

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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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. 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	
Your name	Stanislav Viter
Project title	The International Year of Forests in the North-eastern Ukraine: establishing of long-term program on forest biodiversity conservation
RSG reference	10155-1
Reporting period	June 2011 – November 2012
Amount of grant	£5780
Your email address	Elbasan-Viter@mail.ru
Date of this report	30th November 2012

**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 conduct a field survey in a series of forest patches			+	Within the project we have visited and surveyed 280 forest compartments with total area of 110,000 ha in 32 forests ranging from 20 to 15,000 ha. Description according to developed scheme was made for each patch. We created a GIS-database, where all these descriptions are combined with appropriate maps.
To visit territories which were previously entered to the State Cadastre of animal World in order to inspect the regime maintenance			+	We have visited 40 forest compartments which were entered to the Cadastre in 2008-2010, total area of these plots is about 500 ha. We found 2 "hot spots" where forestry planned cutting or it had been already done despite they were officially informed.
To record rare species and species included in the Red Data Book of Ukraine and Red List of Kharkiv region			+	We have recorded 82 animal species on 445 points. Main part of registrations made birds of prey and bats.
To involve professional biologists			+	We have involved 9 persons from 5 organisations (Kharkiv National University, Interdepartmental research laboratory "Study of biodiversity and development of nature reserve management", National Nature Park Gomilshanski lessy, National Nature Park Dvorichanskiy, I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology (Kyiv), University of Wroclaw). Such fields of science as ornithology, malacology, herpetology, bat research, botany and mycology were represented.
To involve youth (school children and students)			+	In general 12 volunteers have taken part in our expeditions. Among them were students of Kharkiv National University, young naturalists from Kharkiv Zoo and Kramatorsk (Donetsk region). We also carried out a seminar concerned to the conservation of forest biodiversity for school children in Zoological Garden of Kharkiv.
Data transferring to the Governmental Cadastre of Animal World			+	Database on rare species and their habitats with specification of specific forest compartment and stratum were transferred to the Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources. Recommendations regarding conservation of that species and restrictions of forest management on these

				patches were also submitted.
Creation and development of website		+		We created the website concerned to the Nature of Kharkiv region and at the moment we are working on its content (writing reviews).

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

We had some technical problems but they did not affect on the project run and success. The other difficulty was in very time consuming field season, which from the one hand gave us rich material, but from the other hand we had to change our timeframe.

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

- 1) We have gathered the team of young field biologists. It is one of the first cases of forest research team completely independent from the Government of Ukraine. Our team has demonstrated the effective work in the field of forest research and conservation, for only one field season we have obtained a body of information about forest biodiversity of studied areas. Gathering of such team is the real success of the project and the key outcome. Our experience concerning independent forest biodiversity research is very important for providing changes to Government forest management in future.
- 2) We have concentrated in our hands a large amount of data including forest taxation data and information about forest state in studied region; also we have some progress in analysis of forest management standards. We have created a database including the occurrences of rare and protected species of animals, plants and fungi. This GIS database includes more than 2000 records; each record has geographical connection and connection to certain forest compartment and stratum. It is not a great number for any European country where such data bases include millions of records. But in Ukrainian scale it is quite large database because our records constitute no less than 5% of full Governmental Cadastre that includes near 40,000 records. We are going to expand this database and to transfer these data to forest assessment and management institutions.
- 3) We reached essential consents with governmental forest management organisations about taking our data and including to forest management plans and limitations of some activities that could have negative impact on rare species. Unfortunately at the moment this agreement doesn't mean that all these areas will be immediately protected, but that mean the beginning of the dialogue.

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

During our expeditions we communicated with lots of local people. The most of locals use surrounding forests for small-scale hunting, mushroom gathering, recreation, etc. Nowadays rates of cutting significantly exceed the necessity of local communities in wood, furthermore, the most attractive and productive areas are destroyed. Therefore we often faced with negative relation to forest cutting from local communities – especially when there was a talk about old forest areas, which are often well-known to locals and have also somewhat historical heritage. But almost no one from locals knew anything about possibility to protect these areas from cutting and we see that most of them will never spend their efforts to counteraction to these increasing rates of clear felling.

