



Species

ISSUE 64

2023 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 trans-versal 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 and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS 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 and CSS Stand-alone Reports

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

Title of the group

Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

Group information

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

Logo of the 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 or CSS 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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:

Kessler, M. and Collar, N. 2024. 2023 Report of the Bustard Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 8 pp.

2023 Report

IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group



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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



Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indicus*)
Photo: Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj

T-039 Conduct satellite telemetry of Lesser Florican.

Status: On track

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: Achieved

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 a 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



Asian Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*) performing breeding display in Uzbekistan
Photo: John Burnside

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

Status: On track

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: Achieved

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

Status: On track

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 2023

ASSESS

Research activities

T-005 Assess status, habitat requirements and threats to Bengal Florican (*H. bengalensis*) across Brahmaputra floodplain, including use of global system for mobile communications (GSM) tracking. (KSR 5)

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

Result description: Funding for GSM/GPS tags could not be secured hence this project could not be initiated. However, status and habitat requirements and threats are being evaluated by conventional survey methods with limited success in Upper Assam (Tinsukhia) and Eastern Arunachal Pradesh (DERing WLS and Roing Grassland).

T-007 Develop community monitoring for Great Indian Bustard (*A. nigriceps*) and Lesser Florican (*S. indicus*) in Rajasthan. (KSR 5)

Number of trained groups on community monitoring: 4

Result description: The BNHS established a network of local individuals such as Friends of Bustards (Godawan Mitra, Maldhok Mitra), floricans (Kharmor Mitra), and cranes (Kurja Mitra).

T-023 Identify breeding and wintering critical areas for Little Bustard (*T. tetrax*) in Spain. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 1

Result description: As a result of a research project funded by Fundación Biodiversidad, dependent on the Spanish Ministry of Environment (MITECO), these areas have been identified and reported to the Ministry. A corresponding scientific manuscript has been submitted to *Cons. Biol.*, and is currently under review.

T-033 Research impact of captive breeding and hunting on Houbara populations. (KSR 5)

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

Result description: The 2023 surveys of nesting females were initiated to examine the contribution of captive bred releases to the free-living population, this activities will continue in 2024.

T-034 Survey wintering areas of Eastern European Great Bustards (*O. tarda*) and assess possibility for protection. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 1

Result description: The following paper was published in 2023: Oparina, O.S. et al. (2023). '[Abundance and demographic structure of the Great Bustard \(*Otis tarda*\)](#)

(*Otididae, Aves*) population at lek areas in the Saratov and Volgograd Trans-Volga region'. *Povolzhskiy Journal of Ecology*, N° 4, pp. 454–465.

T-035 Identify suitable habitats of wintering population of Little Bustard in Iran and propose their conservation and protection. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 2

Result description: We have successfully developed a model that predicts the suitability of habitats for the species, based on various environmental factors. However, we are still in the process of updating the distribution records of the species.

T-039 Conduct satellite telemetry of Lesser Florican. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 2

Result description: TCF continued its collaborative efforts with the Gujarat Forest Department Government of Gujarat. The TCF team led by Dr Devesh Gadhavi worked as 'subject expert' and subsequently tagged six male Lesser Floricans in Blackbuck National Park, in August 2022. So far, one female and 11 males have been tagged. The results of this exercise have been published in the following research articles: (1) Ram, M., et al. (2022). '[Breeding and non-breeding home range, and dispersal patterns of the critically endangered lesser florican *Syphoetides indicus* \(Miller, 1782\)](#)'. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society (JBNHS)*, 119, 3-10; (2) Ram, M., Gadhavi, D., Sahu, A. et al. (2023). '[Unravelling the secrets of lesser florican: a study of their home range and habitat use in Gujarat, India](#)'. *Sci Rep* 13, 19082.

T-050 Add Great Bustard to official list of British birds, methods to include publishing research paper. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 1

Result description: The Great Bustard has been included as an eligible species in the Natural England Species Recovery Programme. This directly opens a significant habitat funding opportunity from a statutory agency and represents a significant step forward for formal recognition of the species in the UK.

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: 1

Result description: The GPS/GSM telemetry study continued in 2023. Five hand-reared 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 2023 gave valuable insights into the flight routes of Great Bustards between the different bustard areas and beyond. 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

Result description: The Action Plan was completed and is on the agenda for CMS COP14, which has been delayed until 2024. An SSC Edge Grant has been received to fund the translation of the completed document into three regional languages.

