

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Andrei Tupikov
Project title	Prevention of direct extermination and protection of the steppe viper in the North-Eastern Ukraine
RSG reference	14742-1
Reporting period	April – December 2014
Amount of grant	£5850
Your email address	a.i.tupikov@gmail.com
Date of this report	30 th March 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 analysis of the modern distribution of the steppe viper in north-eastern Ukraine.			+	During the field studies all the historical habitats of the steppe viper in north-eastern Ukraine were observed and explored. From literature data it was known from about 11 habitats. We've confirmed the existence of three of them: two viable and one endangered. Besides we've found two new habitats in north-eastern Ukraine. As a result, by this moment it is known about five reliable habitats of the steppe viper.
The comparison of different habitats.			+	We've collected data of habitats' ecological characteristics. This information was used while developing scientifically grounded conservational strategy and also recommendations for including these habitats in the structure of protected areas.
The study of limiting factors.		+		We've collected data about the different limiting factors. In our opinion, among them the most harmful for the steppe viper's populations was use of different pesticides in farming industry. We received the information about the amount of pesticides' use within the observable territory from 1982 to 2013. For the further analysis we need to study more detailed the influence of pesticides on the steppe viper's populations.
The distribution of the report with our recommendations for the species' conservation among authorities.			+	During the implementation of the project our report with the recommendations for the species' conservation was distributed among the authorities within the observable territory and in surroundings, such as: district and regional divisions of ecological inspection, the department of ecology of the Kharkiv region Public administration, territorial divisions of Ministry of Emergency Situations, first-aid stations, district and village councils.

The preparation of the documents necessary for including the steppe viper's habitats in the structure of protected areas of Ukraine.		+		Our detailed report with the species' conservation and including the habitats in the network of protected areas of Ukraine will be sent to the department of ecology of the Kharkiv region Public administration.
The work with the locals.			+	During the implementation of the project we carried out different public and education activities with the local people of neighbouring settlements and educational institutions to the species' habitats (lectures, talks, interviews).
The development of the detailed recommendations for the species' conservation.		+		We've identified the limiting factors for the species. For this moment we have developed some recommendations for the steppe viper's conservation. But for the creation of more detailed list of recommendations we need to accomplish some additional studies of negative and limiting factors.
The distribution of the published materials.			+	We've prepared, published and distributed different kinds of published materials: booklets, posters, brochures.

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

In the beginning we have some difficulties with the searching of the historical localities, as the description of habitats in the literature sources usually was inexact. As a result we were spending a lot of time on finding reliable habitats. In some questions the help of the locals was very helpful.

Another big problem for us was the difficult situation in the country. The observable territory was situated nearby the area under the military conflict. Besides such situation in the south-eastern Ukraine had an influence on the foreign exchange market. In the very beginning of the project £1 cost 19,2UAH (instead of 12,5UAH when the project was only planned). In the end of the project £1 cost 24,7UAH. We should say, that this fact didn't have a big influence on the volume of works. The project was fully fulfilled.

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

- The most important outcome of our project is the data about current distribution of the steppe viper in north-eastern Ukraine and the data about its limiting factors.
- Our research brought us to the conclusion that the most important factor which lessens the number of species' population is the human's economical activity. As a result, the organisation of strong informational campaign can have a positive influence on the modern condition of the population.

- The positive effect was achieved during this project's education activities. Many of the people were involved in distribution of published materials (booklets, posters, brochures). The most attention was paid to the work with the local people living in settlements nearby the steppe viper's habitats. With the aim to inform the bigger audience some published materials were placed and distributed in public places such as schools, out-of-school centers, hospitals, first-aid stations, district and village councils, territorial divisions of Ministry of Emergency Situations, National nature parks ("Dvorichanskyi", "Slobozhanskyi", "Homil'shanski lisy"), Non-governmental ecological organizations. We believe that the information campaign had a great success.

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

The most part of the planned activities was implemented with the active participation of local people. Some of the locals were not only providing us the useful information about the steppe viper, but also were taking part in distribution of published materials and organising lectures.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, in future we are planning to continue studying the problems of the steppe viper's populations in north-eastern Ukraine. On a basis of the collected data we are planning to make scrutiny study of the limiting factors, especially of the use of pesticides in farming industry. The human factor is one of the most important limiting factor for the Steppe viper's populations and we have an opportunity to affect.

For further detailed research we are planning to enlarge the observable territory and for the comparison include habitats with the more healthy populations of the steppe viper. This will help us not only to make more detailed analysis of the negative influences, but also to develop more competent recommendations for the conservation of the Steppe viper.

Also we are planning to enlarge the number of public and education activities among the local people.

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

The results of the project will be shared with others in several different ways. We are planning:

- to make publications in press (All-Ukrainian, regional, district newspapers and data portals), scientific and popular science editions;
- to place the results of the project on the websites of different conservation organisations of north-eastern Ukraine (national nature parks, non-governmental ecological organizations, etc.);
- to present the results of the project at the All-Ukrainian Herpetological Conference (October 2015, Kyiv, Ukraine);
- to make a report with the subject "The conservation problems of the steppe viper in north-eastern Ukraine and the modern condition of its populations" (for the students and teachers of the biological department of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine);

- to organise lectures in the educational institutions with the help of the national nature parks of the Kharkiv region (April-May 2015).

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

Like it was planned The Rufford Foundation grant was fully used during the 9 months of the implementation of the 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.

Because of the unstable situation in the country the foreign exchange market was also changeable. The budget was initially calculated at a rate 12,5UAH per £1. In the beginning of the project £1 cost 19,2UAH and in the end of the project £1 cost 24,7UAH.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Car rent	2100	2200	+100	The actual price of a car rent was higher than we planned.
Fuel	500	650	+150	Because of the increase in price we've spent more money for the fuel.
Daily allowance	2400	2100	-300	We were able to reduce expenses with the help of bulk purchase.
Field supplies	200	175	-25	
Telephone	100	80	-20	Using one telecoms operator let us reduce our expenses for telephone service.
Printing	300	500	+200	Because of the unstable foreign exchange market the prices varied.
Contingency	100	40	-60	
Postage	150	100	-50	The postage was carried out in complex so it reduced the expenses.
Total	5850	5845	-5	

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

For the development of more competent recommendations and the strategy for the conservation of the steppe viper we need to continue studies of the limiting factors. That is why it is needed to define the maximum and the minimum size of the biotopes where the Steppe viper lives and identify the level of negative influence on the species

To make scrutiny study of the influence of we need to collect the examples of snake's ecdyses. Also we are planning to define and to examine the prey objects of the steppe viper, as this will show the indirect influence of different pesticides on the Steppe viper's populations.

The field studies of habitats with the more healthy populations of the steppe viper are also needed.

After the comparison of healthy, dense populations and low-density populations, their habitats' conditions (ecological factors, limiting factors, etc) we'll be able to define a problem of the species' conservation and to develop the strategy of the populations' growth.

As the steppe viper is a rare endangered species in Ukraine the most important step will be including all the known the habitats in the network of protected areas of Ukraine.

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

All the published materials (booklets, posters, brochures) were provided with The Rufford Foundation logo. In the publications in press The RSGF support was mentioned. In future all the materials (based on the data collected during the project) will be provided with the reference or the The Rufford Foundation logo.