

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. 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. 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	Ian Tchagra Little
Project title	Understanding and mitigating the impacts of land-use management strategies on grassland biodiversity.
RSG reference	04.07.07?
Reporting period	October 2007 – April 2009
Amount of grant	£ 5000
Your email address	ian.little@uct.ac.za
Date of this report	29 May 2009

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
Identify what forms of pastoralism are compatible with biodiversity conservation			yes	I have achieved however analysis is required to assess to comparable effects of management types.
Conservation of indigenous and threatened species		yes		I will be able to illustrate the detrimental impacts of some management types. However, effective implementation of these on a species basis will be based upon our local conservation authorities' support.
Advising conservation extension officers and agricultural extension officers.		yes		I have the data to develop a guideline procedural manual in order to address this objective however this is still in the pipeline.
Conservation of wetlands and water resources			yes	Through this research the management of the Verloren Valei Ramsar site will be considerably improved and with improved farming practices in grassland catchments regional water supplies will improve.
Further conservation of all grassland species with birds acting as a conservation “umbrella”			yes	Birds have proven to be an excellent “umbrella” for illustrating the need for improved land management. These conservation “friendly” practices will benefit biodiversity as a whole.
Improving our understanding of the ecological functioning of grassland systems.			yes	This study will assist conservation authorities to set in place ongoing grassland conservation practices. Currently grasslands are a major focus for conservation in South Africa and improved understanding of how to implement these conservation activities in an efficient and effective manner are critical.

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

Finding effective study sites with the desired management practice along with a reputable knowledge of the history of management on these farms was a major challenge. Luckily these were available as some farms have been within a single family for multiple generations. This will in itself make convincing these farmers to alter their farming practices should that be desired for conservation very difficult.

Working in moist grasslands in the rainy season led to major difficulties with regard to getting from site to site as a result of extensive mud.

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

Conservation of endemic and threatened species.
Improved understanding of the management requirements for grassland conservation areas.
Assisting in the process of generating conservation “friendly” grassland farming guidelines.

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

Local people were hired to assist in data collection. In the process of field work I gave free guided tours to local people and explained the conservation benefits of “friendly” land management.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The project is not yet complete as data still requires analysis and interpretation and once this has been done the implementation of conservation activities resulting from the research needs to proceed.

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

Seminal presentations, poster presentation, scientific publication, semi-popular and popular article publication.

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

The entire period to date was co funded by the RSG (18 months). The project will continue for another 18 months.

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
Sweep nets (arthropod sampling)	120	120		As planned
Disc pasture meter (vegetation)	70	70		As planned
Storage jars/preservatives	300	300		As planned
Heavy duty rope	95	95		As planned
Electronic field balance	190	190		As planned
1 entry-level PC/printer	460	460		As planned
Field assistant from local community	2200	2200		As planned
On-site travel (fuel)	4150	765	3385	The excess covered by other sources.

Field accommodation	4130	800	3330	The excess covered by other sources.
TOTAL	11715	5000	6715	Other expenses not covered by RSG were covered by other funding sources.

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

Analysis and interpretation of data, implementation of conservation activities resulting from the research, communicating conservation recommendations to as broad a public as possible.

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

Aside from verbal communication this has not been done to date. The reason for this is simply that no publications or presentations have been done yet. This will happen in many areas, in many forms in the 18 months to come and onwards.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to emphasize the importance of implementing conservation after research effort has taken place. Without implementation conservation research is simply "hot air".

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rufford Foundation for their support and wish all their other endeavours in conservation my best of luck.