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: This paper was published in 2023 by Silva, J.P. et al. (2023). '[The effects of powerlines on bustards: how best to mitigate, how best to monitor?](#)' *Bird Conservation International* 33: e30.

T-024 Reclassify Little Bustard to Endangered in Spain; develop a national conservation strategy for the species. (KSR 8)

Number of Assess to Plan (A2P) species assessments completed: 1

Result description: The new classification was published by the Spanish Government early this year. There is now no timeline for the development of the national conservation strategy.

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: The first of two planned papers on satellite tracking data for Ludwig's Bustard was drafted in 2023.

T-036 Update Action Plan for Bengal Florican in Nepal. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies updated: 1

Result description: The Bengal Florican Action Plan for Nepal is at the final stages of review and hoping that the government will endorse it by early next year. This may take place within April next year.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-014 Conduct habitat restoration and protection, and reserve creation for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican in Rajasthan and other important areas. (KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 3

Result description: Around 80% of the land in the village of Khetolai, along with some parts of neighbouring villages, has been affected by the spread of exotic invasive trees known as *Prosopis juliflora*. This has made access to certain areas more difficult, including those where bustards reside in non-protected areas. However, the community has taken steps to address this issue by developing grassland enclosures on three plots of land, measuring 25, 10 and 35 ha each. These enclosures will help to prevent the further spread of invasive trees and preserve the natural habitat of the area.

T-026 Implement community outreach and economic development programmes for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican to include habitat improvement and awareness. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 2

Result description: In the year 2017-18, TCF collaborated with the Kanakpar village community to initiate the restoration of degraded pastures in Kutch, Gujarat. Over 50 acres of community grazing area has been successfully restored to a self-sustaining grassland. During a good monsoon season, the grassland produces approximately 30 tonnes of grass annually. The harvested grass is stored and used to lower grazing pressure on the surrounding natural grasslands and bustard habitat, particularly during the breeding season of all grasslands-associated species that epitomize the Kutch bustard landscape. The villagers have followed the 'Rotational

and Controlled Grazing System' for the past six years, making the grassland self-sustainable. Due to the erratic rainfall of the year 2023, in November, ~29,000 kg of grass was harvested from 30 acres (57%) of the restored area by the villagers. (Refer to Pg 5-6, at [Fostering Coexistence](#)). Additionally, around 10 farmers were involved in practising organic/pesticide-free farming in the bustard landscape. Six thousand kg of groundnut was cultivated without any pesticide and sold within one month. This program can be scaled up with the funding support. The TCF seeks funding support to expand/continue it henceforth. (Refer to Pg 39-40, at [Fostering Coexistence](#)). Also, in 2023, TCF conducted a series of community and school awareness programs in the ecologically sensitive region of Kutch Bustard Sanctuary. In total, 10 awareness programs were conducted, during which participants were educated about the significance of grasslands and the importance of their conservation through Nature Education Camps. In 2024, TCF will initiate the restoration of an additional 350 acres of degraded pasture within Priority/Potential Bustard Areas and complete the task by 2028.

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 threatened species benefiting from *ex situ* conservation action: 1

Result description: Four chicks successfully hatched after artificial incubation. One captive-hatched female laid the first ever captive-conceived egg. Unfortunately, this captive-laid egg failed to hatch. One genetically valuable adult female was successfully rescued from the native habitat and has been incorporated into the assurance population. Blood collection from birds in the assurance population has started to produce mtDNA sequences and a ddRAD genomic library. The sequencing data will be used to gain pairwise kinship estimates of the captive individuals and will further be used to identify genetic markers that can be used to genotype future samples that are non-invasively collected from wild and/or captive birds. Furthermore, blood samples have been sent for analysis to develop the first biochemistry baseline for Bengal Florican.

T-051 Increase the area of land under the management of the Great Bustard Group. (KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 1

Result description: The GBG has established an additional 10 ha of nesting and chick rearing habitat close the main population base. Additionally, a further nesting plot has been established on a second sub population with a third to come on line in the autumn of 2024. Plans are on track to establish a fourth sub population with dedicated nesting habitat areas during 2024. The action will continue indefinitely.

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: 4

Result description: The measures were continued as in previous years. Agricultural land owned by the state and owned 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. Some hectares of arable and grassland areas were newly acquired. Predation management needs further 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: 1
Result description: The pilot project was continued. After migrating, three young birds from last year returned to the area independently. In 2023, 15 hand-reared young bustards were released into the wild. Habitat improvement continued.

