



THE GOMPOU

The Kori Bustard SSP Newsletter

December 2014, Volume 12

Table of Contents

Egg Move

SSP Updates

Cokes for Koris

Education

Husbandry News

Keeper Profile

Medical News

News of Other Bustards

Conservation News

Volunteer Corner

Around the Zoo

Just For Fun



Edited by Dara Girsch
Kori Bustard SSP
Keeper Representative
dgirsch@wcs.org

If you are interested in submitting an article or information for the 2015 newsletter please feel free to contact Dara or SSP Chair, Sara Hallager at hallagers@si.edu



Kori eggs on the move! Transport of eggs from Jacksonville Zoo to Birmingham Zoo, 2014



SSP NEWS AND SUPPORT

Cokes for Koris Fundraiser Update

Katie Bagley-Vyas
Lead Keeper, Bird Dept.
Zoo Atlanta
kbagley@zoatlanta.org

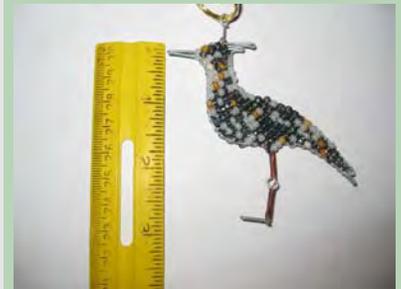


Cokes for Koris has been a very successful, on-going fundraiser at Zoo Atlanta since 2011. This fundraiser directly supports the Kori Bustard SSP. Sodas are donated or purchased in bulk and sold for 50 cents to zoo staff. In the past, zoo staff could only purchase kori sodas from the bird keepers' break room. Thanks for the efforts of the Kori Bustard SSP Education Advisor, Melissa King, we have started selling sodas in the education offices as well. This area is visited frequently by educators, camp counselors, docents and volunteers. We have increased our proceeds significantly since the second location was introduced. This year we raised a total of \$732 (approximately \$1,100 since the project started in 2011). This fund-raiser is extremely easy to organize and we hope to have another profitable year for the koris in 2015.



Don't forget the Kori Bustard SSP sells unique items not found anywhere else including keychains and mini beaded statues made in Zimbabwe.

For details, contact Sara Hallager:
hallagers@si.edu



Education Update

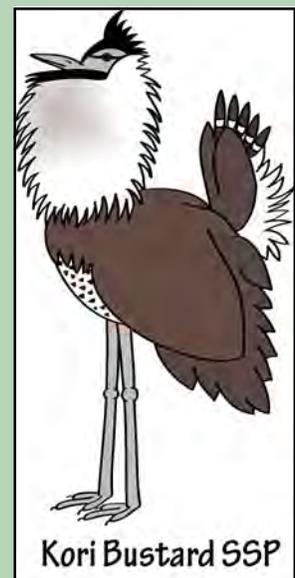
Melissa King, Interpretive Programs Supervisor and kori bustard SSP Education Advisor,
Zoo Atlanta

Website Update: The SSP website was first launched in 2008 and was originally described as a "one-stop shop for kori information." **The site has been completely redesigned in 2014 and there are some new additions. On the site you'll find information about kori characteristics, conservation and research, educational materials, and ways to help.**

Please check it out and share! www.koribustardssp.org

The goal of the blog on the site is to provide some insight to the public as to what a Species Survival Plan does to contribute to the conservation of a species and provide a forum to share our experiences. Would you like to write about a "day in the life of a bird keeper?" Have you lead a kori keeper talk and have photos and info to share? Any funny or interesting stories?

Submit your blog entries to koribustardssp@gmail.com



SSP NEWS AND SUPPORT

“Kori Bustard Feeding and Forage like a Kori” by Melissa King, Zoo Atlanta

In early 2014, I sent out a survey to find out about the scope of Education programming featuring koris in Zoos and to get some general feedback. Responses were received from nine institutions (Audubon, Birmingham, Cameron Park, Denver, Jacksonville, Living Desert, San Diego, Smithsonian, and Zoo Atlanta – Thank you!!). Based on these responses, guest surveys conducted here, and discussion with Katie Bagley, I created an interpretive program about koris for Zoo Atlanta. The first draft of the program focused on breeding and included some unusual facts. This version of the program ran for several weeks before being modified based on observations of guest response. Guests were interested in the birds, but the program was too long, too formal, and guest questions were mostly about general characteristics since most people are not familiar with koris. Another challenge was that when our male was in breeding season, we needed to take a break from the program due to aggressive behavior if we were too close. The program was changed to focus more on diet since the program includes a keeper or myself feeding the koris mealworms and this is an easy way to point out adaptations and also include unusual facts. The program now consists of a kori feeding with an interpreter using biofacts to explain adaptations, and an interactive activity in which kids can “forage like a kori” for plastic insects, snakes, mice, etc. in a container full of artificial grass using metal tongs that serve as their bill. If they really want to play the part, they can don a pair of fabric wings during their foraging! We advertise this program on the Zoo map on Saturdays as “Kori Bustard Feeding and Forage Like a Kori activity.” At times we had a line of children waiting to “forage!”

In 2014, we spoke with at least 1,114 guests during the five months that advertised, designated kori programming ran. We spoke with another 2,437 guests at the exhibit outside of the regular program time throughout the year. Our total number of guest impacts recorded at the kori bustard exhibit was 3,551, and I hope to dramatically increase that number next year.

