

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	Maria Gritsina
Project title	Specification of the status of the Pallas's cat (<i>Otocolobus manul</i>) in Uzbekistan
RSG reference	17482-1
Reporting period	October, 2015 - August, 2016 (Final report)
Amount of grant	£ 4990
Your email address	mgritsina@gmail.com
Date of this report	25/08/2016

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
Specification of the status of the Pallas's cat in Uzbekistan		V		We did not discover the Pallas's cat either in the project territories or earlier in the Kyzylkum desert. Thus, it is apparent that, even if this cat was not extinct in the wild of Uzbekistan, it is a very rare species, which needs to be protected. However first ever research focused on clarifying Pallas's cat status in mountainous regions in the eastern and southeastern parts of Uzbekistan (bordered with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) was conducted in the frames of the project.
To conduct research with use of camera traps			V	The research has been conducted. Camera traps (17 pieces) worked in two project areas.
Submit official proposal to include the Pallas's cat in the Red Book of Uzbekistan		V		In spite of the fact that the Pallas's cat was not found, we have submitted the proposal to include this species in the new edition of the Red Data Book of Uzbekistan with the status DD (Data Deficient). The justification was prepared and at the moment the proposal is considering by the special zoological working group/commission. It is necessary to receive the statement from the State Committee of Nature Protection (in the process).
Study of inhabited by the Turkestan red pika (<i>Ochotona rutila</i>)			V	We have obtained new information on the Turkestan red pika's habitats within the project territory (Western Tien Shan). The Turkestan red pika is considered a rare species distributed within a limited

			<p>area. V. M. Petrov (1961) was the first who recorded the red pika in the region: he observed this species on the Pskem Range, in the area between the Chiralmasay and Ikhnachsay Rivers, the Pskem's tributaries, as well as on the northern slopes of the Chatkal Range, in the upper course of the Akbulaksay in Uzbekistan and the Chetbergsay, the tributary of the Ters River, in Kyrgyzstan (Mitropolsky, 2005). V. I. Kapitonov encountered the animal on the Ugam Range, near Sayram Peak (Bernstein, 1980). We found out that the Turkestan red pika inhabits a much larger area along the Pskem River, living in relatively dense colonies on relevant screes. We discovered colonies of the animals in the following places: on the natural dam of Lake Shabyrkul; on the northern slope of the Pskem Range near the lake; up the Shabyrsay valley; in the Bakaryksay valley, branching off the Pskem River valley further down the stream. The red pika is the main food of the Pallas's cat in other countries than Uzbekistan, and the colonies of the Turkestan red pika indicate that the cat may inhabit the area, which means there is a need for further investigation.</p>
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The only type of difficulties that arose during the field portion of the project was weather conditions: the month of July in 2016 proved rainy, which made the crossing of streams time- and energy-consuming. In addition, one of the camera traps in Surkhandarya province was buried under rock as a result of an earthquake.

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

1. The camera traps have recorded 10 mammal species, 14 birds and 1 reptile. Two of them, the Tien-Shan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*) and snow leopard (*Panthera uncia* Shreber, 1775) are rare species included in the Red Book of Uzbekistan (2009), the latter having the status of a critically endangered species (CR). The snow leopard is also included in the Red Books of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – countries that share the species habitat with Uzbekistan. It is also included in Appendix I of CITES, Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild fauna and Flora and Appendix I of CMS, Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. The animal's range in Uzbekistan represents the extreme western boundary of the Snow Leopard's area of occurrence. It should be noted that the shots of the snow leopard from the two mountain ranges – the Pskem and Ugam Ranges – during the project were taken from the Uzbek portion of the Western Tien Shan. In the course of the expedition we specified the main threats for the animal world of the project territories. The main threats in the project area are pasture of livestock (including use of large size dogs whom shepherds don't feed and dogs ruin colonies of marmots, various rodents, catch birds), poaching, cabin of wood and shrubby vegetation. Besides in some areas pressure of recreation is quite high. Concrete threats and their level have been described specifically to each site of researched territory.

