



MOS4 11 – 15 March
Bad Belzig, Germany

Contribution to population status of Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) in Slovakia

Report of Signatories at MOS4 according to Agenda Item 4.2

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Current status: Distribution and population status of Great Bustard in Slovakia

In Slovakia, the species is considered as Endangered (according to Demko *et al.* 2013). Up to 2000, the species disappeared from the Danube Lowlands (former distribution area) and other areas north of the Danube River. After several years of break in breeding in Slovakia, one successful breeding was recorded in 2010 in the Sysľovské polia SPA. Factors influencing breeding success has not been determined. In the Sysľovské polia SPA breeding of 3 females was recorded again in 2016 and breeding of 2 females in 2017.

SPAs	Breeding population	
	No. of individuals estimated in 2000 - 2003	No. of individuals estimated in 2004-2017
Lehnice	0 - 1	1
Sysľovské polia	0 - 3	2

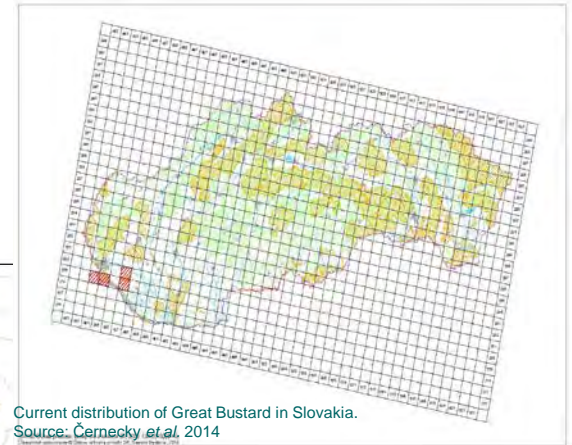
SPAs	Non - breeding population (on passage, wintering)	
	No. of individuals estimated in 1998	No. of individuals estimated in 2017
Lehnice	0 - 1	0
Sysľovské polia	86 - 90	160 - 398

Numbers of wintering Great Bustards increased from maximum 86 – 90 of wintering individuals in SPA Sysľovské polia in 1998 up to regularly 160 – 300 specimens wintering in 2016 with maximum 398 in winter 2017-18. These wintering places are situated on the Austrian border and birds come from adjacent Austrian SPAs and Hungarian SPAs. Complete breeding population of the Great Bustard in Austria and north-western Hungary is wintering in Slovakia and therefore this SPA Sysľovské polia is a key site for conservation of this species.

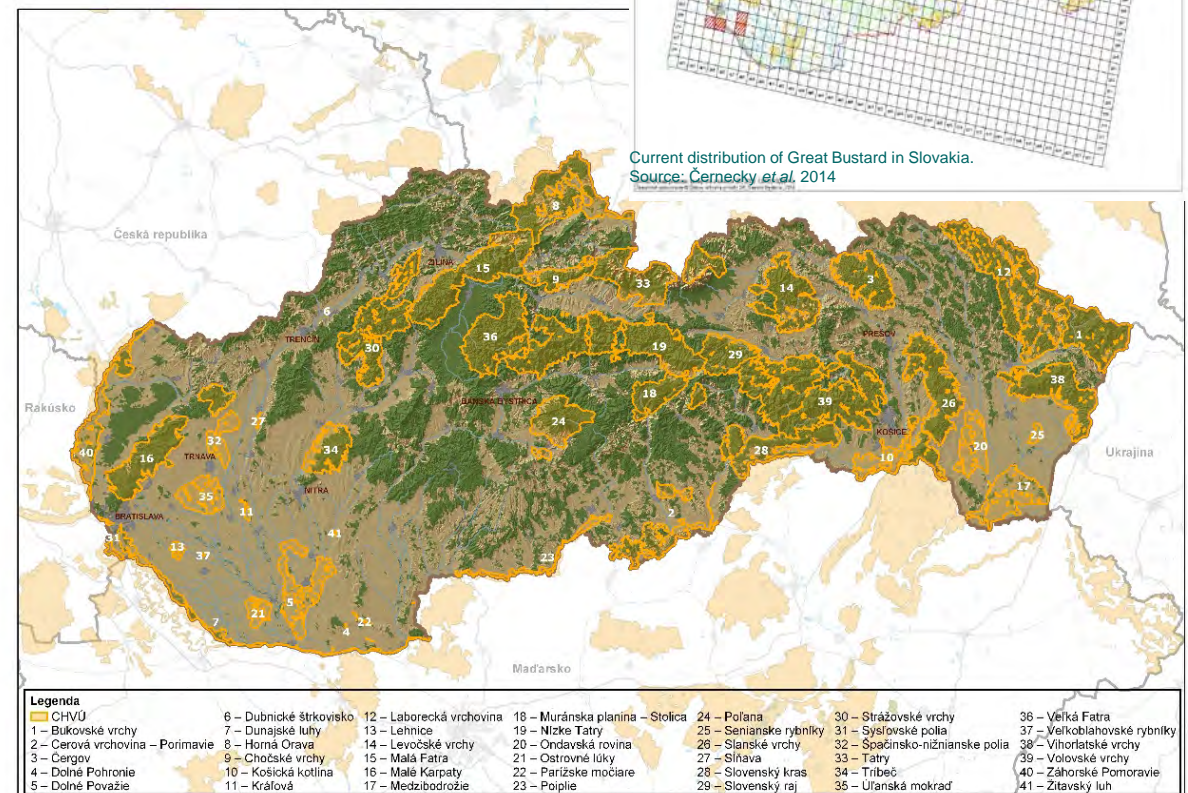
We have two SPAs designated for protection of Great Bustard in Slovakia:

