

## The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Dr Altay Zhatkanbayev
Project title	Carry out research and actions for supporting survival of the subspecies of Turkestan Ground-jay ( <i>Podoces panderi ilensis</i> ) and saving their habitats in Kazakhstan.
RSG reference	13304-1
Reporting period	May 2013 – September 2014 (16 months)
Amount of grant	£5940
Your email address	kz.wildlife@gmail.com
Date of this report	June 2015

**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
The evaluation current number, mosaic distribution and population trend and to update data on biology/ecology of Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay population with using modern non-invasive methodology for zoological/ecological research as camera trapping (photography/video), which will allow to study relationship of it with other wild species in same habitats.			Yes	<p>1. The current population trend of Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay is still decreasing.</p> <p>2. The availability to visit once any 1 square meter of middle constant inhabitation by this subspecies in winter period is <math>1.02^{-5}</math> (<math>2.19^{-5}</math> for dunes only) within 11.7 day. This is real confirmation about constant character of place of inhabitation for this subspecies around the year.</p> <p>3. Start of nest building in 2013 was in first 10-day period of February, and it is changing our scientific knowledge, when indicated about it as the end of February. Much more available explanation for it as additional evidence about climate change/imbalance into warming side in this geographical region too.</p> <p>4. The main enemy in the nature of this subspecies is red fox, whose number has increased in recent decades due to lack of professional hunting onto this animal in Southern Balkhash valley.</p>
To increase understanding of priorities for Ile subspecies of Turkestan ground-jay population survival and saving their habitats (by decreasing degradation of desert and semi-desert biotopes in Southern Balkhash valley) amongst people communities.		Yes		Different local communities were involved in conservation training actions for saving native wilderness and wildlife, especially to preserve biotopes of Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and neighbouring landscapes. Necessary to continue work on more in-depth involvement/integration of the local communities in the process of conservation and sustainable use natural resources (purveyance saxauls trees for fuel, reduce fires and house waste in wild habitats).

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

The most difficult in the implementation of the project was to hold actions on the effective involvement of local communities in the process of understanding the need for sustainable use of natural resources. During the meetings in these communities, first of all, it was difficult to change the well-established mentality in people's minds that the natural resources are just for use of people. Within conservation training actions it was tried to change local people mentality onto side of saxaul trees must be used rationally, and not cut down by big massive surround the villages and close to them.

It was difficult to change in human consciousness installation that "saksaul - it is only necessary fuel for their homes and farms." It was had to constantly prove that immense cutting of saxaul trees leads to the degradation of not only the saxaul thickets (even the most dense), but also the neighboring habitats (landscape), in which constantly lives Ile subspecies of Turkestan ground-jay - the only one endemic creature in the bird population of Kazakhstan. And it could eventually lead to the impossibility of it inhabits on its typical territories. And intensive cutting saxaul trees (*Haloxylon* species) leads to further desertification of arid and semi-arid areas in Southern Balkhash valley.

During meetings with local communities we felt that people are aware on the words at least, of the importance of scientific and environmental approaches in the use of local natural resources. However, they asked which alternative energy sources can be use instead of the inefficient use saxaul trees on fuel, that is, in principle, the local population was aware of the need for rational use of natural resources. Unfortunately, at present time wind and solar power devices are not extensively implemented in the Southern Balkhash valley region as far government programmes as private business. In fact, there was no good examples of using wind and solar power devices by local communities in this region. Thus, proving the need to change attitudes towards excessive consumption haloxylon fuel, possibility of project has not been the most effective leverage to change the mentality of local people in using traditional methods of producing heat. That is, we could not give any kind of wind and solar power device (even compact) to local community as real alternative approach for their everyday activities at least for short time during the project realisation. In words, often agreeing with presented arguments during the meetings, some local community people continued to use saxaul as the main energy source for heating and cooking, especially in winter. In the meanwhile, some indigenous families began use electric power devices and carbon for heating their houses. Therefore, attempts for changing usual mentality of local communities bring some results, i.e. it was not been in vain.

