

**28– 10 – 2024**

**News: Great Indian Bustard**

- Recently, a Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the state bird of Rajasthan, successfully hatched an offspring through artificial insemination in Jaisalmer district, marking a significant milestone in conservation efforts.

**Great Indian Bustard (GIB)**

- GIB is also called **Indian Bustard** and **Ghorad**.
- It is also the **state bird of Rajasthan**.
- GIB is the **heaviest flying bird weighs up to 15 kg** and grows up to 1 metre high.
- Most **commonly arid and semi-arid grasslands**, open country with shrub. **They normally avoid irrigated areas**.
- GIB is also **endemic to Indian Sub-continent**.
- This **omnivorous bird** is considered as **a flagship species in grassland ecology**.
- They have poor frontal vision.
- GIBs are the largest among the fur bustard species in India, the others being MacQueen's bustard, lesser Florican and the Bengal Florican.

- These birds are often found associated in the same habitat as Blackbuck.
- GIB is found majorly in Central and Western India and Eastern Pakistan.
- The GIB lays one egg every 1-2 years and the success rate of these eggs is 60-70 per cent. However, this rate has been reduced to 40-50% due to predators like fox and dogs.
- Population in India is reduced to 150 approximately in 2018. Out of them, 122 are in Rajasthan.
- Recent survey shows that only four female GIBs are left in Gujarat.
- IUCN Status of Great Indian Bustard is Critically Endangered.
- It is also protected under Appendix I of CITES Schedules and Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Threats faced include developmental projects leading to collision led deaths, Hunting, Loss of Eggs; Noise pollution makes the mating call impossible and Habitat destruction.
- Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary/ Jawaharlal Nehru Bustard Sanctuary, Project Great Indian Bustard and Project Godawan by Rajasthan Gov are intended to protect Great Indian Bustard.
- It is also protected in Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh and Karera Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

- The government has recently released Rs 33 crore to a project, titled "**Habitat Improvement and Conservation Breeding of Great Indian Bustard-An Integrated Approach**", for five years from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) for conservation and breeding of the GIB.
- In 2015, the **Union Government** launched the **GIB species recovery programme**, under which the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** and **Rajasthan forest department** have jointly setup conservation breeding centres, where **GIB eggs** harvested from the wild are incubated artificially, and hatchings raised in a **controlled environment**.
- Until 2020, **9 eggs** have been hatched.
- The **plan is to create a population that can act as insurance against the threat of extinction** and to release the third generation of these captive-bred birds.
- The **World Conservation Congress** in its session held in November 2004 had urged the Government of India to initiate action to conserve the species of bustards by launching a specific '**Project Bustard**' on the lines of Project Tiger.
- Recently, the government informed Rajya Sabha that there were **no GIBs in the Kutch Bustard Sanctuary in Gujarat**.

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