



Great Indian Bustards

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Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has constituted an **expert committee to balance the conservation and protection of the endangered [Great Indian Bustard](#) bird** population with the country's international commitments to promote [Renewable](#) sources of energy.

- The large-winged birds are on the brink of extinction, with one of the causes being frequent collisions with **high-powered power cables running adjacent** to its core habitats in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

What is the Great Indian Bustard?

▪ About:

- 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.
- Its population is confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat. Small populations occur in **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh**.

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The GIB is among the heaviest birds that can fly



THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

GIB has been put in the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature

DID YOU KNOW?

The Great Indian Bustard was proposed as a candidate for the National Bird of India and was under consideration.



The bird is hunted for its meat in Pakistan

PAKISTAN



It migrates from Rajasthan to Pakistan

THREATS TO THE BIRD

- Annual and perennial non-timber crops
- Renewable energy
- Transportation and power lines
- Human intrusions and disturbance
- Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases



2011

The year the species was enlisted in the critically endangered category

150

The approx population of the species in 2018

Height
3.3ft tall

Weight
18 kg

THE GIB IS RESTRICTED TO POCKETS IN

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Gujarat
3. Karnataka
4. Maharashtra
5. Madhya Pradesh
6. Rajasthan



▪ Vulnerability:

- The bird is under constant threats due to collision/electrocution with power transmission lines, hunting (still prevalent in Pakistan), habitat loss and alteration as a result of widespread agricultural expansion, etc.
- GIBs are a **slow-reproducing species**. They lay a few eggs and have almost a **year-long parental care of chicks**. The GIB achieves maturity in around 3-4 years.

▪ Protection Status:

- [IUCN Red List](#): Critically Endangered
- [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#): Appendix 1
- [Convention on Migratory Species \(CMS\)](#): Appendix I
- [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule I

What Steps are Being Taken to Conserve the GIB?

▪ Species Recovery Programme:

- It is kept under the species recovery programme under the [Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats](#) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

▪ Firefly Bird Diverters:

- [Firefly bird diverters](#) are flaps installed on power lines. They work as **reflectors for bird species like the GIB**.

- Birds can spot them from a distance of about 50 meters and change their path of flight to avoid collision with power lines.
- **Artificial Hatching:**
 - The conservation breeding programme started in 2019 by collecting eggs from the wild and **artificially hatching them**. The first chick hatched on 21st June 2019, and was **named 'Uno'**. Eight more chicks were hatched that year and raised and monitored.
 - A total of **29 GIBs have been housed** in the two breeding centres in Rajasthan.
- **National Bustard Recovery Plans:**
 - It is currently being implemented by conservation agencies.
- **Conservation Breeding Facility:**
 - MoEF&CC, the Rajasthan government and the [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#) have also established a conservation breeding facility in **Desert National Park at Jaisalmer in June 2019**.
- **Project Great Indian Bustard:**
 - It has been **launched by the Rajasthan government** to construct breeding enclosures for the species and develop infrastructure to reduce human pressure on its habitats.

Desert National Park:

- It is situated on the western border of India **within the Jaisalmer & Barmer Districts of Rajasthan**.
- Great Indian Bustards, Rajasthan State animal (Chinkara), State tree (khejri) and State flower (Rohida) are found naturally at this park.
- It was declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980](#) and National Park in 1992.

Kutch Bustard Sanctuary:

- The Kutch Bustard Sanctuary is **located near Nalia in the Kutch district of Gujarat**, India.
- It is the smallest sanctuary in the country, spread over just two square kilometres. The sanctuary, also known as the **Lala-Parijan sanctuary**, was declared in July 1992 primarily to **safeguard the endangered Great Indian bustard**.
- The sanctuary is home to three **species of Bustards**: the Great Indian bustard, lesser floricans, and the Macqueen bustard.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Q. Which one of the following groups of animals belongs to the category of endangered species? (2012)

- (a) Great Indian Bustard, Musk Deer, Red Panda and Asiatic Wild Ass
- (b) Kashmir Stag, Cheetal, Blue Bull and Great Indian Bustard
- (c) Snow Leopard, Swamp Deer, Rhesus Monkey and Saras (Crane)
- (d) Lion-tailed Macaque, Blue Bull, Hanuman Langur and Cheetal

Ans: (a)

Q. With reference to India's Desert National Park, which of the following statements are correct? (2020)

1. It is spread over two districts.
2. There is no human habitation inside the Park.
3. It is one of the natural habitats of Great Indian Bustard.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

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