

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	Sargis Aghayan
Project title	Use of Long-legged Buzzard as a model for conservation of Raptors in Khosrov Nature Reserve (KhNR)
RSG reference	13604-1
Reporting period	10.01.2014 – 15.12.2014
Amount of grant	£5985
Your email address	asargisa@gmail.com
Date of this report	02.02.2015

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
To create a database on the breeding population of the species:		X		The database on breeding population of long-legged buzzard was created for the surroundings of villages. However, due to administrative changes in the structure of Ministry of Nature Protection, including some protected areas, the process of obtaining necessary permissions took longer than we assumed. Therefore, we have not been able to accomplish surveys inside the Khosrov Nature Reserve completely. So, we will complete this task during 2015.
To shift the interests of the children from pet-keeping to survey and movie or photo-making activities			X	More than 150 children of different villages were so inspired of the project that started to create different art objects with long-legged buzzard (carpets, paintings etc.). Additionally, they use the bird as a symbol in local cuisine painting it on cakes, making different dishes in the form of the bird, etc.
To inspire children in parent education (when children explain to parent the value of the species)			X	During the contest children brought the figures, cakes, hand-made carpets and different things made in the form of long-legged buzzard which they could not create without parents help. This means parents also understand the value of the species. That was visible from the dialogues between our volunteers and parents. Also, participation of parents in the event (at the end of the contest) was giving them additional inspiration.
To make the long-legged buzzard a symbol of the local conservation			X	During our project long-legged buzzard and other birds became the loveliest symbol of the locals. The indicators of being symbol are the use of long-legged buzzard form view in cuisine art, etc.
To prepare and conduct focus testing of the educational and inspirational materials			X	Amazing show was organised by children during final contest, where they were competing. Various interesting facts were showed using PowerPoint

				presentations, artistic performances, handmade carpets etc. During contest very informative and interesting presentations were shown. The winners were awarded (books, cups, souvenirs, diplomas etc.) by which can help them in future exploration of surrounding nature without harming it.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

- a) In some areas the nests of target species were in the higher and difficult places, so children were not able conduct survey. To solve the problem, we have selected another species for current location.
- b) Due to changes in political area of Armenia related to shift of the Minister of Nature Protection, and subsequent changes in number of other positions including Heads of Protected Areas, obtaining of permission to enter the Khosrov Nature Reserve became a technical issue. Thus, because it took longer than we have been planning, we could not complete our survey there and will finish it during 2015.

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

A comprehensive data on breeding populations of target species (and not only) was created from surroundings of KhNR, which will be completed during 2015. Scientific publications and recommendations for governmental bodies and non-governmental organisations will be published. This will serve as a base for development of conservation action plans for current locations and also for further planning of research surveys and educational activities.

We developed a very effective model for conservation education activities, which is using as a model some target species for making the whole bird (could be lizard, bat etc.) community as a symbol. So locals will not only save the current species, but also take care of the rest. We will distribute the information about new scheme of conservation which might be used by other environmental NGOs not only in Armenia but also in whole Caucasus region, as well as in some other post-Soviet countries.

Local communities of the target villages started exploring the birds and especially raptors and appreciate the value of birds not only in the frame of nature conservation, but also for agriculture. Also, they began understanding the potential opportunities of alternative income from development of ecotourism in their region. And the most important outcome is the new way of love of children to the birds and nature that is based not on owning the nature but observing it.

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

Firstly, I would like to mention that some of villages were previously involved in such projects, so they were experienced and prepared their presentations very professionally and almost without our help. However, most of the local people had no experience. For those it was a bit difficult to get

involved in a campaign. With the help of our project they not only got knowledge about birds and their conservation importance, but also got experience to design the project, to plan and implement it, and eventually to prepare and present their work. The equipment that was purchased during the project (binoculars and cameras) was donated to the schools so they will be able to continue the started work. All participants of the project also got various presents during final contest of which children were very happy.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The developed method of education appears to be effective and universal. Therefore, we plan to use it for conservation education in other regions of Armenia with main focus on the national parks and other protected areas. Also, we will continue survey of raptors in KhNR to finalize the data collection and publishing the results. Also, we plan to keep communication with the villages in the frame of future development of ecotourism in those regions with main focus on bird watching and other wildlife tourism.

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

We will publish our scientific results in peer-reviewed periodicals as soon as we finish the raptors survey in KhNR. Also, we plan to create a recommendation for governmental and non-governmental organisations on population status of target species to create necessary preconditions for creating the national action plan. The developed method for education of locals as a conservation solution also will be included in recommendations.

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

The project duration was 1 year. Almost all stages of the project passed without serious deviation from the schedule. The few additional months are necessary to complete evaluation of the scientific data with colleagues and writing the papers. The only big change was rescheduling of the final contest from September to November, because it was a great challenge to get five schools organised at the same time.

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
Seminars for schoolchildren	393	520	-127	The amount was overspent because of the economical crisis the prices raised in Armenia; therefore everything became more expensive then we expected writing the proposal
Surveys	2570	2350	220	The amount was underspent because as we mentioned, couple of surveys were missed due to issues with permissions

Contest	790	990	-200	The amount was overspent because of increase of prices
Seminars for teachers	197		197	The amount was not used because the seminars for teachers were conducted the same days when we have been implementing the seminars with children.
Equipment	1260	1350	-90	The amount was overspent because of raise of prices
Booklets and t-shirts	775	860	-85	The amount was overspent because of raise of prices
TOTAL	5985	6070	85	The difference in 85 GBP was covered by the funds of YBA NGO.

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

At first, we believe that the conservation education tool that was developed and tested during the project should be replicated at the other areas of Armenia as well. At second we think that number of such objects should grow in order to provide engaged people a value of uniqueness of their group (eco club, school, initiative group, or whatever). At third we think that there are necessary steps to create a place for accumulation of the monitoring data, which can be used by various researchers, consultants, and other interested parties.

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?

RSGF logo was used in all printed materials (t-shirts, booklets etc.) and presentations during trainings and contest as well.