I really believe that our efforts at the exhibit are making a difference...I've had several Zoo members tell me that prior to our increased presence they had passed by the exhibit without noticing the birds, and they now express enthusiasm and great interest.

In 2015, I plan to compile a packet of education resources for creating kori-themed programs. If you are currently running a program that features kori bustards, I'd love to hear what you have found works well for you versus your challenges. If you would like to collaborate on this project or have any other suggestions or needs, please contact me!



ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS

A New Perspective on Kori Bustards

Katie Bagley-Vyas

Assistant Curator, Birds and Program Animals
Zoo Atlanta



Africa is an amazing continent with each country possessing its own unique culture and wildlife. My first experience there was in 2004 when I spent 3 months in South Africa conducting elephant research for my M.S. in Biology. To this day, I can't express how fortunate I am to have had the opportunity. After graduating, I pursued my passion for aviculture and currently work in the Bird Department at Zoo Atlanta. This past year, my husband and I decided to plan a two-week camping trip in Tanzania. It had been over ten years since I had been to Africa and I was excited to explore a new country. Of course, one of my first thoughts when booking this trip was "I finally get to see a kori bustard in the

wild!" Kori bustards are one of my favorite species that Zoo Atlanta exhibits and seeing these birds in their natural environment was on my "bucket list."

On the very long, cramped flight to Tanzania I kept my bird guide handy and studied it often so I would be familiar with it when I got there. The first bird I saw when I stepped out of the airport was a superb starling. I admit to grabbing our guide's arm and jumping up and down a bit with excitement. He gave me a little smile and nod because he knew I would see thousands of them before the trip was over.

Over the next couple of days we worked on organizing our tents, packs and food.

Our itinerary included Lake Eyasi, Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti and Lake Natron. Lake Eyasi was amazing; we heard flamingos fly over-head as the sun was setting and bush babies jumped over our tents all night. We saw the "big five" in the Serengeti and had a close encounter with a hyena that was snooping around the camp site one evening. We saw lesser flamingos in Lake Natron and I'm still



amazed that these birds can not only survive the harsh conditions but actually breed there. One of the most breath-taking moments I experienced during our trip was looking down into Ngorongoro crater for the first time.

Ngorongoro crater is the result of ancient volcanic activity and now serves as a protected conservation area. You can see herds of wildebeest, Cape buffalo, gazelle and other wildlife as you look down from the rim. Thankfully, our guide was an avid birder and stopped whenever there was a new bird sighting. My first kori bustard

sighting happened just as I was wondering if I was going to get to see them as I had hoped. The Land Rover was driving through the middle of a grassland area when all of a sudden I saw movement. As soon as I shouted "kori bustard!" the truck stopped and we were able to watch them for a while. We had several kori bustard sightings after that but this sighting will be the most memorable.

We tend to think of kori bustards as clumsy, unpredictable birds in captivity. Enclosures need to be carefully designed so that they don't run into hard mesh, large trees or trip on large rocks lying around. However, in their natural environment they are graceful, capable and perfectly suited to their habitat. They make no noise at all and can disappear in the savanna just as quickly as they appeared. Observing these birds in the wild has given me a new outlook on a species that I already appreciate.



HUSBANDRY NEWS

Kori bustard Egg Transfer by Mike Taylor and Dan Maloney



For the second year in a row, Birmingham Zoo and Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens [JZG] have cooperated for Kori's sake. JZG's Kori bustard pair is very prolific, laying multiple fertile clutches each year, but unfortunately not raising the chicks. These past two seasons, our Facilities' crew has been rebuilding our off-display, rearing- center in their "spare" time, so Birmingham offered their services in order to save the eggs and boost the SSP population to Yellow status.

Once again, staff from each zoo met half-way between Birmingham and Jacksonville to hand-off their precious cargo. JZG keepers start the incubation process, then transport the clutch between days 10 and 20 of incubation. Out of eleven fertile eggs sent in the past two years, Birmingham Zoo hatched ten chicks and six of those survived to fledging!

With our new breeding and rearing center coming on line this year, we hope to be able to duplicate Birmingham's impressive results by raising some chicks ourselves and still be able to send eggs to Birmingham and build the population numbers even bigger. We are also working on another neat project with our Kori bustards that we hope we'll be able to share with everyone next year.



Photos by DeeAnna
Murphy



HUSBANDRY NEWS

Birmingham Zoo Juvenile Kori Bustard Update

Cindy Pinger, Curator of Birds, Birmingham Zoo



The Birmingham Zoo has been fortunate enough to have repurposed a former kangaroo yard into a nice big Kori Bustard area. We have the Birmingham breeding pair, another very genetically valuable pair, and several youngsters from the Jacksonville Zoo all living peacefully together in

this yard. We have another big yard and several holding areas to move birds around to suit their preferences if needed. The bird manager, Jeff Pribble, and the lead keeper, Alan Yester, did a great job modifying the exhibit and hatching and rearing the chicks. The exhibit looks beautiful and the visitors are really impressed to see these magnificent



birds up close and in a group. By keeping a large group together we hope to socialize the younger birds and give them a chance to watch more experienced birds breed and we can quickly send birds to other zoos to pair up birds if needed.

The kori SSP was able to purchase an additional Grumbach incubator for the zoo. Thanks to the combined efforts of Birmingham and Jacksonville Zoo, the future of the kori SSP is looking bright.



