

# Darwin 14:45 Biodiversity in Tomsk Taiga

## Minutes of Project Review Meeting at BTO Offices

### Thetford 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007 from 10:00 to 14:00

By Janet Sackman, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2007

#### Attendees

British Trust for Ornithology: Dr Rob Fuller (RF), Dr Chris Hewson (CH)  
Tree Council: Margaret Lipscombe (ML)  
Cambridge University Expedition Team: Adrien Smith (AS)  
Institute of International Environmental Safety: Svetlana Kozlova (SK)  
WTA Education Services: Janet Sackman (JS), Wayne Talbot (WT)  
Copy to: Pauline Buchanan-Black, Tree Council.

#### Location

BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, Telephone: 01842-750050

#### 1. Update on project milestones

JS handed out a copy of the Logical Framework and the project plans with a view to reviewing them at the end of the meeting as part of the exit strategy.

#### 2. Darwin reporting requirements

RF requested information on the Darwin requirements for the next Annual Report to ensure that the documentation produced by BTO fit them. JS to send a copy of the guidelines to RF.

JS asked that all reports are emailed to her by the end of March for inclusion in the Darwin report for Year 2, which is due in April.

SK showed the Russian report on the expedition from 2005 produced by Dr Blinova which integrates the output from the UK students. RF asked what use Dr Blinova envisaged for the report and SK explained it could be used for publication but primarily in Russia. RF observed that it would be a massive task to translate it but requested that the summary, introduction and appendices at least could be translated and sent to him, on the basis that it could be useful to find out more detail about habitats' peculiarities and its unique features in order to fulfil the Darwin requirements to identify them.



CH suggested translating all of the report for assessment and this was agreed. SK explained that Dr Blinova's report could be used by foresters as it contained detailed information on species. A copy was left with BTO and one given to JS for inclusion in the documentation for Darwin.

All agreed that Dr Blinova was to be congratulated on her efforts and that it would be useful to have a copy for 2006 and 2007 expeditions as well, but in view of the lack of English translation at the moment it was difficult to assess.

#### Action points

- 1) JS to email reporting Guidelines to RF. **Due – 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**
- 2) JS to email Year 1 report and Year 2 expedition reports to AS. **Due – 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**
- 3) SK to arrange translation of the year 1 report by Dr Blinova and sent to CH for assessment – **Due – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007**
- 4) CH to assess whether the combined format would be useful for years 2 and 3. **Due – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007**
- 5) WT to email Dr Blinova to congratulate her on the report. **Due – 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007**

### 3. Review of progress on Forest Stewardship Certification

WT asked SK for an update. SK asked whether RF/CH had produced any papers yet and could she have a copy; RF explained the process in the UK and commented that it could be two years for a scientific paper could be produced. RF offered to include a piece on the expedition for the BTO newsletter. SK summarised the changes as:

- Introduction of Forestries working at Oblast level, which plants trees for reforestation.
- Another level to manage forests, to allow companies to cut the forest in different territories and manage permits for anyone wishing to harvest trees.
- The Oblast being able to define what structure can be in place to manage the forests.
- The Federal Forest Agency no longer exists and a new structure has been put in place; in Tomsk the forest will be managed by the Tomsk Oblast, led by Alexander Trubicin (AT). SK had a meeting with AT prior to coming to the UK and reported that he and Dr Adam have agreed to cooperate and compromise on a joint approach to combine the ecological and commercial goals of forestry management.

WT asked whether the work we had already done on ecology through the expeditions and the market research on pine nuts and birch bark products was useful with the new



agency; SK indicated that this was seen as very useful and a good way forward. WT requested that he would meet with AT on his next visit to Russia. SK has been asked to produce a poster about FSC certification and our project, for display in the Museum of Forestry History.

SK has also been asked to develop a workshop on FSC for companies and representatives for different regions of Siberia and other regions of Russia. SK has spoken with WWF, Greenpeace and FSC national office in Russia and they have offered to attend the workshop conference to help develop cooperation with European companies and Russian interested parties. SK also reported that a representative of the FSC regional office Sergey Maroz (SM) who accredits forests in Siberia is willing to advise on steps required to achieve certification, without any charge to the project.

WWF Russia has a department which assesses whether a forest achieves the FSC Criteria 6 definition of high potential forest value; in meeting with Tatiana Yuanickay (TY) of WWF Russia, SK learned that there is a project run by WWF to develop criteria for assessing forest value. RF asked if we could use this research to define the forest potential of the two areas where we have been working.

