

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	Grass-roots level education, local awareness and monitoring for conservation of Blue Swallow in Kenya
RSG reference	12821-2
Reporting period	January 2013-January 2014
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	blueswallowkenya@gmail.org
Date of this report	7 th February 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
To initiate environmental education targeting: grass-root level community; management of Ruma National Park including KWS park rangers; and environmental clubs of local schools.			Fully achieved	Awareness on the plight of blue swallow and its locally threatened habitats was promoted among local community, park management at Ruma and local schools environmental clubs. This was achieved by conducting local community and schools outreaches through drama and puppetry with conservation messages, strengthening of schools environmental club activities. The close cooperation of schools, local community and the Ruma NP management was critical for achievement of this objective.
To conduct annual monitoring of the non-breeding populations to determine basic ecology of the blue swallow in western Kenya.		Partially achieved		Non-breeding population of the blue swallow was determined in Ruma National Park. In Busia, additional annual survey work is still needed due to the patchiness of the grassland areas. There is need to conduct the surveys to cover the whole wintering period from April-September in order to ascertain the actual blue swallow numbers, and owing to the current escalating levels of anthropogenic blue swallow habitat loss and modification. More work needs to be done in Busia where human activities are threatening the survival of the locally threatened blue swallow habitats.
To promote avi-tourism for benefit of local people by raising the profile of the park using blue swallow as the flagship species.			Fully achieved	With the support of local tour guides and Ruma NP management awareness on avi-tourism through blue swallow was promoted to local people following a series of public meetings and workshops. However, more needs to be done to brand Ruma NP as a blue swallow park in western Kenya. In future projects efforts will be made for KWS to offer

				special rates for park visitors and student community who shall be attracted by avi-tourism targeting blue swallow. To fully achieve this objective there is also need to engage the management of KWS on benefit sharing of tourism proceeds and promote active participation of local community on decision making.
To enhance the capacity of newly created conservation groups including Lake Victoria Birds Working Group and Ruma Site Conservation Group to ensure sustainability of conservation actions locally.			Fully achieved	Field-based training sessions and workshops were conducted targeting Lake Victoria Birds Working Group and Ruma Site Conservation Group on various aspects: field data collection, species and habitats monitoring, conservation group dynamics, fundraising, networking, among others. We recommend future refresher trainings to strengthen their local capacity for conservation.

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

Annual flash floods during the April-June period partially affected our field work at Ruma National Park. We overcame this challenge by concentrating much of our species population monitoring work at the site during the dry months especially from end of June through to September.

The grassland patches at the Busia Grasslands IBA are located several kilometres away from each other making field travelling a challenge. We however overcame this problem by using locally available transport including motorbikes that are able to use short cut routes away from the conventional roads network in Busia.

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

Local conservation awareness was massively created among local people and schools community in both Ruma and Busia Grasslands IBAs. The project conducted outreach activities by mobilising the local community through drama and puppetry activities, reaching out to approximately 5000 local people and approximately 6000 pupils/students in both sites. Schools environmental clubs were formed in at least 10 schools and conservation messages on the blue swallow and its locally threatened habitats were conveyed. This was coupled with other conservation activities including participation in and promotion of tree planting in schools to promote hands-on conservation among schoolchildren, their parents and teachers.

Detailed habitat surveys of Busia Grasslands IBA covering seven grassland patches: Matayos at the Sio River Bridge; Sikoma at Nasira River and Sio River; Nambale at Nambale River Bridge and Sio River (Manyore area); Malanga/Nambale at Rerekwe River; Kisoko at Sio River; and Mungatsi at

Walatsi River, 10 years after Ndang'ang'a (2007). This survey has elicited the current status of the IBA and its urgent need for immediate conservation as indicated in the final project report.

The project enhanced the capacity of Lake Victoria Birds Working Group and Ruma Site Conservation Group, two community-based conservation organisations that were formed during my first Rufford Small Grants. The group members were trained on various aspects of conservation including field data collection and monitoring. They were also trained on other areas: group management and group dynamics, networking, and fundraising through proposal writing. Other local conservation groups in Ruma and Busia Grasslands were also trained on the same to help strengthen their local capacity towards conservation related issues.

