

New opinions, fascinating species biology, and a lot on Black Storks

K. S. Gopi Sundar¹, Luis Santiago CANO ALONSO²

¹Seva Mandir, Old Fatehpura, Udaipur, 313004, Rajasthan, India

²Department of Biodiversity, Ecology, and Evolution, Univesidad Complutente de Madrid, E-28040 Madrid, Spain

Email for communication: storkibisspoonbill@gmail.org

2021 has been the first year of the 2021-2025 quadrennium, and we started this period trying to tackle as many targets as possible of the Specialist Group's strategic plan. One of the targets is continuing the publication of *SIS Conservation*, under the component "assess" of the species conservation cycle as laid out by the Species Survival Commission (SSC). With this issue, we provide new information and thinking on species not covered so far in this publication - Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* and Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*.

We successfully obtained the IUCN SSC internal small grant in 2020. This grant has served to upkeep the Specialist Group's website and *SIS Conservation* until 2024. This is an enormous fillip for this relatively young publication that is hosting an increasing number of remarkable original manuscripts on SIS species.

In Issue 3, in addition to the sections we have in past issues, we feature a conference summary (Champagnon and Krajl 2021). Such summaries will help keep tabs of these important events that focus on individual SIS species around the world. In the first such summary in *SIS Conservation* we are delighted to include information on the Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* International Expert Group meeting in October 2021. The experts met by video conference and have decided to arrange an in-person workshop in Croatia in 2022.

We have the "Opinion" section with a review on Marabou Stork population changes in Uganda with information collected across a decade (Pomeroy and Kibuule 2021). The authors document the urbanisation of what used to be a stork of the savannas, though improved garbage management may see a reversal of fortunes for this species.

A second "Opinion" piece provides a fascinating summary of the White Stork *C. ciconia* population in Poland (Wuczyński 2021). This is arguably the most studied stork species and Poland is the country with likely the best long-term data on this species. While numbers appear to be on the rise, there appears to be considerable nuance and complexity that requires attention before becoming assured of suggested population trends.

In the general section, we host important papers from India, Nigeria and Zambia continuing the *SIS Conservation* objective to collate relevant and novel information of species from countries with little-known information on SIS species. In one paper, colleagues provide a recent breeding record of the Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* in north-eastern India (Ranade *et al.* 2021). This record is entirely novel to the species' breeding range and increases our knowledge on this species. A very interesting article on Marabou Stork comes from Nigeria providing a unique perspective on the species' predicament now that vultures have declined greatly (Ringim *et al.* 2021). The authors provide a narrative that combines cultural experiences with the complexity of conservation where one species' declines could impact another. Gula *et al.* (2021) provide a richly illustrated description of different age groups and other

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aspects of populations of the Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* in Zambia. Responses of waterbirds to extreme weather conditions are of particular interest today, and this paper provides some initial understanding of how this poorly studied stork reacts to drought.

We are very pleased to host a Special Section on the Black Stork in this issue, which carry papers provided by participants of the VII International Black Stork Conference. The Editorial for the Special Section provides a description of the papers compiled on a species that has also seen a considerable increase in scientific and conservation effort in the past three decades.

This issue was obviously delayed. This was due to various reasons, least of all due to complications arising from the pandemic, but also due to the vagaries of professional lives of the Editors-in-Chief. Better late than never, as we always say, and thanks to the many authors who have waited patiently for this issue to be finalised. Our practice of posting accepted papers online immediately on acceptance has been very useful for authors to begin citing their work without delay. Getting page

numbers and a URL is of course critical and we will work to ensure that future issues are completed on time. We hope all of our readers continue to enjoy good health and that they will take care as travel and field work resumes.

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