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## Status of the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* in Ivory Coast

The Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* breeds in the Palaearctic from the Iberian peninsula to SE China and the Sakhalin peninsula, to about 60°N (Hoyo *et al.* 1992); a smaller breeding population is found in southern Africa (Brown 1982). The Palaearctic population migrates to Africa annually where it winters mainly in E and NE Africa but scarcely south of the equator or in W Africa (Brown 1982).

Thiollay (1985) did not record the species for Ivory Coast. The first records for the country were made from a helicopter flying along the Comoé River in an area where it forms the border between Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast: three groups, of four, one and three Black Storks, were recorded on 8 Feb 1989 (Walsh 1991). The coordinates of the observations reveal that one location was in Burkina Faso (9°41'N, 4°51'W), one exactly on the border between Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast (9°5'N, 4°48'W), and one in Ivory Coast (9°51'N, 4°50'W). Consequently, Black Stork was listed as a vagrant for the country by Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (1993), who also report it in W Africa as a vagrant from Senegal, Gambia, Ghana, Togo and Benin, and as a Palaearctic migrant from Nigeria.

The next record from Ivory Coast and the first for Comoé National Park was a Stork that had been equipped with a satellite transmitter in Jul 1995 in the Czech Republic (Brdy Highlands, Central Bohemia). After wintering in Senegal for several months the bird flew south-east and spent some days in the north-east of Comoé NP in Feb 1996 (9°20'N, 3°54'W), before returning to Europe. A third record for the

country was also made in Comoé National Park in Dec 1997, when one individual was observed flying with Woolly-necked Storks (Demey 1998).

These observations, especially that of several groups of Storks along the Comoé River (Walsh 1991) might indicate that the Black Stork is a rare Palearctic migrant in Ivory Coast rather than a vagrant. The same might be true of Senegal, where recent wintering of Black Storks in the country was proved for several individuals equipped with satellite transmitters (Bobek *et al.* 1999).

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