Final Evaluation Report

We ask all grant recipients to complete a project evaluation that helps us to gauge the success of your project. This must be sent in **MS Word and not PDF 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 – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please DO NOT fill in and submit this form until the project has been completed.

Complete the form in English. Note that the information may be edited before posting on our website.

Please email this report to jane@rufford.org.

Your Details	
Full Name	Foued Hamza
Project Title	Ecology and conservation of three globally threatened waterfowl species breeding in Tunisian wetlands: The Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Teal and White-Headed Duck
Application ID	39286-2
Date of this Report	28-02-2026

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
Assess the population size of the three species during the breeding season			■	The abundance of each studied species was determined across the surveyed wetlands (for further details, see the first report)
Identify the key sites used by these waterbird species during the breeding period			■	By determining the number of individuals of each species at each site, we identified the most important site for each species (see the first report).
Understand if natural wetlands, hill lakes, hill dams and large dams are equivalent in terms of habitat use by these species.			■	Of the 40 sites, 15 were natural wetlands, 4 were hill lakes, 10 were hill dams and 11 were dams. Based on data collected during bird surveys, natural wetlands provide more important habitats than hill lakes, hill dams, and large dams in terms of habitat use by these species.
Determine the most important factors affecting the presence and abundance of these		■		Numerous environmental variables were collected for each wetland and will be used to identify the ecological factors influencing the distribution and abundance of each duck species.

breeding birds in Tunisian wetlands				
Increase public understanding about the threats and conservation significance of these species and their habitats				During the project, we conducted awareness-raising workshops and training sessions with local communities living adjacent to the wetlands visited, with the aim of promoting the sustainable use and conservation of wetland resources for future generations. In total, at least 15 information and training sessions were organized across five regions: Sfax, Gabès, Kebili, Nabeul, and Medenine (Djerba). The training sessions focused on waterbird identification and on educating participants about how to reduce stress and disturbance on wetlands and their associated waterbird populations. These sessions included guidance on recognizing different waterbird species, understanding their habitat requirements, and promoting practices that help protect wetland ecosystems and minimize human impacts on wildlife. Approximately 400 individuals were reached through the sessions. These sessions were conducted in local schools, local environmental associations, and faculties. During each session, promotional materials were distributed to enhance awareness of wetlands and the conservation of duck species as well as waterbird species. In addition, two field visits were conducted to Important Bird Areas, one in Medenine and another in Kebili, for students from the Faculties of Sciences of Sfax and Gabès. These field visits aimed to increase student understanding of the threats facing these duck species and waterbird as well as to highlight the conservation significance of their habitats.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.
The three most important outcomes of this project are as follows:

a) The establishment of baseline data for three threatened waterfowl species, the Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Teal, and White-headed Duck, breeding in Tunisian wetlands. This study represents a first step toward the development of a national dataset for these species, as it covers a large number of wetlands across the country.

b) The collection of a wide range of environmental variables related to habitat characteristics, water chemistry, and anthropogenic pressures. These data provide the first comprehensive assessment of the key factors influencing the distribution and abundance of these duck species during the breeding period and constitute essential baseline information for the implementation of effective conservation actions in Tunisian wetlands.

c) The organization of several awareness-raising workshops and training sessions focused on wetlands, threatened duck species, and the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats. These activities were conducted around many of the studied wetlands, thereby helping to expand the project and ensure the continuity of the programme by engaging new participants in the future.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

N/A

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

Local communities were an integral part of this project and were actively involved in its implementation through information sessions held in schools, local associations, and faculties. Participants gained knowledge and practical insights from the talks and presentations. At least 350 local schoolchildren, students, and community leaders were informed about the threats facing wetlands, endangered waterfowl species, and the measures needed to conserve these waterbirds and their habitats.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we intend to continue the research activities. The next steps will include:
- Integrating additional potentially important sites for these duck species that were not covered during the current project.

- Implementing satellite tagging of these duck species to better understand their annual local habitat use.
- Continuing to build the capacity of local community members to support the conservation of these threatened duck species and their habitats.

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

The results are currently undergoing further analysis and are being compiled into a technical report, which will be shared with key government agencies. The project outcomes will also be presented at upcoming national and international conferences. Additionally, we are preparing a manuscript to publish our findings for the international scientific community such as the IUCN SSC Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group or the IUCN SSC Duck Specialist Group. We recognize that disseminating our results through these expert networks could contribute to broader conservation knowledge, support species and habitat management efforts, and facilitate collaboration with other waterbird and wetland conservation practitioners.

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

The next important steps of this project include:

- Expanding surveys of the Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Teal, and White-headed Duck across Tunisian wetlands.

- Enhancing ecological knowledge to identify the specific requirements of each species for effective conservation, particularly with respect to habitat use at different stages of their life cycle.

- Analysing habitat use by the Ferruginous Duck, Marbled Teal, and White-headed Duck through GPS tracking.

- Establishing a long-term monitoring programme for these three duck species and regularly updating information on their spatial distribution and abundances.

- Promoting awareness of the conservation importance of these species among wetland stakeholders and users.

8. 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?

Yes, the Rufford logo was displayed on all project documents. It was featured on educational materials, including flyers, banner, and bags used during awareness-

raising activities. In addition, upcoming scientific publications will acknowledge that the results of this work were supported by the Rufford Small Grants Programme.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

- Foued Hamza: participated in planning of data collection, fieldwork (counting waterbirds), organizing awareness events in schools and colleges and created the educational materials.

- Mohamed-Ali Chokri: participated in planning of data collection, fieldwork (counting waterbirds) and awareness events.

- Marwa Ghoul: participated in fieldwork, organizing awareness events in schools and colleges and created the educational materials.

- Hassiba Belghith: participated in data collection, organizing awareness events in schools and colleges and created the educational materials

- Fatma Triki: participated in data collection, organizing awareness events in schools and colleges and created the educational materials.

10. Any other comments?

We sincerely thank The Rufford Foundation for their generous financial support of our project. Without this funding, the successful implementation of this work would not have been possible. We also greatly appreciate your belief in small-scale conservation projects, which we believe, collectively, can achieve a far greater impact.

ANNEX – Financial Report

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