

AMENDMENTS TO APPENDICES I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

Other Proposals

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Mycteria leucocephala in Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT

The United States of America.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

11. Class: Aves
12. Order: Ciconiiformes
13. Family: Ciconiidae
14. Species: Mycteria leucocephala (Kahl, 1972)
15. Common Names: English: painted stork, rosy wood ibis  
French:  
Spanish:
16. Code Numbers: 1311004006005001 (IBIS)

2. Biological Data

21. Distribution: The painted stork is found throughout India south of the Himalayas as well as in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Burma, southern China, and Southeast Asia (Ali and Ripley, 1978). There is a healthy breeding population in Sri Lanka, but this stork no longer breeds in Bangladesh and Myanmar. It has been reduced to approximately five breeding pairs in southern Thailand. The species is rare throughout the rest of its range.
22. Population: M. leucocephala appears to be secure within India and Sri Lanka, but is in danger in the rest of its range (Coulter, 1989a). No current population estimates are available, although it is now rare throughout Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (Luthin, 1987). The breeding season usually follows after the monsoon and is somewhat irregular, lasting from September until April. The birds nest in colonies of 70 to 100 nests, so closely packed that a half-dozen trees may suffice for the whole colony. The usual clutch consists of two eggs.

Approximately 150 specimens of M. leucocephala were reported in zoos, again with the majority being found in Southeast Asia. At least 15 facilities reported breeding this species.

23. Habitat: Painted storks frequent rivers and ponds, but prefer marshy areas. Wetland habitats which this species relies upon for food and breeding sites are being lost to human encroachment. Habitat loss will eventually lead to the disappearance of this stork as a breeding species in Southeast Asia (Luthin, 1987).

### 3. Trade Data

31. National Utilization: Since M. leucocephala is not listed under CITES, trade data on this species are not available. Young painted storks are often consumed as food items where available (Coulter, 1989b, Luthin, 1987).
32. Legal International Trade: Very few M. leucocephala have been imported into Europe or the United States in the past few years. Almost all trade is within Southeast Asia. There is no known international market for the species other than for public exhibition.
33. Illegal Trade: No information available.
34. Potential Trade Threats:
341. Live Specimens: The trade in live specimens is only known to involve birds for public exhibition and breeding.
342. Parts and Derivatives:

### 4. Protection Status

41. National: Not known.
42. International: The milky stork (M. cinerea) is listed in Appendix I of CITES. In the past, juveniles of M. cinerea have been imported into the US and Europe ostensibly as M. leucocephala.
43. Additional Protection Needs: Due to similarity of appearance of the juvenil forms of M. cinerea and M. leucocephala and the apparent inability of wildlife officials in foreign countries and countries of origin to distinguish between the immatures of the two species, the protection of M. cinerea, which is listed in Appendix I, would be further enhanced by placing M. leucocephala in Appendix II under provisions of Article II, paragraph 2(b) (for reasons of similarity of appearance).

In submitting this proposal, the United States proposes to interpret the CITES permitting requirements in a manner designed to protect the species that the proposed listing is intended to protect. Thus, this proposal to include the painted stork in Appendix II is being put forward solely for look-a-like reasons to protect the endangered milky stork. Therefore, when reviewing permit applications for the export of painted storks, Scientific Authority advice and Management Authority considerations should be carried out in a manner to ensure protection of the milky stork rather than the painted stork.

The Scientific Authority shall issue its no detriment advice if the export will not be detrimental to the survival of the milky stork. Among other things, this would require all reasonable assurances that the specimen being exported is the painted stork, i.e., the species listed in Appendix I or under the provisions of Article II, paragraph 2(a). Consequently the Scientific Authority would not be expected to make a "no detriment finding" on the species being listed for look-alike reasons, but should continue to monitor that species to be assured that it does not need protection in its own right under Article II, paragraph 2(a). This may entail marking the specimen to achieve this assurance. If so, live specimens should always be marked, but products might need to be marked only when being exported from the range state. Also, the value paid for the look-alike specimens could conceivably also affect the species to be protected. That is, if excessive payments are made, this might stimulate take of specimens of the species to be protected. Finally, the Management Authority should have all reasonable assurance that the specimens being exported were legally acquired. This determination might also involve marking.

5. Information on Similar Species

There is an apparent inability of wildlife officials both in the United States and the countries of origin to distinguish between the juveniles of M. cinerea (milky stork) and M. leucocephala (painted stork). The distinctive, easily visible "checkered" white/black bands of colour on the breast and wing coverts that are distinguishing features of M. leucocephala are present from a very young age. Additionally, the purple-pink colour on the inner secondary feathers (very obvious from the back and side) of the painted stork is also quite visible. These characteristics of M. leucocephala are entirely absent in M. cinerea.

6. Comments from Countries of Origin

None.

7. Additional Remarks

Misidentification problems involving milky storks (M. cinerea) have occurred in the past. In most cases, the birds were imported as painted storks (M. leucocephala). The milky stork was added to Appendix I on 22 October 1987 at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

8. References

Ali, S. and S.D. Ripley. 1978. Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan. Oxford University Press, London.

Coulter, M.C., et al., 1989a. Conservation and Captive Management of Storks. Proceedings of an International Workshop.

Coulter, M. and C.K. Brouwer, 1989b. Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises, and Spoonbills Newsletter 2(1/2).

Luthin, C.S., 1987. Status and Conservation Priorities for the World's Stork Species. Colonial Waterbirds, 10(2): 181-202.

