

## WILDLIFE AT SOLAPUR

Due to the rapid concretisation of the lands and urbanisation, the shelter places of the animals, birds etc. are getting diminished and these creatures are finding it very difficult to survive and some species are becoming extinct.

Looking at this grave situation, the local Governments have swung into action and taken steps to declare some of the Wildlife and Bird Sanctuaries all over the country to preserve the rare species of Animals and Birds.

The Great Indian Bustard (Maldhok) is one of such rarest birds of Indian Sub continent. The Bird is found only in some parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh States. The respective State Governments have declared the sancturies for the Great Indian Bustard.

The Government of Maharashtra declared Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary in 1979 with the sole objective of conserving the rarest species of Great Indian Bustard which are endangered with extinction. The sanctuary consists of the area of North Solapur, Madha, Mohol and Karmala Talukas of Solapur District and Karjat, Shrigonda, Newasa Talukas of Ahmednagar District covering a total area of 8496.44 sq.kms. This bird has been included in the Schedule-1 of Wildlife Act 1972 and accordingly due protection has been given to this bird. The headquarters of the sanctuary are Nannaj of Solapur District and Rehekuri of Ahmednagar District.

The other salient features of the Sanctuary are as below: .

- Location - Madha, Mohal, Karmala, North Solapur Talukas of Solapur District and Karjat, Srigonda, Newasa Talukas of Ahmednagar District.
- Name of the Sanctuary - The Great Indian Bustard (Maldhok) Sanctuary.
- Sanctuary Headquarters - 1. Nannaj Tq. North Solapur, Dist. Solapur 2. Rehekuri, Tq. Karjat, Dist. Ahmednagar.
- Geographical Area - 8496.44 sq.kms.
- Sanctuary Notification No. - 1. W.LP/1078/72634/F.A dtd., 27.09.1979 2. W.LP/1085/CR-588/F-5 dtd. 19.09.1985.
- Temperature : Min. 16 degrees celcius, Max. 43 degrees celcius.
- Average Rainfall - 450 to 600 mms.
- Approach - By Road - Nannaj : Solapur-Barshi Road, 22 kms. from Solapur, Rehekuri : Karjat-Valvad Road, 8 kms. from Karjat.
- Forest Type - Southern Tropical Thorn forest.
- Biogeographic Zone - 6 B (Deccan Peninsula - Central Plateau)
- Major Floral Species - Neem, Sissoo, Babul, Bor, Tarwad, Henkal, Dongri, Kusali Pavanya, Sheda, Marvel etc.
- Major Faunal Species : The Great Indian Bustard, Blackbuck, Wolf, Indian Fox, Jackal etc.
- Accommodation - Forest Rest Houses at Solapur, Nannaj, Karmala, Madha, Rehekuri, Karjat, Srigonda, Newasa.
- Best time to visit - July to December.

A brief description of the Great Indian Bustard (Maldhok)



The Great Indian Bustard (*Choriotis Nigriceps* (Vigors) ) is one of the rarest birds of Indian subcontinent. It is a large ground dwelling bird with a long neck and long bare legs and some what similar to a young Ostrich. Its standing height is more than a meter, wing span is 2.5 mts. and weighs about 18 kg. It is inhabitant of the open country having thorny bushes and tall grass interpassed with cultivation. It is omnivorous in diet mainly relying on grass, small shrubs, insects, rats, chana, groundnut, bajri etc. depending on the season..

The male is deep sandy buff coloured. The crown of the head is black and crested. In the female which is smaller than the male, the head and neck are not pure white and the breast band is either rudimentary or absent. The male is polygamous. The female lays only single egg once in a year and incubates it for about two days. Since these birds do not live in nests, the eggs are at risk of destruction from other animals. Due to this, the increase in the numbers of these birds is at a very slow rate which is evident from the following table.

Sl.No	Name of Animals	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
1	GreatIndianBustard	15	27	35
2	Blackbuck	2000	1700	1200
3	Wolf	12	20	28
4	Khokad	8	12	20

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