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

The main focus of this project was to create awareness among local people on conservation of blue swallow and its locally threatened habitats. As a result, our main target was the active involvement of local population, which we achieved. The local people provided field assistants during our field and community visits for data collection. We hired motorbikes locally for routine field data collection at Busia where the local field assistants actively participated. Their capacity on ornithological and habitat data collection was strengthened. Community members also participated as volunteers during community outreach activities in puppetry and drama activities. Members and the management of KWS were trained on avi-tourism targeting blue swallow during our series of workshops in avi-tourism promotion. The wider community were also involved in our activities through schools outreaches, training workshops for members of Lake Victoria Birds Working Group and Ruma Site Conservation Group. Through direct engagement of schoolchildren (students and pupils) in local schools we reached out to a massive population of local community indirectly because we believe that each and every family is at least represented by a child in the local schools.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I intend to continue this work.

I shall apply for a RSGF Booster grant to address some of the proposed future work and interventions identified by this second RSG. Some of the work I intend to address with the Booster grant include among others:

- Identify locally acceptable alternative sustainable livelihoods for people living around threatened grassland areas and private land owners at Busia to minimise blue swallow grassland habitat conversion into sugarcane plantations, subsistence farming and grazing.
- Continue working with local communities to conduct annual blue swallow population census to establish population trends and ecology of the species during its non-breeding season in Kenya. This will help create a database on which annual records will be made available for scientific work and compare with data from other African range states.
- Initiate community-based management of natural resources and coordinate learning exchange programme for western Kenya communities with other communities who have succeeded in community-based management of natural resources near protected areas (Ruma) and settled habitats (Busia).
- Collaborate with local communities and relevant organisations to rehabilitate degraded moist grassland habitats in the unprotected Busia Grasslands IBA.

- Spearhead the branding of Ruma National Park as a blue swallow site to promote local and international avi-tourism targeting the species. This will engage relevant stakeholders including Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Nature Kenya, BirdLife International, Wetlands International, Kenya Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources among other stakeholders who can help influence conservation policy.
- Interpret the international Blue Swallow Action Plan (Evans *et. al.*, 2002) into a local context that is applicable to the Kenyan non-breeding sites.

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

I will publish the results of this work in an international peer reviewed journal to be available to the international community. Results of this work will also be shared in relevant forums including workshops and seminars. The current status of the two sites will be shared for dissemination in the annual IBA status and trends report published by Nature Kenya, the BirdLife International partner in Kenya. I shall also provide a 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 January 2013 to January 2014. 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 visits and guide books, binoculars	467	482	15	Fuel costs that are reviewed monthly in Kenya by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) increased transport costs during reconnaissance visits.
Public education and awareness, and refreshments	1097	1097	0	
Training of Field Assistants	200	200	0	
Trainings/Workshops: Halls hire, projector screen, generator hire/fuel, used laptop	961	961	0	
Transport reimbursements	307	364	57	Monthly increase in fuel costs increased the cost of public transport
Workshop trainers facilitation fees	269	269	0	
Monthly stipend for project team	481	481	0	

Field mobility during field-based activities	1308	1580	272	Inflation rates increased in Kenya in 2013 as a result of impending general elections. Besides, fuel costs were constantly reviewed upwards by the ERC increasing the cost of transport reimbursement.
Office administration: documentation, communication/co-ordination and reports production	423	423	0	
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	143	143	0	
5% Contingency	344	-344	0	
Total	6000	6000	0	

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

In order to make a long-lasting conservation impact, this project needs continued logistical and financial support, and close post project follow-up activities. Fundraising for the project activities will be mandatory for the success of this project. There is need to closely monitor the habitat dynamics of the blue swallow especially in Busia where anthropogenic impacts are already chocking the once impressive grassland sites. Annual blue swallow population monitoring at both Busia and Ruma coupled with habitat status assessment will help determine the actual ecology of this species in its wintering sites in Kenya. It is critical to interpret the international Blue Swallow Action Plan (IBSAP) (Evans *et. al.*, 2002) into a local sites context that befits Kenya now that local conservation groups have been formed locally. The local landowners, subsistence farmers and livestock keepers need to be provided with locally sustainable alternative livelihoods so that they can participate in restoration of degraded grassland areas especially in the unprotected Busia grasslands IBA. These activities need support with relevant resources especially financial resources that are critical for the success of these project activities. In order to achieve all these I intend to apply for the RSGF Booster grant for financial support.

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?

I used the RSGF logo in all the public outreach 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. this project also produced a conference paper on conservation of blue swallow in western Kenya that was subsequently presented at the East Africa RSG grantees conference in Mombasa, Kenya with the RSG logo conspicuously shown on the poster.