

REC 3.115 Protection of the great Indian bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps*

RECOGNIZING that the great Indian bustard is perhaps the most endangered member of the bustard family in the world;

NOTING that historically, the great Indian bustard was widely distributed in arid and semi-arid grasslands of India and Pakistan;

FURTHER NOTING that presently the total number could be as low as 500 individuals;

RECALLING that if effective conservation measures are not taken urgently, the great Indian bustard will be extinct in another five to ten years' time;

FURTHER RECALLING that poaching and habitat deterioration are the two main causes for the drastic decline of the great Indian bustard;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the great Indian bustard is legally protected in India and Pakistan;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that BirdLife International has included the great Indian bustard in the 'Endangered' category in its *Red Data Book*, mainly because of drastic and continuing decline in its population;

NOTING that the Government of India has taken some measures to protect bustard habitat by establishing sanctuaries but these measures are not adequate;

FURTHER NOTING that the great Indian bustard lives at low density and depends on a wider landscape, with short-grass plains, low-intensity agriculture and traditional livestock grazing, hence it cannot be conserved effectively in a few small sanctuaries;

AWARE of the fact that movement patterns and ecology of the great Indian bustard are not fully known and unless movement patterns and landscape use are studied, planning effective long-term conservation measures is not possible; and

ALSO AWARE that, along with the great Indian bustard, the lesser florican *Sypheotides indicus* and the Bengal florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* are also endangered, and the migratory population of the Houbara bustard *Chlamydotis macqueeni* is threatened by poaching and habitat destruction;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. CALLS ON the Governments of India and Pakistan to take all measures necessary to protect the great Indian bustard, including establishment of large sanctuaries/community conservation areas at the landscape level and effectively curtailing poaching;
2. REQUESTS the Government of India to start *Project Bustard*, following the pattern employed with *Project Tiger* and *Project Elephant*, to protect all species of Indian bustards and their habitats;
3. URGES the Governments of India and Pakistan to give special attention to the protection and sustainable utilization of grasslands by curtailing conversion of grasslands for agricultural use and preventing overgrazing; and
4. PROPOSES that movement patterns and ecology of the great Indian bustard, and other Indian bustards, should be studied urgently by using modern methods such as telemetry and radio tracking.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).

The Department of State, United States, provided the following statement for the record:

State and agency members United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolution Process.