HUSBANDRY NEWS

Observed Breeding Behaviors of Newly Matured Kori Bustards, by Jenna Curtis

The Smithsonian National Zoological Park (SNZP) has been documenting the steady maturation of our three subadult Kori Bustards since 2011. Volunteer “kori watchers” observe our trio of one male and two females, collecting data on their behaviors with the hopes of better understanding how koris grow up in captivity. This year faced the facts: our “kids” are no longer kids! Our subadult flock reached adulthood. We are pleased to present some early data from our first year of mature breeding behaviors.

A kori in the wild reaches sexual maturity at approximately five years of age. While our six-year-old male, Maliki, showed primitive “sexual displays” last breeding season (consisting primarily of head tosses, gulping air, and partial booming), this year was the first season he performed full booming displays. And he boomed with gusto! Between June and September, Maliki performed just over 300 booming displays. The majority of these (66%) were six-boom bouts, which appears typical for a season.

However, this is far from a full booming season. The SNZP’s other breeding male, Noname, averages nearly 2000 booms in a five month period. Considering this is Maliki’s first display season, it is perhaps unsurprising he did not approach a thousand booms. It will be interesting to see Maliki’s booming rate increase in future breeding seasons. See the table (next page) for a summary comparison of Noname and Maliki’s booming statistics.

Interestingly, Maliki continued booming into September. Noname, who is over 20 years old, has not boomed past August since 2004. It may be that, as a younger bird, Maliki remains in breeding condition later into the year. It will take several more years of observation before we determine Maliki’s full breeding season length and whether it is longer than Noname’s.

It is uncertain how male koris begin booming in the wild. They may observe mature males at leks before starting to boom themselves. Alternatively, increasing testosterone may cause a young kori to boom regardless of whether other males are present. At the SNZP, volunteers observed Maliki actively listening to Noname booming in a separate enclosure (not visible to the flock) before he began booming himself. Early evidence suggests Maliki boomed concurrently with Noname for most of the season. Now that both males are booming, one of our goals will be to establish if Maliki and Noname’s booming periods are significantly correlated.

| | NONAME | MALIKI |
|--|--------|-----------|
| Age (years) | 22 | 6 |
| Start of Booming | April | June |
| End of Booming | August | September |
| Month w/ Most Booms | June | June |
| Avg. Number of Booms Per Season | 1830 | 302 |
| Avg. Number of Booms per Set | 5.81 | 5.34 |
| Percent Displays w/ Head Toss | 2% | 9% |



Of the two females, seven-year-old sisters Tatu and Chasi, Tatu has shown the most maturation. Tatu laid one infertile egg last year and three infertile eggs this year. Tatu also incubated dummy eggs and exhibited regular “nest building” behavior. Chasi, on the other hand, has yet to lay her first egg. Chasi continues to perform a strange conspecific behavior with Maliki, standing face-to-face with bills slightly agape for up to several minutes. We are uncertain what this behavior signifies and how it may relate to their future breeding interactions.

Curator Sara Hallager has an interesting theory regarding why Tatu is laying eggs and Chasi is not. As the Kori Bustard Species Survival Plan states, dominant females in a flock may suppress breeding activity in other females. Sara describes Tatu’s aggressive attitude, “challenging” and even “taking jabs” at keepers. So perhaps Tatu is the dominant female in our little flock! Unfortunately, we lack evidence to support this yet. Neither female performs more aggressive behaviors, and both allopreen each other to a similar degree. Neither female appears to stand closer to Maliki on average than the other does. Only time will tell if one female becomes clearly dominant over the other.

In the upcoming seasons we anticipate additional breeding behavior from Maliki, including more frequent booming, and even chasing females or attempted copulations. We hope to see more eggs from Tatu, and hopefully a first egg from Chasi. It is exciting to have data documenting the growth of our newly matured flock. Our team of volunteers, keepers, and kori fanatics is thrilled to see these birds come so far!



Photo by Lisa Barker [top left Chasi, middle Maliki, far right Tatu]

Avutarda de kori (Ardeotis kori)

Nacimiento de pollos en el CCAE

Alejandro Pérez - Rafael y Antonio López

En nuestro artículo sobre la avutarda (*Otis tarda*), publicado en el mes de abril, hacíamos mención a los trabajos realizados con el plantel de las avutardas de nuestro centro (Centro de Cría de Aves Esteparias: CCAE). En aquellas notas indicábamos que las técnicas de manejo usada con nuestras *Otis tarda*, sisones y avutardas de Senegal, se emplean también con la avutarda de kori.

Esas técnicas de manejo (ver el amplio artículo sobre la avutarda de nuestra revista del pasado abril), nos hicieron conseguir crías de nuestros reproductores - de *Otis tarda*- de forma regular, lo cual entendemos, que ya constituye algo extraordinario para esta especie tan esquiva y poco conocida.

Después de esta introducción queremos compartir con los lectores de *Aviornis*, que tal y como decíamos en la página 13 del citado número, el pasado 12 de julio,

una de nuestras avutardas de kori, ha puesto el primer huevo.

Como es obvio se trata de un modesto resultado, pero con estas pocas líneas queremos recalcar que con dedicación, paciencia - mucha dedicación y mucha paciencia - y tenacidad se pueden conseguir resultados.

