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Agenda Item 26.4.2

**MULTI-SPECIES ACTION PLAN TO CONSERVE AFRICAN, EURASIAN AND
AUSTRALIAN BUSTARDS (2026-2037) (BUSTARD MSAP)**

(Submitted by Hungary, and co-sponsored by Eritrea, the European Union and its Member States, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, and Nigeria)

Summary:

Bustards (Otididae) are among the most threatened groups of terrestrial birds. The Bustard MsAP covering all 26 bustard species across 102 Range States integrates scientific evidence with priority conservation actions. It has been developed by the consortium *Bustards Without Borders*, in consultation with experts, government officials and non-governmental organizations.

This Plan is submitted to COP15 for adoption with the view of immediate and collaborative implementation.

MULTI-SPECIES ACTION PLAN TO CONSERVE AFRICAN, EURASIAN AND AUSTRALIAN BUSTARDS (2026-2037) (BUSTARD MSAP)

Background

1. Bustards are among the most threatened groups of terrestrial birds. Of the 26 recognized species, 15 are globally threatened and 18 are undergoing population declines. Drivers of decline include habitat loss and degradation, agricultural intensification, collisions with powerlines and other infrastructure, illegal and unsustainable killing, disturbance, and climate change. These threats are compounded by bustards' naturally low reproductive rates and dependence on intact grassland and steppe ecosystems.
2. Addressing these threats requires a coordinated and urgent response on a global scale. *Bustards Without Borders (BWB; UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC7/Inf.13)* was created to meet this challenge, uniting individuals, organizations, government institutions, and stakeholders committed to sustainable bustard conservation. BWB aligns with the aim of the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP) adopted as Annex to CMS [Resolution 11.17 \(Rev.COP14\)](#).
3. Through [Resolution 11.17 \(Rev.COP14\)](#), the CMS Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting (COP14, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 2024), specifically addresses the necessity of mitigating threats to migratory bustards. The COP '*Further calls on Parties to urgently take practical measures to address threats to migratory bustards, a highly threatened and declining group of migratory landbird species under particular pressure from illegal killing, unsustainable taking, collision with energy infrastructure and habitat loss and degradation including as outlined in relevant Species Action Plans*'.
4. The Bustard MsAP covers all 26 bustard species across 102 Range States spanning Africa, Eurasia, and Australia. It establishes a strategic framework for conservation, under the umbrella of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and contributing directly to the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular Target 4 (halting extinctions) as well as targets on habitat protection, sustainable land use, and knowledge transfer.

Activities

5. The development of the Bustard MsAP included questionnaires, regular virtual coordination meetings, and a global workshop (Islamabad, Pakistan, April 2025), culminating in a plan that integrates the best available scientific evidence with conservation priorities.
6. Two rounds of consultation were conducted (July 2025 and September 2025), involving experts, researchers, government officials and agencies, and non-governmental organizations in 102 Range States, resulting in the compilation of up-to-date biological and population data, threat analyses, and a framework for coordinated actions.

Issues

7. Population declines result from multiple, interacting threats, including habitat loss and degradation, agricultural intensification, illegal and unsustainable killing and trade, collisions with infrastructure, predation pressure, human disturbance, and climate change, exacerbated by bustards' characteristic life-history traits (low reproductive rates, long generation times) and their dependence on extensive grassland, steppe, semi-arid and other open landscapes.
8. Many range states currently lack comprehensive, coordinated strategies addressing these threats, as well as monitoring, scientific knowledge, cross-border collaboration and awareness among stakeholders.
9. Immediate and collaborative implementation of the Bustard MsAP is essential to reverse population declines, secure habitats, mitigate threats, and enhance the resilience of bustard species across their range.

Discussion and analysis

10. The Bustard MsAP is being submitted to COP15 for adoption with the view of immediate and collaborative implementation.

Recommended actions

11. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt, as part of the draft amendments to Resolution 12.12 (Rev.COP14), the Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African, Eurasian and Australian Bustards (2026-2037) contained in the Annex of this document.