

## **The Rufford Foundation Final Report**

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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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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<b>Grant Recipient Details</b>	
<b>Your name</b>	Lucy Kemp
<b>Project title</b>	Re-wilding of Southern Ground-Hornbills
<b>RSG reference</b>	14875-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	1 May 2014 – 31 April 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5936
<b>Your email address</b>	project@ground-hornbill.org.za
<b>Date of this report</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2015

**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 establish four 'bush schools'		✓		One release ongoing (just awaiting permits for final bird) with the next two in advanced stages of preparation (for one the release aviary is ready and we just need the Newcastle's Disease vaccine course to be completed, for the other we are awaiting the final construction of a collapsible aviary).
GIS-based site selection		✓		This is ongoing with a new collaboration with
Re-wilding and release protocols			✓	The draft reintroduction plan has been completed and is currently out for review with all local stakeholders before it goes
Publication			✓	One publication is completed: Koepfel, K.N. & Kemp, L. V, 2015. Lead toxicosis in Southern Ground-Hornbills <i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i> : a case from South Africa. <i>Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery</i> . Two more in advanced stages of preparation.
Employ a shepherd		✓		One shepherd has been employed and interviews for another two are being completed this month.
Associated education and awareness programme			✓	The education programme has grown in this past year allowing us to reach thousands of school children in areas where wild birds still persist and also

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

In order to ensure the sustainability of the release programme we approached an architecture firm, known for their 'green' designs, to design and assist with the construction of a collapsible aviary that can then be used at multiple release sites, rather than large proportions of our funding being used in static permanent structures. This work was being

done *pro bono* and despite months of follow-up and repeatedly being told that they would have a product for us within the required time frame, we are still awaiting something positive from them. The decision has been to carry on with the first release in a permanent structure and we are currently in the final stages, the wild mentor bird has already been caught. Once the community education and community by-in is completed the release will proceed. The aviary and the hand-reared group of birds await, already pre-bonded, well-socialised, vaccinated and ready to go.

Our best release suffered a tremendous blow with the poisoning of three individuals including the mentor alpha male. This has set our progress back considerably and consumed nearly 2 months of trying to find carcasses and culprits and then the follow-up awareness campaign to try and ensure that the remaining two birds remained safe till we caught them.

We had an interesting year of harvests (2013 season) with only one male chick – the rest all being females. This has slowed production down considerably as each group needs three males and one female, and without the male 'support-units' we cannot release the groups. The surplus of females in holding has slowed what aviary space we can use, and as a consequence of the pending hand-rearing centre and the back log we will not harvest in the coming year. We are undergoing training (San Diego Zoo) in how to sex embryos so that in the 2016 season we will be able to selectively harvest what the project requires.

The drop in fuel price led to the loss of one of our largest sponsors: SASOL Ltd. – a fuel company that had to retract all of its conservation project support. We are still looking to find a replacement for this.

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

- i) We have shown that the techniques we use to do the reintroductions – right from the harvest of the redundant chicks, through hand-rearing and socialising and then finally release and post-release monitoring – work to produce functional family unit groups, capable of successfully breeding and fledging chicks. It has taken over a decade of development and finally we have a replicated technique that works and takes all the relevant life-history and complex social interactions of the species into account.
- ii) Our work is growing an awareness of the plight of the species and we have been invited to present to the South African Scientific Authority (who advises the Minister of Environment) on the need for the species to be CITES listed and the need to ban the use of aldicarb pesticides in the country. Finally we are able to target our message at the scale that is able to make a legislative difference.
- iii) Our reintroduction efforts are now being included in case-studies with very well-known projects such as the Mauritius avian restoration projects and the Californian condors – allowing our work to add the knowledge base of reintroduction biology for socially complex species.

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

The shepherds are sourced from communities near the release sites, thus creating jobs in a country with a 25% unemployment rate. In the case of the Loskop release site we are sourcing the shepherds from the land-claimant communities, thus working to sustain the future of Loskop as a nature reserve.

Our education and awareness programme is targeted at communities in both the intended release sites and areas where wild birds still persist. Often our programme is the only conservation message these communities have heard and leads to further discussion about the greater environment: burning regimes, other species declines, land-use best practice.

