



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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The Great India Bustard

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Why is in news? Impact assessment study of forest cover Special campaign for conservation of The Great India Bustard

As per information available with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, there are **about 150 Great Indian Bustard** in the country.

The Ministry **provides financial assistance** to the States, including Gujarat, under the **Recovery Programme for saving critically endangered species and its habitats** and conservation and management of protected areas components of **Centrally Sponsored Scheme – Development of Wildlife Habitats** for conservation and protection of Great Indian Bustard.

Further, the Ministry sanctioned an outlay of Rs. 33.85 crores for the duration of seven years for the programme titled 'Habitat Improvement and Conservation Breeding of Great Indian Bustard-an integrated approach' under the CAMPA in the year 2016.

An **MoU has been signed** between Wildlife Institute of India and the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC), UAE to undertake collaborative work aimed at the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard.

About the bird:

The Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the **State bird of Rajasthan**, is considered India's **most critically endangered bird**.

It is considered the **flagship grassland species**, representing the health of the grassland ecology.

Historically, the great Indian bustard was **distributed throughout Western India**, spanning 11 states, as well as parts of Pakistan.

Today, its population is **confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat**. Small population occur in **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh**.

Bustards generally favour **flat open landscapes** with minimal visual obstruction and disturbance, therefore **adapt well in grasslands**.

They avoid grasses taller than themselves and dense scrub like thickets.

It is **one of the largest flying birds in the world**, and **India's heaviest flying bird**.

The male bird weighs upto 12-15 kg and female bird up to 5-8 kg.

Conservation Issues:

The biggest threat to this species is **hunting**, which is still prevalent in Pakistan.

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This is followed by **occasional poaching outside Protected Areas, collisions with high tension electric wires, fast moving vehicles and free-ranging dogs in villages.**

Other threats include **habitat loss and alteration** as a result of **widespread agricultural expansion** and mechanized farming, infrastructural development such as irrigation, roads, electric poles, as well as mining and industrialization.

Conservation Status:

Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Convention on Migratory Species: **Appendix I**

CITES: **Appendix I**

IUCN Red List: **Critically Endangered**

It has also been identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.