Pricebatch Altai has been through the process of FSC certification and has adopted a principle of special protected areas to be the category of high potential forest value to justify FSC certification for their forest in Kosixinskii forestry; SK prefers the approach suggested by WWF Russia. WT requested a copy of the research in order to assess which model to proceed with.

JS asked whether there would be an assessment of either of the forests as there was money set aside in the budget for this. It was agreed that we were unable to give an answer to this at the moment until we saw the research, which SK agreed to distribute. SK indicated that IIES would initiate certification process with NGOs with experience of helping to prepare the paperwork. This will be done in collaboration with forestry companies who will be able to continue paying for certification on an ongoing basis.

RF asked for clarification of whether we would still be working in Kaltaiski Forest for FSC certification, as this would influence which forest the expedition would go to. SK explained that there are a number of companies who audit forests and that she has begun to approach them to get prices for FSC certification in our case. In the meantime, Asinovski Forestry is the only one which has a company trading that can apply for FSC certification and has encountered many problems with documentation. SK updated on the current situation, that there is some uncertainty at the moment as to which area will be applying for FSC certification, because the potential company for FSC certification has not decided yet what the territory to certificate.

WT asked if the work done in Kaltaiski could be used by the companies applying for FSC certification – SK said yes but that the data collected from Kaltaiski may not be used in the forest finally chosen for FSC. RF asked for clarification that we continue to run expeditions in Kaltaiski to set up a model that could be used for assessment in other locations. It was agreed that we would continue to work in Kaltaiski in order to complete the model for use elsewhere.

RF commented on the problems caused by the timing of the expedition, that it would ideally be in May to capture the relevant data on Red Data Book species information on birds present in May but absent in July. CH commented that the effects of the timing reflect on the accuracy of the model being developed.



RF observed that the final report delivery of March 2008 needed to reflect the subtle shift on the emphasis of the project, to include the relevant recommendations.

SK contributed positive points about FSC certification:

- The project has allowed IIES to inform the local community about the FSC certification and forest management, including newspaper articles and television spots.
- The exposure to FSC certification for IIES staff has improved their profile locally and established them as experts.
- The project has created a bridge between NGOs and commercial companies and shown conservation can be used to develop cooperation between different types of organisation.

#### Action points

- 1) RF to include piece on the expedition for the BTO newsletter. **Due: by March 2008**
- 2) SK to produce a poster on FSC certification for the Museum of Forestry History, which would combine the expedition results and market research elements. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007**
- 3) SK to help develop a seminar/workshop on FSC certification in Siberia to include relevant NGOs. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007**
- 4) SK to develop relationship with FSC certifying body in Siberia. **Due: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**
- 5) SK to send a copy of the research on criteria to RF/CH/ML/WT/JS for assessment. **Due: 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007**

#### 4. Review of progress on trade in pine nuts & birch bark products

WT explained that SK is going to Traidcraft for training on marketing on trade in these products and that an action plan would be produced and circulated.

The Tree Council are to be commended on their generosity in agreeing to the marketing reports produced by Traidcraft to be distributed to the Taiga Rescue Network and similar organisations in Canada for the benefit of the forestry communities.

#### Action points

- 1) SK to attend training course and develop action plans in conjunction with WTA. **Due: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2007**



## 5. Review of progress on eco-tourism

SK showed photographs of birds in Siberia to the group as examples of species found there; RF pointed out that the work done by SK and her associates on bird species available are not from the Taiga area but from the Steppes wetland areas.

SK reported that the scientists in the Tomsk Taiga region have indicated that there are insufficient species of bird diversity promote the area as suitable for bird watching. This means that there is no point in continuing to research potential nature bird watching eco-tourism in the region as part of this project. This is in line with the recommendations from the reviewer of the first Darwin Annual Report, who commented that this element of the project was unlikely to be achievable given the nature of the area. JS would reflect this outcome in the second Annual Report.

JS would spend time with SK at travel agents in Royston and desktop research on the Internet at the WTA office during her time here and give her the perspective of would-be tourists in the UK so that she can understand what the Tomsk region is competing with.

### Action points

- 1) JS to carry out research with SK whilst at the WTA office. **Due: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007**
- 2) JS to reflect progress on eco-tourism in the second Annual Report. **Due: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

## 6. Expedition results from years 1 & 2

Habitat recording: the area that came out as exceptional were the old-growth areas in Kaltaiski, with trees of very considerable stature, up to 35 metres, with an average of 27 metres, compared with an average of 13 metres in the year 2 area Asinovski. The Scots Pine and broad-leaved stands in Kaltaiski in year 1 and the Scots Pine, broad-leaved and Siberian Pine stands in Asinovski in year 2 were comparable, but within these stands there were wide variations in the size of trees and the number of standing dead trees, which are essential for supporting key bird species.

