



Species

ISSUE 63

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of “a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth.”

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC’s major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle’s main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

ASSESS: Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

PLAN: Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

ACT: Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.



Their implementation requires two transversal components:

NETWORK: Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

COMMUNICATE: Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the SSC *Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network each year. Each SSC Group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

Group information

Includes names of Chair / Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authority Coordinators and Program Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the SSC Group

Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC Group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

Activities and results

Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results were generated during the reported year, ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

Acknowledgements

Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

Summary of achievements

Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

Example for the recommended citation:

Kessler, M, and Collar, N. 2023. 2022 Report of the Bustard Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 6 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
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RED LIST AUTHORITY

COORDINATOR

BirdLife International

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

47

Mission statement

The mission statement of the SSC Bustard Specialist Group (BSG) is to actively promote bustard research and conservation by developing conservation action plans for the most threatened species, and by encouraging information exchange and cooperation amongst bustard specialists and other relevant organisations to enhance conservation of bustards and their habitats worldwide.

Projected impact 2021–2025

In the 2021-2025 quadrennium, the Bustard Specialist Group (BSG) plans to expand membership of the group to include motivated, committed bustard researchers and conservationists from all taxa and range areas, who share the vision of maintaining healthy and sustainable populations of bustards. The BSG will improve communication and cooperation between bustard experts and conservationists across political and language divides. The BSG will contribute proactively to Red List assessments of all bustard species and engage in continued research to clarify status and threats to bustard species, including cross-border counts and electronic tracking. The BSG will develop and provide guidance regarding action plans for bustards with a focus on species and populations

threatened with extinction, and provide consultation and advice to governments and conservation organisations to inform their programmes of action. We will develop guidelines and programmes to address declines of bustard species, with a focus on species under threat of extinction and threats facing multiple bustard species, such as poaching and unsustainable hunting, agricultural intensification, dog predation and powerline collisions. The BSG will assist with and implement habitat protection and restoration, captive breeding and reintroduction/reinforcement measures for threatened bustard species as appropriate. The BSG will increase awareness and concern among the public regarding bustard conservation and promote conservation management interventions for declining populations of bustards to relevant authorities and public forums.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-005 Assess status, habitat requirements and threats to Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*) across Brahmaputra floodplain, including use of global system for mobile communications (GSM) tracking. Status: Not initiated

T-006 Undertake Bengal Florican monitoring in Assam. Status: On track

T-007 Develop community monitoring for Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) and Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indicus*) in Rajasthan. Status: Achieved

T-022 Evaluate Kori Bustard (*Ardeotis kori*) population status and range shift investigation, search for priority habitat. Status: Not initiated

T-023 Identify breeding and wintering critical areas for Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) in Spain. Status: On track

T-030 Survey Bengal Florican population across all Nepal. Status: On track

T-033 Research impact of captive breeding and hunting on Houbara populations. Status: On track

T-034 Survey wintering areas of Eastern European Great Bustards (*Otis tarda*) and assess possibility for protection. Status: On track

T-035 Identify suitable habitats of wintering population of Little Bustard in Iran and propose their conservation and protection. Status: On track

T-037 Conduct threat assessment for Bengal Floricans at Koshi Tappu Reserve with focus on powerlines. Status: On track



Kori Bustard (*Ardeotis kori struthiunculus*)
at the National Zoo, Washington DC
Photo: Jessie Cohen

T-039 Conduct satellite telemetry of Lesser Florican.

Status: Achieved

T-043 Carry out range level population and habitat monitoring for Lesser Florican and Great Indian Bustard.

Status: On track

T-044 Carry out telemetry of Lesser Florican and Great Indian Bustard to learn life history, movement, seasonal habitat use and behaviour.

Status: On track

T-045 Assess bustard mortality due to powerlines and effectiveness of diverters for mitigation.

Status: On track

T-046 Assess population of predators of Great Indian Bustard and their impact.

Status: On track

T-047 Conduct genetic studies of Great Indian Bustard to inform management practices.

Status: On track

T-048 Conduct genetic analysis of wintering Eastern European Great Bustards.

