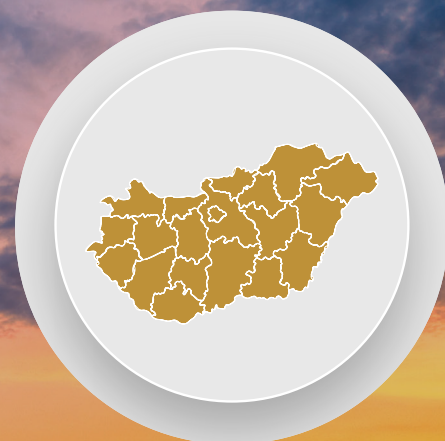


Upgraded Great Bustard Protection Scheme in High Nature Value Arable Lands



Geographic coverage

- National: Hungary, High Nature Value arable lands
- Regional

Focus of the scheme

- Conservation (i.e. maintaining or improving the conditions of an existing habitat)
- Restoration (i.e. restoring a degraded habitat or recreating one that has been destroyed)
- Combination of both

Type of scheme

- Prescription – based
- Result – based
- Combination of both
- Addressing individual farmers
- Collaborative scheme

Novelty of the scheme

- New scheme
- Improvement of existing scheme: Protection of Great Bustards in High Nature Value Areas (AEC measure)



Great Bustard *Otis tarda*
Photo by: gmackenzie/stock.adobe.com

Photo by: Kavita/stock.adobe.com

Target agricultural system



Low-intensity Pannonian non-irrigated arable land

Birds benefitting

Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), Eurasian Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*), Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*), Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), Turtle-dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*).



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Aim

The aim of the conservation scheme is to create safe nesting and feeding sites for Great Bustard (an emblematic species of low-intensity non-irrigated Pannonian arable land) by promoting green fallow land and pollinator-friendly crops and by minimising disturbance in sensitive periods.

Scheme interventions

List of main actions or commitments	Threat that is addressed by the action/commitment	Enhanced component
<p>Obligation to maintain a green fallow or pollinator-friendly crop during the 5 years of the support period</p> <p>Leaving 5 – 10% of parcels with green fallows / pollinator-friendly crops unmowed with strips at least 6 m wide.</p> <p>Reduced use of pesticides</p>	Decrease of population of insects; lack of food supply, damages to nests due to agro-technical activities	Food supply, foraging habitat, nesting sites and refuge
Prohibition of irrigation and drainage of inland water or intermittent waters.	Direct habitat loss due to irrigation and habitat fragmentation	Habitat suitable for Great Bustard and other species
Protection zones of at least 1 ha around detected nest; bird-friendly mowing techniques; mechanical work prohibited from sunset to sunrise from 1 st March to 31 st July; Earliest date for mowing: 1 th of August	Damages to nests due to agro-technical activities	Food supply, foraging habitat, nesting sites and refuge
Use of game-repellent devices and chains	Damages to nests due to predation	Undisturbed habitat patches during the whole vegetation period

Description

The conservation scheme upgrades the existing AEC measure for the 'Protection of Great Bustards in High Nature Value Areas' in Hungary, which foresees, among others, the preparation of a nutrient management plan and prohibits mechanical work on water-saturated ground and the use of slurry or sewage sludge. The scheme also integrates measures for Natura 2000 arable land in Hungary.

The conservation scheme comprises:

- The size of a parcel may not exceed 20 hectares and it is not allowed to produce the same crop in the neighbouring parcels.
- The use of harmful pesticides (a list is published by the CAP Managing Authority) is prohibited during the support period. The level of N active substances applied during fertilisation shall not exceed 90 kg/ha/year.
- During the 5 years of the supporting period, it is obligatory to maintain a green fallow or pollinator-friendly crop culture (according to the list of species published for non-productive investments) in the entire area covered by the requirements. After 15 September of the 3rd

year, the green fallow / pollinator-friendly crop culture can be ploughed one time for renewal by turning the plant parts into the soil.

- When harvesting and mowing the green fallow or a pollinator-friendly crop culture, 5-10% of the parcel must remain unmowed, leaving stipes of at least 6 meters width.