Resulta llamativo que las técnicas (principalmente de



Kori Bustard (*Ardeotis kori*) Birth of Chicks at the Center for Breeding of Endangered Birds

Alejandro Perez, Rafael and Antonio Lopez, Centro de Cría de Aves Esteparias

Translated via Google translate

In our article about the Great Bustard, published in April, we mentioned the work done with the establishment of our bustard center Centro de Cría de Aves Esteparias (CCA). In these notes we indicated that the management techniques used with our *Otis tarda*, little bustards *Tetrax tetrax* and white bellied bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis*, is also used with kori bustard *Ardeotis kori*.

These management techniques (see the extensive article on our bustard magazine last April), were used to get offspring from *Otis tarda* on a regular basis, which we understand, is something extraordinary for this species as it is so elusive and little known.

We want to share with the readers our first hatching of kori bustards.

We want to emphasize that with dedication, patience - much dedication and patience - and tenacity, one can achieve results.

It is striking that the techniques (mainly

Aviornis Internacional - Diciembre 2014 - n° 133 - pág. 44

Article submitted by Ricardo Sobrino; originally published in AVIORNIS magazine

In addition to breeding kori bustards, The Centro de Cría de Aves Esteparias has also bred great bustard, little bustard and white bellied bustard.

<http://www.avutardas.com/Inicio.html>



amansado a través de una apetecible comida) utilizadas con la hubara, han dado resultado con nuestra avutarda, con el sisón y en 3 años - desde la importación - con la avutarda de kori.

Para nosotros el mero hecho de conseguir este primer huevo ha supuesto un gran impulso en nuestra pasión por esta interesantísima familia de aves.

Como todo el grupo estaba junto en el mismo aviario, y como no habíamos observado ningún cortejo, no teníamos esperanza alguna en que el huevo estuviera fecundado. El solo hecho de haberlo conseguido nos llenaba de satisfacción. De todas formas decidimos incubarlo.

Cuando pasados unos días decidimos monitorizarlo con el "Buddy", nuestro corazón dió un vuelco al observar la pantallita del aparato. Con gran prudencia compartimos la noticia con los amigos de nuestro centro.

Como no sabíamos el periodo de incubación de esta especie contactamos con Sara Hallager (coordinadora del studbook de esta especie), del *Smithsonian Institute* de Estados Unidos, que amablemente nos indicó que el periodo de incubación es de 23 días y que raramente se desvía de este dato. No obstante en nuestro caso nació a los 22 días y unas horas que es el tiempo de incubación de nuestra avutarda. Con esta información nos tranquilizamos un poco y solo nos quedaba esperar.

Es bien sabido, que al contrario que de la avutarda (*Otis tarda*), de la de kori, existen algunas referencias de cría en cautividad, principalmente en los Estados Unidos.



De izquierda a derecha: huevo de kori, avutarda (*Otis tarda*) y sisón (*Tetrax tetrax*).



Continued from previous page....

tamed through a palatable food) used for the Houbara, have been successful with little bustards and in 3 years following import, with kori bustards.

For us, getting this first egg has been a great boost in our passion for this extremely interesting family of birds.

As the whole group was together in the same aviary, and as we had not seen any courtship, we did not have any hope that the egg was fertilize. The mere fact of having achieved an egg filled us with satisfaction. Anyway we decided to incubate.

When the egg was a few days old, we decided to monitor it with the "Buddy," and observed the screen showing a fertile egg.

As we did not know the incubation period of this species, we contacted Sara Hallager (studbook coordinator for this species) at the Smithsonian Institution, USA who kindly informed us that the incubation period is 23 days and rarely deviates from this data. However in our case, the chick was born at 22 days and a few hours.

It is well known that unlike the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), there are captive breeding references for the kori bustard, mainly in the United States.



Huevo picado y pollo nacido el 7 de agosto de 2014



El mismo pollo de la foto superior el día 8 de octubre

Según nuestros datos, en Europa la reproducción de esta especie ha sido muy escasa y hace ya bastantes años que no nace ningún pollo en el Viejo Continente.

No podemos ni queremos ser pretenciosos, pero quizá estos pasos puedan suponer un antes y un después en la conservación de algunas de estas especies que están muy amenazadas.

According to our data, in Europe the reproduction of this species has been scarce with few birds born in recent years.

We do not want to be pretentious, but maybe these steps can be a before and after in the conservation, as some of these species are highly endangered.

Todo lo descrito en el artículo del pasado mes de abril sobre la avutarda (*Otis tarda*) lo podríamos transcribir en estas notas. Solo hay un dato a tener en cuenta y es que todo el plantel de 3 machos y cuatro hembras están en una jaula comunitaria de unos 250 metros cuadrados. Esta jaula es opaca en la parte exterior y en el pasillo desde donde la podemos observar tiene una malla de sombreo de modo que las aves -entendemos- se sienten seguras. Incluso cuando se acerca el cuidador con el alimento, todo el grupo se aproxima sin arrimarse demasiado. La actitud del grupo cambia cuando algún visitante extraño las observa a través del algún agujero de la malla de sombreo; todas se alejan al fondo de la jaula.



Pollo nacido del segundo huevo, tomada el mismo día que el de la página anterior.