Sysľovské polia SPA (No. 31 on map)

Lehnice SPA (No. 13 on map)



Current distribution of Great Bustard in Slovakia.
Source: Černecký *et al.* 2014





Monitoring

Census methods harmonised with Austria and Hungary.

Monthly census of Great Bustard performed once a month jointly with Hungarian and Austrian experts.

All breeding, migratory and wintering Great Bustard populations monitored

No formal international monitoring programme is in place. Coordinated and joint monitoring of the sizes and the structure of the Western Pannonian population of Great Bustard shared by Slovakia, Austria and Hungary performed once a month.

Data are summarised in Annual monitoring reports

Existing conservation measures at the national level

- ❑ **Act. No. 543/2002 Coll on Nature and Landscape Protection** as amended **Order of the Ministry of the Environment of Slovak Republic No. 24/2003 Coll** which implements Act No. 543/2002 Coll which implement EU Habitat and Birds Directives is protected like protected animals. The species is listed in Annexes 32 and 4B to the Regulation by Ministry of the Environment as respectively species of European importance and autochthonous species naturally occurring in Slovakia
- ❑ According to national legislations is societal value of the species is established at 5990 eur/specimen
- ❑ **Species is also protected by the Act No. 15/2005 Coll** on the conservation of wild animals and plants by regulating trade therein
- ❑ **Act No. 274/2009 Coll on Hunting** as amended the species is included as all – year round protected game species

- ❑ **Order of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No. 377/2005 Coll** to establish the Lehnice SPA
Hunting restrictions in Lehnice SPA
prohibited hunting from 16.1 to 15.5 except for predators (fox, martens, raccoon dog, European polecat)
prohibited falconry
- ❑ **Order of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No. 234/2006 Coll** to establish the Sysľovské SPA
Hunting restrictions in Sysľovské SPAs
prohibited falconry within the whole area of the SPA
prohibited hunting from 1.1 to 30.6 expect for predators within the specified part of the SPA
prohibited hunting on all goose and duck species within the specified part of the SPA
- ❑ Rescue programme for better conservation of Great Bustard has been approved in 2000, realized in 2001 - 2005. In 2018 is mainly goals update rescue programme
- ❑ Management plan developed for Sysľovské polia SPA for period 2018 – 2047 with protection measures for Great Bustard population and its habitat



Threats

Identified threats	Threat score	Explanation and reference
Habitat loss	Critical	The most important factor is intensive agriculture, especially loss of permanent grasslands (pastures, meadows) absence of barren land, planting of unsuitable crops cultivated as monocultures on large parcels, huge use of industrial fertilizers and chemical plant protection products and complete absence of extensive livestock farming
Losses of eggs and chicks	High	When breeding of Great Bustard was recorded and nest was found, strictly protected zone was designated around the nest. But losses could be recorded in cases when the nests were not found and breeding was probable.
Predation	Medium	
Collision with powerlines	Critical	
Human disturbance	High	Important Great Bustard sites are close to Bratislava and some disturbance occurs due to tourism and recreation activities
Pesticides	Critical	Restrictions on the use of chemicals in agriculture are established by the SPA regulation, but exceptions are still valid for land-users
illegal hunting	Low	Some illegal hunting can occur, but hunting on Great Bustard was not recorded



Cross – border cooperation conservation measures with neighbouring countries

Regular – monthly counting of Western – Pannonian population of Great Bustard implemented jointly with Hungarian and Austriarian experts.

Projects

Project LIFE13 NAT/SK/001272 “Energy in the Landscape - power lines and conservation of priority bird species in the Natura 2000 sites” has been implemented since 2014. It is the first project with a systematic approach to solving the problem of bird collisions with power lines through the design of suitable methods for the identification and elimination of risks. The project area includes Lehnice SPA.

The Slovak RDP 2014–2020 was approved by the European Commission on 04/02/2015 and it includes several measures for biodiversity protection. The AES for Great Bustard with title "The Great Bustard Protection" with the scope for support for 3 000 ha of arable land.

The AES is applicable in Sysľovské polia and Lehnice SPAs, both areas designated for the protection of Great Bustard in Slovakia.

Thank you for your attention

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