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

1. The current population trend of Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay is still decreasing. It was real confirmation about constant character of place of inhabitation for this subspecies and adult male and female co-existence in constant pairs around the year (since May of 2013 till September 2014). Start of nest building in 2013 was in first 10-day period of February, and it is changing our previous scientific knowledge, when indicated about it as the end of February. Much more available explanation for it as additional and lighting evidence about climate change/imbalance into warming side in this geographical region too.

2. The main enemy in the nature of this subspecies is red fox, whose number has increased in recent decades due to lack of professional hunting onto this animal. So, it is can recommend for cutting number of this predator in Southern Balkhash valley.

3. Another important outcomes of project is its educational, environmental and public relations mission. In this regard, during each of the 16 carried expedition trips, conservation training actions (meetings) were held with various communities of the local population, open lessons for schoolchildren and informative talks with workers of peasant farmers, local authorities and government agencies in the Balqash and Karatal districts of Almaty's administrative region. In order to implement the open lessons, lectures and conversations were done the most informative and instructive, to some extent, in the project frame activity were published colourful flip desk calendars about theme of Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and it's habitats for 2014 edition. During open lessons, lectures, discussions and simple meetings with people from local communities implemented a mandatory distribution of these calendars.

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

Different local communities such as schoolchildren, farmers, simple representatives of indigenous communities (population of villages), officials and employees of state organisations and local government agencies were involved the project activity definitely into conservation training actions for saving native wilderness and wildlife. Possibly, effect from the open classes, lectures, discussions, and simple meetings to some extent can be estimated from those reviews that have been received from different local organisations. There are such as secondary school "Ulgily" Balqash district of Almaty's administrative region (Director Abdikerov Maulen, May 15th 2014); Administration of Karaoy's Rural District (Akim Irgebaev Taybek, May 16th 2014); Karaoy's office of Bakanass state institution for forest and wildlife conservation Committee of Forestry and Hunting of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Head Musyrpanov Serikbay, March 27th 2014); the peasant farming "Duman" (Head Sholpanbekov Bakbakty, April 11th 2014); Karaoy's antiepidemic squad of Taldykorgan's Anti-Plague Station of Agency for Consumer Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kopbaev Talgat, Alexander Belyaev, Nauryzbayev Erlan, Elzhanov Amansary, May 29th 2014).

Carried out conservation training actions among local communities in the frame of project realization not been in vain, and left a positive message, especially among young people generation, first of all, among schoolchildren. And it keeps the awareness that in the near future need to change mentality from the irrational use of local natural resources (especially to use saksaul as the main energy source for heating and cooking) onto sustainable development, including the preservation wilderness and wildlife and among it support to survival endemic fauna creatures such as Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

For near future, it is necessary to continue work on more in-depth involvement/integration of local communities in the process of wildlife and wilderness conservation and sustainable use of its resources (help for development of rational use saxaul trees for fuel, try to reduce fires and house waste in plant associations and natural habitats surround the local villages). And in context of it certainly need to continue this work by scientific side in order to support for creation of protected

area for survival Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay in the Southern Balkhash valley – only one inhabitation in the world's range of this just one endemic bird creature among whole Kazakhstan's fauna of birds.

It seems to have many arguments after finish this project in order to a new work to raise awareness of local population in environmental issues with a focus on preserving the unique representative of the endemic birds in Southern Balkhash arid and semi-arid region and save its habitats and neighboring landscapes must be continued. Also, it is need to involve this new work another vulnerable and endangered wildlife species, which are inhabits on the same biotopes or close to Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay, such as steppe tortoise (*Agrionemys horsfieldii*) and saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*).

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

The results of this project (especially most effective and useful), both in scientific and conservation educational local communities sides were published and much more of them continues preparing to publish in the scientific articles and in the papers of popular environmental magazines in the Republic of Kazakhstan and abroad, inclusive websites.