Indicar también que solo después de la puesta del segundo huevo (la hembra ha hecho dos puesta de un solo huevo cada una) fue necesario retirar uno de los machos que parecía algo agresivo hacia los demás. En el momento de escribir estas notas, el grupo sigue compuesto por dos machos y cuatro hembras. El tercer macho sigue separado.

A día de hoy no sabemos quienes son los progenitores de los dos pollos obtenidos. Estamos considerando la posibilidad de realizar los correspondientes análisis genéticos para despegar esta duda.

De alguna manera queremos dedicar estos resultados a las autoridades de la Junta de Andalucía, O.C.A. - Oficina Comarcal Agraria- de Chipiona y del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente que confiando en nosotros, nos dieron los permisos necesarios para la importación, sin los cuales no habríamos podido dar este paso, que muy bien pudiera ser útil para cualquier programa serio de recuperación.

Alejandro Pérez - Rafael y Antonio López

Aviornis Internacional - Diciembre 2014 - nº 138 - pág. 47

One thing to note, is that the whole group of 3 males and 4 females are in a communal cage about 250 square meters. This cage is opaque on the outside and has a shade screen so that birds feel safe, even when the caregiver is present with food.

The group's attitude changes however, when a stranger peers through a hole in the screening.

After the start of the second egg it was necessary to remove one of the males who seemed somewhat aggressive towards other birds. At the time of transcribing these notes, the group is composed of two males and four females. The third male remains separate.

To this day we do not know who the parents of birds obtained. We are considering to make the necessary genetic analyzes to take off this doubt.

We dedicate these results to the authorities of the Junta de Andalucía, OCA - Oficina District Agricultural - Chipiona and the Ministry of Environment who trusted us, gave us the necessary permits for the importation, without which we would not have been able to take this step, which very well could be useful for any serious program of recovery.

Article submitted by Ricardo Sobrino; originally published in AVIORNIS magazine

<http://www.avutardas.com/Inicio.html>

In addition to breeding kori bustards, The Centro de Cría de Aves Esteparias has also bred great bustard, little bustard and white bellied bustard.



Kori Bustard Solicits Copulation from Zookeeper

by Lisa Murphy, Phoenix Zoo

The Phoenix Zoo has a 6-year-old female kori bustard that was raised by herself at the zoo because the egg sent with her was infertile. As I was her primary caretaker, she has always looked to me for reassurance in uncertain situations. When the males she was sharing exhibits with got too aggressive for her, she ran to me as soon as she saw me. When moved to a large, new exhibit, she refused to walk into it until I moved up beside her, and we examined the new space together. This summer when she entered her first breeding season, she repeatedly solicited me, while ignoring or attacking other keepers standing near me. The Species Survival Plan has asked the Zoo to consider doing artificial insemination with her this coming year, and I have no doubt that we can accomplish this goal. The Zoo is excited about the opportunity to help support this important program in new ways.



Photos by Lisa Murphy



CONSERVATION NEWS

ECOLOGY OF KORI BUSTARD (*Ardeotis kori*) IN NORTHERN TANZANIA: A CASE STUDY OF SERENGETI ECOSYSTEM.

Emmanuel C. Mmassy

Senior Research officer, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute

Introduction

The study of ecology of kori bustards in the Serengeti ecosystem started in 2012. We started by assessing the local ecological knowledge and perceived threats to the kori bustards in the northern Serengeti (Published in 2014). In June, 2013 we attached GPS collars to four individual kori bustards with the aim of determining movement patterns and home ranges of kori bustards however, the collars transmitted for three months only (June-September 2014) and thereafter we lost data communication with the collars. In February, 2014 we attached new satellite collars (4 GPS collars and 6 Argos collars) which are still transmitting. Apart from attaching radio collars, the study also aims at studying population size and density as well as behaviour of wild kori bustards. Transects count were being conducted to establish density of the species in the study area and searching for nests, and hatched young during the breeding season so as to acquire knowledge about the breeding success.

Research statement

The total population size of this subspecies has never been reported in East Africa nor has it been reported for individual countries. Thus we have no knowledge about its population status. However it is known that in Tanzania the Kori bustard is only found in the northern plains of the Serengeti and Tarangire – Manyara ecosystems. No study has been carried out on conservation status and the ecological range of this species.

Thus, there is no scientific information available regarding population, conservation

status and the ecology of this species in Tanzania or East Africa. This study will therefore reveal the breeding ecology, habitat choice, home range size and movement patterns of the species.

Study area

The data has been collected in the Serengeti Plains within four areas; Naabi-Ngorongoro-Ndutu South, Naabi-Ngorongoro-Ndutu North, Maasai-Barafu-Golkopjes North and Maasai-Barafu-Golkopjes South. The study areas are treeless and dominated by short grasses of a maximum height of 30cm and some small trees and shrubs in a few kopje areas. The study has been divided into four seasons; 1) short rain season (January - March), 2) long rain season (April – June), 3) long dry period (July – September) and 4) short dry season (October – December).



Data collection

Data on different kori behaviours (laying down, incubating, standing, feeding, walking courtship display, preening and breeding) and habitat choice have been collected and will be assessed to test if these behaviours are influenced by area, grass length, grass colour, time of the day and season of the year. The study will estimate group size to test if group size is independent of the area, grass length, grass colour, time of the day and season.

Habitat choice by Kori bustards has been assessed before breeding season, during breeding season and post-breeding season to test the habitat that is preferred by kori bustards during different seasons.

