

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	Salih Tora Benzeyen
Project title	Raptors Conservation Action
RSG reference	20443-1
Reporting period	April 2017- June 2018
Amount of grant	5000 GBP
Your email address	tora.benzeyen@gmail.com
Date of this report	05.07.2018

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
Eliminating the lack of knowledge about the locations that raptor-human conflicts are intense				<p>During the project, "the case record form" system applied in the clinic. Thus we learned more specific information where and how the injury cases happened. We organised the field trips according to these locations that raptor-human conflicts are intense. We couldn't specify only one location but more random places. We spent 27 days in the field, during which we visited more than 120 villages and town and found new nesting areas of different species that is mostly long-legged buzzard.</p> <p>We didn't come up with any injured raptor cases but found six poisoned great white pelican in a wetland and contacted national parks.</p>
Raising awareness in local communities including the children and young people.				<p>It is the most successful part of the project. We organised 17 different bird watching events with more than 320 children from local school and student workshops of local governments. We also visited the young shepherds in the villages to inform them about the raptors and learn what they know about this conflict cases. We shared the informative posters and flyers with them.</p>
Collecting data about the injured raptors to update the conservation priorities.				<p>During the clinic studies, we gained valuable information about the number and causes of injured raptor species. You can see the details in the tables below.</p>

Species	Amputee	Dead	Released
Barn Owl	1		
Black Vulture		1	
Booted Eagle		1	
Common Buzzard		12	4
Common Kestrel		2	12
Eagle Owl	1	1	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	2	8	
Goshawk	2	4	2
Hen Harrier			1
Imperial Eagle		1	
Little Owl			3
Long-eared Owl		3	
Long-legged Buzzard	6	10	10
Marsh Harrier		1	1
Peregrine Falcon	1		1
Rough-legged Buzzard		1	
Short-toed Eagle		2	
TOTAL	13	47	34

Table 1. Number raptor cases and their ultimate status according to the clinic records.

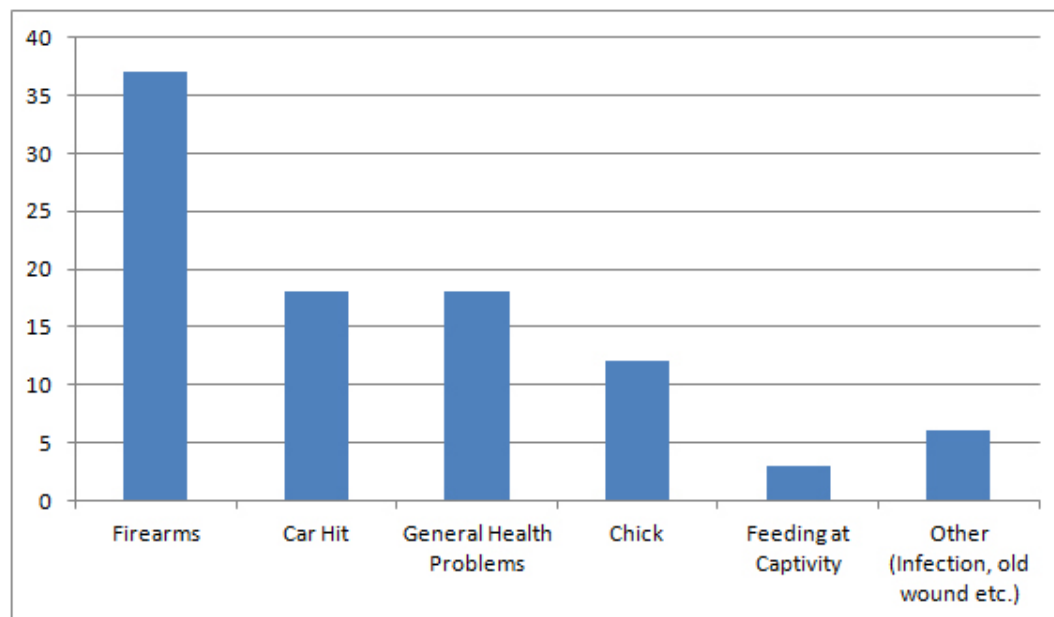


Table 2. Causes of injured raptor cases according to the clinic records.

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

The main difficulty was the communication with local people during the field trips. We were expecting to meet with local leaders and hunting clubs in villages and rural areas. But the reality was totally different than our expectations. Most villages were almost empty. There were two main reasons; firstly, local people were busy with their cropland and secondly the young people moved to cities but the elders left. It was very hard to reach them and try to explain the project.

To tackle with this problem, we visited the larger towns instead of the villages. But this time, another problem emerged; the locals did not want to talk about the illegal hunting against raptors or they did not have any information. Because of all these communication problems, we couldn't make a healthy surveying that we were planning to do.

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

The first and most important outcome is the successful communication with children and young people in locals. Before the field trips, we contacted with the local schools or rural workshops of the municipality for bird watching activity with children. They supported us very gently and gave opportunity to work with kids. More than 320 children found chance to touch a binocular first time and observe birds. Two of these schools created their own birding student clubs.

