

## The breeding of the Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* in Tanzania

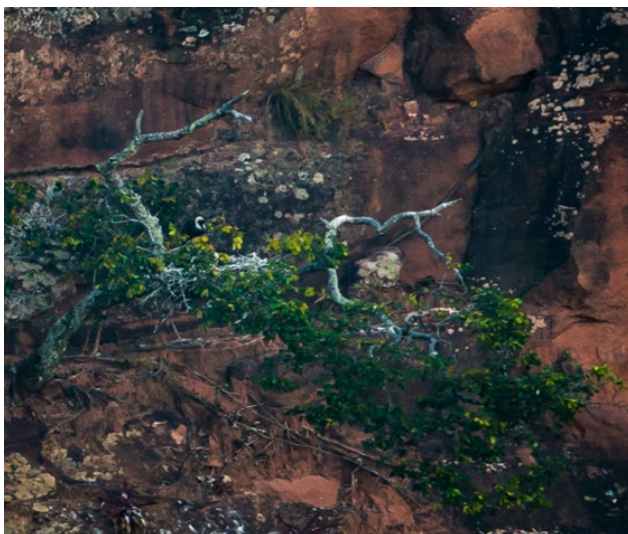
This species occurs in all months with no obvious seasonality (Table 1) suggesting that, for the most part, it can be considered resident, although individual birds in border areas presumably wander to neighbouring countries to some extent. Nesting in Tanzania is not mentioned in Brown & Britton (1980) and Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1993) could not trace any breeding records. Harvey (1972) suspected that this species was nesting close to Dar es Salaam, but was unable to prove breeding, although he watched them displaying in early December. Elliott (1973) reports this species nesting on 15 August 1948 in a baobab on the north bank of the Ruvu River southwest of Bagamoyo. This constitutes the first breeding record for Tanzania and had been overlooked by later authors. More recently, Jiri Haureljuk (pers. comm.) located a nest on 2 September 2016 in mangroves to the north of Saadani National Park close to Kijongo Bay Beach Resort (Fig. 1). On 24 January 2017 he found a further three storks in the same mangroves along the Msangasi River. There is a more or less resident flock of 20 to 30 birds in this general area.



**Figure 1.** Nest of Woolly-necked Stork in Saadani National Park, Tanzania (photo: Jiri Haureljuk).

On 22 September 2016 we found an active nest in a totally unexpected locality and situation. This nest was built on top of a small (but old) tree growing out of a cliff face in hilly miombo woodland north of Songea (1017 m, co-ordinates available from author), a long way from any significant wetland habitat or any other records of this species (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2.** Woolly-necked Stork nest on a tree growing out of a cliff face north of Songea, Tanzania (photo: Neil Baker).



	Presence	Breeding season
January	119	3
February	87	
March	74	
April	46	
May	48	
June	74	
July	93	
August	65	1
September	70	3
October	84	1
November	67	
December	71	1

**Table 1.** Seasonality of records in the Tanzanian Bird Atlas. Although there are few nest records it appears that this species breeds towards the end of the dry season and into the short rains. The majority of records are coastal in Climatic Zone D8. The Songea record is in Climatic Zone C7 in Brown & Britton (1980).

There are 905 records on the Tanzania Atlas database with occupancy in 120 Atlas squares (34%). Although there are records in every month for only four Atlas squares. Whilst never common, flocks of up to 50 birds have been reported.

#### Acknowledgement

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#### References

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