These people need to know more about their rights and mechanisms of public control of forest management.

Also it worth to be said that a lot of local people truly believe that forests can only exist under continuous logging pressure with removing of dead trees and control of “pest” number (wood decaying fungi, saproxylic beetles etc.) by people. These ideas need to be changed in public consciousness.

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

In the longer scale we consider the main direction of our work to be change of forest management methods in Ukraine, including restrictions in cutting rates, clear separation of economical forests from protected ones and change of ideas of local people about forest “functioning” and role.

During the project realisation we have understood that there is a necessity to continue our activities in the larger scale and also to start some further ones. Planned activities are divided into following directions: 1) expansion of forest field survey and collection of data on rare species distribution to other territories (borderline Forest-Steppe regions); 2) future work on regular and official informing of forestry’s and forest management organizations about the presence of rare species on their territories and about necessary restrictions of felling, aimed to save these species; 3) independent assessment of forest state (history of deforestation, forest fragmentation, reduction of forest cover area, reduction of dead wood amounts in forests as results of forest management activities and its impact on forest biodiversity); 4) raising of large-scale work in the field of ecological education among school children in village schools, situated near forests and among young active peoples in cities. This work must include carrying out seminars and preparing different educative materials.

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

Main results of this work are data on old forests state and distribution of rare and protected species. Main way of its distribution is Official correspondence with forest management organisations. We will strive for including data on biodiversity in forest management documents, establishment of cutting restrictions. Also the important way of our work will be dissemination of data about the state of our forests and how to save it through mass-media and own website. During this project we start important work and we are going to continue it in future. The last point is dissemination of the results of our work in scientific sphere – through publications in scientific journals.

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

Despite we match all our purposes there were some changes of previously established plan. There were two delays: we start our project in September but not in June. It was because we obtain funds a little later than planned. We shift some planned field activities form 2011 to 2012 field season so this year it was really intensive.

The second delay was connected with internet site creation. According to plan we should start it in the period from October 2011 to March 2012, but we deal with it in August – November 2012. The reasons were that we had a lot of work with databases and surveying during the first stage of our project.

These two delays didn't have serious impact on our overall work.

**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
Garmin GPSMap 60 cx	335	238	97	
Sony Alpha 700 (used)	390	398	-8	We choose Sony camera because we are already had some lenses and other stuff for this model.
Sony 100mm f/2.8 Macro	410	677	-267	This lens was essential for mycological studies, i.e. vital taxonomy, also for taking pictures of ground mollusks, bats, and rare plants. We will use these pictures for illustrating our scientific and educational materials.
Stereomicroscope Delta Optical SZ-450B	177	312	-135	We decided to buy another, more expensive model of stereomicroscope. Our colleagues already have purchased the model which we were about to buy and they shown us serious limitations of that model.
Field telescope Celestron Ultima 80	155	179	-24	We have purchased the field telescope as planned, to the time of purchase its price has slightly increased.
Spurs for tree climbing	142	153	-11	
Climbing equipment	126	103	23	It was bought without problems and used in studying of bats and birds of prey.
Mist nets	37	37	19	We bought one mist net for bats catching from Ecotone company using project funds. However it is rather expensive and there are not much ways to buy it elsewhere.
Other research stuff	231	16	215	We planned to buy laser range finder and hypsometer for making forest descriptions but finally we refused to buy such expensive stuff. Instead it we have bought a lot of small important stuff like magnifiers, plastic boxes for samples, hand lamps etc. Also we reallocated this money to other points of our budget.
Tent	145	148	-3	According to our budget we have purchased one tent, other two we had already.
Sleeping Bag	132	143	-11	We have bought camp and field equipment as planned, except by buying field shoes for one team member instead of sleeping bag.
Backpack	125	123	2	
Headlamps, batteries and other field equipment	50	50	0	

