

The Rufford Foundation Final Report

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	George Eshiamwata
Project title	The population, range, habitat preferences and threats affecting the Near Threatened Malindi pipit (<i>Anthus melindae</i>) in the Coastal grasslands of Kenya.
RSG reference	15035-1
Reporting period	May 2014-Nov 2015
Amount of grant	GBP5995
Your email address	eshiamwatagw@yahoo.co.uk
Date of this report	18 th Nov 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
Assess the current population of Malindi pipit and spatial distribution within the entire range of coastal grasslands		Yes		<p>The areas surveyed during this project include Arabuko Sokoke Forest and its environs, Marafa, Marereni, Tana Delta. This is a very large area. In Kenya, the species range extends to the north of the Tana Delta (Mpeketoni, Lamu, grassland glades within and around Boni Dodori forests areas to the border with Somalia). There has been a spate of insecurity along the coast especially north of Tana Delta including the use of Boni Dodori Forest as a hideout for terrorists. This made it difficult therefore to survey and assesses the population north of the Tana Delta. What therefore this means is that the entire population was not surveyed. The distribution of this species is however highly fragmented and not contiguous as initially presented in maps. There was a huge gap in its distribution in areas north of Marereni as the habitat is very hostile (bushy and very dry). Tana River Delta appears to be the stronghold for this species. The largest population of the species is therefore found within the delta, which has expansive grasslands</p>
Document Malindi pipit's habitat preferences and threats within the entire range of coastal grasslands			Yes	<p>Based on the ecological survey undertaken within the areas surveyed, this objective was achieved. The species' preferences were documented. It is now clear that the species prefers short grass. The threats are enormous particularly in the south of Tana River Delta where farming is reducing the available habitat for this species. The threats in Tana River Delta include bush encroachment where the invasive <i>Prosopis juliflora</i>, fire,</p>

				<p>restriction of grazing in some areas (due to ethnic clashed between the Orma and Pokomo ethnic groups). Restriction of grazing is likely to affect the habitat use of the Malindi pipit because grazing helps in maintaining a certain height of the grass. If not grazed, the grass overgrows forcing the birds to looks for patches with shorter grass within the landscape.</p> <p>Salt production along the coastline is also a major threat as there are currently a lot of investments in the expansion, construction of evaporators and dykes that is reducing the available habitat for this species. This compounded by the associated infrastructure and emerging settlements around salt production companies could pose a major threat to the survival of this species.</p>
To assess land cover and land use changes in Malindi pipit's habitat at the Kenyan coast over the past 20 years and their effects on habitat size		yes		<p>Implementation of this objective has encountered problems in terms of accessing cloud free images. The area is also very expansive and this funding would not have purchased adequate scenes of satellite imagery to cover the entire study area for the different years during which change in land cover was to be assessed. The entire coastal areas have problems in terms of satellite images. Most images are very cloudy. However, distribution maps of the species range are being generated that will show habitat suitability based on mapping of grasslands</p>
To assess local people's level of participation, awareness and attitudes towards conservation, with special emphasis on Malindi Pipit and its habitat.			Yes	<p>This was assessed through questionnaires, Focussed Group Discussions with local communities on the ground through the many forums held with different communities ranging from the Giriama (around Arabuko Sokoke, Marafa, Marereni), Orma and Pokomo (Tana River Delta). Perceptions vary across communities because of differences in culture and socio- economic way of life.</p>

			<p>However, during this study, it emerged that the presence of NatureKenya (East African natural History Society) on the ground particularly in Tana River Delta and areas around Arabuko Sokoke has contributed a lot to local awareness about the importance of conserving birds and their habitats. This has been enhanced by engagement of the local communities through nature-based income generating activities and formation of community-based organisations (Site Support Groups) focused on bird and habitat conservation of threatened species and ecosystems in the area. Most of this activities are project-based and will require scaling up to sustain the gains that have been made</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

There were many challenges encountered during the project implementation. The key challenge was sporadic insecurity incidences ranging from terrorist activities within the study area including a massacre of more than 60 people at Mpeketoni. This happened when the inaugural field visit was planned thus forcing the research team to postpone the data collection in some areas for a long time. This explains the delay in starting this project and interruptions in data collection. This was tackled by just taking precaution and suspending field visits when the government issued warnings and also complying with the curfew when in the field whereby fieldwork could only be conducted within hours allowed by the curfew. Getting an introductory letter and making visits to the local administration (County Commissioners and area chiefs) and briefing them about our work made it possible for the research team to be well received on the ground.

