

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	Iurii Strus
Project title	Study and conservation of rare waders (Charadrii) in the Ukrainian forest zone
RSG reference	21206-B
Reporting period	13 Dec 2016 – 9 Nov 2018
Amount of grant	£9781
Your email address	yurastrus@gmail.com
Date of this report	10 Nov 2018

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
Field training for volunteers who will participate in data collection				In 2017, 50 people were involved to training in bird identification. 70% of them successfully passed the formal online exam on www.birdid.no and got certificates from the Nord University. In 2018, there were 75 more volunteers. In total more than 40 field excursions and ~10 lectures were done (half in 2017 and another half in 2018). As a result, we prepared the baseline for a national monitoring scheme. The volunteers are already capable to count "easy" species of waders (lapwing, black-tailed godwits, redshanks etc.). This work will be continued in future without interruption.
Survey/questionnaire among local communities to estimate their level of knowledge regarding rare animals and their conservation				The survey was conducted among relevant people in local communities, who deal with forestry, hunting or work in conservation institutions. Respondents were asked to fill in a paper questionnaire. The results show a quite low level of awareness. The objective was not fully achieved because not everybody returned the paper forms (40%). In future we plan to redesign such a survey to stimulate people to be more active.
Field works in north Ukraine				All planned field work was accomplished according to the schedule in the proposal. In total, nine field ornithologists were involved in wader surveys. Four of them were workers at local conservation institutions (Rivne Nature Reserve, National Park "Prypiat Stohid"). We managed to perform surveys in three new administrative regions of Ukraine (Zhytomyr, Kyiv and Chernigiv regions)

			and to conduct some additional surveys in Volyn and Rivne regions (already covered during previous two projects). Thus, we now possess data from nearly whole Polissia area of Ukraine.
Lectures/seminars for hunters on meetings of hunting society			Three presentations were given, about diversity, ecology and conservation issues of waders and other rare birds.
Publishing materials for distribution among local people			Two brochures were published and distributed among local hunters and forestry workers for free. A lot of copies were given to local schoolchildren and in some cases to biology/geography teachers.
Data processing and analysis. Entry of data to GIS database. Plotting data on maps			All data, collected in 2017 and 2018 was inputted to Spatialite geodatabase with properly designed structure. Also, we merged with the mentioned geodatabase, all the data collected during two previous projects (1st and 2nd Rufford Small Grants). Apart from that we collected old, unpublished data from a few observers in Ukraine. Now we possess data on wader numbers and distribution in north Ukraine collected since 1983 – the most complete dataset in north Ukraine regarding waders. As data is stored in geodatabase it is easily sharable and can be plotted on maps using GIS software very easily.
Preparation and submission of a scientific paper			During the project period we have prepared two journal articles which are already submitted and accepted by two journals (“Branta” and “Proceeding of State Natural History Museum of NAS of Ukraine”). Also the results were presented at the meeting of West-Ukrainian Ornithological Society in February 2018, the meeting of Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Working Group in September 2018 and at the annual conference of International Wader Study Group in Workum (Netherlands, September 2018).

				Now, we are preparing one more paper based on the results of the project and plan to participate in one more international wader conference in Minsk (Belarus) to present the results.
Providing relevant reports to local conservation organizations (sharing the data)				<p>Collected data is partially published and available to everyone. Apart of this, we provide relevant part of data (locations and count results) to Rivne Nature reserve, Shatsk National Park, Zoology Department of Lviv University, State Museum of Natural History. In other words to all organisation who can use the data for scientific and conservation needs.</p> <p>In May 2018, Iurii Strus (leader of the project) took part in the national seminar organised by the Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources of Ukraine devoted to development of Emerald Network in Ukraine and provided information regarding distribution and numbers of waders protected by Bern Convention.</p> <p>Also, data was included to national database and sent to data managers of new European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA2). In October 2018 we provided an update concerning curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> to national cadaster of species listed in the Red Data Book and protected by AEWA agreement.</p>

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

No unforeseen difficulties this time.

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

Up to date information on current distribution and numbers of waders, especially meadow waders, snipe and great snipe in north Ukraine (Polissia nature zone). Apart from new data, we managed to collect old, unpublished data regarding numbers and distribution of breeding waders in the same area from a few observers and to create a geodatabase which covers a 35-year period (data since 1980s). This is important part in establishing national monitoring scheme for waders.

All collected information was used to improve distribution maps and status assessments of waders in Ukrainian part of new European Breeding Birds Atlas (second) and to improve information for several proposed Emerald sites (network of protection sites, part of Bern convention) on national seminar organised in spring 2018 by the Ministry of Ecology and Nature resources of Ukraine. We participated in the seminar and provided relevant information about distribution of great snipe, black-tailed godwit and other vulnerable waders protected by the Bern Convention.

During 2 years of project implementation we prepared 125 field observers (~50 in 2017, and 75 in 2018). In 2017 70% of them passed the formal Nord University online exam and got certificates of proficiency in bird identification. Of course those people are not specialist ornithologists but they are already capable of collecting and providing data regarding "easy species", such as lapwing and black-tailed godwit and already do so.

We expect that all this (aggregated, high quality data and established network of observers) in the near future will bring monitoring of waders and birds in general in Ukraine to a high, international standard (e.g. PECBMS approaches).