Transect counts have been conducted to test the kori bustard densities in the study area. The kori bustard density will be compared with different seasons of the year, grass colour, grass length, time of the day and areas of occurrence.

The study will also determine movement patterns and home range of kori bustards. This will be done by using the Satellite GPS collars which were attached to kori bustards. The study also aimed to assess the local ecological knowledge of kori bustard by local people close to the Serengeti National Park. These results are already published.

To date more than 1000 transect counts and observations of kori bustard behaviour have been conducted.

Expected output of the study.

Baseline data on the density of kori bustard in the study area will be known.

Movement patterns and home range size as well as seasonal migration patterns of kori bustard in Serengeti ecosystem will be known.

Factors that determine different behaviours and density of kori bustard in Serengeti ecosystem will be known.

Distribution map of kori bustard in Serengeti will be produced.

Uses of SSP donated funds

Funds from SSP were used to fuel the vehicle for conducting transect counts, recording of kori behaviour, as well as to recover dropped GPS units. The fund was also used to pay for meals allowances during the field work for two months.



NEWS OF OTHER BUSTARDS

33 Great Bustards to be Released in Wiltshire

Bruno Clements, Social media and web editor
This Is Wiltshire News



Great bustards being reintroduced to Britain on Salisbury Plain are now reared from eggs brought here from Spain instead of Russia. And conservationists are hoping that 33 birds will be released on at two secret sites on Salisbury Plain this year. The world's heaviest flying bird was hunted to extinction in the UK in 1832 and Wiltshire's Great Bustard Group was set up in 1998 by former policeman David Waters with the aim of reintroducing the bird featured on the county crest and flag. Under the reintroduction scheme, great bustards have been released on a Ministry of Defence-owned site on Salisbury Plain since 2004. Eggs were being taken from great bustard nests on farmland in Russia where they would otherwise be destroyed by agricultural machinery, being hand-reared from behind a curtain using a puppet to prevent them getting used to people.



They were then brought to the UK, where they are put into a large enclosure until they are ready to fly away of their own accord; some even headed off as far as France in the first year. Although the first successful hatching of wild chicks happened in 2009 the population of birds on Salisbury Plain is not yet big enough to survive in its own right.

Today Mr. Waters said: "The Great Bustard Trial Reintroduction has entered a momentous new phase." "Up until this year the project has used only birds sourced from Saratov in Russia, and the UK Government restricted this to birds hatched from eggs rescued from destroyed or abandoned nests. The difficulties in rescuing the eggs, combined with the huge distances and logistical challenges of working in Russia meant that the number of birds the project was able to import into the UK was small – often as low as six birds a year. The Great Bustard Group received a tremendous boost last year however when Dr. Paul O'Donoghue, of the University of Chester, undertook a genetic comparison of European great bustard populations. He discovered that, contrary to the previously held belief, the great bustards in Spain form the closest living population of great bustards to the original UK population before its extinction. The Great Bustard Group is very grateful to the museums and private collections that allowed genetic material to be removed from their specimens."

Spain has two thirds of the world's great bustard population, with over 30,000 birds, and that number is increasing. "The density of birds and nests are higher than in Russia, therefore the birds are easier to find and, of course, the potential numbers which may be released in the UK are much higher," said Mr. Waters. "Having been granted the appropriate licences from the regional and national governments, a team of four GBG staff with two specially trained dogs and two staff from the RSPB collected 56 great bustard eggs. The eggs were exported in partnership with Madrid Zoo and transported by ferry to the UK to specialist bird park, Birdworld in Farnham, Surrey, home to the only public captive great bustard enclosure in Britain. Here park curator Duncan Bolton and a team of incubation experts undertook the incubation and hatching of the eggs with excellent results, achieving a hatch rate of over 82 per cent of the viable eggs. The young chicks were then taken from Birdworld to the GBG project site in Wiltshire and reared by Great Bustard Group and RSPB staff. The first birds are now at the release sites - a total of 33 great bustards will be released this year at two secret sites in Wiltshire. The use of Spanish birds promises to be a major step forward for the project. The previously released Russian birds have demonstrated a tendency to disperse in a south westerly direction, often to their detriment."



It is thought that Russian birds instinctively head in this direction to avoid the worst of the Russian winter. Many of the birds released on Salisbury Plain have dispersed, some reaching France, and although many have successfully returned others are thought to have perished. The cost of collecting the eggs and importing them to the UK from Spain was covered by the Rural Trust, whose support for the Great Bustard Group goes back to the beginning of the project when the first UK licences were being applied for. Since 2010 the Reintroduction Trial has been assisted by an EU LIFE+ grant which is coordinated by the RSPB. The LIFE+ programme covers up to 75 per cent of eligible expenditure.

More information about the Great Bustard Group at <http://greatbustard.org/>

All Photo Credits:

Bruno Clements



Conserving the wildlife and habitats of the Termit and Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve, Niger Project Progress Report, July 2014

Healthy numbers of Nubian bustards were recorded during the first half of 2014, with a total of 73 individuals from 66 observations. In the same period, only 19 Arabian bustards from 14 observations were recorded. The Arabian bustard, with a more Sahelian distribution, seems to be more threatened than the desert-loving Nubian bustard. Earlier in the year, foresters from the re-serve dismantled an illegal trade network operating in the markets of Zinder and Tanout with the help of Termit project staff. Supervised by SCF, a French Masters student from the Paris 7 University, has been working on "*Developing spatially explicit habitat models for endangered Sahelo-Saharan Bustards*". The preliminary results of his research were presented in a poster at a ZSL symposium on Remote Sensing for Conservation. His research is providing insights into habitat suitability for Nubian and Arabian bustards, including human influence, by using human and cattle densities as covariates in his model. His report will be circulated soon and an article for publication prepared in September.



