

**CZECH REPUBLIC**  
**NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD MOU AND ACTION PLAN**

This reporting format is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support exchange of information throughout the range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatory States. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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|---|
| <p><b>Agency or institution responsible for the preparation of this report</b></p> <p>Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic</p>   |
| <p><b>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input</b></p> <p>The Regional Authority of the South Moravian Region<br/>         Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic<br/>         Czech Society for Ornithology</p>   |
| <p><b>Reports submitted to date:</b><br/>         First: (Period covered)<br/>         Second: 20/02/2013</p>   |
| <p><b>Period covered by this report</b><br/>         (day) (month) (year) to (day) (month) (year):<br/>         21/09/2008 – 20/02/2013</p>   |
| <p><b>Memorandum in effect in country since:</b><br/>         [Date: dd / mm / yy]:<br/>         18/02/2008</p>   |
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## PART I. GENERAL

This questionnaire follows the structure and numbering of the Action Plan annexed to the Memorandum of Understanding to make it easier to read the relevant action points before the form is filled in. In some cases, however, sub-actions were not listed separately for the sake of simplicity and to avoid duplications. They should however be taken into consideration when answering the questions.

### 0. National work programme

Is there a national work programme or action plan already in place in your country for the Great Bustard pursuant to Paragraph 4(g) of the Memorandum of Understanding?

Yes       No

### 1. Habitat protection

#### **1.1 Designation of protected areas.**

To what extent are the display, breeding, stop-over and wintering sites covered by protected areas?

| Designation of protected areas under national law  | Classification of Special Protection Areas according to the requirements of Art.4.1 of the EC Birds Directive  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%)<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%)<br><input type="checkbox"/> None<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup> |

What measures were taken to ensure the adequate protection of the species and its habitat at these sites?  
*There is no protected area.*

Where are the remaining gaps?

*There has been no significant occurrence of the species since 2006 to proclaim protected area.*

Are currently unoccupied, but potential breeding habitats identified in your country?

Yes       No       Not applicable<sup>2</sup>

If yes, please explain how these areas are protected or managed to enable the re-establishment of Great Bustard.  
*The Great Bustard belongs to the group of critically endangered species which are protected by the law. The protection of species includes also habitat protection. Exemption from prohibitions concerning specially protected species shall be granted by the nature protection authority, which assesses each request individually.*

*The former military airport was protected as a temporarily protected area until 2011. The site has been continuously managed every year to ensure adequate habitat for Great Bustards.*

#### **1.2 Measures taken to ensure the maintenance of Great Bustard habitats outside of protected areas.**

Please describe what measures have been taken to maintain land-use practices beneficial for Great Bustard outside of protected areas (e.g., set-aside and extensification schemes, cultivation of alfalfa and oilseed rape for winter, maintenance of rotational grazing, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> The species occurs only irregularly, no regular stop-over or wintering sites identified.

<sup>2</sup> Countries *outside* of the historic (beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century) breeding range of the species.

*The habitats are protected from realization of projects that could lead to changes in landscape character (high buildings and structures like wind power stations, new windbreaks, roads, farms, irrigation, afforestation and so on).*

*A study on specific agro-environmental schemes was conducted between years 2009 – 2011 as a part of preparation for the next programming period of Programme for Rural Development (2014-2020). The examined measures for increasing the spatial and species diversity (concerning the requirements of the Great Bustard) in the agricultural landscape are negotiated with the Ministry of Agriculture to be part of new agro-environmental schemes.*

To what extent do these measures, combined with site protection, cover the national population?

- Fully (>75%)  
 Most (50-75%)  
 Some (10-49%)  
 Little (<10%)  
 Not at all  
 Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Are recently (over the last 20 years) abandoned Great Bustard breeding habitats mapped in your country?

- Yes       No       Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

What habitat management measures have been taken to encourage the return of Great Bustard?

*The area of the former military airport as a historical habitat of the Great Bustard has been continuously managed every year to maintain permanent grassland.*

*A plan for the land purchase (free transfer of state land (owned by State land office) to the state organization Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic) has been undertaken since 2011. The land cadastral area lies in the historical breeding and lek area including wintering habitats. This area (475,7 ha in total was requested) is supposed to be taken out of the agricultural production and be managed according to the ecological agriculture in compliance with requirements of the Great Bustard.*

If there were any measures taken, please provide information on their impact.

*The area of the former military airport was monitored and high biodiversity, esp. invertebrates was observed, nevertheless concerning the Great Bustards there is no effect.*

### **1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.**

Are new projects potentially causing fragmentation of the species' habitat (such as construction of highways and railways, irrigation, planting of shelterbelts, afforestation, power lines, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country?  Yes     No     Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats?  Yes     No     Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please provide details.

Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?  Yes     No     Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

## **2. Prevention of hunting, disturbance and other threats**

### **2.1 Hunting.**

Is Great Bustard afforded strict legal protection in your country?  Yes       No

Please, give details of any hunting restrictions imposed for the benefit of Great Bustard including those on timing of hunting and game management activities.

*The Great Bustard is not listed as a game species according to hunting law and shall not be hunted.*

Please, indicate to what extent these measures ensure the protection of the national Great Bustard population? The national population is covered by restrictions on hunting to prevent hunting-related disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Prevention of disturbance

What measures have been taken to prevent disturbance of Great Bustard in your country, including both breeding birds and single individuals or small flocks on migration?

*The Great Bustard as a specially protected species is protected from harmful intervention during all life stages, particularly from disturbance, killing, catching and keeping.*

Please, indicate to what extent these measures have ensured the protection of the national population. The national population is covered by restrictions on other activities causing disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3.1 Prevention of predation

What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country?

*Not relevant*

What are the main predator species?

-

What measures have been taken to control predators in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly?

*Not relevant*

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (predation reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (predation reduced by 10–49%)
- Less effective (predation reduced by less than 10%)
- Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.

What is the significance of collision with power lines in your country?

*None.*

What proactive and corrective measures have been taken to reduce the mortality caused by existing power lines in your country?

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What is the size of the populations affected by these corrective measures?

*Not relevant*

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (collision with power lines reduced by more than 50%)  
 Partially effective (collision with power lines reduced by 10–49%)  
 Ineffective (collision with power lines reduced by less than 10%)  
 Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3.3 Compensatory measures.

What is the size (in hectares) of Great Bustard habitat lost or degraded for any reasons since the Memorandum of Understanding entered into effect (1 June 2001)?

*The degradation of Great Bustard's habitats took place in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century; the situation recently has been stable.*

What is the size of the populations affected?

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Were these habitat losses compensated?  Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please explain how.

Were these measures effective?  Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, give details on the effectiveness or explain why they were not effective if that is the case.

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### 3. Possession and trade

Is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs prohibited in your country?  Yes  No

How are these restrictions enforced? What are the remaining shortcomings, if any?

*Collection, possession of and trade with the specially protected birds and their eggs is prohibited according to the Act n. 114/1992 Coll. for the Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection.*

Please indicate if any exemption is granted or not all of these activities are prohibited.

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### 4. Recovery measures

#### 4.1 Captive breeding\* in emergency situations.

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country?  Yes  No

Please, describe the measures, staff and facilities involved and how these operations comply with the IUCN criteria on reintroductions.

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#### 4.2 Reintroduction.

Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe the progress. If there was any feasibility study carried out, please summarize its conclusions.

#### 4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.

Are captive reared birds released in your country?  Yes  No

If yes, please summarize the experience with release programmes in your country. What is the survival rate of released birds? What is the breeding performance of released birds?

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\* In effect, "captive breeding" should be read as "captive rearing" according to current practices.

What is the overall assessment of release programmes based on the survival of released birds one year after release?

- Effective (the survival is about the same as of the wild ones)  
 Partially effective (the survival rate is lower than 75% of the wild birds)  
 Ineffective (the survival is less than 25% of wild birds)  
 Not applicable<sup>3</sup>

## **5. Cross-border conservation measure**

Has your country undertaken any cross-border conservation measures with neighbouring countries?

- Yes     No     Not applicable<sup>4</sup>

Please, give details of your country's collaboration with neighbouring countries on national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities for Great Bustard. Especially, list any measures taken to harmonise legal instruments protecting Great Bustard and its habitats, as well as funding you have provided to Great Bustard for particular conservation actions in other Range States.

*The Czech Republic cooperates especially with Austria in exchanging information of movements of birds and experience on habitat management.*

## **6. Monitoring and research**

### **6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.**

Are the breeding, migratory or wintering Great Bustard populations monitored in your country?

- Yes     No

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

- All (>75%)  
 Most (50-75%)  
 Some (10-49%)  
 Little (<10%)  
 None  
 Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

What is the size and trend in the national population?<sup>5</sup>

Breeding/resident population

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of adult males: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of females: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of females: \_\_\_\_\_

No. immature males: \_\_\_\_\_

No. immature males: \_\_\_\_\_

Trend:  Declined by \_\_% over the last 10 years

Trend:  Declined by \_\_% over the last 10 years

Stable

Stable

Increased by \_\_% over the last 10 years

Increased by \_\_% over the last 10 years

For countries where the species occurs only occasionally, please give the details of known observations within the reporting period:

2008 (since September)

-

<sup>3</sup> No release is taking place in the country.

<sup>4</sup> For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

<sup>5</sup> Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

2009*1 September, Mikulov-Březí, 1 ind.*2010*13-17 March – Kojetín, district Havlíčkův Brod, 1M**29 March – Praha - východ, Nupaky, 1 ind.*2011*April, tracks of 1 ind. in mud, Hostěradice-Paseky*2012

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2013

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**6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.**

Is the effect of habitat conservation measures monitored in your country?

 Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

*Monitoring was done at the former military airport, which has been managed as permanent grassland.*

What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

**6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.**

Have there been any comparative studies carried out on the population dynamics, habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes and causes of decline in your country in collaboration with other Range States?

 Yes  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

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What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps where the Memorandum of Understanding could assist?

**6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.**

Are the causes of Great Bustard mortality understood in your country?

 Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

-

What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

**6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.**

Are the factors limiting breeding success in core populations understood in your country?

 Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Only for breeding countries.

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

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What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps and what measures are you going to take to address these gaps?

#### **6.2.4 Studies on migration.**

Were there any studies on migration routes and wintering places carried out in your country?

Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Where are the key sites and what is the size of the population they support?

-

Do you have any knowledge about the origin of these birds supported by ringing or other marking methods?

-

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

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### **7. Training of staff working in conservation bodies**

Is there any mechanism in place in your country to share information on biological characteristics and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices to personnel working regularly with the species?

Yes  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please describe it.

Have personnel dealing with Great Bustard participated in any exchange programme in other Range States?

Yes  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please give details on number of staff involved, country visited and how the lessons were applied in your country.

### **8. Increasing awareness of the need to protect Great Bustards and their habitat**

What measures have been taken to increase the awareness about the protection needs of the species and its habitat in your country since signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

Do farmers, shepherds, political decision makers and local and regional authorities support Great Bustard conservation?

Yes  Partially  No

What are the remaining gaps or problems and how are you going to address them?

*The concerned stakeholders are often not aware of importance of biodiversity protection and possibility to change the management and do not understand the reasons, why the species is protected. They might not see the purpose of applying nature friendly agricultural measures. We are planning to launch a project contributing to understanding of importance and consequences of suitable agro-environmental measures for biodiversity (Great Bustard) protection as well as for productive management. This is essential before beginning of the next programming period (2014-2020).*

**9. Economic measures**

Have there been any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country?

Yes  Partially  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

*The management of permanent grassland was paid from Programme for Nature and Landscape provided by the Ministry of the Environment. Discussions on suitable agro-environmental schemes are underway.*

What percentage of the population is covered in total by these measures?

- All (>75%)  
 Most (50-75%)  
 Some (10-49%)  
 Little (<10%)  
 None  
 Not applicable

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (more than 50% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)  
 Partially effective (10–49% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)  
 Ineffective (less than 10% according to the species' needs)  
 Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

**10. Threats**

Please, fill in the table below on main threats to the species in your country. Use the threat scores categories below to quantify their significance at national level. Please, provide an explanation on what basis you have assigned the threat score and preferably provide reference. Add additional lines, if necessary.

**Threat scores:**

- Critical:** a factor causing or likely to cause **very rapid declines** (>30% over 10 years).  
**High:** a factor causing or likely to cause **rapid declines** (20-30% over 10 years).  
**Medium:** a factor causing or likely to cause relatively **slow, but significant, declines** (10-20% over 10 years).  
**Low:** a factor causing or likely to cause **fluctuations**.  
**Local:** a factor causing local declines but likely to cause **negligible declines at population level**.  
**Unknown:** a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

| Threat name               | Threat score | Explanation and reference |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Habitat loss              |              |                           |
| Losses of eggs and chicks |              |                           |
| Predation                 |              |                           |
| Collision with powerlines |              |                           |
| Human disturbance         |              |                           |
| Pesticides                |              |                           |
| Illegal hunting           |              |                           |
| Others (specify)          |              |                           |

## PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

**Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if that is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on Great Bustard or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.**

*Due to irregular occurrence of the Great Bustards in the Czech Republic it is very difficult to find any financial support for required measures. Some local farmers would change their agricultural schemes according to the Great Bustard needs, but this change has to bring them financial benefit. Recently, farmers have especially produced cereals, maize and sunflower and, their farming is very intensive. Each demand for any change should be followed by offer of compensations of financial losses and these compensations are very expensive. No national or international programme supporting nature conservation is suitable for funding these requirements. More, none of these programmes (funds) support regular management measures.*

*Cross-border cooperation with Austria has been developed – we have changed information about numbers of observed birds and population level. Moreover, we have discussed possibilities of creating bilateral (or trilateral) projects. We have discussed the possible use of agro-environmental schemes for improvement of the habitats for Great Bustard.*

*It seems impossible to establish a protected area for Great Bustard in South Moravia because of irregular occurrence of birds here nowadays.*

*The work on preparation of suitable agro-environmental measures for new programming period continues. After finishing new agro-envi schemes, we intend to prepare information workshop, preferably with visit of South Moravian farmers to Austria to see, how can be the agro-envi schemes used for support of the Great Bustard and what kind of experience the Austrian farmers have.*