Also, the results of work will be shared and used on the scientific-practical conferences and workshops with participation of local and state administration from Southern Balkhash valley to take into consideration preserve Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and its habitats under future planning to industrial use territories in this arid and semi-arid region.

Besides it, the effective and useful results of project will be shared with the governmental organisations of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Committee of Forestry and wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Investment and Development, including the Committee for Environmental regulation, control and state inspection in oil and gas complex of the Ministry of Energy.

## **7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The whole duration of project activity planned for 16 months, May 2013 to September 2014. However, the final report is presented later than anticipated. May be one of the justification for it the massive data and materials of work were in long process of analysing and much more time spent for preparing of publication in scientific articles. And work for this project was continued periodically till May 2015. As example of this work, it was firstly within 100 years period of ornithological research in Southern Balkhash desert and semi-desert valley saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) became breeding in the same inhabitation with Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay. Therefore, this endangered species firstly identified as a new enemy for Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay, suddenly appeared in the sand dune arid natural conditions.

Certainly, it was a high responsibility of project leader to finish final report in time and I am sorry very much for long delay to complete final report. In the meanwhile, tentative project report was presented at June of 2014 and extra time was covered for realisation project fully. Indeed, I am appreciative so much for the Rufford Foundation for possibility to wait final report longer than usually for other small grant project. It will be a good exercise for learning (both in negative and positive sides) and adds to my live a personal experience in realisation of project's activities too.

Taking into consideration this occasion, I will give much more attention to duration of real work and think much more carefully about to complete final report in time under planning new my project. And I will try to complete final report as soon as need accordingly timescale of project.

**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
Stipend for project leader/principal investigator: 30 £/month x 1 person x 16 month = 480 £.	480 £	81 £	-399 £	All project members worked much more as volunteers, so stipends for them were quite low, like as symbolic level. Differences were paid to increased amounts for per diem, rent a car, gasoline and engine oil.
Stipends for other 3 member of project team: 15 £/month x 3 person x 16 month = 720 £.	720 £	333 £	-387 £	
Per diem for expedition/trips: 6 £/day x 4 person x 75 days = 1800 £.	1800 £	2256 £ (in fact p/d for trips: 6 £/d x 4 pers. x 94 days = 2256 £)	+456 £	Additional amounts were covered from parts of stipends of project leader and other three members of project team as own contributions to full project realization.
Rent a car: 15 £ x 1 car x 75 days = 1125 £.	1125 £	1410 £ (in fact rent a car: 15 £ x 1 car x 94 days = 1410 £.	+285 £	
Gasoline: 0,5 £/liter x 15 liter/100 km x 5500 km = 412 £.	412 £	450 £ (in fact 0,5 £/l x 15 l/100 km x 6000 km = 450 £.	+38 £	

Engine oil	28 £	35 £	+7 £	
Expenses for edition of colorful flip desk calendar.	330 £	444 £	+114 £	Add fund was covered by saving 114 £ from real purchased the long focus lens for camera.
Purchase long focus lens NIKON AF VR Zoom-NIKKOR ED 80-400 mm f: 4,5-5,6	1045 £	931 £	-114 £	This saving money paid to whole price of colorful flip desk calendar 2014 edition.
<b>Total</b>	5940 £	5940 £	0 £	

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

It is need to try for doing following. Further supporting to survival Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and preserve its typical habitats and probably to involve for saving another vulnerable and endangered wildlife species, which are inhabits at the same biotopes or close to this subspecies, such as steppe tortoise and saker falcon. Reducing poaching by breaking *Haloxylon species* trees for fuel. Facilitate to sustainable development of local communities in the movement to rational balance with surround wilderness and wildlife. So, possible it will be prepared special, more in-depth consideration of future second project on this subject under the auspices of The Rufford Foundation.