Some important challenges for the year ahead

In spite of the progress achieved and the dedication and commitment of the Niger government and its Wildlife Department, the Termit & Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve needs strong and continued support to achieve its mission and to meet its vitally important conservation goals to protect threatened species. To enhance the management of the reserve and increase

the knowledge on Sahelo-Saharan wildlife, urgent priorities include:

\$50,000 for applied research on endangered bustards to improve understanding of their distribution and seasonal movements by satellite collaring and monitoring.

<http://www.saharaconservation.org/>

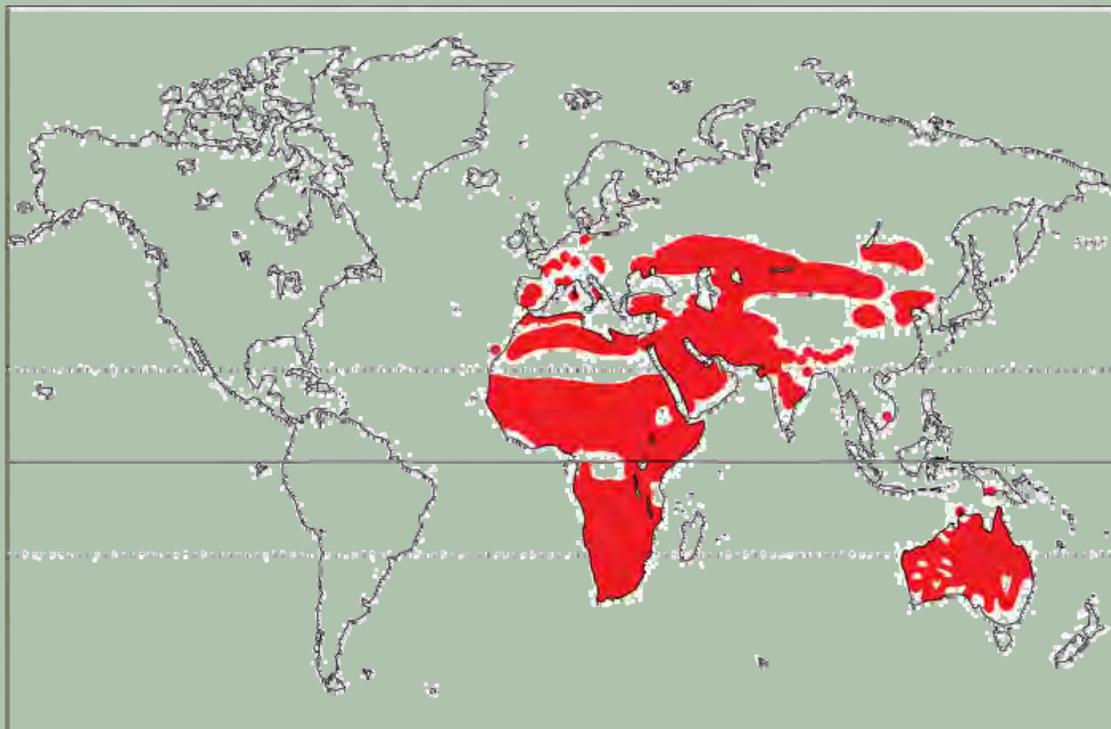
Asian Great Bustards

Signatories of the Convention on Migratory Species approve increased protections for Great Bustards at the 11th Conference of Parties! Visit <http://www.asiangreatbustard.org/index.html> to learn more about great bustards in central Asia.



Photo by D. Erdenetsetseg

Distribution Map of Bustards of the World [26 species and 30 subspecies currently recognized]



<http://www.hbw.com/>

AROUND THE ZOO

Kori Keeper Profile



Monica Halpin, Keeper III, has been a team member of Zoo Atlanta's Bird Department since 2005. She started her zoological career as an intern at the Indianapolis Zoo caring for lorikeets and other various African/Australian mammals. Monica came to Zoo Atlanta as an intern in the Hoofstock department while attending Georgia State University and continued interning after graduating (B.S. in both Biology and Psychology) in 2004. She found her love for birds when she joined the Bird department shortly after. Since then, she has become the editor for the Ratite TAG newsletter, helped manage the department's artificial incubation program and hand-rear several bird species (including kori bustards!).

Monica has been the primary keeper for our 1.1 kori bustard pair, Snake and Tuza, since 2012. These birds are lucky to have such a dedicated keeper. She was essential in helping Snake recover from a battle with West Nile Virus last year. Furthermore, Monica has trained our kori bustards to shift into their holding space on cue. Snake and Tuza have a better relationship with the bird department staff and are more confident thanks to her efforts. It seems as though everyone that works with kori bustards becomes a fan of this species. What are Monica's favorite things about kori bustards? "Their clown-like personalities. They make me laugh every day."



