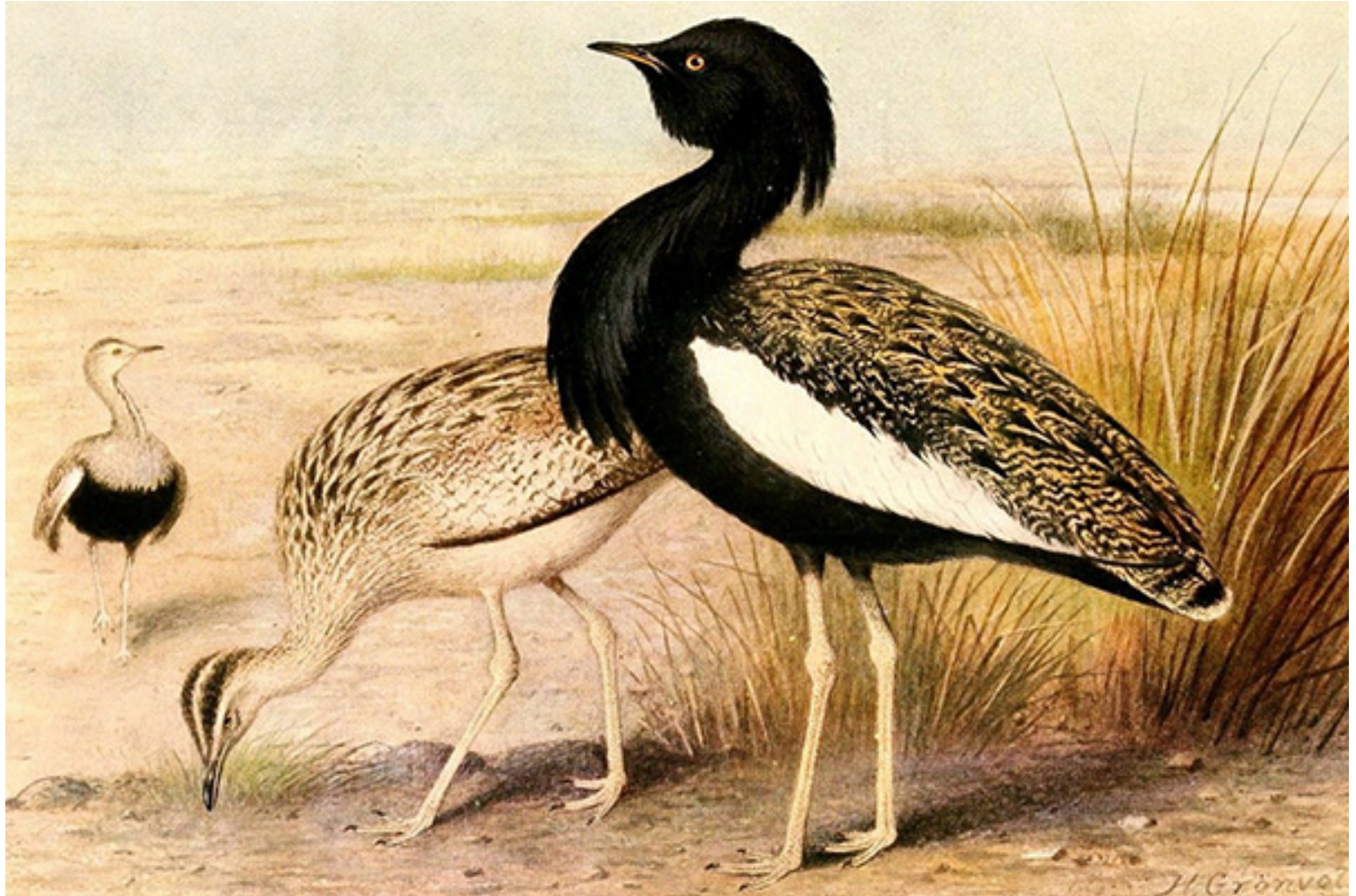


## Bengal Florican

By IASToppers | 2021-10-19 17:10:00



## Bengal Florican

The **Bustard Specialist Group** (BSG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature has urged the Assam government on the urgent need to prevent land-use changes at **Kokilabari Seed Farm** in Assam to protect **Bengal floricans** and other species.



