

Notes on the feeding behaviour of Milky Storks *Mycteria cinerea* at the coast of Indramayu, west Java

M. INDRAWAN, W. LAWLER, W. WIDODO and SUTANDI

On 5 November 1990, while counting waders on the Bungko estuary, located in Indramayu, 6°31'S 108°33'E, on the north coast of West Java, a group of 12 Milky Storks *Mycteria cinerea* was found resting on a mudflat. One of the group flew toward us and stood still in the shallow, low tide water. Within minutes, other birds of the group flew and landed in the vicinity of the previous bird. The group eventually consisted of eight birds, including three immatures with greyish plumage. The storks then began to feed in an unusual manner which was watched from 100 m through a x20 telescope.

The storks fed in turbid waters less than 40 cm deep, in a single tight flock, each bird about 20-30 cm apart. The flock walked briskly, with long strides, in a straight line parallel to the shore for about 150 m. The birds held their bills half open and searched for prey with less than half the length of their bills submerged. Unidentified fish 10-14 cm in length (length estimated in comparison with the storks' bills) were frequently flushed from the water. Distance, light conditions and the walking speed of the storks prevented us from observing the success rate of their feeding method and, after 10 mins, the observation was terminated.

The communal feeding of the birds had seemed quite deliberate; they apparently congregated in the shallow water where there were schools of fish. The closely related Wood Stork *M. americana* captures prey using 'tactolocation' and tends to feed where density of prey is high, using 'foot-stirring' and 'wing-flicking' to flush and divert prey to the stork's half-opened bill (Kahl 1968). Our observation leads us to speculate that the Milky Storks were using their flock formation, in a similar situation of high prey density, to flush and divert prey to their half-opened bills.

Few published observations exist on the feeding behaviour of the Milky Stork, which is a globally threatened species (Collar and Andrew 1988). Previous accounts have described at least three feeding methods, involving birds feeding individually or in loose flocks: 'probing in mud', 'groping in shallow water', and occasional 'direct visual searching' (Silvius 1986: 36, Swennen and Marteijn 1987: 63-66). The present note, therefore, describes additional information on the feeding behaviour.

Observations of feeding behaviour help to increase our understanding of

the Milky Stork's habitat requirements. The coasts of Indramayu-Cirebon have been identified in recent years as having relatively high numbers of Milky Storks, but also very high hunting pressure (Raharjaningtrah 1988, Milton and Marhadi 1989, Yus Rusila Noor 1989), and it is an important site for implementation of conservation measures and protection of the species in Java.

The observation was made while we took part in a waterbird study training course, organised by the Indonesian Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHPA), Asian Wetland Bureau (AWB), Indonesia and Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG). Comments on the first draft were kindly provided by Marcel J. Silvius, Yus Rusila Noor, Paul Jepson and Bas van Balen.

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M. Indrawan, W. Lawler, W. Widodo and Sutandi, c/o Asian Wetland Bureau Indonesia, Jalan Arzimar III, P.O. Box 254, Bogor 16001, Indonesia.

A sighting of *Ficedula (crypta) disposita* in Luzon, Philippines

GUY DUTSON

Two male flycatchers *Ficedula (crypta) disposita* were seen on 12 July 1991 at Angat Dam, Luzon, Philippines. This is the only record of this taxon other than the female type-specimen collected in the Zambales Mountains (Ripley and Marshall 1967). The distinctive appearance of *disposita* appears to warrant its treatment as a species.



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