Secondly, with the inspiration of project, we started to record data of injured raptors systematically in the clinic. It gave high success, each of injured raptor recorded with details as much as possible including the cause and location of case. Thus, we have good amount of data to understand the status on injured raptor cases. Additionally, some of the raptors ringed before release back to nature. We couldn't gain any feedback from these ringed birds. We do not know their survival rate. It needs more study. In future, we plan to spread this record system to all wildlife clinics in Turkey to gain data for the status of injured raptors.

Thirdly, we understood that a conservation study without major support from the governmental institutions or universities is not effective to create sustainable conservation. The individual studies like our one are very limited. Personal interests of the people who work in the conservation and treatment studies is barrier that has to break. Otherwise, the individual efforts are ignoring under personal benefits. We realise that, a strong cooperation with institutional organizations is necessary even you do not want to get stuck in bureaucratic processes.

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

During the field trips, we erected the project posters and distributed flyers to the local coffee shops and talked with the adults about the project as much as possible. But the main involvement of the local communities was the bird watching events. The

children and young people joined to the project actively by bird watching events with support of their teachers and instructors. The students showed great interest to the bird watching and wanted to learn more details about the raptors. As mentioned above, even some of the students created their own birding student clubs.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

During the project, we worked with the all raptor species during the project, but we realised that some species are more vulnerable than others like long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*) and common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*). Even these species are not under threat according to national and international evaluations; we think that limited studies about the so-called wide-ranging species have a knowledge gap.

We plan to work on this conservation action in future by focusing one of these species and understand every aspect about them. So, in future we want to organise more species focused studies. Thus, we can achieve more valuable information for conservation of the targeted species.

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

During the project, we shared every step of activities with others by Facebook page and website. It was very important because we took very good comments and feedback. Some of the schools reach us by these tools to organise birdwatching events. In the last weeks of project, we prepared a short video to tell our story and actions that we did during 15 months. It already watched by couple of hundred people.

Additionally, we would like to publish a scientific paper with clinical results. When it is ready, we will share with the academics that have related works with raptors and bird conservation.

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

From the first expenses made in March 2017 to end of June 2018, we used the grant for the project expenses. The majority of the grant used at the beginning of the project to buy the equipments. The rest used for the local and intercity transportation and other visual materials (included printed and online materials)

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
Coordinators	800	800	0	
Intercity Transportation	420	460	-40	Due to the annual rise in ticket prices.
Local Transportation and Fieldtrips	1110	1450	-340	Rise in rental car costs and fuel prices.
Telescope	550	300	+250	Found a second hand and a better scope.
Binocular	350	350	0	
Pocket Binoculars	320	320	0	
Cameras	350	350	0	
Poster, Flyer and Sticker	200	200		
Website	200	160	+40	Discounted because of the transformation from the word press blog to .org website.
Short Teaser	150	150	0	
Meetings	350	200	+150	Supported by local conservation platforms.
Cargo, Communication, Stationery and Press	200	200	0	
TOTAL	5000	4940	+60	This amount will be used to keep the website domain open.

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

First of all, the project, as can be understood from its name, is an action more than a project. So, it is very critical to spread the objectives of project to all across the country. We would like to create a communication network between all wildlife veterinary clinics in Turkey to learn current status of injured raptors in national level.

Secondly, we understood that some species are more vulnerable than others. It is not meaning on their population trend but threats that not known. As we observed from the clinic researchers, the long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*) is the main target species in the project area. It needs more detailed projects. Also we understood that destruction of the nests and re-location of the chicks in sub-urban areas are a new and unseen problem. There are several incidents that long-legged buzzard and common kestrel chicks moved to clinic as all family. It is needs more studies.

Lastly, the involving of children to conservation is the future of everything. It was the hardest part of project to communicate with the adult people but explain the status of the threatened species to children was more effective than all others. Does not matter, which topic or species we work, we have to reach children for sustainable and realistic changes.

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 RF didn't receive any publicity but we used the logo in each material that produced during the project. The logo used in the Facebook page, website, printed materials (posters, flyers and stickers) and presentations we made.

Most of the birdwatchers and researchers are fully aware that this project is funded and supported by the Rufford Small Grant. As we inspired from the previous RSG projects in Turkey, we inspired several bird watching clubs and individual researchers to apply their own RSG project.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Salih Tora Benzeyen (Project coordinator): management of the project activities and all other technical arrangements.

Onur Okur (Project coordinator): responsible from the clinic part of the project, treatment and rehabilitation of the injured raptors.

Merve Temiz, Fazli Yagız Oktas, Adam Murphy, Lider Sinav, Cansu Ozcan, Gözde Yurdunmalı, Kumsal Düzgün, Ezgi Çobanoğlu: support in fieldtrips and birdwatching events with children.

Okan Ürker, Nizamettin Yavuz, Kiraz Erciyas Yavuz: scientific and technical consultancy.

Ömrül Ünsal Özkoç, Özmen Yeltekin and Suleyman Ezmez: photographic support of raptors to use in the printed materials.

12. Any other comments?

Thank you to the Rufford Foundation for gives us this great opportunity to develop ourselves as young researchers and involve to active conservation of threatened bird species.

Conferences & Meetings



Clinic & Fieldtrips



Bird Watching with Children



