

# Black Stork

*Ciconia nigra*

The Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* is a large waterbird, in adult plumage glossy black in colour, with white underparts and red bill and legs. Its diet mainly comprises fish from shallow waters, and to a lesser extent it consumes insects, frogs and salamanders.



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The Black Stork is often solitary, or it occurs in pairs and is a flocking species during migration and at rich feeding sites in the wintering areas. It breeds in lowland moist forests by open waters, streams, pools or banks of rivers and lakes and it also breeds in mountainous regions. It usually nests in trees and sometimes rock outcrops (and caves) and it prefers to nest in areas not subject to human disturbance.

Most Black Storks are migratory, although a few populations are sedentary and breed and overwinter in the same area. Part of the southern African population as well as a number of birds in Spain and Portugal are resident. Otherwise the majority of the European population migrates to Africa in autumn, returning again in spring. Those further east winter mainly in the Indian subcontinent and central China.



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The global population of Black Storks has been estimated to be around 32,000-44,000 individuals, and nowhere is this species common. Although it was considered to be Least Concern in the 2004 IUCN Red List, it is considered to be nationally threatened in many range States. Despite its expanding range, its total population appears to be stable, although some local declines have also been reported.

The main threat to the Black Storks is habitat loss and degradation involving the loss of wetlands and forests throughout their range as a result of development, intensification of forest use and deforestation. Disturbance and illegal hunting also threaten this species. Many birds die on migration due to collisions with powerlines or illegal shooting.

The Black Stork is legally protected in most range States. It has benefited from conservation efforts, particularly habitat protection, restoration and management projects. However, more information on threats to the Black Stork in its wintering grounds and in stopover areas is required.

The Black Stork has the most extensive breeding range of any stork and it extends from the Iberian Peninsula to Denmark, from Italy to Greece and Turkey and across eastern Europe to northern Mongolia and eastern Siberia. It also breeds in Southern Africa. The wintering range of the European population includes the Iberian Peninsula, West Africa, the Middle east and East Africa north of the equator. The population in southern Africa is resident in the area. The Asian population winters in southern and eastern Asia, from Iran across to China, and in the Indian subcontinent.



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Trends in European breeding populations of *Ciconia nigra*, 1980 - 2003.

Albania	?
Armenia	→
Austria	↘
Azerbaijan	↘
Belarus	↘
Belgium	↘
Bosnia and Herz.	?
Bulgaria	↘
Croatia	→
Czech Rep.	↘
Denmark	→
Estonia	↘
France	→
FYR Macedonia	↘
Germany	↘
Greece	↘
Hungary	↘
Italy	↘
Latvia	↘
Lithuania	↘
Luxembourg	↘
Moldova	↘
Poland	↘
Portugal	→
Romania	→
Russian Fed.	→
Serbia & Montenegro	→
Slovakia	↘
Slovenia	↘
Spain	↘
Sweden	↘
Turkey	↘
Ukraine	↘

(BirdLife International, 2004)

