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14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 – 17 February 2024  
Agenda Item 28.5

**ACTION PLAN FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD IN ASIA**

*(Prepared by the Mongolian Government, along with the Eurasian Bustard Alliance and Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia)*

Summary:

The Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) is an endangered landbird listed on Appendix I and II of CMS. As an activity of the Concerted Action for the Asian Population of the Great Bustard, an Action Plan for the Great Bustard in Asia has been prepared in consultation with researchers from across the species' range in Asia, non-governmental organizations and Range States.

The Action Plan summarizes research on the current status and threats to the species, identifies and prioritizes conservation actions for Range States. This Plan is submitted to COP14 for adoption with intention to launch this programme of work.

Revision 1 of the Action Plan for the Great Bustard in Asia incorporates clarifications to maps 3.2, 4.2 and 4.4, and minor additions to text in response to comments from the Government of Hungary. The revision also includes changes to improve readability and correct typographical errors which were identified during the process of translating the document into Chinese, Mongolian, and Russian versions. Photographs have been added and formatting applied to the document.

## ACTION PLAN FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD IN ASIA

### Background

1. The Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) was listed as Threatened on the IUCN Red List in 1988 and since 1994 has been listed as Vulnerable. Decreases in population and area of occupancy continue, particularly in Central and East Asia. The Great Bustard was listed on Appendix II of CMS in 1985 and the global population uplisted to Appendix I at the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP11, Quito, in 2014). A Concerted Action was designated for populations in Asia at CMS COP12, Manila, in 2017 and extended at COP13, Gandhinagar, India in 2020.
2. The Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Asian Great Bustard ([UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.26.2.8](#)) states that “*The main activity under the Concerted Action will be to update the existing Action Plan dating from 1998 and produce a revised, updated version ready for adoption at COP13.*” The 2020 Report on the Implementation of this Concerted Action ([UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.28.1.8](#)) describes ongoing work on the draft Action Plan and recommends adjustment of the timeline of the Concerted Action with submission of the Action Plan for adoption at COP14.

### Issue

3. The historic range of the Great Bustard stretches from the Iberian to the Korean peninsula, however this range has been severely fragmented over the past two centuries. Populations of the Western Great Bustard (*O. t. tarda*) in Asia (inclusive of Iran and eastwards) are currently estimated at only 500 - 1000 individuals. The entirety of the population of Eastern Great Bustards (*O. t. dybowskii*) is now estimated as 1300-2200 individuals.
4. Populations of Great Bustard in Asia are fully migratory, moving between breeding grounds as far north as southern Siberia and wintering grounds as far south as Iran and China. Great Bustards in Asia typically undertake protracted migrations, spending approximately one third of the calendar year at stopovers.
5. This species is known to utilize border areas for breeding, stopover, and likely also winter habitat in Asia, further increasing the utility of international cooperation for its conservation.
6. The naturally low reproductive rate of the Great Bustard is further lowered by agricultural intensification on breeding grounds. Adult mortality has been heightened by collisions with powerlines, poaching and poisoning at migratory stopovers and wintering grounds.

### Activities

7. In May 2017, a Conference on Conservation of the Great Bustard in Asia was held in Mongolia, involving stakeholders and experts from nine countries. A Proposal for a Concerted Action on Great Bustards in Asia under CMS was developed by participants.
8. The Proposal for Concerted Action was approved at CMS COP12 in October 2017, with creation of a revised Action Plan for the Great Bustard in Asia planned as a major output.

9. A scheduled follow-up conference to develop the Action Plan was not possible for reasons of funding support. Information for the first draft of the Action Plan was gathered through a questionnaire completed by thirty experts across the Asian Range of the Great Bustard in Autumn 2019.
10. The Concerted Action for Great Bustards in Asia was extended at CMS COP13 in 2020.
11. Information was collated from these inputs and the scientific literature and a draft Action Plan was drafted by Eurasian Bustard Alliance and Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia, in consultation with the Mongolian Government and the Chair of the IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group.
12. Fundraising and planning for a gathering to discuss the document stalled during the COVID19 global pandemic. The draft Plan was circulated to contributors for review remotely. All comments were considered and incorporated as appropriate into a second draft of the document.
13. In April 2020, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to contributors to elicit additional information deemed valuable for inclusion. This information was edited into a third draft of the Action Plan.
14. In Autumn 2022 an application for funding to translate the Action Plan into three key regional languages was approved by the IUCN SSC.

#### Discussion and analysis

15. The Action Plan is submitted to COP14 as a key output of the Concerted Action for Great Bustards in Asia, and with the intention of endorsing urgent action for these populations.
16. The Action Plan is appended as Annex to this document. Though this document is in English language, funding has been identified to support translation of the Plan into major regional languages (Chinese, Mongolian, and Russian) by the end of the 2023 calendar year.

#### Recommended actions

17. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
  - a) adopt as part of the draft amendments to Resolution 12.12 (Rev.COP13), the Action Plan for the Great Bustard in Asia contained in Annex of this document.

**ANNEX**

**ACTION PLAN FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD IN ASIA**

Note: The revised draft Action Plan for the Great Bustard in Asia is presented as a separate file [here](#).