Katie Bagley-Vyas
Lead Keeper, Birds and Program Animals
Zoo Atlanta

Otidiformes

Both IUCN <http://www.iucn.org/> and the new edition "Handbook of Birds of the World" (del Hoyo, J. and Collar, N.J. 2014. *HBW and Birdlife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World*. Volume 1: Non-passerines. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona) now list bustards under the order Otidiformes instead of Gruiformes.



Volunteer Corner

I have been a member of the Kori Bustard behavior watch team at the Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington, D.C. for four years. After all this time, I am still struck by the beauty of the Koris, and how park guests often comment on their beauty and majesty. I am fortunate to have the 6 p.m. shift, which means that I often observe Noname, our breeding male, booming. From the early spring evenings of barely observing the beak snap, to the later summer evenings of full throat and sound, Noname is a wonder to behold. He is often in a shady spot of the yard when he is booming, and it can be difficult for guests to see him. So I really like when a guest first hears his drum-like booming, wonders aloud what it is, and I can help direct their gaze to the place where he is standing. It is also interesting to me how many people observe that Noname reminds them of the hippogriff, that fantastical creature of "Harry Potter" fame.

Sandy

Tufani, our young "Stormy" girl (quite literally at that, as that is what her name translates to in Swahili), has been one of the most playful and entertaining koris I've ever watched. She can most often be found near the front of the yard, where her antics can easily be witnessed. Other birds and squirrels, even her own tail (which I've occasionally seen her chase!) endlessly fascinate and engage her.

One day a crow had the audacity to land perhaps a little too near to where she was standing. "BOING!" Straight up she sprang like a shot, landing not a foot away from the black-plumaged intruder. I've no doubt she'd intended to aggressively displace him, but the crow was not easily intimidated and merely inched away. "BOING!" Tufani skyrocketed up again, again landing right in front of the cool-as-a-cucumber crow, who continued to inch away.

Not giving up, Tufani continued to "BOING!" on her invisible pogo stick toward the unwelcome guest (eight times total!), chasing the unruffled crow in a full circle, and causing peals of laughter to erupt from both me and a visitor walking by with her young son who exclaimed "LOOK! A kangaroo!!!"

That was a first! I've heard koris likened to many other things before (that's a whole 'nother story!), but never a marsupial:-)

Lisa

This fall our youngest kori, Moja, joined the adult birds in their lush yard. She had been making her transition to the flock - and getting to know the other birds - while living in the spacious shed in a corner of the yard. The shed has a big screened area in the front, which we call the porch. I have to admit that while I was watching the adults, I was captivated by Moja. I loved to watch her zoom around the shed, chase the sparrows who tried to steal her food and even, on occasion, jump stretch. It seemed to me that she was trying out all the kori behaviors to see which ones she liked best. But my favorite behavior was something that didn't appear on the ethnogram. Moja would stand right at the screen separating her from the yard and the other birds. The others were curious about her and I watched each of them, at different times, visit her. What surprised me was that Moja and the visiting adult would then start tapping beaks. It wasn't aggressive - they just seemed to be saying hello. A friend who also watches the koris called it "Moja poking." What was so interesting was that, when Moja was a small chick she discovered her reflection in the mirror in her nursery. That's when I first saw the beak tapping behavior. She used to do the same with her reflection! I've never seen any of the other birds do this and was fascinated that she somehow had taught the adults what she wanted them to do. She's a great bird and, I probably shouldn't admit this, she's my favorite. After all, I've known her since she was an egg.

Chris

In Memoriam



This issue of Gompou is dedicated to Rand Rensvold, a long time kori watcher at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park. Rand started watching the koris in 2000 when the watch started. I'll always fondly remember Rand with a wide brimmed hat and pink shorts [yes pink!] standing in the summer sun counting visitors and watching the antics of the kori flock throughout the past 14 years. He always liked to refer to the breeding kori as "Himself" and would regale me with stories of "Himself" chasing the females, or booming, or sunning in the yard. I will miss him—Sara Hallager



Rand did the free-ranging golden lion tamarin watch for many years, and the way in which he reminisced about it, I could tell he loved it and was greatly saddened when it was discontinued. He also loved the green-winged macaws, especially back when we still had the one female, the one he called "Scarlet". I always thought it so quirky and cute he re-named them "Paco" and "Scarlet". (In fact, my very first watch I ever shadowed with him, we met by the macaws' enclosure and he introduced them to me this way, too funny...they immediately started a chorus of "BYE-BYE" and to this day I can't hear them saying this without being reminded of Rand.) When the spectacled owls took over the same enclosure, Rand discovered the female didn't have a name, so he named her "Dulcinea" to compliment Diego's name. I now call her that, too... He really dug our barred owl pair as well, and would often stop to greet them or talk glowingly of owls in general. His Amazon parrot survives him. His name is Kelly, and Rand loved him to pieces. He told me "Kelly" stories all the time, like how much he adored his favorite food, lasagna—Lisa Barker



"Tatu" - one of Rand's favorite koris. Photo by Lisa Barker

JUST FOR FUN



Can you find the hidden
Kori Bustard?



Carmine bee-eaters are
often found perching on the
backs of kori bustards who
do not seem to mind at all!

Kori Bustard SSP Steering Committee

Sara Hallager, Chair, Smithsonian National Zoological Park

Katie Bagley, Vice Chair, Zoo Atlanta

John Sills, Phoenix Zoo

Mike Mace, San Diego Zoo Safari Park

Mike Taylor, Jacksonville Zoo