CAP intervention(s) applied

- **Agri-Environment & Climate measure (2nd Pillar)**
- Eco-scheme (1st Pillar)
- Natura 2000 compensation (Art. 67. of CAP SPR)
- Non-productive investments (Art. 68. of CAP SPR)
- European Innovation Partnership scheme Agri (Art. 71 of CAP SPR)
- Farm Advisory Service (Art. 72 of CAP SPR)
- Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions condition
- Statutory Management Requirement (SMR)

- Grazing and seed harvesting on green fallow is prohibited.
- Use of bird-friendly mowing methods (no spiral mowing, speed up to 8 km/h, use of game-repellent devices and chains) is mandatory, leaving a stubble which is at least 10 cm high. Mechanical work is prohibited from sunset to sunrise from 1 March to 31 July. The earliest date for mowing/ensilage is 1 August.
- If a nest or chicks of legally protected ground-nesting birds are found, it shall be reported immediately to the competent authority (i.e. the National Park Directorates in Hungary – NPDs which are responsible for all High Nature Value areas in Hungary). A protection zone of at least 1 ha around the found nest is compulsory until the next mowing.
- Irrigation is prohibited.
- Drainage of inland water or intermittent waters is prohibited, the entire area may be included in the area of the green fallow or pollinator friendly crop culture.

What makes the scheme attractive to farmers and landowners?

Agronomic and economic factors:

- Availability of practical guidance/expert support to assist farmers during the application and the implementation of conservation scheme.

Economic factors:

- Amount of payment provided per hectare for the implementation of the conservation scheme.
- Compatibility with other potential CAP payments (e.g. CAP SPR Art. 73 non-productive investments)

Environmental factors:

- Multiple biodiversity benefits of the scheme (biodiversity, small game, pollinators, etc.).

Factors to consider for the compensation of farmers

Income forgone

- Loss of income from the limitation of the arable production (crop structure) and green fallows, reduced use of pesticides and fertilisers .
- Loss of income due to buffers around nests.
- Loss of income due to poor hay quality (due to late harvest/mowing).
- Income foregone due to pesticide free field margins.
- Income foregone due to preservation of temporary inland waters.

Additional costs:

- Increased time needed for bird-friendly mowing techniques.
- Investments such as the establishment of pollinator-friendly crops and green fallows.

Preliminary calculation of costs for compensating farmers

The calculation is based on the cost estimation of each individual management commitment (income foregone, additional costs, costs saved). It is also based on the production value of grassland fields in Hungary, surveyed by Central Statistical Office, and compared to payment rates defined in the Hungarian CAP Strategic Plan.

The estimated payments are as follows:












- For the compulsory commitments (including cases where 1 ha needs to remain unmowed to protect nests): 435 EUR/ha
- For voluntary commitments: 175 EUR/ha

The maximum available payment amounts to 610 EUR/ha.

Please note that exact calculations of costs for compensating farmers can only be undertaken by the competent authorities.

Measuring the success of the scheme

Indicator/s to measure success of the scheme	Applicability
Number of applicants for the conservation scheme	Easy
Surface of land where the conservation scheme is applied	Easy
Changes in Farmland Bird Index (FBI) trends	Medium
Changes in the area covered by landscape features that are important for biodiversity	Medium

Benefits to biodiversity	Benefits to farmers	Benefits to society
<p>Plants: Promotes the diversity of flowering plants.</p> <p>Arthropods and pollinators: Ensures sufficient foraging resources and host plants.</p> <p>Small game species (brown hare) and small mammals: Creates favourable habitat conditions.</p>	<p> Improved water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. of groundwater resources. <p> Improved soil quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration of soil in fallow land, reduction of hydrogeological risks such as erosion. <p> Pollinator services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased pollination and better yields (in terms of quality and quantity) for pollinator-dependent crops. <p> Biological pests and disease control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of natural enemies such as insects and other animals through floral diversity. <p> Public recreation and ecotourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially additional income from tourism. <p> Improved health and mental health benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral satisfaction or well-being because of using wildlife-friendly farming techniques. 	<p> Improved water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced nutrient run-off into watercourses. <p> Pollination services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of nectariferous plants and creation of refuge areas for wintering pollinators and pollinator reproduction. <p> Public recreation and ecotourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased aesthetic value as more flowering species are present. <p> Improved health and mental health benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moral satisfaction or well-being; educational value ('leaving some areas for nature'). <p> Reduced greenhouse gas emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent soil cover reduces GHG emission from arable land production.

This conservation scheme was developed by the Birds@Farmland Initiative. For information on financial support for measures for farmland birds available in your country please contact your Farm Advisory Service.



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