

PRESS NOTE ON ROLLAPADU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY KURNOOL DISTRICT
dt. 16.7.88

Out of the 22 species of Bustard family found in the world, Great Indian Bustard is considered to be the most endangered and attractive bird. It belongs to the family 'OTIDIDAE' with the scientific name, ARDEOTIS NIGRICEPS. Locally it is called 'Batta Meka' and Tugdar in Hindi. A century ago these birds thrived in drier parts of the Indian sub-continent down up to Timchirapalli. In discriminate hunting and habitat destruction pushed them to the endangered state. The last authentic report on the bird's presence in Andhra Pradesh was made by Tostems who saw a few birds in Kurnool District in the cold season in 1887.

Persistent efforts of Srisailam Wildlife Division of the Forest Department to rediscover the birds succeeded in Aug. 1982. Initially three birds were sighted in the dry agricultural fields of Rollapadu village, Kurnool District. By the end of 1982 about twelve birds were known to be existing in the villages around Rollapadu. Four Watchers, 2 from the Neel Shikaris (the professional bird hunters of Nandikotkur) and 2 from the village were employed on daily wages to locate and watch the birds. One Forester and one Forest Guard of the srisailam sanctuary were assigned to ensure protection to these birds and wide publicity was given in the adjoining villages.

Measures were taken to get alienation of about 1200 Acres of Govt. land of Rollapadu for the rehabilitation of these birds. Besides these an extent of 41.81 Acres of Patta land was proposed for acquisition and the cost of the lands was deposited with the Rev.Divisional Officer, Kurnool. The Govt. have approved for the acquisition proposals vide GO Ms.No. 269 Forests, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries(For.VI) Department dt. 4.8.1987. Further action is pending with the Collector, Kurnool for the payment of compensation to the Patta holders. Subsequently, some more lands (55 Acres) were proposed for acquisition to

keep contiguity of land and to declare these areas as a wildlife sanctuary. Thus there are 1279.04 Acres of Govt. land, 121.93 Acres of D form land and 100.25 Acres of Patta land (Total 1501.22Acs) covered under the 'Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary' which has been approved by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh vide their GO Ms.No. 154/Energy, Forests, Environment, Science and Technology Department (For.III) dt. 23.4.88.

Regarding the breeding success, three nests were located during 1982, 6 during 1983, 12 during 1984, 9 during 1985, 11 during 1986 and 20 during 1987/88. The hatching success varied from 50% to 50% every year. During the last breeding season 21 eggs were laid in between September 87 and January 88. Out of these 16 chicks came out successfully. The present bustard population may be put at more than 70, in and around Rollapadu, ~~and~~

Under the area development, water diversion drains and soil and moisture conservation trenches are excavated which also served ~~as~~ cattle proof trench aroundⁿ the bustard plots and the bund is planted up with agave root suckers. One twin Watcher's quarters was built for the residence of protection staff. An information, centre-cum-laboratory is completed to serve as a centre of education and research on local wildlife. One bore well and one open well are improved inside the bustard plots. During the current year stress will be laid on habitat improvement and sanctuary protection.

In addition to Great Indian Bustards some more endangered species of wildlife found here are.

Birds
Fuils:

1. Lesser florican (sypheotides indica) Nela Nemali (Migratory)
2. ~~Demoiselle Crane~~ ^{Demoiselle Crane} (Anthropoides Virgo) Karakanch -do-
3. Barheaded ~~goose~~ (Anser inducus) Patteda Tala ~~Batu~~ -do-

Animals

1. Indian Wolf (Canis lupus) 'Todelu' (Resident)
2. Black Buck (Antilope cervicapra) Nalla Jinka (Resident)

In fact the Black Buck which is the state animal was present only in small group of 7 when the scheme was initiated. Now the present number is around (50). Similarly the wolf also increased from two to six. This area is also important for grass land birds like hawks, harriers, kites, horned owl and owlets.

The importance of Rollapadu wildlife Sanctuary is that it is one of the best grass lands habitats available in the country as confirmed by the Bombay Natural History Society experts.

The Wildlife staff of Nagarjunasagar-Srisaialam Tiger Reserve who managed this area for the last 5 years also identified the distribution of Great Indian Bustard in Kurnool District. The other areas are Banaganapalli, Kaifa, Pandlapuram, Siruvella, Sakunala, Devanuru, Kadumuru, Jalakuru, Nagaluty, Viprinagandla, Cherukacherla, Thangedancha, Laxmapuram, Dudhiala, Parumanchala, Thudicherla etc.

Thus the Great Indian Bustard rehabilitation scheme in Kurnool District is successfully implemented over the past 5 years and the population of all endangered wildlife species in the area ^{is} stabilized.