

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	Polina Volkova
Project title	Filling gaps in knowledge of distribution and population status of highly endangered plant species on the island Kunashir (south-eastern "corner" of Russia)
RSG reference	15010-1
Reporting period	May – December 2014
Amount of grant	£3112
Your email address	avolkov@orc.ru
Date of this report	18.12.2014

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 reveal exact actual status of known populations of the rare species on the island Kunashir: <i>Hydrocotyle ramiflora</i> , <i>Betula maximowicziana</i> , <i>Chloranthus serratus</i> , <i>Bothrocaryum controversum</i> , <i>Daphniphyllum humile</i> , <i>Carex incisa</i> , <i>Carex insaniae</i> , <i>Rhododendron tschonoskii</i> , <i>Schizophragma hydrangeoides</i> , <i>Erythronium japonicum</i> , <i>Magnolia hypoleuca</i> , <i>Amitostigma kinoshitae</i> , <i>Habenaria yezoensis</i> , <i>Tilia maximowicziana</i> , <i>Athyriopsis japonica</i> , <i>Athyrium wardii</i> , <i>Arachniodes mutica</i> .		+		<p>Despite thorough searches, we have not found previously described populations of several species (<i>Chloranthus serratus</i>, <i>Carex incisa</i>, <i>Carex insaniae</i>, <i>Erythronium japonicum</i>, <i>Habenaria yezoensis</i>, <i>Athyriopsis japonica</i>, <i>Athyrium wardii</i>, <i>Arachniodes mutica</i>). As the descriptions of location of these populations are not detailed and these populations have not been inspected for a long time, we are not sure if the species still exist on the island. This anxiety was already expressed for several species (e.g. <i>Chloranthus serratus</i> and <i>Habenaria yezoensis</i>). The only exception is <i>Erythronium japonicum</i>, which is ephemeral. Thus, we were not able to find it, because its above ground parts have already died. We also did not manage to study populations of <i>Betula maximowicziana</i>, because we revealed high polymorphism of this species (probably caused by interspecific hybridisation, which is common for birches) that is why it was poorly distinguished from close species.</p> <p>We inspected known populations of <i>Hydrocotyle ramiflora</i>, <i>Bothrocaryum controversum</i>, <i>Daphniphyllum humile</i>, <i>Rhododendron tschonoskii</i>, <i>Schizophragma hydrangeoides</i>, <i>Magnolia hypoleuca</i>,</p>

				<i>Amitostigma kinoshitae</i> and <i>Tilia maximowicziana</i> and documented their exact position and condition (see supplementary report for detailed descriptions and photos).
To look for new, previously unknown populations of these species in suitable habitats from remote and not yet investigated locations.			+	We found and documented new populations of <i>Hydrocotyle ramiflora</i> , <i>Daphniphyllum humile</i> , <i>Schizophragma hydrangeoides</i> , <i>Magnolia hypoleuca</i> and <i>Tilia maximowicziana</i> (see supplementary report for detailed descriptions)
Dissemination of the obtained information			+	See answer to the question 6.

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

The main difficulty was the absence of precise descriptions of locations of focus species populations. That is why it was difficult to find them and even if we discovered any population, we remained uncertain if it was the very population that was described previously or just a new one in the same area. We tried to tackle this difficulty investing a lot of efforts in searching the plants, what was still not enough in some cases (see above in the table).

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

1. We obtained the current and detailed information about status of previously known and found by us populations of highly endangered eight plant species on the island Kunashir (see supplementary report for detailed information);
2. We found six species of aquatic plants that are new for the Kunashir island, which has long history of botanical investigations, these species are rare or new for Kurily islands in general.
3. We broadly disseminated the obtained information (see answer to question 6).

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

We worked with Kurilsky nature reserve, increasing the knowledge of its staff in the field of conservation biology of the studied rare species.

Broad dissemination of the obtained results (see the answer to question 6) served for ecological education of the community and especially tourists who are visiting the Kunashir island and locals. We also discussed the need in protection of the endangered species with locals, tourists and frontier guards when we met them during expedition on the island.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, the monitoring of the described populations (that are easy to find now as we marked geographic coordinates with GPS) will be performed by the staff of nature reserve. This monitoring will be supported on governmental level as the information, obtained by us, will be included in the new edition of Red Book of Russian Federation.

We placed the illustrated descriptions of the species on the website of the nature reserve and asked all the visitors send us information about this species. Thus, we could get new information on the species from locals, tourists and visiting researches.

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

We posted our results in Russian and English, illustrated with original photos, on the site of Kurilsky nature reserve (<http://kurilskiy.ru/?territory,kurilskiy>). Thus, the information will be used by staff of the nature reserve as a basis for monitoring and protection of the endangered populations and for ecological education, by visitors of the reserve and locals. We submitted two papers, describing our results, to the scientific journal "Bulletin of Moscow society for nature protection" (accepted, will be published in 2015), thus the results are accessible to the scientific community. Finally, we arranged information for incorporation in the next editions of Russian Red Book and Red Book of Sakhalin Region (which includes Kunashir island) and sent it to the editors.

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 project lasted from May to December 2014 in full accordance with the initial plan. We summarised existing information on the target species in May—June, using literature, herbarium and scientist's knowledge; we worked in the field in July—August and we summarized the obtained information in September—December.

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
Flight Moscow -- Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk -- Moscow (3 persons)	2041	1947	+94	The tickets were slightly cheaper than we planned
Ship Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk-- Yuzhno-Kurilsk -- Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (3 persons)	510	392	+118	The tickets were slightly cheaper than we planned
Local transportation on the Kunashir Island (car rent)	115	115	0	
Food (3 persons)	446	446	0	
Local transportation on the Kunashir Island (motorboat rent)	0	212	-212	We used money that left after purchase of the tickets to rent a motorboat to travel more effectively in the northern part of the island, where roads are absent.
Total	3112	3112	0	

Exchange rate was 1 Pound Sterling = 58.8 Russian Roubles. Now (December 2014), the rate has been changed greatly, but we exchanged obtained funds to Roubles in spring (before the expedition).

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

Our results illustrated scarcity of previously existing information on status of populations of rare plants and on flora in general in the remote parts of our country. Thus, it is essential to continue filling gaps in knowledge of distribution and population status of highly endangered plant species on other poorly accessible territories of Russian Far East (e.g. Kommander islands that are located to the east from Kamchatka, belong to other nature reserve and characterized by unique and still poorly investigated flora).

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?

Yes, we used the logo in the presentation of our results on the website of Kuril nature reserve. We appreciated the support of RSGF in the two papers that have been accepted for publication in the scientific journal "Bulletin of Moscow society for nature protection".

11. Any other comments?

We are grateful to The Rufford Foundation for the support and hope to continue the collaboration.