[Ref: ebird.org]

## Major Highlights:

- **Kokilabari Seed Farm** is famous for its floricans.
- **Land-use changes** at the site, which houses 25 Bengal floricans, is posing a threat to the critically endangered bird.
- The species is found in **very small numbers** only in India and Cambodia. About a hundred of them are present in Nepal and the species is extinct in Bangladesh.

## About Bengal Florican:

- The **Bengal florican** is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- It is the only member of the genus **Houbaropsis**.
- Only 1,000 of them were estimated to be alive as of 2017.



# Bengal florican

(*Houbaropsis bengalensis*)

Ambassadors of the floodplain grasslands

**Habitat**  
Dense riverine grasslands in subtropical floodplains

**Geographic range**  
India — Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh; Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Vietnam

**Grasslands**  
• Vegetation height is an important factor in Bengal florican habitats  
• Need a mix of short grass and tall grass to be able to forage, nest and to use as cover

**THREATS**  
• Hunting, pesticides and fertilisers  
• Grazing by livestock  
• Uncontrolled burning of grasslands  
• Invasive shrubs  
• Conversion of native grasslands to agriculture  
• Collision with powerlines

**Mating Behaviour**  
• Solitary, except during the breeding season  
• In the breeding season, males put up a spectacular aerial display to court females  
• During aerial display, males croak and produce a deep hum  
• Show site fidelity — always return to same breeding sites

POPULATION, NUMBERS DECLINING

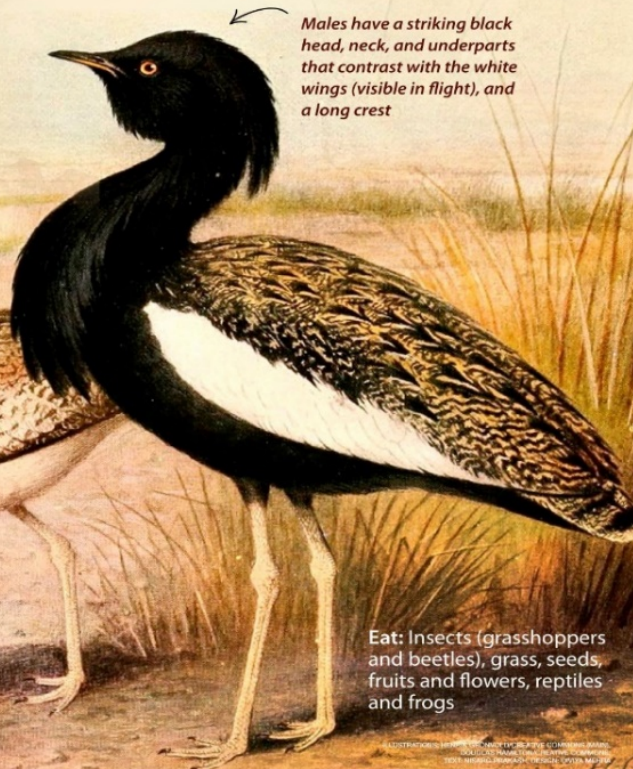
250 - 999

WEIGHT

1.25 - 2.25 kg



Females are buff-brown and usually larger than males



Males have a striking black head, neck, and underparts that contrast with the white wings (visible in flight), and a long crest

Eat: Insects (grasshoppers and beetles), grass, seeds, fruits and flowers, reptiles and frogs

**PROTECTION STATUS** CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ON THE IUCN RED LIST

[Ref: Sustain. Roundglass]

## Features:

- **Adult Bengal floricans** range from 66–68 cm in length and 55 cm tall.
- They have **black plumage** from the head and neck to underparts.
- Its head carries a long lanky crest, and the neck has elongated display plumes.
- The upper side is buff with **black vermiculation's** and black arrowhead markings.
- There is a large white patch from the wing coverts to the remiges. The feet and legs are yellow.

## Distribution and Habitat:

- It has two disjunct populations, one in the **Indian subcontinent**, another in **Southeast Asia**.
- The former occurs from **Uttar Pradesh** through the Terai of Nepal to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The **Southeast Asian population** occurs in Cambodia adjacent to southern Vietnam.
- The birds **use grasslands** near the lake to breed, and move away in the wet season.
- The Terai population move to warmer lowland locations in winter.

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered [Red List]