

## 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	
<b>Your name</b>	Barna Krisztian
<b>Project title</b>	Protection of the Sand Martin ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> ) and European Bee-eater ( <i>Merops apiaster</i> ) colonies in natural habitats in Vojvodina (Serbia)
<b>RSG reference</b>	16194-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	23.02.2015 – 01.06.2016
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4960
<b>Your email address</b>	barnakrisz2@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	25.06.2016

**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 map all of the existing colonies in natural habitats in Vojvodina			+	The surveys were very successful, and we had mapping all existing colonies of the targeted areas.
To survey the circumstances of the current breeding population and to ensure undisturbed nesting and to clear the most important river walls from weed			+	Thanks to the accomplished conservation work we created many new nesting opportunities for birds, and we made the older loess walls safely habitable again for them. But we also paid a special attention to maintain the nesting undisturbed for them.
Creating a database of all gathered information from all of the colonies			+	We collected all received and surveyed information into a database which will help to prepare the future conservation work.
To increase the number of people who are interested in the protection of these species and their colonies			+	During the lectures and fieldwork we managed to get a lot of supporters, who make a point to help to us voluntarily to preserve colonies, to ensure peaceful environment and nesting opportunities for them.
Bird-ringing actions and excursion			+	With these actions we wanted to get more people acquainted with these birds and to show them how much is their help necessary to preserve bird's whole environment.

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

Last year, on the major rivers larger floods were off, so it was only on few places possible to naturally renew the river bank, this way creating new nesting places for birds. There were many places left where we did not perform cleaning due to inaccessibility of the sites.

Thanks to the varied spring the arrival of birds was postponed. Thus the nesting period was protracted, which made the organisation of ringing actions slightly more difficult. We have organised several actions because there were not capable colonies to ring at the same time.

At the outplacement of the information boards we had smaller difficulties, because we did not count with the fact that we might have to apply for a licence in some areas to outplace them. For this reason, the outplacement of boards has slightly shifted.

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

The most significant result we achieved is that - thanks to surveys - we have an image which shows the accurate, current stock situation on the natural habitats. We hadn't had this information before.

We explored the current status of the environment of colonies, the number of threatening factors, and the areas that require priority attention. With the summary of these results we learned in how critical conditions are natural habitats, which are the places where it is necessary to carry out renovations and maintenance to survive.

With the performed field activities we have succeeded to ensure peaceful natural nesting places for birds. By weeding out we were creating new walls for birds. We believe that these places have managed to increase the size of the breeding population in natural habitats and can provide them with nesting opportunities for a long time.

Among the local population and the target group the project got very good response. Many of them have very open-minded attitude towards us. With our work, we managed to call attention to the importance of these species, and also to the importance of preserving the existing natural habitats in the environment where they live. Many of them voluntarily undertook to monitor changes in the future on existing colonies in their vicinity, because they do not want to see disappear these "jewels"

from their ambience. In the future, this would mean a huge help for us, and we are confident that the conservation of these locations will be regarded as solved in long term. We hope, that we have been launched a process in which people themselves can realize the essence of the protection of nature and they can find the opportunity how can they do for it.

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

Citizens who are living in the vicinity of the colonies definitely "benefitted" from the project. During our activities we received very positive feedback from local residents, local anglers and farmers who are landowners in the surroundings. Everyone shows a very open-minded attitude to the preservation of birds and their habitat, and to the protection of the nesting sites. We received a huge help from numerous people, who were members of the involved group and who have been voluntarily participating in cleaning, refreshing the river banks. Also, a lot of them offered help in the future. We have a feeling that - thanks to our active field-, many bird species, which had not been known before, have become familiar to the participants. Many people also recognised the importance of protection of the colonies and the breeding spaces, because earlier they did not know how beautiful natural values have been existed in their surroundings. After this they promised that they will preserve these places with their heart and soul, because they would like other people to see this and act similarly. They also realised it is a good opportunity in tourism, and we believe that this will also help the protection of these birds.

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

Yes, we definitely want and plan to continue our conservation work. We would like to follow the changes on the researched colonies in a long-term period, but we also want to monitor the trend of these populations, and to ensure their long term survival on natural habitats as much as possible. If any problem will endanger their preservation or their peaceful nesting conditions, we will be able to react on these things immediately. Among other plans, we would like to try to extend this research to a bigger area, e.g. to explore more natural habitats throughout the country where these birds are nesting, later to conduct a nationwide census. But we also consider that the mapping of all other, not natural nesting places is also necessary for an effective protection. Meanwhile we started collecting data of other nesting colonies, and in the future we would like to investigate all of them. For the real, effective protection it is indispensable to know the entire current situation.

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

During the time of the project we tried as much as possible to be presented locally. We want to publish and share with others the results of the research and a summary of the performed activities of our scientific work. After the completion of scientific works we planned to publish an article in Ciconia journal or in the Ornis Hungarica journal.

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

We were able to start our project at the scheduled time, in the middle of March 2015. Information and some data of the known colonies have been collected in advance. We were able to accomplish all the planned activities. Because of the lack of floods the colonies were located less scattered, which facilitated the research. The only delayed and partially completed activity was the outplacement of information boards, because applying for permission for it was a bit late. The project officially ended at the end of May 2016, but the research and conservation work have been still proceeding. The observation of this year's breeding colonies and the maintenance, cleaning of the loess walls has been started as well. From the recaptured birds during this year's ringing actions, we will get to know more important information about their life.

**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
Fuel cost for field work	900	900	0	The planned amount of fuel used in its entirety.
Cost of ringing actions and camp	450	450	0	
10 Mist Nets	500	550	-50	The price of Mist Nets were more expensive than we just count.
1 Brushcutter	530	510	+20	At the purchasing of Brushcutter we obtained a smaller price reduction, thus the remaining amount we could transfer to other

				things.
Printing of brochures and posters	850	800	-50	Thanks to the large amount of printing we got these thing a little bit cheaper.
Printing of promotional T-shirts	400	420	-20	The printing, order of smaller quantities were more expensive than planned.
Cost of 3 information boards	650	590	+60	The part of wood materials, to prepare the information boards, we received for free from our member, so we can save some amount.
Cost of lecture and catering	300	350	+50	We held many more lectures, presentation as we planned, therefore it also had more material cost.
Travelling and food for the excursion	380	380	0	We used up the planned total amount. We were obliged to rent a car.
<b>Total</b>	4960	4950	+10	

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

We consider that the next important step is to continue the monitoring of the researched colonies, at critical points to secure peaceful, safe circumstances for birds during the nesting period in the future. We also want to invest further efforts to continue shaping the approach of the people. We would like the residents, who live in the surroundings, to be able to identify the importance of conservation of these natural values.

**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?**

Throughout all of our work the Rufford Foundation has been mentioned, at every occasion we insisted to underline the identity of the project sponsor. That way we wanted to take advantage of existing opportunities to say thanks for the support. The Rufford Foundation Logo was used on every promotional material.

**11. Any other comments?**

This large-scale project became possible thanks to the support of the Rufford Foundation. Only in this way could we get to know the present situation of nesting population on natural areas, to make something to protect those colonies which are in the most critical situation and to know which of them needs more attention in the future. Thanks to this, we could strengthen the cohesive force between the staff that would help our work. I would like to say thank you once again for the support!