

Painted Stork

The Painted stork is a creature of magnificent beauty, adorned in a flamboyant coat of feathers that dazzle the eye. Its plumage is a tapestry of white and black, embellished with streaks of brilliant pink and crimson. A creature of the wetlands, it wades gracefully through shallow waters, its slender legs moving with fluid ease.

As it moves, the stork’s long, curved beak sweeps back and forth, probing the depths for its prey. With every darting motion, it reveals a glimpse of the skill and precision that makes it a master hunter. But it is not just its physical prowess that sets this bird apart. The Painted stork is a creature of great intelligence, able to adapt to changing environments and thrive where others may falter.

Serial Number	Characteristic	Description
1	Common Name	Painted stork
2	Scientific Name	Mycteria leucocephala
3	Colour	White with black flight feathers, red bill, and yellow facial skin
4	Average length in cms	95-100 cm
5	Average Height in cms	100-120 cm
6	Type of bird	Waterbird
7	Found in India in states	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Odisha
8	Habitat	Wetlands, marshes, ponds, and shallow lakes

9	Status	Near threatened
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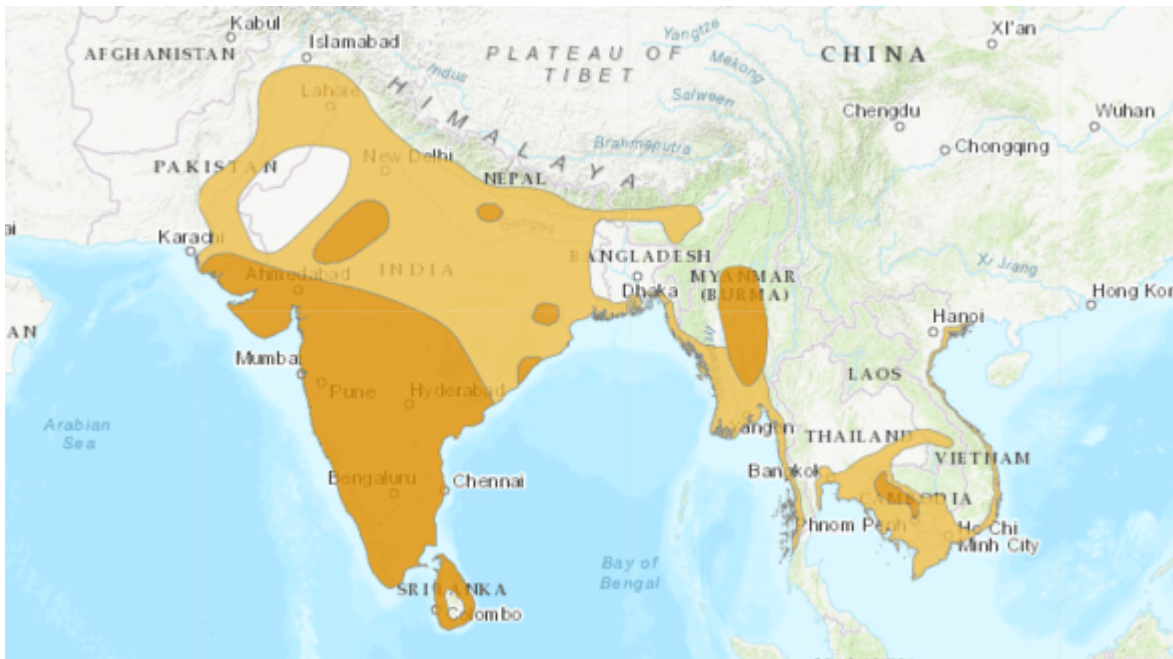
Features

The Painted stork is a majestic bird that boasts an array of striking physical features. This species stands at an impressive height of approximately 3-4 feet (91-122 cm) tall and has a wingspan of around 5-6 feet (152-183 cm), making it one of the larger species of stork.

The bird's most distinctive feature is its gorgeous plumage, which is a striking combination of white, black, pink, and crimson. The feathers on its body are mostly white, while its wings and tail are adorned with black feathers that have an iridescent sheen. The bird's long, pointed beak is a striking yellow color with a red tip, and its legs are long and slender, with a bright pink hue that contrasts beautifully against its white feathers.

In terms of length, the Painted stork measures around 35-40 inches (89-102 cm) from beak to tail, with males being slightly larger than females. Its long, broad wings allow it to soar effortlessly through the air, while its sturdy legs and large webbed feet make it an excellent swimmer.

Habitat and Food



The Painted stork is a species of bird that is primarily found in wetland habitats across the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and parts of Africa. These birds prefer to live near freshwater bodies such as lakes, rivers, and marshes, where they can wade through shallow water in search of food.

The Painted stork is primarily a carnivorous bird, feeding on a variety of aquatic animals such as fish, frogs, crabs, and insects. They are known to be opportunistic feeders, and will often eat whatever prey is available in their environment. Their long, sharp beaks are well-adapted for catching and holding onto slippery prey, and their keen eyesight allows them to spot prey from a distance.

During the breeding season, Painted storks gather in large colonies to mate and raise their young. They build their nests in trees near water bodies, using twigs and sticks to construct large, sturdy platforms. Both males and females take turns incubating the eggs and caring for the chicks, with the parents regurgitating food to feed their young.

In addition to their primary diet of fish and other aquatic animals, Painted storks are also known to eat small mammals, reptiles, and birds, as well as carrion when prey is scarce. They are skilled hunters and can often be seen standing still

in the water for long periods, waiting for prey to swim within reach.

Nesting and Nurturing

Painted storks are colonial nesters and breed in large groups, building their nests in trees near water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and marshes. They use sticks, twigs, and other materials to construct large, flat platforms that can be up to 3 feet in diameter. The nests are often built in the top of tall trees, which provides safety from predators such as monkeys and snakes.

During the breeding season, female Painted storks lay between 2-5 eggs in their nests. The eggs are a pale white or cream color, and are laid approximately 2-3 days apart. The incubation period for the eggs is around 30-35 days, with both the male and female taking turns to incubate the eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the chicks are covered in greyish-white down feathers and have large eyes and beaks.

After hatching, the young chicks are dependent on their parents for food and protection. The parents feed their chicks regurgitated food, primarily fish and other aquatic animals that they catch in nearby water bodies. The chicks grow rapidly and can double their weight in just a few days.

The chicks typically fledge after around 60-70 days, during which time they learn to fly and hunt for food on their own. The fledglings are still dependent on their parents for food and protection for a few weeks after leaving the nest, and can often be seen begging for food from their parents even after they are able to fly.

IUCN Status



The Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*) is listed as “Near Threatened” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This means that the species is considered to be at risk of becoming threatened with extinction in the near future. The main threats to the Painted Stork’s population are habitat loss, pollution, and hunting. Wetland destruction and degradation, as well as declining water quality, have had a significant impact on the species’ breeding success and survival. The species is also vulnerable to hunting, especially during the breeding season, when it congregates in large colonies. The species is also protected under international treaties such as the Convention on Migratory Species and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which regulate the trade and hunting of these birds.