### 10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

In order to implement open lessons, lectures and other conversation training actions as the most informative and instructive, to some extent, in the project frame activity were printed in professional printing house the colorful flip desk calendars about Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and its habitats for 2014 edition (idea, design, text, photos by author of the project) with the placement of the logo The Rufford Foundation. During open lessons, lectures, discussions and simple meetings with people from local communities implemented a mandatory distribution of these calendars. It seems it was a good example of right publicity for RF as international high level organization for supporting survival endangered and vulnerable wildlife species and their inhabitations.

Besides it, The Rufford Foundation (with input logo) was also mentioned as a funder in the tree articles published in the News of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Series of Biological and Medical ([www.nauka-nanrk.kz/biological-medical.kz](http://www.nauka-nanrk.kz/biological-medical.kz)):

Volume 2 (308). March – April 2015. A. Zh. Zhatkanbayev. Extraordinary unusual early beginning of reproductive cycle by Turkestan ground-jay Ile subspecies (*Podoces panderi ilensis*) in Southern Balqash desert valley – adaptive response of only one endemic bird creature among whole Qazaqstan avifauna onto changing weather-climatic conditions (Part II). P. 25-47.

Volume 1 (307). January – February 2015. A. Zh. Zhatkanbayev. Extraordinary unusual early beginning of reproductive cycle by Turkestan ground-jay Ile subspecies (*Podoces panderi ilensis*) in Southern Balqash desert valley – adaptive response of only one endemic bird creature among whole Qazaqstan avifauna onto changing weather-climatic conditions (Part I). P. 10-33.



Volume 6 (306). November – December 2014. A. Zh. Zhatkanbayev. A new data on the biology and ecology of Saxaul sparrow (*Passer ammodendri* Gould, 1872) in the deserts of Southern Balkhash valley in South-East of Kazakhstan. P. 27-41.

The Rufford Foundation has also been acknowledged in other articles, and will be fully credited in all further published articles, papers, documents and other printed materials on this project results.

#### **11. Any other comments?**

The most notable in printed calendars in the frame of project activity was that in addition to cognitive information they are unobtrusive promise to environmental conservation activities on the example of save the Ile subspecies Turkestan ground-jay and protection of their habitats and neighboring natural landscapes. These calendars, fully focused on the ideas of the world of wildlife conservation, environmental and property of local communities that are close and understandable to the local population of the geographic region of Southern Balqash desert valley. They are dedicated not alien objects, namely, promoting conservation of the unique representative of the local wildlife and their typically habitats, directly related to the settlement of local people and their daily activities undertaken. That's what is special and this project in terms of the public relations of the local communities is directly related to the local wildlife, i.e., the project is not carried out general lectures for zoological and ecological profile students, which so then almost every day in the classroom to educate and trained in the field of wildlife and the environment.

Important was the fact that the text presented calendars not only in Qazaq and it was in three languages: Qazaq (state), English (international) and Russian (among nations communication), and not on any one of them. And this is very important because more than 90% of the local population in Southern Balqash desert area Qazaqs, and there are large villages and small settlements on 100% consisting only of Qazaqs in everyday life mostly using the language of their ancestors. And as part of the national programme for development and support of the Qazaq language it pays special attention as state and unfairly consigned to oblivion in the Soviet period of development of Kazakhstan. However, in the Republic of Kazakhstan is carried out long-term strategy for the development of the principle three languages, i.e. mandatory knowledge of the state, and the international language of inter-ethnic communication. Therefore, guided by the ideas on the implementation of the state language policy, calendars texts were prepared in three languages, without prejudice to any of them. And for the local population and it has been clear in the context of a case in the state language policy on the use of Qazaq, English and Russian languages, which are in Southern Balkhash area somehow used in the implementation of daily activities in school and office work in public institutions, authorities and agricultural business.

Entire edition published calendars been completely distributed to schoolchildren, simple representatives of local communities, farmers and employees of state organisations, as well as officials from local government agencies.