

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	Alexey Dondua
Project title	Protection of spoon-billed sandpiper breeding ground in Northern Chukotka: better late than never
RSG reference	12.01.10
Reporting period	June 2010 – January 2011
Amount of grant	£5732
Your email address	adondua64@mail.ru
Date of this report	January 18, 2011

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
Talks with Nature conservation authorities in the Chukotka regional government to seek for their approval and understanding		Yes		On our way to the study area we had no information whether our project is supported by RSGF or not, hence we were not able to form a team involving Chukchi hunters.
Talks in the village of Nutepel'men; recruiting volunteers from villagers to partake in this work			Yes	Talks occurred in local villages (Nutepel'men and Vankarem) on the way back from the field.
Establishing field camp on the Belyaka spit and eliminating territorial Arctic foxes within that small area. This work is to be done by a team of two local trappers and two ornithologists not later than in the last ten days of May (before birds arrive). SBS breeding territories at the Belyaka Spit and Juzgny Island will be searched thoroughly, chiefly by ornithologists, up to the end of July. Alongside, local volunteers (trappers) will be trained to recognise the species and fill observation datasheets.			Yes	
As soon as SBS nests are found, we immediately start 24-hour patrolling of the area - from the start of incubation through fledging. Hence, the area will be prevented from presence of any mammalian predator (unleashed dogs, Arctic foxes, reindeer or brown bear) and occasional humans. Also we will try to push away roaming jaegers and big gulls from the area. All observations on nests and broods will be done from a distance of 50 m or more; no			Yes	

handling or ringing is planned. Any nest disclosure caused by observers will be prevented.				
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The only difficulty was that we got the information that our project was supported by RSGF when we were already in field (on 3 June), thus we had no opportunity to arrange for hunters' participation in the project in good time and to buy necessary field equipment. One personnel Chukchi team was formed instead of two personnel and it was because grant announcement arrived late during nesting season and many local people were busy with fishing. However Chukchi guys agreed to work in the project though I promised them that their per diem and expenditures on using their dog sledges will be given to them only in late autumn.

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

1. We found that local breeding population of spoon-billed sandpiper at the Belyaka Spit (recently one of the two main known breeding populations of this species) is still alive and needs in urgent and active protection.
2. We made the pioneer attempt of direct guarding of spoon-billed sandpiper nest and brood (as well as all other waders species) from predation and it was successful. The only spoon-billed sandpiper nest, which was found and protected, hatched, and brood was observed (and also protected) no less than to 14-days old and likely fledged. This result is of great importance considering rodents absence and strong predation pressure in summer 2010: 52.9% of other wader nests were depredated (n=51, cases of provoked depredation and clutch losses after unhappy capturing are excluded).
3. We demonstrated that such important conservation task as saving spoon-billed sandpiper from extinction in its breeding grounds could be done with the real help of native villagers.

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

Three Chukchi hunters from the Nutepel'men village participated in the project. Unprecedented fact of hunters' partaking in protection of small wader has an essential educational component.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. Our success was only the start of the large-scale work and it is impossible to stop. We are planning to continue our activities at the Belyaka Spit until there is at least a slight hope to restore spoon-billed sandpiper breeding population in this area. In the case of successful fundraising at least one more field group will work on saving nests on the northern coast of Chukchi Sea at other Spoon-billed sandpiper breeding site(s).

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

We would be glad everybody interested in saving spoon-billed sandpiper from extinction to know about our experiences. We hope to publish our report in the International Waders Study Group Bulletin and on Russian Bird Conservation Union's website in the shortest time.

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

The anticipated and the actual length of the project were similar: we started field-work a week before waders' arrival and finished it after the only protected brood of spoon-billed sandpiper was about to fledge (last observation of brood happened on the 14th day after hatching).