Synergy

T-013 Develop community activities for Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican in Rajasthan and other important areas. (KSR 11)

Number of rural communities involved in species conservation programs and sustainable use practices: 9

Result description: Community-based monitoring aims to understand the status of bustards, flicans and associated birds through training and empowering selected locals as well as garner community support for conservation actions.

T-015 Conduct awareness programs for sustainable agriculture near Lesser Florican sites. (KSR 11)

Number of rural communities involved in species conservation programs and sustainable use practices: 19



Ludwig's Bustard (*Neotis ludwigii*) performing breeding display in South Africa
Photo: Matt Pretorius



Hartlaub's Bustard (*Lissotis hartlaubii*) performing a breeding display in Meru National Park
Photo: Alain Jacot

Result description: BNHS has launched an initiative to develop a model for Florican-friendly Agriculture Practices, going beyond awareness programs. One concept being tested is sparing land for less intensive farming in Florican areas.

T-027 Create economic development programs focusing on handicrafts in Great Bustard areas in Iran. (KSR 10)

Economic development programs focusing on handicrafts in Great Bustard areas in Iran created: 1.

Result description: This project addressed the critical situation of the Great Bustard in Iran and Turkey. It is a story of intertwined challenges – poverty, lack of awareness, and the pressing need for sustainable economic practices. To tackle this issue, we proposed a novel approach: making effective use of the rich tradition of Persian handmade carpets. Originating more than 2,500 years ago, these carpets are not just artefacts; they are woven narratives of Persian history and culture. The rural communities near the Great Bustard's habitat have their unique patterns, reflecting their deep cultural roots. Our objective was twofold: to provide a stable source of income for the locals while raising awareness about the critical state of the Great Bustard. As a pilot initiative, we engaged local carpet weavers in creating handmade carpets inspired by the Great Bustard. Koc University played a crucial role in this initiative and in creating this masterpiece as a project host, The project not just ends with the creation of these carpets. Our plan includes showcasing and marketing these unique pieces nationally and internationally through social media. This not only provides a market for the carpets but also serves as a platform to raise awareness about the critical situation of the Great Bustard. In conclusion, this project is not

just about conserving a species; it is about creating a sustainable future for both wildlife and the communities that coexist with them. By weaving the story of the Great Bustard into the fabric of Persian culture, we hope to inspire a shared commitment to conservation and cultural preservation.

**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
Results: We have added new members to the group, and plan to further expand membership in Central Europe and the Caucasus. We are searching for members in Africa and Australia.

Synergy

T-003 Extend a multilingual website to facilitate communication between bustard experts in North Eurasia. (KSR 2)

Manage a multilingual website: Achieved
Result description: The multilingual website in four languages has the capacity to spread news about North Eurasian species, but there is not a login for communication on the platform.

**COMMUNICATE
Communicate**

T-002 Provide a weekly forum for BSG members to share research findings and news (BSG Secretariat, with input from Membership). (KSR 2)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 52
Result description: Weekly bustard news was pulled from various social media outlets along with newly published papers on bustards sent out each Sunday to the BSG members.

T-020 Set up Bustard Studies as an open-access online journal. (KSR 2)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 0

Result description: The design has been completed. The production of the journal is linked to holding a bustard group meeting/conference.

T-029 Promote sustainable management and hunting of Houbara. (KSR 2)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: BSG Member now actively working in KSA to promote sustainable Houbara management.

Acknowledgements

The IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group gratefully acknowledges the work of Sara Hallager, the Group's Secretary. We also extend thanks to the SSC Chairs office for their kind support.

Summary of achievements

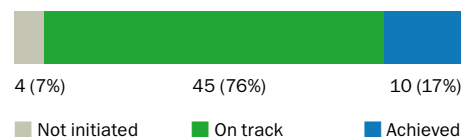
Total number of targets 2021–2025: 59

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

Actions during 2023:

Assess: 9 (KSR 5)
Plan: 5 (KSR 8)
Act: 9 (KSR 10, 11)
Network: 2 (KSR 2)
Communicate: 2 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:





Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus
Photo: Csenge Nagy



Tetra Parnaiba
Photo: Karina Molina



Trioceros hoehnelii
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson



Sternberia lutea
Photo: Hayri Duman



Egretta rufescens
Photo: Ernesto Gómez



Lactifluus neotropicus
Photo: Aida Vasco



Mayfly nymph (*Ecdyonurus* sp.)
Photo: Astrid Schmidt-Kloiber and Wolfram Graf