Final Project Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Anna Loseva
Project Title	Haul-out site monitoring of two seal species in intensively developing area of the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea
Application ID	22171-1
Grant Amount	£ 4997
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Date of this Report	25/07/18

1. 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
Approbation of camera traps method for the Baltic ringed seal monitoring on haul-out sites at the Gulf of Finland, Baltic Sea				14 camera traps were set at different sites of Russian Gulf of Finland, near to ringed seal haul-outs (seven with support of Rufford Foundation and seven with support of JSC 'Rosterminalugol'). 9485 photos based on 252 working days were made. Significant notes on scientific objectives, required camera specifications and installation details were made. The result will be presented in the form of paper or conference presentation.
Analysis of Baltic ringed seal number and factor affecting the presence at haul-out sites using camera traps				Information from Malyi Tyters Island and Tiskolsky Reef is appropriate for the analysis. The spike of ringed seal numbers was established for the autumn season. Four camera traps were lost during the project implementation (three stolen by fishermen and one carried away by a storm). In addition, one of the most important haul-out sites (Kurgalsky Reef) was not used by the seals during the project at all, probably because of unusual high level of disturbance. More information for scientific purposes is needed.
Analysis of Baltic grey seal number and factor affecting the presence at haul-out sites using camera traps				During the implementation we revealed that any haul-out site at the Gulf of Finland must be equipped by at least three camera traps since there are too many vacant boulders while field of view of the lens is narrow. It was decided to restrict the test of cameras to ringed seal as more rare of two seal species.
Grey seal counting in Russian part of the Gulf				826 grey seals were estimated during the survey from a yacht what is

of Finland during molting				almost twice as much as in 2011 (446 seals, Verevkin, 2012). Redistribution of seal gatherings is taken place in the area. New sites with primarily subadult individuals appeared. Haul-out site which is close to Ust-Luga Seaport apparently has lost its value.

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

- Models of camera traps ('Sokol plus', bought through co-financing company) turned out unsuitable for this work. They were exchanged in a place of purchase. Solar panels were also unsuitable due to low efficiency, thereby it was decided to use only AA batteries after the first test.

- It turned out that it is quite difficult to implement the project with low number of performers. Additional volunteer persons will be involved. Incentive salary for increasing of motivation is obligatory in the future.

- One camera trap was lost due to wave impact. We upgraded special pole-looked construction by adapting anchor bolts to install cameras in the condition of open sea.

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

- Camera traps are valid method for the Baltic ringed seal monitoring at remote haul-out sites in Russian Gulf of Finland. It is suitable for determination related seal abundance at focal sites and factors affecting seal presence, but not for photoID and population survey.

- Abundance of the Baltic grey seal has significantly grew what requires the revision of its conservational status in the regional and federal Red Data Book.

- The problem of poaching by fishermen is agile at south coast of the Gulf of Finland. We met with vandalism which was probably caused by seal shooting at haul-out sites. Special seal-fishermen project is necessary in parallel with camera traps project. Additionally, camera traps with GSM-module is only way to prevent vandalism.

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

The project was implemented at the area of Kurgalsky Nature Reserve. Several villages are located there. Volunteers from the villages participated in the work what is essential for environmental education. We have also cooperated with Volunteer Society of Forest Firemen as its members have great experience with technical work at sea islands.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Plans related with co-financing opportunities. This will be clear in November 2018.

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

We are going to create two papers in Russian, with English abstracts. The first one is devoted to the method of camera traps use at the Baltic ringed seal haul-out sites with case examples. The second one is devoted to the Baltic grey seal distribution and abundance. The papers will be provided for the Rufford Foundation.

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

The part of project supported with Rufford Foundation was count on 12 months. It was started in middle August 2017 and ended in late July 2018. The terms of field activities have been shifted and expanded to 2018 (April-June) due to additional financial options.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion. Exchange rate (24.08.2017): £ 1 = 75, 5903 rub

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Camera trap (ScoutGuard SG560K)	1202	1136	-66	'BolyGuard SG 520' model was not available
Rent of scientific Vessel	1985	1850	-135	Captain made a discount
Batteries AA	28	27	-1	
Memory cards	100	44	-56	Memory cards from another project were used
Additional fastening Devices	48	49	1	
Gasoline	140	121	-19	
Long-focus lens Nikon 200-500mm	1394	1497	103	A photo backpack to keep the lens was bought for the difference in cost of vessel rent
Food	100	114	14	
Total	4997	4839	-159	Difference (3%) was spent on gasoline in local village, where is no cash machine for the inspection

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

To involve new highly motivated persons for seal study and conservation in the Gulf of Finland.

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

The information about project is presented at web-site of ICPO 'Biologists for Nature Conservation' (http://bfn.org.ru/wpdir/conservation/seal_monitoring/). We also annotated the project on the web pages of Marine Mammal Council of Russia at VK and Facebook social networks (https://vk.com/club43621728?w=wall-43621728_346, https://www.facebook.com/pg/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BC-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%8E%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BC-203799763010725/posts/?ref=page_internal).

The Rufford Foundation logo has not been used but the source of financing was indicated. The scientific publications are at the stage of writing now.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Anna Loseva – coordinator, researcher, author of the idea

Sergei Kouzov – participated in planning of the research, camera traps selection and field work in 2017

Olga Chirkova – vet, young specialist, member of shipboard expedition to grey seal counting

Iosif Kogotko – volunteer, assisted with camera traps installation

Alexander Shumskii - volunteer, assisted with camera traps installation

Sergei Veselovskii - volunteer, assisted with camera traps installation. Member of Volunteer Society of Forest Firemen

Irina Baranovskaya – local environmental activist, member of Volunteer Society of Forest Firemen. Provided living conditions at Kurgalsky Peninsula and aided with finding of the volunteers

Alexander Pronitskii – fisherman, provide sea transport to achieve Malyi Tyters Island

12. Any other comments?

We consulted with Mervi Kunnasranta (University of Eastern Finland), an expert of camera traps for seal studies in Finland. The future projects must be implemented in cooperation with Finnish specialists.