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
<i>1. Transportation</i>				
1. Railway tickets St. Petersburg - Moscow - St. Petersburg (1 person)	101,5	101,5	0	
2. Air tickets (plane) Moscow - Anadyr' - Moscow (1 person)	811	811	0	
3. Air tickets (plane) Anadyr' - Kresta Bay (Egvekinot) - Anadyr' (1 person)	305	305	0	
4. Air tickets (helicopter) Kresta Bay - Nutepel'men - Kresta Bay (1 person)	61	30,5	-30,5	Only the returning trip from Nutepel'men to Egvekinot by N.Vartanyan
Caterpillar track trip Egvekinot – Nutepel'men *	0	781	+781	Decision to hire private caterpillar track in order to reach Nutepel'men was made because of long delays of helicopter flight from Egvekinot
5. Caterpillar track trip Nutepel'men - Belyaka Spit (doesn't depend of persons' number)	203	203	0	
6. Boat trip Belyaka Spit - Nutepel'men (doesn't depend on persons' number)	203	203	0	
Dog-sledge trip Nutepel'men – Belyaka Spit – Nutepel'men (2 sledges)	0	111,5	+111,5	We have got the information that our project was supported by RSGF in June when we were already in

				field. After grant announcement we invited local hunters to participate in the project. Dog sledges were the only possible transport to carry Chukchi participants (and return back to Nutepel'men) along melting sea ice.
Employment of two dog-sledges in search for Arctic fox dens (2 sledges for 11 days)	0	111,5	+111,5	By the same reason mentioned above we were not able to arrange for hunters participation in the project in advance. Only one hunter agreed to work over all the desirable period, others were to return to the village before ice destroying. We decided to use their help in the most efficient way – to provide search for inhabited Arctic fox dens on the all territory of the Belyaka Spit using their dog-sledges.
7. Air cargo (150 kg)	609	609	0	
2. Food and accomodation				
1. Hunters (2 persons) per diem x 80 days	1947	961,3	-985,7	In reality one hunter worked at the Belyaka Spit for 79 days and two hunters for 11 days; the reason see above
2. Ornithologists (1 person) per diem x 80 days	973,5	1192,5	+219	N. Vartanyan left from St. Petersburg to Chukotka on 9 May and returned on 15 August (98 days). Uncertain transport communication in Chukotka made it impossible to make this trip faster.
3. Field equipment				
1. Tent for hunters, 1 piece	365	0	-365	Was not bought; we leaved to Chukotka and even started field-work having no information whether our project was supported by RSGF or not.
2. Heater for hunters, 1 piece	51	0	-51	Was not bought for the same reason as above.
3. Binocular for hunters, 2 pieces	102	0	-102	Was not bought for the same reason as above
Total	5732	5428,8	-303,2	

* Items marked out by red were not included in the original budget

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

There is no use to talk about urgency of fundraising. We wish to form several field-groups that would be able to provide Spoon-billed nests and broods protection in already known breeding sites and to provide search for unknown breeding sites of the species along the Chukchi Sea coast.

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 did not use RSGF logo yet. Information our project was supported by RSGF appeared already in our report to "Arcticbirds" database <http://www.arcticbirds.net>

11. Any other comments?

We are grateful to Rufford Small Grant Foundation – the only conservation organization which supported our project. Pacific Fishery Institute, Anadyr branch, supported the field-work of project leader in 2009 and 2010 financially and by field equipment - my personal thanks to the leader of Laboratory of Sea Mammals Anatholy Kochnev. My friend Ivan Taldenkov - the leader of spoon-billed sandpiper project 2005 (this project also was supported by RSGF) helped me with his own money both in 2009 and 2010, if it was not for his help the real critical situation with the northern spoon-billed sandpiper breeding population would still remain unknown. Personal thanks to the leader of Fishery Inspectorate of Egvekinot town Alexander Chekmaryov, to the staff of this organisation, to all citizens of Egvekinot town, Nutepelmen and Vankarem villages who helped us in crazy logistic of Russian North.

We are proud we were the first team in Russia that made small but really practical step to save the spoon-billed sandpiper from extinction in its breeding grounds, this step could not be done without support of all mentioned organisations and people.