

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. 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	Maxim Tarantovich
Project title	Revelation of viability and furtherance of conditions which will help population and range expansion of roller in Belarus.
RSG reference	11238-1
Reporting period	May 2012 – October 2013
Amount of grant	£5979
Your email address	tarantovich@gmail.com
Date of this report	17.10.2013

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
Estimation of recent population number of the roller in Belarus.		X		Census works in potential breeding sites of the roller was carried out. According to the observations the number of rollers at monitoring sites has decreased by 30% compared with the data obtained 5 years ago. However the monitoring activity shall be continued in order to make objective estimation of the number of roller. We are going to keep on observation so as to collect significant data base and to eliminate the influence of annual fluctuations.
Reduction of the roller mortality during breeding season.			X	All the trees with rollers nest hollows have been protected from marten (<i>Martes martes</i>) by plastic rings. The nest hollows were mechanically cleaned to reduce negative impact of ectoparasites on development of nestlings. As a result, we didn't register death cases caused by predation in the protected hollows and 100% of hatched chicks flew successfully from the hollows.
Protection of old trees with the roller nest holes.		X		Representatives of local government were involved actively in the project. We succeeded to convince the local authorities of necessity to protect nesting sites of roller. The first Belarusian reserve zone for roller ("Gronovo" reserve zone) was established as a result of our cooperation with local government. Nevertheless the other nesting sites of roller are still in danger of forest cover destruction thus these areas need state protection. We are planning to continue our work on reserve zones for roller in Belarus.
Increasing of roller breeding success in revealed breeding sites.			X	The level of breeding success of roller was determined as 75.0% (n=9) for breeding seasons of 2012 and 2013. The level was significantly higher as compared with in the value of 52.7% (n=11) that had been indicated previously in the process of 5-years observation.

Revealing of post-breeding dispersion, migration and biological features of the species via individual colour ringing of the roller nestlings.		X		We have ringed 23 nestlings of roller regarding the results of two breeding seasons. The breeding pairs of the roller were photographed by Canon camera with 20x zoom to find the birds ringed by color rings in the previous year.
Accessing of supplementary data about feeding of the species during breeding season.			X	We collected data on feeding process and found 16 prey species used by roller for feeding of nestlings.
Increasing of awareness among the staff of forestry enterprises and general public about the necessity of the roller protection in Belarus avifauna and about the realisation of this task.			X	<p>The project was conducted in close cooperation with the Belarusian forest ranger stations, forest farms and forest enterprises. We used 200 questionnaires to collect data concerning the number of roller in breeding season from forestry areas; we prepared and disseminated information about critical status of the species in Belarus and provided forestry enterprises with recommendation to produce and place nest boxes for roller.</p> <p>We also tried to rise awareness of general public about the situation with roller in Belarus. Information about critical status of roller in Belarus, recommendations for roller habitat conservancy and guides for producing and placing nest-boxes were placed on websites http://birdwatch.by/news/4780 http://www.wildlife.by/node/17315</p> <p>Special attention was paid to informing of local population in the roller nesting area. We made a presentation about roller and its habitat conditions, reported about dramatic decline of roller in Europe and Belarus and represented possible ways to stabilise the number of species in Belarus. The report represented Rufford Small Grant Foundation Programme and our project in the frames of the Rufford Programme. We organised a meeting in the local secondary school № 2 and made our presentation. The</p>

				<p>presentation was attended by over 100 people including pupils, teachers and journalists of local media. The visitors received booklets about roller and brochures “National Plan of Action for the Conservation Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i> in Belarus”. The information about the meeting and about the problems with roller was published in local official newspaper and placed on the official newspapers website</p> <p>http://www.cherikovnews.by/?p=1747</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The breeding pairs of roller were photographed by Canon camera with 20x zoom to find the birds which had been ringed by colour rings in the previous year. But we didn't succeed to get the pictures in sufficient quality and with correct camera angle. Rollers showed very cautious behavior on nest territory that complicated the process of photo shooting; and we did not have adequately powerful optics in our disposal for longer distances. The experience revealed low efficiency of the method for monitoring. We have decided to use camera traps for the next year instead. These camera traps will be installed in front of the hollows occupied by breeding pairs.

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

1. Roller breeding success have increased by 22, 3% as compared with the data obtained during the previous 5 years of observation in breeding sites.
2. The project contributed to increasing awareness of general public and staff of forestry enterprises about the necessity to protect roller and avifauna and about possible measures which can be taken for this mission. Local authorities were involved in the protection of roller in Belarus.
3. The first roller reserve zone was created in Belarus to protect roller nesting area (“Gronovo” local reserve zone)

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

The information about problems with roller in Belarus and possibilities for preservation of the species was publicised through local mass media, thus the issues left the narrow borders of ornithological research and got a public nature in the locality where the project was implemented.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we intend to proceed our research. We are going to continue the search for nesting sites of roller in Belarus, to take measures to protect the nests from predators and to implement preventive actions to improve the reproductive success of the species. In addition to the above, we will

continue our work with general public, local authorities and forestry enterprises in Belarus to protect the species and to increase breeding success of roller. We are planning to expand the list of nesting sites under state protection. The next year we will extend cooperation with forestry enterprises and will set up a joint project for construction and installation of nest boxes for roller. We will continue colour ringing of the birds and their individual tracking using camera trap. In the working process we are going to introduce ptilochronology as a new technique which provides an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of fledging of roller.

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

The results of the project will be reported at two international conferences. They are Rufford India Conference, Bengaluru 2013 and International Research-to-Practice Conference "Ecological culture and Environmental Protection" (Vitebsk, Belarus).

The results will be reported to general public at meetings with local population in the frames of the project work (as it is done in Chericov region); these achievements will be described in information materials designed for local authorities and forestry entities involved in the project; we are also looking for opportunities to place this information on the ornithological internet source

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

Start of the project - May 2012. Finish of the project – October 2013. The project was implemented in accordance with the schedule.

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
Travel Expenses	1600	1660	+60	The price of gasoline has increased by 13% in 2013
Accommodation and subsistence	3600	3445	-155	Cost savings by living in cheaper hostels. More frequent stay in a tent.
Materials	235	160	-75	Only one batch of color rings (300 units) was bought instead of the planned 600 units on the basis of estimates of the number of birds ringed in the first year of the project. This has enabled cost savings. Colour rings 300x0,25£=75£
Overhead expenses	544	714	+170	Overhead expenses accounted for 12% instead of the planned 10% (caused by change in tax rate).
Total	5979	5979	0	

Exchange rate: 1 £ = 14 650 BLR

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

- 1) To expand the list of roller nesting sites under the state control through the creation of special reserve zones.
- 2) To organise the construction and installation of nest boxes for roller to compensate the lack of natural hollows.
- 3) To continue monitoring with the aim to discover the key factors influencing the population dynamic of roller in Belarus.

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?

The RSGF logo was used in 200 questionnaires disseminated among forestry enterprises in Belarus, the logo was included in documents provided to local authorities in the course of discussions on the creation of reserve zone for roller in Belarus; the RSGF logo was placed on APB-Birdlife internet-source (included in information about the project and labeled all the questionnaires); also the logo was used for presentation made in Chericov.