We have instigated ground-hornbill craft production from some of the communities where wild birds occur and after a fair trade is conducted we then create a market for the crafts to assist with a little extra fund-raising and creation of awareness.

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

Yes. We would like to apply for a booster grant as this is an ongoing and long-term project and the Rufford fund is currently one of our largest supporters.

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

Peer-reviewed paper:

Lessons from trial reintroductions of Southern Ground-Hornbills.

Contribution to peer-review paper:

Health and disease in translocated wild animals.

Popular media:

Facebook, magazine articles, newspaper articles, presentations to schools, bird clubs and conferences.

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

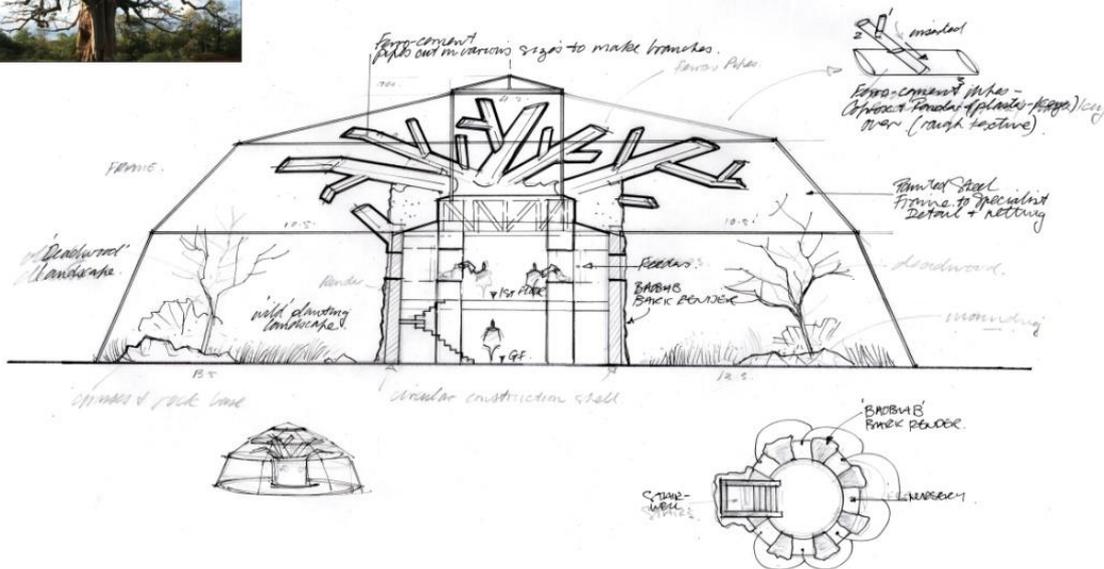
The funding was used over a financial year as it was initially requested for.

**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
Fuel	3636	4500	-864	The search for the three poisoned birds increased our fuel spend beyond what we budgeted and the care of the birds in the aviary required more management than expected (this has been rectified with better training)
Shepherd	1100	500	600	We were able to get some of the equipment for the shepherds sponsored.
Increasing hand-rearing capacity	2200	2500	-300	We hosted a workshop to design the new centre and then we had a site visit with the architect and several preliminary visits to secure the site. This was not a move we had anticipated when applying for this grant but is the best way to ensure sustainable hand-rearing at the highest standards.
<b>Total</b>	6936	<b>7500</b>	564	We were over budget by about £550.

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

The most important step is now fund-raising for the centralised hand-rearing facility. The aim of this facility is to standardise the quality of chicks being raised and thus ensure a sustainable flow of stock to build the restocked population. This facility will draw on expert rearers under the guidance of a manager who has been rearing good quality birds since 1996. The land is secured for an initial 20 year lease and all parts are moveable should the centre need to be relocated at any time.



## 10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project?

Yes – the logo was used to acknowledge the funding on our FaceBook page and in every presentation given on the project. It is also on the acknowledgment page of our information brochure.

## Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes in all of the above mentioned avenues. We also presented our work at the Rufford conference hosted in Cape Town in April 2014.

## 11. Any other comments?

Our Rufford Grant has helped us grow this project considerably and for this opportunity we are extremely grateful. The support of basics such as fuel is what allows a project to grow.