

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. 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. 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	Adrián B. Azpiroz
Project title	Pampas meadowlark: using a flagship species to promote conservation in the South American grasslands
RSG reference	8745-B
Reporting period	September 2010-December 2011
Amount of grant	£11728
Your email address	avesuru_1999@yahoo.com
Date of this report	January 6th 2012

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
Objective 1. Identification of pampas meadowlark population trends			X	Although analyses of data from song recordings and banding are not complete yet, preliminary results suggest that the pampas meadowlark population numbers low but stable.
Characterisation of pampas meadowlark seasonal movements and spatial needs			X	Substantial new information was gathered from marked individuals. This has allowed the identification of clear seasonal movement patterns and spatial needs.
Habitat management in private lands			X	After management measures were applied at on of the fields of the ranch inhabited by most of the population of meadowlarks, 25 reproductive pairs established their territories there.
Increased understanding of the conservation needs of pampas biodiversity			X	The distribution of new attractive printed materials was very successful. The project's webpage has also been recently launched.

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

There were no significant difficulties to tackle during this phase of the project. The only activity that is not fully completed has to do with the preparation of the webpage, which has taken more time than expected. Right now the Spanish version is online but the English version is still in preparation. I expect it will be ready by late January/early February (costs for this are already covered).

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

- 1) Conservation Outcomes: Through a government-supported programme (PPR – “Responsible Production Programme”) the owner of the ranch where a large proportion of the pampas meadowlark population breed, received funds from the government (£6500) to manage grasslands in such a way as to provide the habitat requirements favoured by this threatened species. Through some adjustments to livestock grazing patterns a more favourable grassland structure was developed for meadowlarks and this was coupled with a more efficient management of cattle. A few months after the new measures were implemented (with the technical advice of the Pampas Meadowlark Project Leader) 25 pairs of meadowlarks established their territories in the managed field. Two other nearby ranches (which also hold meadowlarks and populations of other threatened fauna) also received funds (and technical advice) for grassland management. This programme has been a very

positive experience in my study area because for the first time private landowners perceived a link between wildlife conservation and economic benefits.

- 2) Research Outcomes – 1) During both breeding seasons (2010 and 2011) we obtained hundreds of recordings from more than 120 different pampas meadowlark males. This information will be incorporated to the Pampas Meadowlark Song Library. Because each male has a distinct song, the library can be used for population monitoring activities. We also found more than 40 pampas meadowlark nests and colour-banding of 20 individuals. 2) For the first time we sighted several colour-banded individuals during the breeding season. This allowed us to gather important new information on philopatry and local movement patterns and social relationships, among other topics.
- 3) Awareness on Conservation - Public awareness activities within and outside the study area were a great success thanks to the production and distribution of the new printed materials: posters, bookmarkers, colour brochures and calendars. The quality and originality of the new materials was highlighted by many individuals and were particularly popular among school children. We also expect a high visitation rate for the newly launched Project's web page (www.pampasbirds.com) in the following months. All these activities will clearly have a very positive effect on public awareness in the near future.

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

Local communities benefit in several ways. As already mentioned, the owner of the ranch that holds most of the Uruguayan population of pampas meadowlark received funds from the government (£6500) to manage grasslands in a sustainable way. Several other ranchers also received funds to help meadowlarks and other threatened fauna. Also, local communities (mainly school children) have benefited from our public awareness campaigns that included talks and presentations as well as the distribution of a variety of attractive printed materials. More generally, local stores also benefit from selling a variety of goods (mainly food items) for project members during field seasons.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes I plan to apply for a RSG Continuation Grant to work towards the project's sustainability. The priorities will be to create a Biological Station and to establish volunteer and ecotourism programmes as a means of generating funds. I have applied for funds to procure housing for a Biological Station. A station would allow the establishment of income-generating programmes related to paid volunteer participation and ecotourism. All these activities will positively affect local communities.

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

As it has been done in the past, results from the project will be disseminated in a variety of ways including the use of media, scientific meetings, workshops, and technical and non-technical publications. An additional new tool is now available through the project's website (www.pampasbirds.com).

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

The Booster Grant was used from September 2010 to December 2012. This was the anticipated length of the project. Research activities were planned for two consecutive breeding seasons (September-December 2010 and September-December 2011).

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.

Used exchange rate from Uruguayan Pesos (U\$) to Pounds Sterling is: £ 1 = U\$ 27,5.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transportation (car rental, fuel, bus tickets)	4110	4674	564	Fuel was quoted at £ 1/litre, but actual price varied from 1.1 to 1.45 due to price increases during project period and to higher costs of fuel in a remote area.
Lodging	310	200	-110	Free lodging was offered during some weeks.
Meals	2880	2520	-360	A slightly lower amount of money was needed for food and related items.
House and Field Materials (office materials, bike, gps, batteries, drives, etc.)	1275	1311	36	
Public Awareness Materials (web page, printed materials)	3153	3153	0	
TOTAL	11728	11858	+130	

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

The most important next step will be to ensure sustainability. The plan is to set up a Biological Station and use it not only for research activities but also as a way of generating funds. Another important activity will be the scientific dissemination of research results through technical and non-technical publications. For example a Pampas Birds Field Guide is being prepared.

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 logo was used extensively. It was included at the end of all presentations and on each of these talks RGS support was acknowledged explicitly. The logo was also included in all the new printed materials (calendars, brochures, bookmarks, etc.). A special acknowledgement was also included in the Project's website (www.pampasbirds.com).

11. Any other comments?

I have attached several photos showing activities and materials in another email message.