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Important Facts for Prelims (15th September 2018)

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Great Indian Bustard

- Once the contender for becoming India's national bird, the Great Indian Bustard is now facing extinction.
- It is listed in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, in **Appendix I of CITES**, as **Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List** and the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016).
- It has been identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Historically, the great Indian bustard was distributed throughout Western India, spanning 11 states, as well as parts of Pakistan. Its stronghold was once the Thar desert in the north-west and the Deccan plateau of the peninsula.
- Today, its population is confined mostly to **Rajasthan (where it is the state bird)** and Gujarat. Small population occur in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Desert National Park (Rajasthan) in Rajasthan is one of the most prominent habitats for the Great Indian Bustard.
- The **sewan** grassland landscape is the bustard's natural habitat. The bustard, known locally as **godawan**, flourished for years in these grasslands, but now most of that land is lost to agriculture and other human activities.
- In 2013, the Rajasthan government launched **Project Great Indian Bustard**, with the aim of constructing breeding enclosures for the species and developing infrastructure to reduce human pressure on its habitats.
- Recently, wildlife officials and experts submitted their recommendations to the standing committee of the **National Board for Wildlife** to save bustard, from extinction.

National Board for Wildlife

- It is a statutory Board constituted under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

- It is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- It works as advisory body in framing policies and measures for conservation of wildlife in the country.