Status: On track

T-050 Add Great Bustard to official list of British birds, methods to include publishing research paper.

Status: On track

T-053 Assess demography and population trends of Asian Houbara (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*) in the Bukhara region, Uzbekistan.

Status: On track

T-056 Conduct GPS/GSM telemetry study of hand-reared Great Bustard females in Germany.

Status: On track

T-057 Monitor Lesser Florican in Saurashtra region of Gujarat State, India.

Status: On track

T-058 Conduct awareness programmes for sustainable agriculture and grassland protection near Lesser Florican sites.

Status: On track

T-059 Survey population demography and wintering areas of Eastern Great Bustard population and assess potential threats in China.

Status: On track

T-060 Study population genomics of Great Bustard for further evidence as to the status of the two subspecies of Great Bustard.

Status: On track

PLAN

T-008 Complete an Action Plan for Great Bustards in Asia, for submission to the 2023 Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species.

Status: On track

T-009 Conduct sensitivity mapping for Great Indian Bustard in Rajasthan to inform energy investment.

Status: Achieved

T-010 Identify grassland corridors and key threats to Bengal Florican in Brahmaputra Floodplain.

Status: On track

T-019 Develop best practice guidelines for the mitigation of powerlines to reduce bustard collisions.

Status: Achieved

T-024 Reclassify Little Bustard to 'Endangered' in Spain; develop national conservation strategy for the species.

Status: Achieved

T-028 Publish satellite tracking data for Ludwig's Bustard (*Neotis ludwigii*) to share information about the species' ecology and vulnerability to powerline collisions.

Status: On track

T-032 Develop Kori Bustard conservation action plan in Tanzania.

Status: Not initiated

T-036 Update Action Plan for Bengal Florican in Nepal.

Status: On track

ACT

T-011 Continue to develop conservation breeding for Great Indian Bustard.

Status: On track

T-012 Pursue implementation of measures to reduce powerline collisions of Great Indian Bustards.

Status: On track

T-013 Develop community activities for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican in Rajasthan and other important areas.

Status: Achieved

T-014 Conduct habitat restoration and protection, and reserve creation for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican in Rajasthan and other important areas.

Status: On track

T-015 Conduct awareness programmes for sustainable agriculture near Lesser Florican sites.

Status: Not initiated

T-016 Conduct community support and awareness programmes at Bengal Florican habitat in Assam.

Status: On track

T-017 Carry out habitat restoration and improvement (via organic cultivation) for Bengal Florican in Assam.

Status: On track



Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) displaying
Photo: Gobind Sagar Bhardwa

T-018 Conduct community education and awareness programmes, and citizen science programmes, relating to Bengal Florican in Brahmaputra Floodplain.
Status: On track

T-026 Implement community outreach and economic development programmes for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican to include habitat improvement and awareness.
Status: On track

T-027 Create economic development programmes focusing on handicrafts in Great Bustard areas in Iran.
Status: On track

T-038 Conduct powerline marking and support of public litigation for powerline marking.
Status: Achieved

T-040 Carry out conservation breeding for Lesser Florican.
Status: On track

T-041 Implement predator management for Great Indian Bustard.
Status: On track

T-042 Conduct capacity building and outreach to stakeholders and collaborators for Great Indian Bustard protection and habitat.
Status: On track

T-049 Build breeding centre for Bengal Florican, improve husbandry protocols, start captive breeding, increase captive breeding population, conduct genetic study for captive breeding management.
Status: On track

T-051 Increase the area of land under the management of the Great Bustard Group.
Status: On track

T-052 Continue and improve captive breeding programme with intention of eventually restoring populations to other regions of England.
Status: On track

T-054 Further improve Great Bustard habitats in the last three breeding areas in Germany.
Status: On track

T-055 Reintroduce/restore the extinct Great Bustard population in the Zerbster Land Special Protection Area (Germany).
Status: On track

T-061 Conduct community survey and improve the community awareness to protect Great Bustard and its sympatric vulnerable species in China.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-001 Increase membership of BSG to include experts on additional bustard taxa and range areas.
Status: On track

