

## **Sighting record of White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) in Vidarbha, Maharashtra**

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During a birdwatching trip to Malkhed reservoir near Sawanga Vithoba village in Amravati district of Maharashtra on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2008, Padmakar Lad, Dr. Vijay Ingole and Mr. P. S. Hirurkar saw a large stork bigger than an Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*). It was standing silently in the marshy area of the backwaters. It was white and black flight feathers, red bill and red legs. The tail was white. It was photographed and then identified as White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*). The Malkhed reservoir is located at 20<sup>o</sup>50'N and 77<sup>o</sup>54' E and the elevation is 1109 feet above sea level.

According to Ali and Ripley (1987) it is a winter visitor to India. It is found in smaller numbers east and south in the Gangetic Plain (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal), Assam, East Pakistan (Bangladesh), Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra. (It is found) decreasingly south through Deccan (Andhra, Madras, Mysore).

Grimmett et. al. (2000) has shown only few sightings of White Stork in Maharashtra and south of Maharashtra in the peninsular India in the Pocket Guide.

Recently, one White Stork was sighted at Dhebewadi, in Satara district of Maharashtra on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 (Pande et. al., 2007) and one stork was sighted on all the three visits at Dive in Pune district of Maharashtra on 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

The White Stork also did not feature in the checklist of the birds Vidarbha and Madhya Pradesh prepared by D'Abreu (1923). It was neither sighted during the studies conducted by Raju Kasambe and Jayant Wadtkar in the Pohara Malkhed reserve forest (Kasambe & Wadtkar, 2003 & 2007). Thus, it is evident that, this is the first sighting and hence important sighting report of White Stork in Vidarbha part of Maharashtra.

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