

Milky stork

Desc:

Milky stork has a small population in **Cambodia**, with birds occasionally wandering (in the non-breeding season) to **Thailand**. Historically it occurred naturally in Peninsular **Malaysia**, but all populations here originate from escapes or unsuccessful reintroduction efforts, with another such population in **Singapore**. The vast majority of the world's population now exists in **Indonesia**, with recent records from Sumatra and Java (the strongholds) and Sulawesi (Eaton *et al.* 2021, eBird 2023), with no recent records from Sumbawa or Buton.

Info:

The Milky Stork is found predominantly in coastal mangroves. This bird has a diverse diet, feeding on small animals including shellfish, insects, fish and frogs. This stork has been observed to make use of several feeding mechanisms. Typically, it locates and captures prey by groping. This groping method sees the Milky Stork wading slowly through shallow waters with a partially open bill submerged about three quarters in the water. When the prey touches this bill, the stork rapidly shuts its bill and swallows the item whole. The stork might rest for a minute after swallowing a large fish, before it resumes its hunt. As with other wading bird species, the Milky Stork is sometimes considered a minor pest within the aquaculture industry, if it feeds on fish and shrimps meant for commercial purposes. The Milky Stork is a generally silent bird, except in breeding colonies. Breeding tends to occur during the dry season, and usually lasts for three months. The Milky Stork lays a clutch of 1 to 4 eggs, with the incubation period estimated to be around a month. Both the male and females take turns nesting. The eggs can hatch at different times, so the oldest and youngest chicks can differ considerably in size. This puts the youngest and smallest chicks at a disadvantage, as feeding of the young begins before all of the eggs have hatched. With an equal distribution of food, it is quite common for the youngest chicks to die of starvation.

Characteristic:

- Medium-sized storks, about 91-97cm tall
- Plumage primarily white, with black flight feathers on the wings and tail
- During breeding seasons, white plumage is suffused with a pale creamy-buffish color
- Yellow bill, bright yellow when it is breeding season

Fun fact:

they were once widely distributed across the Peninsular