

### **Final Evaluation Report**

Your Details				
Full Name	Clara Trofino Falasco			
Project Title	Developing effective conservation tools for grassland songbirds in Argentinean Pampa			
Application ID	28349-1			
Grant Amount	£5,000			
Email Address	claratrofino@hotmail.com			
Date of this Report	04/11/2020			



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
Increase the nesting success of Hudson's Canastero and Bearded Tachuri by protecting active nests against cattle and predators				We found enough Hudson's Canastero nests, but bearded Tachuri nesting pair density was very low.
Identify and protect key breeding sites of these two grassland songbirds in Southern Pampa.				This activity was planned mostly for the non-breeding season (from March to September 2020) and was partially achieved because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

One unforeseen difficulty that arose during the project was that we found fewer nests of Hudson's Canastero and bearded Tachuri than we expected. However, we monitored and protected nests of other grassland birds in the same area during the breeding season.

Another difficulty that arose was the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented us from carrying out the total of the field activities planned for the nonbreeding season, such as visiting all the properties used as breeding sites to interview owners and managers. We currently are starting to make virtual interviews in order to explore solutions for breeding birds.

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

In this work we tested the effectiveness of wire mesh enclosures in nests of five Neotropical grassland bird species: Hudson's canastero (*Asthenes hudsoni*), long-tailed reed finch (*Donacospiza albifrons*), grassland yellow-finch (*Sicalis luteola*), brown-and-yellow marshbird (*Pseudoleistes virescens*), and long-tailed meadowlark (*Leistes loyca*). No abandonment associated with the use of enclosure fences was documented.







75% of the nests were successful, and 14 failed predation attempts were recorded.

We identified pampas fox (Lycalopex gymnocercus), Chimango caracara (Milvago chimango) and Geoffroy's cat (Leopardus geoffroyi) as nest predators.



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

We were working with the local birdwatchers' club (COA-Tandil) and they helped us to identify the presence of Hudson's canastero and bearded Tachuri individuals in the region. Furthermore, we were working with the local NGO Scouts for Science searching for nests and installing nest enclosures. Now they have more skills to locate breeding birds and search for nests of different grassland birds.





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

We are planning to continue this work by interacting with landowners in order to protect key breeding sites of Hudson's canastero and bearded Tachuri in the region. During our next field season, we will focus on finding more nests, to continue testing nest enclosures and increasing our knowledge of the reproductive biology of Hudson's canastero and bearded Tachuri.

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

We plan to create a document with management actions that owners can use to help grassland songbirds thrive and also we plan to share this experience with different local schools through several virtual meetings.

Also, we will report our conservation actions in scientific journals (e.g. Conservation Evidence journal or similar) and conservation newsletters (e.g. BirdLife Americas Newsletter).

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

The grant was mostly used over the reproductive season period (from October 2019 to March 2020) and part of the non-breeding season. This is almost the total length



of the project, which had to be completed by virtual meetings between the members of the project and other social actors, such as landowners and schools.

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.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Field equipment (Trap cameras, nest cameras, binoculars, leg bands, pliers, etc)	840	1685	+845	IdeaWild and Neotropical Grassland Conservancy grant partially cover this
Fencing and nest enclosures	1280	1620	+340	Neotropical Grassland Conservancy grant partially cover this
Salary, Food & Lodging fieldwork (volunteers and project leader)	1450	4750	+3300	Local University and CONICET cover this
Truck rental, gas and maintenance	1430	3100	+1670	Local University cover this
TOTAL	5000	11155	+6155	

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

We believe that the next steps we need to take are to test more nest enclosures as effective conservation tools for grassland songbirds in Argentinean Pampa. Also, we feel the necessity to identify and protect key breeding sites of Hudson's canastero and bearded Tachuri in the region.

# 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?

We used The Rufford Foundation logo in all materials produced in relation to this project.

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

Work team: **Gimena Pizzarello** is a conservation biologist from the Instituto Multidisciplinario sobre Ecosistemas y Desarrollo Sustentable, UNICEN, Tandil, 7000, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Gimena co-leaded the field activities all over the breeding season, and she is leading the virtual landowners' interviews.



Also, we included several fieldworks sciences students' assistants, which helped us with nest searching, monitoring and installing the nest enclosures.





Advisor: **Dr. Agustina Cortelezzi** is a professor of Population Ecology at the National University of La Plata and a researcher in the Argentinean National Agency for Science and Technology (CONICET) at the Instituto Multidisciplinario sobre Ecosistemas y Desarrollo Sustentable. Since 2012 Agustina has been working on threatened species of highland grassland remnants and corridors in the Southern Pampa. Agustina's contributions were essential to organize the logistics and methodology of the campaigns in the field.