

Summary

GREAT BUSTARD (*Otis tarda dybowskii* L.) IN MONGOLIA

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The Great bustard was distributed commonly throughout the mountain steppe of Mongolian Altai and the depression of Uureg Lake in west, the forest steppe of Khuvsgul in north, the Trans-Altai Gobi, the Alasha Gobi, and the Depression of Lakes in south till the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. During the World War II and its afterward the number of high speed gun and automobile increased and at the same time the hunting for great bustard rose. Consequently the number and distribution range of great bustard in Mongolia began to decrease.

Habitually the great bustard is found in flat and hilly areas with cheat (or feather) grass (*Stipa* sp.), river basin, meadow and sometimes found around a small patch of forest. Some wintering populations were regularly observed in the wheat field. Since 1990 the agriculture industry in Mongolia has been slowed and many people who worked in rural area moved to bigger town. Because of these reasons many wheat fields have been left vacant and turn out to be suitable habitats for great bustard.

Great bustard is a semi-migratory bird. Earliest migrating birds seen on March 20, and latest birds seen on November 5. The range of migrating period vary depends on area occurred, and weather and snow cover conditions in particular year.

Some warmer years we observed the flocks of wintering great bustard with 8-30 individuals where snow cover was 7-15 cm thick in Bulgan, Tov, Khentii and Dornod aimags.

We observed great bustard males displaying on females on April 20, May 12-31 and June 1. we encountered with birds incubating eggs on May 12 and July 5, two or three days old chicks on June 24, and birds recently did their first flight on July 31. Based on our observations we conclude that the great bustard usually begin to lay eggs at the beginning of May, but later than usual in some particular years in Mongolia.

We analyzed stomach contents of great bustards from two seasons. Insects comprised 52,3 % and plants 37,6 % of great bustard food in summer. Some 88,8 % of plants and 11,2 % of insects were found from the specimens obtained in spring.

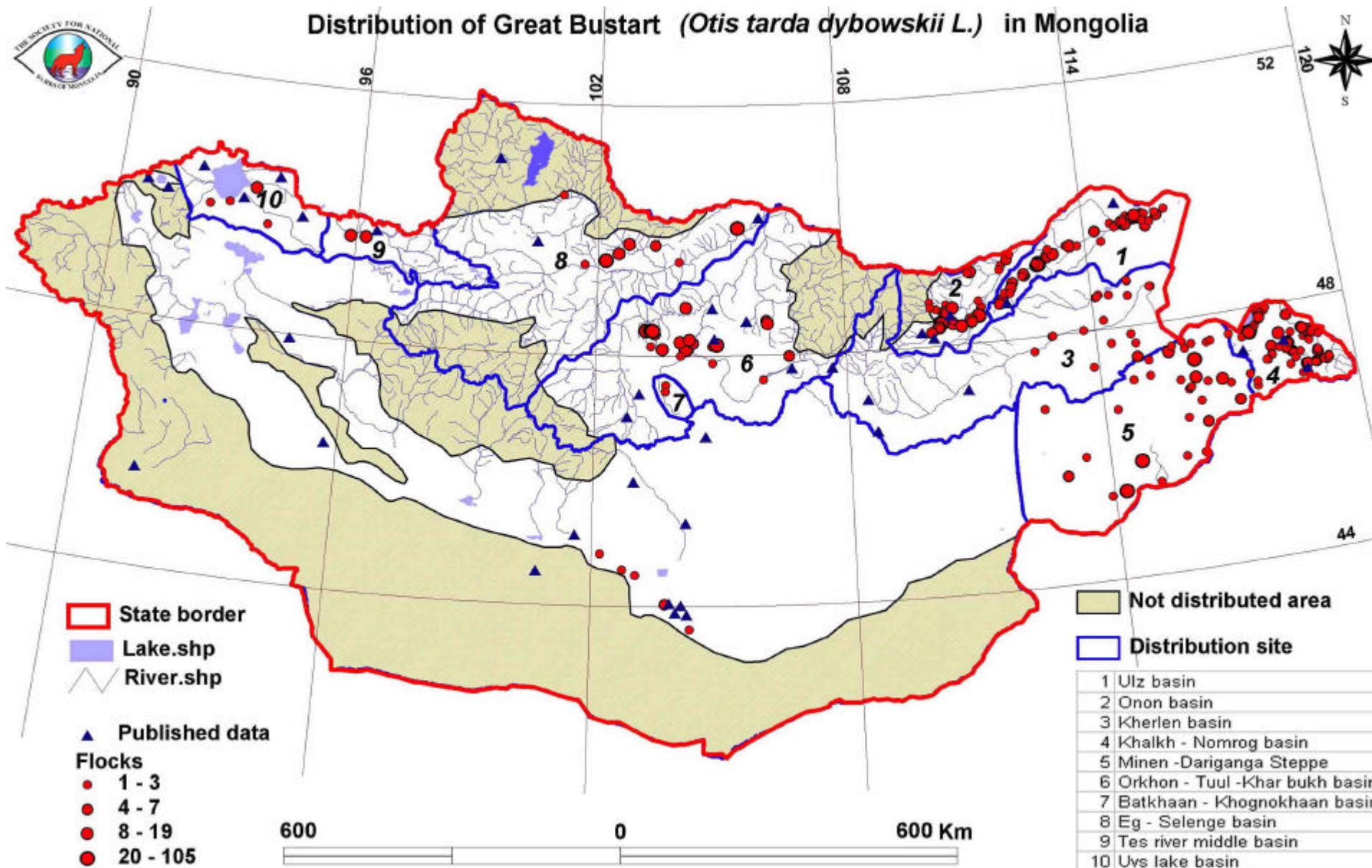
We collected information on great bustards from all incidental observations made by researchers since 1961 in Mongolia and analyzed number, time period, location and distribution of this species. Based on this analyze we conclude that some 1500-1700 individuals might occur in the territory of Mongolia.

There are some abiotic and biotic reasons that negatively influence great bustard population in Mongolia such as shifting land to wheat fields, livestock grazing and haying at the suitable habitat, steppe fire, use of pesticides, floating, harsh winter, poaching and predating. In Eastern Mongolia steppe fire becomes the most critical threat to great bustard. For example, there was no nesting occurred during the three subsequent years of 1996, 1997 and 1998, because of each year's steppe fire.

Conservation measurement. The species is listed in the Red Data Book of Asia, Mongolia and its adjacent countries. Listed on the Appendix II of CITES, and on the Appendix I of CMS. This species is protected by law in 1980 in Mongolia. Some breeding areas have been included into State Specially Protected Areas. For example, Nomrog, Dornod Mongol, Mongolian Daguur, Khan Khentii, Uvs Lake basin are included into Strictly Protected Areas, Onon-Balj and Khustain Nuruu into National Parks, Lkhachinvandad, Ugtarn, Yahi, Toson-Khulstai, Khar Yamaat, Nagalkhan, Khognokhaan and Ikh Nart into Nature Reserves.



Distribution of Great Bustard (*Otis tarda dybowskii* L.) in Mongolia



- State border
- Lake.shp
- River.shp

▲ Published data

- Flocks
- 1 - 3
 - 4 - 7
 - 8 - 19
 - 20 - 105

- Not distributed area
- Distribution site

1	Uls basin
2	Onon basin
3	Kherlen basin
4	Khalkh - Nomrog basin
5	Minen - Dariganga Steppe
6	Orkhon - Tuul - Khar bukh basin
7	Batkhaan - Khognokhaan basin
8	Eg - Selenge basin
9	Tes river middle basin
10	Uvs lake basin