Second challenge was the ethnic/tribal animosity and clashes between the Orma and Pokomo in the Tana River Delta, which is a stronghold for the Malindi pipit. The conflict is between these two communities over land and grazing land and in the past there have been times when these conflicts went out of control leading to death and destruction to property. The situation on the ground was so tense that sometimes there was a lot of suspicion when researchers were seen interacting with members of a certain community. This challenge was tackled by working with local administration (local Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs) as well as working with local guides as field assistants/enumerators during data collection. This also had cost implications because that meant that we had to work with more people straining our budget for field assistance.

The third challenge involved logistics. The study area was large and this impacted on the cost of travel. Some of the sites within the expansive delta could only be accessed using boats and hiring was expensive. The costs of fuel were also high as a result of distances involved. The terrain in some areas especially the River Tana Delta was really bad especially the state of the road. Occasionally the vehicle was stuck in mud thus affecting the field work (see images). This was overcome through sometimes walking long distances parking the vehicle away and avoiding muddy/swampy areas and road or using boats.

Another challenge is that the species is found on people's farms/land and so in some cases, there was a lot of suspicion because land is a very sensitive issue to an extent that people would think that researchers were surveying their land for possible grabbing or demarcation. This problem was overcome by explaining to the people the purpose of the visit including showing them a letter/permit secured for the work from the county administration.

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

- Documentation of the population, habitat preferences and spatial distribution of the Malindi pipit between Arabuko sokoke and north up to the Tana River Delta.
- Assessment of the attitudes and perceptions of the local communities about birds and their conservation. This is an important outcome from this project as it forms a basis for subsequent conservation interventions especially that that involve working with the local communities
- An inventory of existing community-based organisations was conducted. It is now clear who the major stakeholders are on the ground ranging from local community groups, NGOs and government agencies. The conflicts on the ground notwithstanding, it is clear that when it comes to conservation, site-based interventions can be a bridge to bring the warring communities together and bring a long lasting peace because in as much the communities have problems interacting, when it comes to conservation issues, they are readily willing to work together for the common good of nature. This was demonstrated through the focused group discussions during which the two communities were brought together and freely interacted and shared their views about bird conservation. The rapport has been struck between this project and the community and therefore it will not be difficult to return and work with them as there is a lot of good will

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

The communities were involved in many ways including the interactions during the data collection as respondents, and focused group discussions. During the interactions and meetings held, there was a lot of sensitisation about birds and the environment and so this was a mechanism for environmental and wildlife education during which the community came to appreciate the value of birds for avitourism, employment, peace building initiatives

and other services provided by birds. The communities benefited from this project through the following ways:

- a) Employment opportunities provided by the project members from the communities were engaged as field assistants and enumerators. This was very welcome considering that the unemployment rates are very high in the study area thus contributing to the very high poverty levels
- b) Awareness and sensitisation about birds and their environment.
- c) Contribution to local economy through services sought from the community including rental (hotel), food bought, hiring of boats, fuelling among others. The providers of these goods and services benefited directly from the project.
- d) Unifying nature and approach taken during the data collection. By bring the different stakeholders drawn from government, local communities and civil society, it demonstrated the unity of purpose as the project provided a plat for communities to interact leaving out the animosity that characterises their relationships

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. If the security situation normalises north of River Tana Delta, I may want to continue with the work particularly focusing on population and geographical range (spatial distribution) so that it will be possible to have a clear picture about the conservation status of the species in its entire range in Kenya.

Working with local communities is necessary especially on capacity building and raising awareness about birds. The study areas have a great potential for avitourism and therefore developing the capacity of the local guides in bird identification and guiding will go a long way in creating jobs and appreciating bird conservation. Most of the field assistants and enumerators are passionate about birds and have an interest in developing their skills in bird watching and guiding.

