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## MAGAZINE NOTES

# Great Indian Bustard — Vanishing from the Thar

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ENVIRONMENT

GEOGRAPHY

GS3

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# Great Indian Bustard — Vanishing from the Thar

🌱 Down to Earth Chapter 13 · 1 min read ·

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## | Species Profile: *Ardeotis nigriceps*

- Heavy, ground-nesting flying bird native to open grasslands and scrublands of the Thar desert
- **State Bird of Rajasthan**
- Numbers collapsed to just **100-150 individuals**
- Disappeared from nearly **90% of its former range** (including Bikaner outskirts)
- Primary threat: habitat loss due to “green energy” land diversion (solar/wind farms)

## | The “Wasteland” Misclassification

- Government uses **colonial-era “wasteland” classification** for western Rajasthan’s scrublands
- These are actually **vital community pastures, medicinal repositories, and critical habitats**
- Misclassification provides legal loophole to divert commons for state-backed solar/wind and infrastructure projects
- **Phog Bush (*Calligonum polygonoides*)** — native desert plant whose flowers were traditionally mixed with curd to endure heat — now vanishing

## | UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Biodiversity, conservation, land use policy, renewable energy vs ecology conflict



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