

Sight record of a Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* at Maduru Oya

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I observed a pair of Black Storks at around 10.30 am on 21st April 2004, at the Maduru Oya National Park (Eastern Province, Sri Lanka). The birds were seen in a partially inundated area close to the Maduru Oya reservoir.

Although I observed the birds around four years ago I did not report it at the time as I was unaware of the rarity of the species in Sri Lanka. However, after reading Gunatillake's Report (2006), I realized that my observation was only the fourth record of this species in Sri Lanka.

Since, the two birds were unfamiliar to me, I made a sketch accompanied by detailed notes. After comparing my sketch with the available literature and photographs I was able to identify the birds as Black Storks. Little Egrets, Black winged stilts, Little cormorants and White throated Kingfishers were also present in the vicinity at the time of this observation. Few fishermen were also present in close proximity to the birds which did not show any signs of disturbance by their presence.

The Black Stork is considered a vagrant to Sri Lanka (Kotagama *et.al.* 2006). The species was first record at Kumana National park in March 1938 by Major W.W.A. Phillips who recorded two birds at Helawa plains and few days later saw the same birds at Bagura lagoon (Phillips, 1940). The second record of the species was in 1998 when a pair of birds was reported at Aruvakkalu, in Wilpattu National Park (Seneviratne, 2000). The third record was from Kala Oya basin in December 2003 when a single stork was recorded at Kokmaduwa village close to Rajangana reservoir (Goonatilake, 2006). As these records and the present observation are from the dry zone, visitors and observers to dryzone would do well to be on the alert for this rare species.

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References

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