



GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD: ENVIRONMENT

NEWS: India Achieves Milestone in Great Indian Bustard Conservation with First Chick Born through Artificial Insemination

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Sudasari Great Indian Bustard Breeding Centre in Rajasthan achieved a milestone with the birth of a great Indian bustard (GIB) chick through artificial insemination. This breakthrough represents a significant stride in the conservation of this critically endangered species, with fewer than 150 birds left in the wild, mostly in Rajasthan.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB):

Species Overview:

- **Scientific Name:** *Ardeotis nigriceps*
- **Status:** Critically endangered; State bird of Rajasthan.
- **Habitat:** Primarily in Rajasthan and Gujarat, with small populations in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Ecological Role:** Flagship grassland species, indicates grassland health.

Protection Status:

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **CMS:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I

Conservation Techniques and Global Collaboration:

- Adapted artificial insemination techniques from Abu Dhabi's Houbara Conservation Program, with training provided to Indian researchers at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

Threats:

- **Egg predation, habitat destruction, and fatal collisions with power lines.**
- **2020 WII Study:** Approximately 84,000 birds die annually from power line collisions in GIB habitats due to the bird's limited frontal vision.
- **Supreme Court Order (2021):** Mandated underground power lines in GIB habitats; feasibility is under review.



Conservation Efforts:

- **Species Recovery Programme:** Under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, MoEFCC.
- **Firefly Bird Diverters:** Reflective flaps installed on power lines to reduce collisions by making power lines visible from about 50 meters.
- **Artificial Hatching (since 2019):** Collecting and hatching wild eggs; first chick “Uno” hatched on June 21, 2019. A total of 29 GIBs are in breeding centers in Rajasthan.
- **National Bustard Recovery Plans:** Actively implemented by conservation agencies.
- **Conservation Breeding Facility:** Established in Desert National Park, Jaisalmer, in 2019.
- **Project Great Indian Bustard:** Launched by the Rajasthan government to build breeding enclosures and reduce human pressure on habitats.

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

Ardeotis nigripes

FOOD HABITS

The bustard's diet consists mainly of grasses, seeds, insects, and small reptiles.

Grasses Reptiles Insects

Habitat

Dry grasslands, scrublands, and agricultural fields

Weight

15-18 grams

Population

IUCN has classified the great Indian bustard as Critically Endangered on its Red List of Threatened Species

Height

100-120 cm

Did you Know?

The male has a more prominent black patch on its breast, which is used during the breeding season to attract a mate.

Generation Length

15.6 years

Distribution

They are found in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

FEATURES

The male and female bustards are similar in appearance, with both sporting a striking white patch on the sides of their necks.

The bustard's elongated neck is covered in black and white feathers, which complement its overall coloration. the prey.

Its head is small and rounded, with large, dark eyes that seem to gleam in the sunlight.

The crest of feathers on its head is dark brown with a black tip and white base, while the eyes are yellow.

IUCN Status

Extinct
Extinct in the wild
Critically Endangered
Endangered
Vulnerable
Near Threatened
Least Concern
Data Deficient
Not Evaluated

THREATS

1. Agriculture
2. Biological Resource Use
3. Energy Production and mining



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Source : <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2024/Oct/23/in-historic-first-great-indian-bustard-chick-born-through-artificial-insemination-in-rajasthan>



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