

# MacQueen’s bustard

Amidst the arid savannas of Africa, there roams a regal bird, known as MacQueen’s bustard. Its feathers, a canvas of sandy brown, blend perfectly with the parched landscape, rendering it almost invisible to the untrained eye. But make no mistake, this avian beauty is a sight to behold.

Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	MacQueen’s bustard
2	Scientific name	Chlamydotis macqueenii
3	Colour	Males: sandy brown with black markings on the wings and tail; Females: pale brown with black bars on the wings and tail
4	Average length	65-75 cm
5	Average height	70-100 cm
6	Type of bird	Grassland
7	Found in India in states	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab
8	Habitat	Dry and arid grasslands, agricultural fields, and scrubland
9	Status	Vulnerable

## Features

The MacQueen’s bustard, also known as the Asian houbara, is a bird species found in parts of Asia and the Middle East.

In terms of physical features, the MacQueen’s bustard has a large, plump body with a round head and a long neck. The male

birds have a distinctive black and white plumage on their wings, and a brownish-grey body with a lighter underside. The females are generally smaller and less colourful than the males, with a more uniform brownish-grey plumage.

In terms of colour, the MacQueen's bustard is primarily brownish-grey in colour, with a lighter underside. As mentioned earlier, the male birds have black and white plumage on their wings, while the females are generally less colourful.

The height of the MacQueen's bustard varies depending on the sex of the bird. Males can grow up to 65-70 cm (25-28 inches) in height, while females are typically smaller, measuring around 55-60 cm (22-24 inches) in height.

In terms of length, the MacQueen's bustard can measure up to 70-80 cm (28-31 inches) from beak to tail. Again, the size of the bird can vary depending on its sex, with males generally being larger than females.

## **Habitat and Food**

The MacQueen's bustard is a large bird species found in arid and semi-arid regions of northwestern Africa and southwestern Asia. Their preferred habitat includes open plains, savannas, and deserts with low vegetation cover.

In terms of their eating habits, MacQueen's bustards are omnivores and feed on a wide variety of foods. Their diet typically includes insects, seeds, berries, and small mammals such as rodents and lizards. They also consume plant matter such as grasses, leaves, and roots.

MacQueen's bustards are adapted to life in arid regions and can go for long periods without water. They obtain most of their water from their food and conserve it by excreting concentrated urine. They are also able to regulate their body

temperature by changing their posture and position in response to changes in the ambient temperature.

## **Nesting and Nurturing**

MacQueen's bustard is a ground-nesting bird that typically lays one to three eggs in a simple scrape in the ground. The nest is usually located in a sparsely vegetated area, such as a grassy plain or desert terrain. The eggs are typically beige or pale brown in color, and they are relatively large compared to the size of the bird.

The incubation period for MacQueen's bustard eggs is around 24-28 days. Once the eggs hatch, the young birds are precocial, which means that they are relatively mature and able to move around and feed themselves shortly after hatching. The parents will typically provide some care and protection for the chicks, but the young birds are mostly self-sufficient from the start.

Overall, MacQueen's bustard is a relatively solitary bird, and it does not exhibit complex social behaviors like some other bird species.

## **IUCN Status**

The MacQueen's bustard (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*) is listed as "Vulnerable" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. The species has suffered a significant decline in its population due to habitat loss and hunting, and its range has become fragmented. Conservation efforts are underway to protect the remaining populations and their habitats.