

Biodiversity Record: Milky and painted storks at West Coast Park

Tan Heok Hui

Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore, Singapore 117377; Email: heokhui@nus.edu.sg

Recommended citation. Tan HH (2022) Biodiversity Record: Milky and painted storks at West Coast Park. *Nature in Singapore*, 15: e2022009. DOI: 10.26107/NIS-2022-0009

Subjects: Milky stork, *Mycteria cinerea* (Aves: Ciconiiformes: Ciconiidae);
Painted stork, *Mycteria leucocephala* (Aves: Ciconiiformes: Ciconiidae).

Subjects identified by: Tan Heok Hui and Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, West Coast Park; 26 August 2021; 0850–0910 hrs.

Habitat: Seashore consisting of a granite rock bund and lower littoral zone of mud and silt substrates exposed during morning low tide.

Observer: Tan Heok Hui.

Observation: Seven storks were observed foraging along the rock bund and exposed tidal flats in shallow waters with the incoming tide (Figs. 1, 2). Five were milky storks and two were painted storks. Painted storks are distinguished by their black wing coverts. The birds were walking along the shore, picking at debris washed up on the bund, or stirring the shallow murky waters with their bills, picking up occasional prey items and swallowing them. Due to the long distance, it was not possible to identify the prey items.



Fig. 1. Five of the storks foraging along the rock bund at West Coast Park, Singapore. (Photograph by: Tan Heok Hui).



Fig. 2. Three painted storks and three milky storks (without black markings on wing coverts) foraging along the shore at West Coast Park, Singapore. (Photograph by: Tan Heok Hui).

Remarks: Although milky and painted storks are widely distributed in South and Southeast Asia, they are not regarded as native to Singapore. Instead, they are classified as common escapees (Lim et al., 2020). Those seen in the wild there are believed to be free-flying birds from the Singapore Zoo (Lim, 2009). Painted storks were first recorded in the wild in Singapore in March 1987, when a flock of eight was noted over Senoko. Milky storks were first recorded in November 1997 based on two examples at Seletar Farmway. Both species were subsequently regularly observed in the northern and northwestern parts of Singapore, particularly at the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. The appearance of juvenile birds of both species suggests that they breed locally in the country, but not outside the zoo (Lim, 2009). The featured sighting shows that these birds also travel to the southern coasts of Singapore Island.

Literature cited:

Lim KS (2009) *The Avifauna of Singapore*. Nature Society (Singapore), Singapore, 611 pp.
Lim KS, Yong DL & Lim KC (2020) *A Field Guide to the Birds of Malaysia and Singapore*. John Beaufoy Publishing, Oxford, 396 pp.