



STUDY OF NESTING BEHAVIOUR OF PAINTED STORK

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Abstract - The village Rajpura ($27^{\circ}7'0''N$ $76^{\circ}1'49''E$) is located near Kota district, Rajasthan. It is about 26km. away from Kota. The study was carried out from July 2018 to December 2018. Painted storks were sighted first time in Rajpura pond doing nesting. During the study period 200 nests were observed in the pond trees. All the nests were built on Babul trees (*Acacia nilotica*) within the pond. The nest construction and egg laying was observed in the months of July 2018 and August 2018. Both males and females carried over incubation and other parental care. The main factor affecting nesting site selection were food and habitat availability. The nest built material consisted of old branches of trees and some soft green leaves. The observation suggested that Rajpura was one of the best nesting, feeding and breeding site for the Painted storks. So it is need to take immediate steps towards the conservation of such diversified pond.

Keywords : Painted storks, *Acacia nilotica*, Nesting, Rajpura

1 INTRODUCTION

Painted storks are widespread throughout the Indian subcontinent. The Painted Stork is a large wading bird in the Ciconiidae family. Painted stork is currently classified as near threatened. It has a long, heavy bill and unfeathered waxy yellow face. It is mainly white with black barring on wings and breast and black flight feathers. They display white plumage with a rose colour near the tail feathers. Juveniles are with pale dirty brown plumage and like most other storks reach breeding condition after two to three years. Painted storks are found within a variety of habitats. They are found at shallow fresh water wetlands and marshes. Painted storks feed in shallow wetlands. They feed mainly on fish but they also like frogs and snakes. They are resident in most regions but show seasonal movements also. They are absent from desert areas. Painted storks build their nests near the water body. During the present investigation the main factor affecting the nest site selection was food and protection availability. Both male and female participated in nest construction activites. The Painted Stork is a monogamous species.

2 STUDY AREA

Rajpura village ($27^{\circ}7'0''N$ $76^{\circ}1'49''E$) is situated 26 Km away from Kota city. Rajpura pond was one of the best nesting site for the Painted storks and other wetland birds. Rajpura wetland is a permanent freshwater pond with marshes and swamps having emergent vegetation. The average annual rainfall of Kota district has been reported to be 742.8mm in 2018.

3 METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted during July 2018 to December 2018 at Rajpura pond near Kota district, Rajasthan. All the observations were made during early morning and evening. The observations were made with data sheets and Nikon 12×50 binoculars. The photographic recordings and video recordings were captured through Nikon camera with Nikon 200×500 mm lens.



4 RESULT

Painted storks breed on trees (*Acacia nilotica*) either in mixed colonies along with other water birds. The female lays 2- 3 eggs and both male and female incubate eggs. The courtship displays involve ritual bowing with the head being raised and lowered while performing bill-clattering and producing hisses. The breeding season starts after mid July in northern India. Painted storks are colonial tree nesting birds. Colonies are abundant on large trees in villages. The breeding colony was seen near human settlements. The nesting trees selected were only Babul (*Acacia nilotica*). Both male and female

involved in nest sanitation. The nests were repaired regularly with fresh leaves and sticks of *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia nilotica*. The nets were always guarded by one partner once the site was selected. The incubation period was about one month. Parents regularly stood at the nest with wings out stretched to shade the chicks. Approximately 500 Painted storks visited the village Rajpura. 200 nests were made by Painted storks in Rajpura village. Painted storks visited the Rajpura during breeding time only. Nesting birds usually gave preference to the safe nesting area, availability of the nesting material and plenty food for nesting. All these conditions are favourable in Rajpura pond. Ali & Ripley (1987) state that the breeding season of storks is highly dependent on the monsoon and related water conditions, which trigger the abundance of food.





CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study we can suggest that Rajpura is one of the best breeding site for such near threatened species. Awareness about this ecologically important species should be created among local people and efforts should be taken for the protection of nesting colonies.

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