



## Great Indian Bustard-Provider of Ecological Services, Now Under Threat of Extinction

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India is one of biodiversity rich country of the world, standing 6<sup>th</sup> in list of 12 mega biodiversity countries. In Asia, India is 3<sup>rd</sup> among country having threatened species of birds, with 85 bird's species listed as critical, endangered and vulnerable and further 52 as near threatened.

Approximate 26 species of Bustard found in all over world and 4 species found in India including Macqueen bustard, Lesser florican, Bengal florican and Great Indian bustard. In which Great India Bustard listed critically endangered (IUCN), comes under Schedule-I under wildlife (protection) Act, 1972. In India big challenge for conservationists to prevents their extinction. Historically it was found in 11 states of India and now it is limited to only 6 states namely as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and presently, the only serving population is recorded from a small pocket of Kachchh district of Gujarat and large population of GIB is found in DNP of Rajasthan.

They live in dry, open landscape comprising of short grasslands, scrubs, and rains -fed agriculture and bird prefers arid and semi-arid grassland with thorn scrub, tall grass interspersed with cultivation. They prey on various arthropods, small mammals, grasshoppers, beetles, ants, spiders, scorpions, worms, frogs, lizards, bird eggs, small snake and mice and vegetable matter-recorded as food included shoots of vegetable, lemon grass, mustard, wheat grains of millets and fruits of *ziziphus sp*, *Capparis sp* and *salvadora sp*. GIB plantigrade posture drink water while pumping water using suctions and after slowly walks towards dense vegetation.

The breeding season recorded as October to March in southern India, July to August in Northern India, Male display elaborately from specific spot by inflating their gular pouch to produce deep resonant



calls, cocking their tail and occasionally engaging in highly ritualized territorial flights with intruding males.

Their population have steadily declined by 75% in last 30 years. As few as 150 individuals were estimated to survive in 2018 (Reduced from an estimated 250 individuals in 2011).

Historically, hunting and collection of eggs, indiscriminate shooting, destruction of its habitat by expansion of agriculture and overgrazing by livestock infrastructure development such as power lines project, road cause severe habitat degradation and being low and heavy flyers collides with powerlines and wind turbines that are difficult to see from far because of heavy weight and poor frontal vision.

It is an urgent need to take concrete conservation action to save this magnificent bird from extinction. The species is only conserved by both in-situ and ex-situ conservation and by some scientific managerial practices. In in-situ conservation in which maintained and recovery of viable species in their natural surroundings by establishing more bustard sanctuaries its management research and monitoring conservation sites identification, are being declared as small protected areas control repeat grass burning.

Education, awareness programmed and workshop and meeting. A campaign like “**SAVE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD**” for want to stay connected with wildlife natural world. can positively shape the future of wild species and their habitats. Imparting natural conservation education through fun and interactive sessions will be always an amazing experience for students and purpose of activity awareness, education joyful entertaining and interactive sessions. To education local people of near bustard sanctuaries, limited use of pesticides in agriculture field and avoid livestock grazing in protected areas.