

BLUE-FACED PARROTFINCH *Erythrura trichroa pinaiae*
In central Buru, we recorded small flocks of this species three times in montane forest above the village of Memboli, at 850 m, 1,000 m and 1,750 m, respectively. These sightings establish a wide elevational range of this species, which has previously been recorded only once at 1,500 m on Buru (Coates and Bishop 1997).

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Records of Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* breeding pairs fledging four chicks

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Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* is among the rarest of the stork species in India (Rahmani 1989, Sundar 2004) with very few studies on their breeding success (Sundar 2003). They nest solitarily and have clutch sizes of 3–4 eggs, with 1–3 chicks usually fledging successfully from each nest (Ishtiaq 1998, Maheswaran 1998, Sundar 2003, G. Clancy *in litt.* 2006). In this note, we report three instances of Black-necked Stork pairs fledging four chicks each from three different locations in India, and discuss possible reasons for the occurrence of this unusual phenomenon in the same year.

On 21 December 2005, AD and YB visited a farm in Jodiya village, Jamnagar district, Gujarat, and observed a Black-necked Stork nest on a 'neem' *Azadirachta indica* tree. The nest had four nearly fledged nestlings (Plate 1). One week later, the farmers informed YB that all four nestlings had fledged from the nest. Subsequently, AD and YB visited the site and observed all four fledged juveniles. This nest was likely initiated in October 2005 (calculated following Sundar 2003). Neem trees were previously unknown as a nesting tree for this species (see Sundar 2003).

On 28 January 2006, an adult Black-necked Stork was observed with four newly fledged juveniles in Hadayi Malawaan Wetland, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh by SPN. The nest site for this family could not be found and the subsequent fate of the four juveniles is not known. The nest was likely initiated in October or November 2005.

On 20 March 2005, a pair of adult Black-necked Storks with four newly fledged young was seen resting in a wheat

field beside Kurra village, Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh by KSGS (Plate 2). The adult pair is known to be resident in the area; they raised chicks only once between 1999 and 2002 (Sundar 2003, KSGS unpublished data). The four young are likely to have fledged from a nest initiated in December 2005 or January 2006.

All three nests were clearly initiated during or immediately after the monsoon, as is consistent with earlier observations (Ishtiaq 1998, Sundar 2003), in the breeding season of 2005–2006. In 2005, rainfall in all three areas was delayed, with most of it occurring in September instead of being spread between July and October. Such concentration of rainfall may lead to the formation of temporarily larger wetlands. This may lead to temporary food abundance, and may have permitted the storks to provision more chicks than usual. The three records are geographically well spaced, hinting that breeding pairs all over the country can potentially raise four chicks if appropriate conditions are available. This species is naturally rare in the countryside in India, mostly living in areas that are not visited regularly by birdwatchers or biologists, and with most pairs and families scattered in the countryside away from the wetlands where intensive waterfowl counts are made (Rahmani 1989, Sundar 2004). More consistent observations on identified pairs will provide improved information on nesting success and on why so few nesting attempts result in the fledging of four chicks. This information may assist in captive breeding attempts and in understanding the ecology of a species that is declining rapidly in the Indian landscape.



Plate 1. Four Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* chicks at the nest in Jodiya, Gujarat, India, on 21 December 2005.



Plate 2. Four Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* chicks at Kurra village, Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh, India, on 20 March 2005. A pair of adults was present nearby.

Among the large storks that nest singly, the maximum number of fledglings recorded is three, with one exceptional record of a Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria* nest with five chicks fledging (Thomas 1981) and one record of four Black-necked Stork chicks fledging in Australia, where the species has been well studied (D. Richards *in litt.* 2006). There are no records of four Black-necked Stork chicks fledging from a single nest in South-East Asia, where the species is sparsely but widely distributed (J. Barzen, T. Clements, W. Duckworth, T. Evans and R. Timmins *in litt.* 2005).

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A recent record of Storm's Stork *Ciconia stormi* in Thailand

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Storm's Stork *Ciconia stormi* is one of the rarest species of storks in the world and very little is known of its natural history (Luthin 1987, BirdLife International 2001, Wetlands International 2006). The species is classified as Endangered due to its small (250–500 individuals) and rapidly declining population, caused primarily by the destruction or conversion of its preferred lowland evergreen forest habitat (BirdLife International 2001, Wetlands International 2006).

In this note we report the first sighting of this species in Thailand for 18 years. The observation was made on 3 April 2004 by an infrared camera trap device (placed at c. 100 m above sea level at c. 9°10'N 98°40'E) within Klong Saeng Wildlife Sanctuary in Surat Thani province.

Most observations of the species come from Borneo where individuals and small groups have been sighted alongside rivers in forested areas, but it also occurs in peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra (Luthin 1987, BirdLife

International 2001). There is only one previous record from Thailand, where a nesting pair with chicks was observed in detail in a lowland evergreen forest area (at c. 9°05'N 98°30'E, 69 m) during September/October 1986 (Nakhasathien 1987). Recent range-wide assessments have suggested that the species is probably extinct in Thailand (BirdLife International 2001, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand 2004).

METHODS

The record was made during a camera-trap survey for fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus* in a remote area of Surat Thani province in southern Thailand. The survey used six passive infrared-triggered camera traps which were rotated among several evergreen forest sites along the banks of smaller streams and lakes surrounding the