Albania – National Programme on Great Bustard

Aims and Objectives

This National Programme aims:

a. In the short to medium term to prevent the further decline of the species
b. In the medium to long term to increase the population size of the Great Bustard to a level at which it no longer qualifies as Critically Endangered in Albania

The aim and generic objectives are grouped under four headings:

• Improve policy and legislation;
• Ensure the species and habitat protection
• Undertake inventory, monitoring and research
• Raise public awareness

Each generic objective is broken down into a series of prioritized actions followed by a brief description. Priority is classified in three different groups:

• essential: an action that is needed to prevent a large decline in the population which would lead to the species extinction;
• high: an action that is needed to prevent a decline of more than 20% of the population in 20 years or less;
• medium: an action that is needed to prevent a decline of less than 20% of the population in 20 years or less;

1. Policy and legislation

1.1. Improve and Implement Legislation

The improvement of legal framework is of primary importance for the conservation of the species in Albania.

Activities:

• Ensure legal protection of the species and its key sites all over Albania
• Promote the designation as protected areas of the southern part of Karavasta and Kopliku (north-east of Lake Shkodra).

*Priority*: essential

1.2. *Prepare and implement the Species Action Plan*

A National Action Plan is necessary for identifying the appropriate conservation measures as well as their timing.

*Activities*:
• Prepare the National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Great Bustard,
• Implement the National Action Plan of the Great Bustard

*Priority*: essential

2. **Ensure the species and habitat protection**

2.1. *Ensure the protection of migrating/wintering areas*

All wintering/migrating areas identified as key or potential key sites should be protected and nature conservation laws strictly implemented.

*Activities*:
• Ensure the enforcement of nature conservation laws in key and potential key sites

*Priority*: essential

2.2. *Control Hunting*

Hunting activity should be strictly controlled. Particular attention should be paid to hunting activity (actual scale, impact and prognosis for the future) especially in identified key sites.

*Activities*:
• The implementation of the ban on hunting in all wintering and staging areas

*Priority*: essential

2.3. *Carry out appropriate site management*

The increased vegetation in Bedati (south of Karavasta area) is very likely to be a limiting factor not only for the Great Bustard but also for other species related with semi-arid habitats.
Activities:

- Carry out appropriate vegetation management in Bedati (south of Karavasta area)

Priority: essential

3. Carry out monitoring and research

3.1. Undertake inventories of wintering/migrating birds

A detailed inventory and further monitoring programs are very important for identifying the precise conservation status of the species as well as the efficiency of the conservation measures.

Activities:

- Undertake a national inventory for identifying the number as well as distribution areas of wintering/migrating individuals
- Annually monitor the wintering/migrating individuals in key and potential key sites

Priority: essential

3.2. Monitor ecological change

Habitat changes are of course influencing the abundance of the species.

Activities:

- Monitor habitat changes and identify responsible factors at key sites (Bedati, Kopliku etc).

Priority: high

3.3. Monitor prey populations

Knowledge on the situation of prey population is a good indicator of the availability of wintering/migrating habitats.

Activities:

- Monitor prey populations in key and potential key sites.

Priority: high
4. **Raise public awareness and undertake training**

4.1. *Raise public awareness*

Raising awareness among different local stakeholders (local communities, local hunters, local politicians) is a very important step towards effective and long-term conservation of the species.

*Activities:*

- Inform land-users, decision-makers at local, regional and national level about the importance of the preservation of the Great Bustard,
- Undertake public awareness campaigns with hunters, shepherds, farmers, local communities, local authorities, etc.,
- Organize talks in primary and secondary schools of Bedati (Karavasta) and Kopliku (Shkodra) area,
- Produce publications (leaf-lets, booklets, posters, etc.) about the conservation of the species.

*Priority*: high

4.2. *Undertake Training*

*Activities:*

- Train members of local NGOs on environmental education, conservation and management of the species and its habitats.

*Priority*: medium

**Implementation Calendar**

In difference from other Action Plan the one we have proposed for the Dalmatian Pelican is foreseen for a working period of 5 years. There are no objectives falling in the “long” time-scale classification. As stressed in the entrance of this Action Plan, the foreseen objectives and activities should be reviewed and updated every five years.
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