T-002 Provide a weekly forum for BSG members to share research findings and news (BSG Secretariat, with input from Membership).
Status: On track

T-003 Extend a multilingual website to facilitate communication between Bustard experts in North Eurasia.
Status: Achieved

T-025 Organise virtual group conference for members of the BSG.
Status: Achieved

T-031 Encourage new researchers/students to take up study of Bengal Florican.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-020 Set up *Bustard Studies* as an open-access online journal.
Status: On track

T-029 Promote sustainable management and hunting of Houbara.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Research activities

T-056 Conduct GPS/GSM telemetry study of hand-reared Great Bustard females in Germany. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: The GPS/GSM telemetry study continued in 2022. Six hand-raised Great Bustards were fitted with GPS trackers in two of the existing bustard areas. As part of a reintroduction project, four additional Great Bustards were fitted with a GPS tracker. The data provided from 2019 to 2022 gave valuable insights into the flight routes of Great Bustards between the different bustard areas. They are therefore an important basis for future protective measures.

PLAN

Planning

T-008 Complete an Action Plan for Great Bustards in Asia, for submission to the 2023 Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species. (KSR 8)

Number of plans invited/endorsed by national governments/conservation authorities: 1



Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indicus*) displaying
 Photo: Gobind Sagar Bhardwa

Result description: At the end of 2022, a grant application to SSC EDGE small grants was selected. This provides funding for the achievement of the Action Plan in 2023.

T-019 Develop best practice guidelines for the mitigation of powerlines to reduce bustard collisions. (KSR 8)

Number of technical documents to support the development of conservation plans/strategies: 1

Result description: The manuscript was accepted in *Bird Conservation International* and published. It has received attention and citations. Publication: Silva JP et al. (2022). 'The effects of powerlines on bustards: how best to mitigate, how best to monitor?' *Bird Conservation International*, 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959270922000314>.

T-028 Publish satellite tracking data for Ludwig's Bustard (*N. ludwigii*) to share information about the species' ecology and vulnerability to powerline collisions. (KSR 8)

Number of technical documents to support the development of conservation plans/strategies: 0

Result description: After a bit of a hiatus while the main researchers were focussed on other work, a new student has undertaken to progress the analysis of the Ludwig's Bustard satellite tracking data in 2023.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-049 Build breeding centre for Bengal Florican, improve husbandry protocols, start captive breeding, increase captive breeding population, conduct genetic study for captive breeding management. (KSR 10)

Number of captive breeding facilities built and operative: 1

Result description: Quarantine facilities are built and operative one egg has been harvested from the wild, and successfully artificially incubated, and the chick has successfully been hand-raised.

T-054 Further improve Great Bustard habitats in the last three breeding areas in Germany. (KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 0

Result description: The measures were continued as in previous years. Agricultural land owned by the state and by the NGO Society for Protection of Great Bustard has been conditionally leased to local farms. This means extensive management, no use of pesticides, limited use of fertilizers and adjusted management times. About 20 ha of arable and grassland areas were newly acquired. Predation management needs improvement.

T-055 Reintroduce/restore the extinct Great Bustard population in the Zerbster Land Special Protection Area (Germany). (KSR 10)

Number of species with increased or prevented decrease in population or range size, as a result of conservation actions: 0

Result description: The first 10 hand-reared Great Bustards were released into the wild in 2022 in the Zerbster Land area as a pilot project. A special aviary in a 14-ha predator-proof fence was built as infrastructure for the release. Intensive public relations work was carried out to involve the local population.

NETWORK

Membership

T-001 Increase membership of BSG to include experts on additional Bustard taxa and range areas. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 3

Result description: In 2022, we have expanded the group's membership in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia (three people) and extended invitations to additional individuals in South and Southeast Asia and Northern Eurasia.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 59

Geographic regions: 7 Global, 3 Africa, 39 Asia, 10 Europe

Actions during 2022:

- Assess: 1 (KSR 5)
- Plan: 3 (KSR 8)
- Act: 3 (KSR 10)
- Network: 1 (KSR 2)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

