

## 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. 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. 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

<b>Your name</b>	Mikhail Rusin
<b>Project title</b>	Rare mammals of steppe valleys in Northern Ukraine
<b>RSG reference</b>	15510-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	August 2014 — October 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£4100
<b>Your email address</b>	mrusin@list.ru
<b>Date of this report</b>	26/9/2015

**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
Make a survey of steppe landscapes in Northern Ukraine		x		We focused our efforts on Kiev and Chernihiv Oblasts. Additionally we visited Odessa, Mykolyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Ivano-Frankovsk regions which gave us very good data both on distribution of rare mammals and preparation of plans for preserving landscapes
Preparation of groundings for new protected areas with steppe vegetation		x		We found at least three areas of very high importance for future conservation of steppe landscape and their habitats. The process of preparing documents in underway
Publish results		x		At this stage we published and distributed booklet on <i>Cricetus cricetus</i> and <i>Spermophilus suslicus</i> . Scientific results collected during field survey currently are under preparation

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

The camera traps appeared not to be as useful as we expected. During a quick survey (just few days in every locality) the chance for successful trail-trapping is very low. Based on this experience we plan to use these cameras for long-time monitoring in a chosen locality. At the same time there is a very high risk of camera traps being stolen when they are installed in pastures and other open landscapes.

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

- We had identified three very prominent regions with steppe vegetation and steppe mammals which are good for future conservation. These are:
  - Sandy area in Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky District of Kiev Region: the largest and most northern area with true psammophyte steppes of Dnieper Basin. This area is under heavy use of military although it requires protection.
  - Sandy area in North of Dnipropetrovsk Region (Mykolayivski Sands). Another patch of open psammophyte vegetation with no protection. We found a stable population of *Sicista subtilis* there – a very rare steppe mammal.
  - Former aerodrome near Ochakiv, Mykolayiv Region. Although this patch is located in Southern Ukraine, we studied this area and found the largest population of speckled ground squirrels in Ukraine (around 1000 individuals). This area has absolutely no protection.
- We collected lot of data on latest findings of several species of protected small mammals, especially *Spermophilus suslicus*, *Cricetus cricetus*, *Sicista subtilis*.

- We start the question of necessity of protection of former pests in Ukraine. This work is very far from being finished and it requires lot of work with local rural population.

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

We started to communicate with rural people about the steppe fauna living close to them. This dialogue is very complicated and not very welcome. Many of our targeted species are concerned to be pests. Normally people who still have stable populations of those species close to their villages do not understand that they should be proud of this and take care of their wildlife.

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

Our work is running without any breaks. We continue to gather information on rare species of animals and their habitats. We spread questionnaires through local rural population to get more knowledge on distribution and willingness in participating in nature conservation.

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

For educational purposes we spread booklet through rural schools. For scientific purposes our data would be published and demonstrated on meetings.

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

Our original timescale was to work the whole 2015 and first half of 2016. The manager of the Fund asked to make the final report in August 2015. Thus not all the tasks are finished yet. But their implementation is on their way.

**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	1200	1100	+100	As Ukrainian currency decreased we were able to save some funds on food and accommodation. At the same time prices on petrol were increasing as it is an imported product
Camera traps	1000	850	+150	Purchased 3 Bushnell Natureview HD Max Trail Cameras with transport price from Great Britain to Ukraine. Camera traps are not sold in Ukraine and we miscalculated the transport costs. Thus less cameras where purchased
Telephoto lens	850	950	-100	Because of the dramatic decrease of Ukrainian currency the prices on foreign goods changed very quickly and

				unpredictably
Binoculars	200	300	-100	We purchased 2 binoculars: Aplen Pro Zoom 8-21 X 40 and Alpen Shasta Ridge II 8x25. We've chosen more expensive and quality items than planned but it proved to be worthy (waterproof, better optics)
Live-traps	200	100	+100	We produced live-traps manually from local materials thus significantly decreasing the price
Booklet	600	750	-150	This includes both publishing and distribution (via snail-mail) of the booklet. Originally we didn't calculate the distribution cost. But as we saved some funds during the expedition we were able to cover mailing costs.
Stationary	50	20	+30	Less stationary was used during a project
Bank management costs	0	35	-35	Includes transfer cost of a project by Ukrainian bank
<b>TOTAL</b>	4100	<b>4105</b>	-5	

*The exchange rate during the project changed dramatically from 21 UAH per 1 GBP (during the application of a project) to 60 UAH (in Feb-Mar). Later it decreased to around 35 UAH per 1 GBP.*

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

Next steps are: (1) expand geographically the survey; (2) install long-term monitoring in best found localities; (3) continue efforts on nature conservation and involvement of public.

### 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 a RSGF logo in a booklet we published. This booklet was spread through schools and other local communities. The reference for the current grant number and funding organisation would be used in any publication that would be based on data collected during that project.