

## CROATIAN REPORT

### **1. Habitat protection**

**1.1 Designation of protected areas.** Please indicate to what extent the display, breeding, stop-over and wintering sites are covered by protected areas and where gaps remain. What measures were taken to ensure the adequate protection of the species and its habitat at these sites?

**The Great Bustard is only irregular winter visitor in Croatia. During severe winters it appears in different parts of Croatia, including islands. There are no regular wintering not stopover sites.**

**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 extensive 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.). To what extent have these measures covered the national population?

**None. There are no national population of Great Bustard in Croatia.**

**1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.** Are 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? Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing of this Memorandum of Understanding? Please, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

**All projects potentially causing fragmentation of the species' habitat are subject to environmental impact assessment in Croatia. Since signing of the MoU two environmental impact assessment for power-lines were produced (Ernestinovo-Pecz and Virje-Mlinovac) with recommended protection measures for Ernestinovo-Pecz powerlines.**

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

**2.1 Hunting.** Are Great Bustard protected from hunting in your country? Please give details of any hunting restrictions imposed for the benefit of Great Bustard and indicate the size of populations affected?

**Great Bustard is protected from hunting though the year by the Nature Conservation Act. The pennality for shoting the Great Bustard is 40.000 HRK (about 5.000 €)**

**2.2 Prevention of disturbance.** What measures have been taken to prevent disturbance of Great Bustard in your country? Please, indicate the size of the population affected by the measures.

**None.**

**2.3.1 Prevention of predation.** What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country? What are the main predator species? What measures have been taken to control predators in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly? How effective were these measures?

**There are no areas in Croatia where the Great Bustard occurs regularly.**

**2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.** What measures have been taken to reduce the mortality caused by existing power lines in your country? What is the size of the populations affected by these measures? How effective were these measures?

**Environmental impact assessment for Ernestinovo-Pecz power-lines recomended protection measures (underground cables or marking of overhead cables). These power-lines are under construction.**

**2.3.3 Compensatory measures.** What is the size of the Great Bustard habitat lost or degraded for any reasons since signing the Memorandum of Understanding? What is the size of the populations affected? How were these habitat losses compensated? What were the results of these measures?

**According to the data from Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics, the production of alfalfa in Croatia is increasing in last five years, but is still lower then before 1991. As there are no regular flyway population of the Great Bustard in Croatia, it is not possible to valuate the effect of these changes for this species.**

### **3. Possession and trade**

How is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs regulated in your country? Please indicate if any exemption is granted. How are these restrictions enforced?

**The Great Bustard is on Appendix II of CITES, and any international trade should be regulated under CITES procedure. Untill now, there were no data about private or legal entities in Croatia possessing birds or eggs of the Great Bustard and no demand for CITES permits.**

#### **4. Recovery measures**

**This section is not applicable in Croatia. The Great Bustard is regionally extinct in our country since the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only proof of its breeding is the single pullus from the ornithological collection in Natural History Museum in Zagreb. As Croatia is on the south edge of Great Bustard's range, it is possible that never regularly breeds there.**

**4.1 Captive breeding in emergency situations.** Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country? Please, describe the measures, staff and facilities involved and how these operations comply with the IUCN criteria on reintroductions.

**4.2 Reintroduction.** Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country? If yes, please describe the progress. If there were any feasibility study carried out, please summarize its conclusions.

**4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.** Please summarize the experience with release programmes in your country if there was any. How do released birds survive? What is the breeding performance of released birds?

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

Please, give details of your collaboration with neighbouring countries on national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities for Great Bustard.

**There are no any organised collaboration with neighbouring countries on this matter. However, some personal contacts helped spreading information about movements of the Great Bustards in winter 2002/2003 when they left their usual area in Kiskunsag National Park.**

**It seems to be very important to organize the network of people (at least in protected areas) to spread information about their movement in the future which can help in the preservation of birds outside during migration.**

#### **6. Monitoring and research**

**The Great Bustard is irregular winter visitor in Croatia, so there weren't any monitoring of this species or its habitats.**

**6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.** How are the breeding, migratory or wintering Great Bustard populations monitored in your country? What percentage of the national population is involved? What is the size and trend in the national population?

**6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.** How is the effect of habitat conservation measures monitored in your country? What can be learned from these studies?

**6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.** Has 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?

**6.2.2 Promotion of studies on mortality factors.** What is known about the causes of Great Bustard mortality in your country? How are these causes investigated?

**There were no studies on mortality factors, but it is known that some birds were illegally shot by local people for food.**

**6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.** How well are the factors limiting breeding success in core populations understood in your country? In which populations are information on use of habitat and space, home range and dispersal patterns collected? What are the remaining gaps?

**6.2.4 Studies on migration.** What studies on migration routes and wintering places were carried out in your country? 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?

**The Great Bustard is irregular winter visitor in Croatia. Data from the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are scarce. In the past, it has been observed in whole Croatia, including islands.**

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

How is information on biological characteristics and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices provided to personnel working regularly with the species?

**There are no personnel working regularly with the species.**

### **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? How would you describe the change of attitude of farmers, shepherds and political decision makers and local and regional authorities?

**Because Great Bustard is irregular visitor in Croatia, people mostly are not aware about this species. It is included in recently published Croatian Bird Red Data Book**

**(Radovic et al 2003), which is widely distributed in the country. Book includes distribution map of the species, status, main threats, conservation measures etc.**

### **9. Economic measures**

Please give details of any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country? What is the size of the population affected? How effective were these measures?

**There are no any economic measures.**

### **10. Threats**

How has the conservation status of Great Bustard changed in your country over the last ten years? Please give an up-date on the main threats to the species in your country.

**There were no changes in the conservation status of the Great Bustard in Croatia on last ten years. It is regionally extinct since the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it used to be numerous in some winters, but it was last time observed in the greater numbers in 1964. After that, it was only seen sporadically, in small numbers.**