

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	Edward Mongin
Project title	Conservation of the Great Snipe through a development of appropriate habitat management and public awareness
RSG reference	19285-B
Reporting period	Mid-November 2017
Amount of grant	£9994
Your email address	Edward.m@list.ru
Date of this report	07/11/2017

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 check results of pilot restoration of habitats in the Sporovo Reserve and to carry out the new restoration of key breeding site in the reserve which was determined during the last project				<p>Research was carried out in habitats near Visokoe village, where management of habitats was conducted during previously stage of the project.</p> <p>About 30 ha of key breeding habitats for the great snipe, including the previously known lekking arena were restored in the Sporovo fen mire.</p>
To study distribution of females during breeding season in order to develop proper management of habitats				<p>We caught and ringed 25 birds on 2 lekking arenas. Unfortunately there was only one female among caught birds, that was equipped with VHF transmitters</p>
To find the key breeding sites in Mogilev and Vitebsk regions				<p>We found 10 new leks with the total numbers of males estimated between 88 and 125 birds</p>
To help organization of the manual mowing championship in the fen mire of Sporovo Reserve in order to increase public awareness about conservation problem of rare species and their habitats				<p>The manual mowing championship was conducted in the reserve and 23 teams from different regions took part in the event. Information was published in different mass media.</p>
To analyse collected data and publish its in mass media				<p>Data were analyzed to publish in two scientific articles.</p>

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

A small number of males in the Sporovo fen prevented us from catching the females in this place (more females may be observed on the big leks). There were more males on the lek in the Berezina River, however we caught and marked with VHF transmitter only one female, despite repeated catching efforts. This was connected with irregularly appearance of females in the lek and weather conditions. Great snipe males were equipped with the remaining VHF transmitters. Complex landscape and insignificant range of transmitters hampered radio tracking of birds. We conducted additional search for nests of females to study their distribution during breeding season.

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

New key breeding habitats were found in Mogilev region. We discovered 10 leks in the Drut River with the total numbers of males estimated between 88 and 125 birds.

About 30 ha of the most important breeding habitats for the great snipe were restored in the Sporovo Reserve during 2016. Next season, thanks to the results of this works, we recorded strong increases (several times) in the numbers of lekking males as compared to censuses of 2011-2013.

Close cooperation has been established with the reserve staff. Due to this, possible measures for the preservation of the great snipe were determined on the territory of the Sporovo Reserve, as well as public awareness was raised about the conservation problems of rare species. At present, the reserve staff continues works on habitat restoration and takes into account the recommendations developed during the RSGF projects to preserve the great snipe.

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

Staff of the Sporovski Reserve took part in the restoration of the great snipe breeding habitats. This work promoted the conservation of Sporovo fen that is the main task of staff. About 50 local people from different regions of Belarus took part in manual mowing championship. Hundreds local people visited the county fair with different folk crafts, that was organized during this event. Such events support local communities and craftsmen economically.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I plan to continue a study of females' distribution during breeding season in order to develop proper management of habitats. Also I would like to carry out repeated restoration of habitats in the Sporovo Reserve as the practice revealed some peculiarities of management for the fen habitats with *Salix* bushes.

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

Scientific results will be published in proceedings of the Eighth Woodcock & Snipe Workshop. I plan also to prepare some additional materials for the journal of APB-Birdlife.

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 Rufford Foundation grant was used from mid-May 2016 till early-November 2017. This is the same term as the anticipated length 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.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Camera traps (Bushnell Trophy Cam HD) -5 items	1355	780	-575	We had to buy 3 camera traps to save the budget balance.
VHF transmitters – 8 items	560	951,05	+391,05	Price was a bit higher for the concrete model and Tax was also included (158,51)
Receiver	496	843,48	+347,48	We were to pay 71,97 for freight and 244,99 custom tax (included and for other goods)
Headset	26	27,99	+1,99	
Yagi antenna	90	94,70	+4,70	
Accommodation and subsistence	5250	5070	-180	Reducing costs to maintain the budget balance
Travel Expenses	592	528,51	-63,49	
Costs of operating the tractor	450	962	+512	Staff of the reserve determined the new rates to restore habitats (due to the new machines and technology)
Diesel fuel for the tractor with mill cutter	328	328	0	
Organization of the manual mowing championship	650	350	-300	Reducing costs to maintain the budget balance and to realize the main tasks
Payment of Internet	147	57	-90	The same
Postage expenses, stationery, consumables	50	1,27	-48,73	The same
Total	9994	9994	0	

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

It is important to continue works on restorations of the great snipe habitats and to test management practices. It is necessary also to continue the study of distribution of females during the breeding season and their ecological needs in order to carry out the proper management of habitats.

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?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used on a poster in the Sporovo Reserve when the manual mowing championship was conducted (also on the programme of championship). RF received also publicity in many press agencies and Internet recourses:

<http://www.budni.by/?p=18050>

http://maiak.by/news/the_nature_round/sporovskie-senokosy-2016.html

http://www.bk-brest.by/2016/07/sporovskie_senokosy_07_2016/

<http://www.kp.by/daily/26568.5/3584243/>

<http://naturegomel.by/senocos/>

<http://www.tio.by/info/novosti/Ekologicheskij-festival-Sporovskie-senokosy--2016-projdet-13-avgusta/>

...and others

We used the logo in the Power point presentation at Eighth Woodcock & Snipe Workshop in Portugal (Pico Island). It was also used in the materials on the APB-Birdlife site (<http://ptushki.org/info/press/item/18325.html>).

Preliminary results of the project were published in the paper:

E. Mongin, E. Davidyonok Continuation of researches on the Great Snipe in Belarus. WSSG Newsletter 2016, 42: P.7 -8.

We also presented the project results at Eighth Woodcock & Snipe Workshop that was held in the Portugal from 9th to 11th May, 2017. Data will be published in the conference proceedings by the end of this year.

11. Any other comments?