Notebooks, papers, envelopes, maps, etc.	150	150	0	
Medicine	50	48	2	
Food and accommodation	2600	2491	90	We spent £5 per person per each field day. As we had 82 field days, and in average 6 persons per each field expedition, we had a small positive balance.
Fuel for car	525	508	17	We planned to get 3500 km but we spent about 2900, instead of it we had some extra expenses (small car repair after few expeditions).
<b>Total</b>	<b>5780</b>	<b>5774</b>	<b>6</b>	

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

We plan to expand field survey on borderline territories through dividing into 2-3 field groups. Therefore we need to engage more people in our team. Increasing data amount will require more effort in data processing (database management) and continuous correspondence with forestry and forest management organisations. The most decisive step would be to create the local Cadastre centre on the base of Interdepartmental Research Laboratory “Study of Biodiversity and Development of Nature Reserve Management” in Kharkiv, which would accumulate data from Eastern and Southern Ukraine. That Centre could also provide an independent assessment of forest state, which we believe is an important next step. Such fields of modern forest science as deforestation, forest fragmentation, reduction of forest cover area, reduction of dead wood amounts in forests as results of forest management activities and its impact on forest biodiversity are almost not developed in Ukraine. The problem is the contrary interests of official forest scientific institutes, traditionally connected with and financed by forest industry.

On that step we will need much more close cooperation with NGO’s and we have preliminary agreements with some of them (National Ecological Center of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ecological group “Pechenegy”, Kharkiv).

One of fundamental further steps of the project should be the movie, where we will highlight problems of increasing felling rates in the region. Also in this film we will discuss results of our independent analysis of situation in the forest sector and share our experience in the effort for the forest conservation. It will be available freely on our website and will be presented in a series of public presentations.

Aside from conservational and scientific activities we plan to start work in the field of ecological education. We will orient ourselves to two target groups – village school children and university students. Educational work will consist of workshops, public lectures, lessons, field excursions, film showing, dissemination of leaflets, posters, booklets and other materials prepared by our group.

All these steps need further fundraising. First of all we need to provide at least part-time salaries for people, responsible for realization of stated above project activities. We have prepared applications for several foundations: Whitley Foundation, leader – our team-member Yegor Yatsuk, The National Birds of Prey Trust, Leader – Stanislav Viter.



**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?**

We used RSG logo in our website “The nature of Slobozhanshina” (“Slobozhanshina” means the historical region on the East of Ukraine, existing from the Cossacks time, which includes several administrative regions). Website started on 25th November and it will be further developed (<http://www.slobnature.in.ua/>).

As we had very rich and time consuming field season, we moved to the step of results publication only now. We work on several scientific articles, which we plan to publish in Ukrainian and foreign journals. These papers are concerned with different groups of living organisms (bats, birds of prey, fungi, ground mollusks) in which will display preliminary results of our project. These publications will be accompanied by references and acknowledgements to RSGF. Also RSGF logo and reference will be used in presentations displayed on several conferences, among them is international conference “Primeval Beech Forests: Reference Systems for the Management and Conservation of Biodiversity, Forest Resources and Ecosystem Services” (June 2013, Lviv, Ukraine), where we plan to raise a problem of oak forests and their conservation.

**11. Any other comments?**

In Ukraine over a period of 2011-2012 years political and economical situation has changed for the worse. Such situation in the field of nature conservation was aptly called ‘ice age’. Planned creation of new natural reserves was delayed, and in existing reserves management replacement took place, often in unclear and corrupted way. Many conservational governmental programs were stopped. Conservation activities, both within NGOs and governmental institutions, has become much more difficult. In such conditions, which we believe are temporary, foreign sources of funding are extremely important.

Therefore we truly appreciate Rufford Small Grants Foundation for support and trust. We do our best to make changes in Ukrainian forest management, to explore and conserve the most valuable parts of our forests.