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

Local communities were involved in two main ways. 125 citizens of Lviv, Kyiv, Kamianets-Podilskiy, Dnipropetrovsk, Uzhgorod and some other smaller cities were involved in training in bird identification to prepare network of observers to collect data on numbers and distribution of birds, including waders and other species. The second way is collaboration with local hunters and forestry workers in the main field work sites. Those people help us in conducting field surveys as guides, local consultants and those to whom we distribute published materials and conduct small education lectures.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The work will be continued in future. Training of volunteers in bird identification with purpose to build network of observers is guaranteed by stable funding from Nord University (Norway). Field surveys aimed to count waders and to search new breeding locations are quite expansive, so scale of this work depends on availability of funding. As we already possess good data on location of important breeding sites we plan to perform continuous monitoring at least on such key sites for many years annually. Also I have a dream to expand the project area and to cover the whole of Ukraine with purpose to aggregate data for the whole country. Therefore we plan to apply for additional funding in the near future. Even without financial support we are going to expand our activities using the created network of volunteers, but availability of funds can accelerate this much.

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

The results are already partially published in two scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals. Also the results were presented on four meetings of ornithological groups and conferences in Ukraine and abroad. Some easy to understand material is published in brochures and is distributed among hunters, schoolchildren, local biology teachers and forestry workers. Also we provide some results on the website/blog of the West-Ukrainian Ornithological Society. In future we plan to publish additional papers. Also, personal conversations with hunters and forestry workers are part of our communication strategy. In future, after publishing, we plan to create a webmap using web GIS technology to make all the data accessible for everyone.

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 grant was used during the period January 2017 – November 2018. This was agreed with the RF administration in early 2017. The project activities lasted all this time. Field work period was restricted by the breeding period of different wader species (April-June in 2017 and 2018). All other activities were evenly distributed during a whole year as planned in the proposal.

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.

When exchanging currency the rate fluctuated in range **34.0-40.5 (UAH/GBP)** and **28.0-35.5 (UAH/EUR)**. The grant was used gradually during the whole period (two years) and was stored in EUR (as I received it), but all payments were made in UAH, so it is difficult to indicate exact rate for each item.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transport expenditures (fuel for two cars; ~19 000 km)	3000	3091	-91	The costs were used to fuel three different cars, quad cycles, also to fuel off-road cars in some territories with difficult terrain. Small proportion of money from this category was used to buy tickets for public transport, because few participants doesn't have their own cars and used public transport to reach

				survey cites. Field works were done in parallel by 3-4 teams of observers.
Food and accommodation (5.7 GBP * 4 persons * 140 days)	3192	3192	0	The sum was equally divided among participants, according to length of time spent on surveys.
Tripod Manfrotto MT190X3 with 128RC Fluid Head	225	264	-39	XFS-C Traveller 4-section Tripod (145 GBP) and Manfrotto 700 RC2 2-way Panhead (99 GBP) were bought instead of initially planned equipment after thorough search in the Internet. Additional money was taken from leftovers from other categories. 20 GBP were spent on delivery.
Ultrazoom photocamera Canon PowerShot SX50 HS	260	276	-16	The same camera model as planned was purchased. + 17 GBP for delivery service.
Brochure (professional design and publication; 1000 copies)	1090	978	+112	Publishing was slightly cheaper.
Small book (professional design and publication; 1000 copies)	1364	1390	-26	Initially planned small book, was published also as a thicker brochure, because it was cheaper (per item) and there was not enough of information for the "book" format.
Field training for volunteers (salary for trainers and organisational costs)	2669	3945	-1276	For work in 2017 all planned money were received from the Nord University in March 2018 and for 2018 activities we expect to receive the money also in the end of winter (early 2019). These funds are used only as salary for field trainers, who work with volunteers (>20 full day excursions per year and up to 10 indoor lectures on identification and ecology of birds). 40% tax was paid to Ukrainian tax service. Because training was very

				successful we got additional bonuses from the Nord Univ., therefore total sum was much bigger than planned (sum before taxes).
Communication costs (cell phone bills)	100	100	0	Phone accounts were filled in advance using all money from this category
Office expenditures and equipment	705	705	0	This was covered by SMNH. (Electricity bills, paper, ink for printers etc.). Actually it is quite difficult to calculate exact sum, because the museum doesn't split bills of different purposes and pays everything at once.
Expenditures on seminars/lectures organization	550	502	+48	As usual we plan to spend some money during lectures for forestry workers for traveling, accommodation and food, but often forestries are very hospitable and provide us with free living space. So it is difficult to foresee real expenditures in this category in advance. Saved money was used to buy better equipment and for fuel.
Total	10,486	9520	966	
Alternative funding	2669	3945	-1276	
Total project Funding	13155	13465	-310	
Rufford funding	9781	9520	261	

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

Further important step is to establish national monitoring scheme using the effort of volunteers prepared during the project implementation, and to cover bigger territory. Also we are going to invest additional effort into field work in eastern parts of Polissia.

Another important task is to include black-tailed godwit to national red list which will be updated soon. Also, we will try to lobby the inclusion of lapwing. Such recommendations already were given in our last paper and we try to discuss this topic with scientific community in Ukraine.

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 logo was used in all presentations and posters presented on conferences (n=4). Also the RSGF logo is included to brochures and on the webpage devoted to the project on the website of West-Ukrainian Ornithological Society. The RF was mentioned as a grantee in the "Acknowledgment" sections of submitted papers.



Left: Training for volunteers in bird identification, near Lviv, Ukraine. Right: Habitat for Common Snipe in good condition, Polissia, Zhytomyr region of Ukraine.



Black-tailed Godwit in breeding habitat, Polissia, Ukraine.