2. All constantly living people have been interviewed in the Western Tien Shan (one of the project's study areas), namely seven families of beekeepers (16 people), the staff of the avalanche station "Oygaing" (three persons) and hydrometeorological stations of «Maydantal» (six people); people temporarily staying in the territory - inspectors of Brichmullinsky Forestry (17 people), inspectors of Ugam-Chatkal National Park (five people), border services (10 people) and shepherds (35). Only one respondent told that he saw Pallas's cat, but not in the project area (*specification - near Akbulak, the Chatkal Range, border with Kyrgyzstan*). A total 12 hunters, 24 shepherds, five people from Forestry Service, 47 residents of villages have been interviewed in the Western Pamir Alai. In that region we met three persons, who not only identified the Pallas cat, but also described how they encountered the animal. Their information seems reliable, as the abovementioned respondents confidently connected the Pallas cat and the Turkestan red pika.

3. We established contacts with the managers of the conservation areas, as well as with the organisations issuing permissions to visit the border areas. We identified focus groups and individuals to work with in future. In addition, we thought it important to distribute posters with the pictures of Uzbekistan's wild cats and our contacts. Occasionally, the local people call us to inform about their encounters with cats.

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

The local people did not gain any direct benefits from our project. We interviewed local people and summarised and processed the obtained information. We also distributed posters with wild cats among local people.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We plan to continue this work in Surkhandarya province and the Western Tien Shan Mountains (borders with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), in areas inhabited by the Turkestan red pika (*Ochotona rutila*), which is, apparently, the principle food of the Pallas's cat.

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

We plan to prepare scientific publication on the results of the research carried out in the Western Tien Shan Mountains. We shall also prepare a scientific report to be submitted to the administration of the Ugam-Chatkal National Park, where the research was carried out. The data we obtained concerning the snow leopard will be passed to the UNDP/GEF Project "Sustainable natural resource and forest management in key mountainous areas important for globally significant biodiversity" which will be implemented in Uzbekistan.

We could make the field work in 2016 longer accepting additional financial support from the OSME (Ornithological society of the Middle East) in the frames of the project "Monitoring of IBA 'Oygaing valley' and the adjoining territories, Uzbekistan" (leading by one of our team members). One of tasks of this project was to collect and analyse data on key birds and mammals species and threats into the fauna of IBA 'Oygaing Valley' and the adjoining territories, in particular, the natural high-altitude wetlands of Shabyrkul (this is also our project study area). We plan to combine data obtained from our camera trap research and findings made in OSME project and prepare joint publication.

The interview data will be entered into the joint data base of the Pallas's Cat Working Group.

The progress, results and experience of the project will be presented in the workshop devoted to Pallas's cat study and conservation in steppes of the Northern Eurasia which will be held in Novosibirsk (Russia) on September 14th-15th 2016.

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

We started the preparatory phase of the project in May 2015 and finished our field work in July 2016. Late July and early August 2016 was dedicated to the processing of the obtained data. The project performance dates completely corresponded with the period specified in the project application.

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
Salary: Driver, £350*2 months	700	700	-	-
Travel per diem, £6 /1 day*6 persons*60 days	2160	2145	15	The slight variances in the per diem figures are associated with the difference in the currency exchange rate on the day of the exchange.
Fuel, 0,87/litre*20 litres/100 km*5400km	950	1100	150	The price for the fuel (petrol) outside big cities was somewhat higher because of shortage
Posters preparing and publishing	400	275	125	We were lucky to find a cheaper printing option comparing to which was planned during the preparation of the project application
Batteries for camera traps	300	468	168	Batteries rose in price
Stationery	100	125	25	The prices for stationery rose a little
Vehicle repair on the road	200	-	-	The car on the road didn't break
Medicine for members of expedition	180	175	5	Elastic bandage was bought for a lower price
Total	4990	4988	488	

Notes to Budget: £1 = 3888.00 Sums

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

It is necessary to continue the work on the specification of the status of the Pallas's cat in Uzbekistan. We need to continue our work in the territory of the Ugam-Chatkal National Park (Western Tien Shan) and in Syrkhanadariya region.

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?

We prepared a poster in three languages containing information not only on the Pallas's cat, but also on all the representatives of the family Felidae in Uzbekistan, and we used the Rufford Foundation logo. The posters were distributed among local people and in local administrative and governmental organisations. We also sent the poster to RSGF.