RF reported being interested in the history of management of the two forests to account for the difference in tree height, and asked SK for information about the history of the areas, such as the burnt trees, were the stands cut and re-grown etc. Asinovski showed very little evidence of thinning, suggesting that there could have been management.

CH asked if there was a list of birds found in the two regions in the reports. JS to look through archives and RF to give access to CH to his records.



## Action points

- 1) SK to research history of forest management during the last 80-100 years in Kaltaiski and Asinovski areas and share this information with RF and CH. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007**
- 2) JS to forward bird species information to CH. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**

## 7. Plans for the year 3 expedition

Ideally the expedition would be earlier than July, but this is the constraint of the availability of the students. AS to canvas the students to find out when they would be available and circulate that information. ML and CH do not have constraints in terms of dates.

The training process was explained: firstly, a potential weekend in Thetford Forest to camp overnight, possibly in April. Secondly, a day going through the fieldwork techniques. AS to sound out whether the students would like a weekend camping as part of the preparation and feed that information back to JS.

SK presented a map of the proposed study area, some 5km from the year 1 site. CH offered to locate the area on Google Earth on the internet. RF suggested three possible things: 1 – gather more habitat data, 50-60 stands; 2 – providing there is transport, undertake wider surveys to ascertain where the old stands are in the forest to get an idea of the geographical context; 3 – collect data on say 40 transects in each of the old forest and the managed forests.

SK described the proposed study area as being on the edge of deep taiga and managed forest. The limitation of access in the deep taiga is that there is only one road; SK asked RF to identify which area he would propose the year 3 expedition goes to. RF asked if it were possible to walk from the site SK identified into other areas; SK described the conditions as very difficult, with swampy forest areas, which RF acknowledged that it would be too dangerous to produce transects in that area but qualitative descriptions could be produced instead. CH asked if there was access to meadowland, SK clarified that there is none in the proposed area.

It was agreed that the campsite managed by Tomsk Polytechnic State University would be used. CH asked if he needed a permit to get mist nets into the country to catch birds in; SK to clarify this. RF suggested that a vehicle would be critical to allow transport. SK to ensure that this is made available. For social research purposes, SK proposed Kirek village as a suitable site.

CH and WT would be accompanying the students at the beginning of the expedition, with WT staying for a week and CH for a fortnight. The purpose of ML's inclusion was to be clarified with the Tree Council. The absence of Fred Currie from the Forestry Commission in the expedition plans, since his retirement, was raised and the possibility of another member of BTO staff attending in his place was discussed, subject to budget constraints.



It was agreed that priority would need to be given to funding a second trip to Russia by WT towards the end of the three year funding period as part of the exit strategy. JS is to review the budget in detail and advise what is possible.

#### Action points

- 1) AS to ask the students if they would like a weekend camping exercise in Thetford Forest and advise JS. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007**
- 2) AS to ask availability of students for attending a day's training at BTO on fieldwork techniques. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007**
- 3) AS to check with other students as to the earliest date they could travel to Russia. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007**
- 4) SK to confirm probable habitats to visit. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007**
- 5) SK to arrange a vehicle to be available during the whole of the expedition. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007**
- 6) SK to clarify permits for CH's mist nets. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007**
- 7) JS to review the budget and clarify what trips can be funded. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**

## 8. Review of milestones and outputs

The milestones and outputs for Year 2 were reviewed in the light of the discussions already held. These were amended by JS at the meeting and are included in the attached spreadsheet.

#### Action points

- 1) JS to maintain the milestones and outputs to reflect the current status of the project. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**

## 9. Any other business

- RF: possibility of 2<sup>nd</sup> person going from BTO.
- RF: involvement of Taiga Rescue Network – WT explained that Katy Harris from the TRN is attending a meeting at the Tree Council on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January to discuss this in more detail with SK.
- RF: what happens after March 2008? Could be strands that have come out of this project that could be carried on. Potential for continuation of elements of the project, which should be discussed.



### Action points

- 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> person going from BTO: JS to look at budget and clarify if the travel can be funded. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2007**
- 2) Taiga Rescue Network – WT to report on the possibility of continuing the project with TRN after the end of Year 3. **Due: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007**
- 3) Future developments – to be discussed and reviewed between now and the end of the project. **Due: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**