Working with schools is necessary as part of awareness raising efforts. This is important because during the study, this species was noted to prefer school football pitches where the grass is sort and is open. Working with schools will ensure that awareness about the species is made.

There is need for a long-term study to look at the breeding ecology of the Malindi pipit. This can be a study undertaken through a postgraduate student.

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

Once analysis of the results from this work is complete; the results will be disseminated through peer reviewed publications, a brochure is in the process of being developed showing a summary of the results and recommendations from this study. This will be shared with the community members through the community-based organisations' structure and a

field visit will be made to the field to disseminate these products but also to share the findings with the administration and community leadership.

The results will be shared with NatureKenya and BirdLife International to assist with the review of the species during the next IUCN Red Listing review of the species conservation status.

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 project did not start immediately the grant was received due to reasons explained above. As I was planning for reconnaissance visit in June 2014, there was a terrorist attack between 15th June and 17th June during which more than 60 people were killed. I had to reschedule my reconnaissance to August 2014 but then even after the reconnaissance actual fieldwork could not proceed due to conflicts between the communities on the ground in Tana River Delta. The study lasted 11 spasmodic months during which the visits to the field was interrupted and dictated by the security on the ground.

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
GPS (1)	184	190	-6	Exchange rates variations at the time of purchase
stop watch and tally counter, tape measure (1 each)	25	27	-2	Purchased three tally Counters@£9
Communication (emails, internet, phone airtime, postage charges, fax etc.)	155	155	0	A lot of photocopying and call made and it is more expansive to photocopy in remote shopping centres. A lot of coordination done and involved calling stakeholders, buying internet bundles to send emails
GIS Imagery maps and processing	250	250	0	This money already spend and already working on some maps
Transport Costs Car Hire @GBP 46 per day	1814	1917	-103	Long distances involved and fuel costs went high. Increase in fuel costs during the period
Subsistence for expenses for field assistants (2) @ GBP	1500	1601	-101	Daily rates as demanded by the field assistants made the costs for hiring

76/month each for 6.5 months				labour in the field expensive
Subsistence expenses for CI @ GBP31/day for 6.5 months staggered field days	1372	1372	0	
Brochures/Advocacy material	346	370	-24	Committed already for a few brochures summarising the results and to be distributed at respective sites (a copy will be shared with Rufford Foundation)
Miscellaneous	269	235	33	Used to cover some of the costs above whose actual costs were higher than budgeted
Total	5995	6028	33	

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

A visit to the field to share the results including brochures and mobilisation of funds for some conservation, capacity building (including in bird watching and avitourism) and awareness work on the ground. A proposal will be developed and submitted to potential funders including Rufford)

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

Yes, the equipment purchased was a GPS and was branded. Rufford received publicity on the ground by mentioning that the project was Rufford funded. The brochures that are in the process of being developed will also have Rufford logo and Rufford will be acknowledged in all publications emanating from this project/study.

11. Any other comments?

Express my gratitude to Rufford for funding this study and the patience with me when the project took longer to start due to the situation on the ground.

When budgeting for this project, it wasn't very clear the extent of the work involved and it would actually been impossible to cover the entire range of the species (Lamu, Witu, Mpeketoni and Boni-Dodori with the budget submitted. The area is too large as it cuts across four counties (Kilifi, Tana River, Lamu and Garissa). Additional funding would have been required but if the security situation normalises, additional funding will be mobilised to undertake survey north of River Tana. Certain area in the north of this river are inaccessible to researchers as the security forces operations are currently mopping out the Al shabaab terrorists from their hideouts especially securing Boni-Dodori forest where the Malindi pipit is known to occur in grassland patches and glades. It is envisioned that once this operation is

over, surveys will be possible in future. Considering the expanse of the area, the study also had to engage more field assistants including enumerators, security guides, research assistants, coxswains and community scouts. As initially budgeted, it was difficult to pay the field assistants monthly and they had therefore to be paid a daily rate which surpassed what they would have been paid monthly.

I would however want to thank my Field assistants and enumerators at different stages and sites (Wellington Kombe, Jonathan Mwachongo, Jilo Kokani, Swaleh Dhadho, Charo Ngumbao, Abdalla Roba, Ali Komora, Mohammed Godhana Galole, Bett Rono, Phesto Osano, Hiribae.