

## Houbara Bustard

The Houbara Bustard has been in news recently after the Government of Pakistan allowed the members of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to hunt the highly vulnerable Houbara Bustard. A special permit was issued to the Emir of Qatar and nine other members of the royal family.

### About the Houbara Bustard



(Image Source: <https://ebird.org/species/houbus1>)

Given below are the characteristic features of Houbara Bustard, its species types, habitat, physical appearance, etc.

### Physical Attributes

- The colour of the above part of the body is sandy-brown while the lower part is white in colour
- It has a white crest and pale eyes
- It has a long neck and tail
- Distinctive black stripe on the side of the neck, which can be erected
- Both males and females look similar, except, females are a bit smaller in size
- Eaglelike in flight with deep wing beats
- White patches on the wingtips framed in black

## Habitat

- The species live in an arid climate
- Houbara Bustard's population extends from northeast Asia, across central Asia, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula to reach the Sinai desert (Egypt)
- These birds migrate to Pakistan, the Arabian Peninsula and nearby Southwest Asia in the winter season, after breeding in the spring season

## Species of Houbara Bustard

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has categorised the Houbara Bustard into two types:

- *Chlamydotis undulata*, residing in North Africa
- *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, residing in Asia

Know more about the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) which is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of biological species.

## Current State of Houbara Bustard

- According to the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC), roughly 42,000 Asian Houbara Bustards and over 22,000 of the North African Houbara Bustards remain
- As per the status characterised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Houbara Bustard is in a vulnerable state
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora & Fauna (CITES) has placed them on the most sensitive listing which prohibits any commercial trade of these birds.

## What are the causes for the decline of Houbara Bustard?

The major causes of decline for the Houbara Bustard include:

- Poaching
- Unregulated Hunting
- Degradation of their Natural Habitat

## Hunting of Bustard Birds in Pakistan

The citizens of Pakistan are not legally allowed to hunt the Houbara Bustard, however, the government of Pakistan permits the Arab royals to hunt it every year. There is no physical evidence of the hunting of these birds but it is believed to be held at a considerable scale.