

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Justus Joshua
<b>Project title</b>	Assessing the possibilities of restoring the habitat and population of great Indian bustard in Sokaliya area of Ajmer District, Rajasthan.
<b>RSG reference</b>	
<b>Reporting period</b>	October 2009 to January 2011
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5900
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:justmonk@rediffmail.com">justmonk@rediffmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2011

**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
To identify the area of use by great Indian bustard (GIB)			✓	The area of use really seems to have shrunk from an area that was earlier spread over pasture lands of 28 villages to now mostly over the agro-pastoral landscape of eight villages
Preparation of land use and land cover map of the area			✓	
To survey the GIB area			✓	
To enumerate the population of the bird in the area			✓	The number of birds seems to have reduced from an earlier 30 to around 15 now. There could possibly be a few more but it is unlikely.
Assessment of vegetation (plant species, grass and herb species, biomass estimation)			✓	
Habitat assessment			✓	There is undoubtedly a reduction in the quality of habitat available and which probably explains why the number of birds in the area have declined. Land use has changed, the agriculture practices and patterns have changed and even the spread of shrub and tree cover threatens the grassland.
Awareness creation both on the threatened nature of the birds as also the criticality of their grassland habitat (mostly group discussion with local communities)		✓		When interacting with the local communities we realised that most of them know that the GIB is present in their midst and wish to do the birds no harm. The local communities are also aware that changes in their agriculture practices, crop pattern and the (un) availability of water for humans and livestock has led to several changes in land use which have adversely affected the GIB population. As such we felt that a simple awareness campaign would not yield much and what is needed is a much deeper engagement on land use especially the conservation and management of the grasslands (both

				village grazing lands and revenue wastelands) and livelihoods (agriculture and animal husbandry) as are currently practised need to change significantly and this will take much more than an awareness campaign focused on the GIB and not on the larger issues that affect the local community. It is because of this review that this objective is reflected as partially achieved.
--	--	--	--	--

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

N/A

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

- a. It is established that out of the 28 villages where GIB was known to be present earlier, the birds currently are almost always seen and use the agro-pastoral landscape of only eight villages.
- b. The birds use the area very occasionally during the non-breeding season (December to end of May - total nine sightings) but comparatively more frequently during the breeding season (end of May to November – 20 sightings). The birds mainly breed in the agriculture fields, as the grasslands were found not suitable for breeding due to lack of adequate ground cover.
- c. There is scope for restoring the grassland habitat of the GIB. The local communities are not against conservation of GIB but need to once again engage in the proper management of the grasslands through local institutions. This in itself would lead to reduced dependence of the locals on fodder sourced from other places including outside of the state further improving incomes from animal husbandry and concomitantly improve the habitat and therefore the scope for conserving the GIB.

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

Most members of the local communities practice both agriculture and livestock keeping, with the latter now increasingly being propped up through purchase of fodder from distant areas due to the degradation of the local grassland area. Group discussions with local communities across the region revealed both awareness as well as a reasonable amount of willingness to engage in grassland restoration which is closely linked to conservation of GIB and its habitat. It was again through community level discussions that we were able to better understand the changing land use and change in agricultural practices and their linkages with GIB use of the area and their impact on the birds and their habitat. In addition to this the field assistants (two) and local informants (five) from the local community were closely involved in the project and gladly provided their time and services in return for a small remuneration.

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

There is need, scope and interest in carrying on with the work that has been initiated. Both the state forest department and local communities are interested in conservation of the grasslands and while the former may want the initiative to grow and succeed because it may lead to conservation of the GIB in particular and securing the Important Bird Area (IBA) in general, the local communities are alive to the need to secure the grassland areas and of their value as critical foraging areas and source of fodder. Plans have been drawn up to demonstrate how the degraded grassland areas may be restored and a couple of plots of around 10 hectares each may be regenerated to serve as models. There is also a need to assist the local communities in evolving necessary institutions to secure the grasslands and arrive at plans to manage the grasslands to cater to their grazing and fodder requirements and at the same time conserving and improving the GIB population of the area. Finally engaging with the mining lobby and involving them in the land use planning and the efforts in grassland and GIB conservation is crucial.

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

- a. Local Communities: The outcome of the project has already been shared with the local communities, but we also plan to make an elaborate presentation in the local language where we would not only convey about the state of their grassland and the birds but also emphasise more on the importance of restoration, protection and management of these grasslands.
- b. Local Administration & Forest Department: Similarly make presentation on the outcomes of the project and also discuss about what needs to be done by each of them to restore and conserve this site for the locals and the GIB.
- c. Mining Lobby: Make presentation on how they can be more involved with the conservation effort that is to be made to restore and manage the grasslands for the local and also the GIB. Mainly specifying how they can be of more support to the local communities.
- d. Write popular article in English and also local language to be carried both in the local press and the national press, in addition to publishing the information generated through this project in a scientific journal.

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

The proposed time period for the project was 1 year, however we extended it by another 4 months mainly because the project started at the end of monsoon (which was not good) in October 2009, and almost towards the end of breeding season. We wanted to collect information on the productive potential of the grass or grazing lands before rains and after the rainy season, in this case it was collected in November and December (after monsoon data collection). Further, in order to get information on the population during the full breeding season we had to extend it beyond the actual length of the project. So on the whole the RSG was used for 16 months, instead of 12 months as proposed in the project.

**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
Hiring Vehicle (Field visits and surveys)	1000	1100	100	Since the birds were using the study site occasionally, we had to make more trips (five trips more in addition to 50 trips proposed – each trip at the cost of £20) covering the grasslands in the adjoining areas to ensure their presence and track their movements. This was adjusted with the £75 saved from field stay.
Field Stays (lodging and boarding)	2250	2175	75	We had got a slightly cheaper accommodation because of which £75 was saved.
Support for two FAs	770	780.50	10.50	We had employed Field assistants for slightly longer period than 240 days or 8 months, so £10.50 was spent more under this item as one of them was hired for 7 days more.
Meetings and Focus Group Discussion	225	200	25	We achieved the objective of having 50 meeting and 25 focus group discussion within £ sterling 200 and used up the £25 saved to give rewards to the informants (local grazers and other villagers) on GIB presences.
Awareness Programme	800	800	0	
Satellite Images for preparing Land Use map	650	650	0	
Binoculars	105	105	0	
Miscellaneous & Stationary	100	100	0	Some part of this was used to adjust the travel and seven days hire of one field assistant

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

Engaging with the local community in all the eight core villages to evolve land use plans central to which would be securing the grazing lands and assist the local community institutions in the restoration and management of these grazing lands linking the effort to strengthening the local animal husbandry dependent livelihoods and economy.

Developing models i.e. demonstrating on at least two 10 ha plots how the grasslands can be revived to meet fodder and forage requirements and at the same time serve as optimal GIB habitat.

Work closely with the local administration and forest department to notify this area as Community Reserve or Community Conserved Area. Further try and bring the mining lobby into discussions and enlist their support for conservation of the GIB.

Gradually building the initiative from the eight core villages to the remaining 28 villages

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

Yes the RSGF logo was used in making posters that were used in awareness creation, meetings and also in all the presentation made through power point. In every instance along with the introduction on the implementing organisation, RSGF was also equally acknowledged stating the support given for this project.

**11. Any other comments?**

We thank RSGF for helping us by funding this very important project that has brought into peoples' mind the significance of restoring the grazing land that is very crucial not only for the survival of GIB but also improving and sustaining the livestock based livelihood of the local communities. We look forward to working with RSGF not only in continuation of this efforts, but also on other threatened species and habitat that have close links with the livelihoods of the local communities in other parts of India.