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**CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES AS THE HABITATS
OF RARE WADERS AND OTHER BIRDS SPECIES IN THE TERRITORY
OF PROSPECTIVE NATURE PARK «CRANE COUNTRY»**

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Two projects on conservation of rare waders in agricultural landscapes in the north of Moscow Region (Russia) were carried out with the support of the Rufford Foundation (RSGF) in 2012-2014 in an area known as the Homeland of the Crane – Important Bird Area, included also in a shadow list of Ramsar Sites. In 2020, during design of the regional Natural Park, monitoring of breeding waders was conducted within the same area where abundance and distribution estimates have been made in 2012. This area is a mosaic of various wetlands (raised sphagnum bogs, birch and black alder forests, willow swamps and oxbow lakes) alternating with agricultural lands such as floodplain meadows, hayfields, arable lands, pastures and abandoned lands. For highly developed Moscow Region it is a unique locality with still existing habitats suitable for Common Cranes *Grus grus* and many other rare birds, including declining and threatened breeding waders – Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Great Snipe *Gallinago media*. Plans to establish Nature Park in this area have been developed since the end of XX century. However, implementation of these plans has been suspended in the 2010s, and conservation community has made efforts to maintain the value of the area until establishment of Natural Park there. Special attention in these efforts was paid to conservation of rare breeding meadow waders. These efforts were successful as above-mentioned wader species along with other birds still breed in the area in relatively high numbers. In 2020 a project of Nature Park «Crane Country» with new extended boundaries was included in the recent official governmental «Scheme of development and localization of SPAs in Moscow Region». Almost half of an area of prospective Nature Park is represented by agricultural landscapes.

Keywords: rare bird, meadow waders, farmland, nature-friendly agriculture, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Great Snipe, Crane Homeland, Nature Park «Crane Country», ecological education.

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