



## Observation of Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*) Nesting colonies at Kodadha Village, Patan

**Bhati Rinku**

Junior Research Fellow

WCB Research Foundation, Patan - 384265, Gujarat.

E-mail: [bhatirinku178@gmail.com](mailto:bhatirinku178@gmail.com)



**Juvenile Painted stork outside the nest, ready to fly**

The Painted stork is a large wader with distinctive pink flight feathers of the adults, and it has a big yellow bill with a down-curved tip, bare orange head and pinkish legs listed as a Near Threatened (IUCN 2007) (Grimmett *et al*, 2016). Males and females have similar resemblance only males are larger than the females (Animalia.bio). This species is known for the colonial nesting (Koli *et al*, 2013).

Agricultural landscapes and wetlands provide a wide variety of avian fauna habitats that vary seasonally. During the December field study of wetland birds, four large habitats in the lake were observed. These were the habitats of Painted stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*), Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), and Black ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*) (Sundar, 2006).

We visited Kodadha village lake (23°33'07.5"N 71°29'52.8"E) about 41 Km to Sami Taluka on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 during my field study. The village lake is filled with water, having an elevation of *Prosopis juliflora* and *Salvadora* genus at the periphery of the lake. The wetland water is used by villagers for irrigation, drinking, or bathing purpose by cattle.

The sky is voluble with the flock of Painted stork. In December 2020, about 45 adults were seen on the nest and soaring in the sky. They had nested on *P. juliflora* grown on wetland bed, about 20 juveniles were standing on the nest and with some on the bed of wetland and few sitting on a tree.



**Unique plumage pattern of juvenile Painted stork**



They were old enough to fly using their wings but these juveniles were mainly opaque whitish with a yellowish-grey bill and blackish facial skin, having a brownish plumage. Urfi (1993) and Tere (2006) some colonies of these birds were also observed in their study area. These species also build nest on trees like Banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*), Peepal (*F. religiosa*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Babul (*Acacia nilotica*), etc., in Gujarat and other parts of the country.

The colony of Painted stork nest was counted on more than 15 nests on *P. juliflora* bushes and the number of nests on each bush varied between 2 and 6, usually 3 and the observations took place by using binoculars (Olympus 10x50S). This nesting site was spread over the wetland. Storks had used thorny sticks of *P. juliflora* as nesting material. All nests and trees were looking white due to the deposition of excreta of the birds.



***Adult Painted stork soaring above the water body***

Other water-birds like Pond heron (*Ardeola grayii*), Black crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Ibises, and Spoonbills also used the same trees for roosting and nesting (Urfi, 1993). Along with these large birds and other waders like Common snipe, Sandpipers, Spot-billed ducks, Egrets, Northern Shoveller, Swallows, Swifts, etc. were also observed.

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