabird conservation: To disseminate the project activities in order to get more volunteers and to raise the awareness about seabird conservation. We are satisfied with the dissemination activities, at least all the local birdwatchers are aware about Marine IBAs and why this project is needed.

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

One of the main stakeholders of this project was local NGOs and birdwatchers. By disseminating project activities between birdwatchers we succeeded to get a lot of volunteers and they are keen to continue to work with us. NGOs are also aware of the positive impact of the project results to their conservation studies.

The other main stakeholder was ship crews. We have very good relationships with them. They have informed about every detail of the project, about what we are doing and why we are doing it. They are aware of our project's activities and purposes and giving us full support to perform at sea counts. Decision makers; since the establishment of Marine IBAs are taking long times and requires a lot of effort and recurring data that is collected for several years. Our project will be contribute -or maybe lead the determination of Marine IBAs in the Marmara Sea after few years of data collection. For now it looks like decision makers are not involved this project but they will be eventually after we reached our target time which is 5 years of data collection for now (Now we almost completed our 3rd year in the Bosphorus).

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The monitoring programme in the Bosphorus will definitely continue because there are plenty of birdwatchers in Istanbul and it is relatively easy to convince them to be involved in this project. At sea surveys will also be continuing since we have this company's full support. The Dardanelles programme is the most challenging part for us to keep surveying without budget as we have only one volunteer in this city and as it is an obligation for us to visit this city each month which costs a lot of money. We are trying to deal with this with applying for a new seabird bycatch project that also includes the Dardanelles as study area. If this project is approved we will be continuing our coastal counts as we visiting this city for by-catch fieldwork. Our target is to collect data at least 5 years in both straits and at sea counts.

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

An article in scientific magazine will be published as soon as possible.

A layman's report will be produced for local birdwatchers and people who are interested in bird research.

Presentations will be made in conferences, meetings and festivals.

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

RSG was used in the entire length of the project. The majority of the grant was used at the beginning of the project to buy the equipment and the rest was used in transportation, accommodation and food for observers as 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
Telescope + Tripod	2000	1744	+256	
Binoculars	625	550	+75	
GPS	390	390	0	
Transportations for coastal counts	1080	1304	-224	Due to the annual raise in bus ticket prices
Transportations for at sea surveys	1440	550	+890	Some surveys are missing due to delay in finding ferry line, will be continue
Project dissemination materials	0	300	-300	T-shirts for volunteers, brochures, Layman's report, stickers
Water-proof clothes for researchers for tough weather conditions	0	60	-60	Wind proof gloves and clothes for main researchers
TOTAL	5535	4898	637	This amount will be used to complete missing "at sea surveys"

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

To reach our target –the proposal of candidate Marine IBAs in the area- the most important next steps are to continue the Dardanelles counts and at sea surveys. We are sure that the Bosphorus programme will continue but in order to fill the gaps in the data we need to increase the effort in the Dardanelles and at sea counts. We are sure that the Bosphorus is a strong mIBA candidate but to identify its borders we are planning to perform more at sea counts in different, short ferry lines along the Bosphorus to have an idea about the dispersal of the Yelkouan flocks. And definitely put more effort in late evening counts during the breeding season as they are vital in having an insight of breeding behaviour.

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 don't have any printed material yet but the plan is to print informative brochures and stickers and t-shirts at the end of the project for the people who are interested. We will be using RSG logo on these materials. So far we used the logo on our website, in an interview and in the presentations we made. All of the local birdwatchers and stakeholders are fully aware that this project is funded by

RSG. We also inspired some young bird researchers to apply RSG for their projects. I as a project leader also participated in another RSG project on cetaceans in the Aegean Sea (The forgotten species: Marine mammals in the Turkish Aegean Sea) and we disseminate each other's project in our local communities using the name of RSG.

