

tection measures. Those actions initiated by the O.N.F. and included in a restoration plan are only the initial part of a general approach, which must be extended to all Black Storks territories. So, an international approach, and not only the Life program, which is limited to Europe, is essential, especially towards African nations.

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Bird habitat conservation in Northeast Guinea

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Covering a surface of 245.857 km², Guinea is a country opened on 480 km of the Atlantic coast. The hydrographic density makes it the "water tower" of West Africa. Rain precipitations oscillate between 1,300 and 1,400 mm a year.

Guinea has lots of internationally important coastal and continental areas. Six of them are listed in the Ramsar Convention thanks to their ecological resources. Those areas are favourite places for resting, feeding, and breeding of Palaearctic migratory and afro-tropical bird species.

Each year, hundred of migratory birds from many species are victims of people living along those areas, arguing that they are grain-eaters. This is one cause for the disappearance of several

bird species in Guinea, including Black Storks.

Therefore, immediate measures must be taken to insure Black Stork monitoring and conservation, whose return in West Africa is an undeniable reality. To do so, a common and sustainable environment management plan at a regional, national and international scale should be designed.

Solidarity between northern and southern countries must prevail in protecting Black Stork's environment. Concerted actions between Guinea and West-African nations are necessary for the management of this natural heritage. Guinea is, as a matter of fact, an important migration way for Palaearctic birds.

Protection de l'habitat de la faune aviaire dans le nord-est de la Guinée

Couvrant une superficie de 245.857 km², la Guinée est un pays qui s'ouvre sur la côte atlantique sur 480 km. La densité du réseau hydrographique fait du pays le château d'eau de l'Ouest Africain. La pluviométrie annuelle oscille entre 1.300 et 4.000 mm d'eau par an.

La Guinée possède de nombreuses zones humides côtières et continentales d'importance internationale, parmi lesquelles six sont inscrites sur la liste Ramsar en raison de leur richesse écologique. Ces zones constituent tant pour les migrateurs paléarctiques que pour des espèces afrotropicales des lieux de préférence, de repos, d'alimentation et des aires de reproduction.

Chaque année, des centaines de migrateurs, toutes espèces confondues, sont victimes de massacres de la part des populations riveraines, sous le prétexte, erroné, qu'ils sont en général granivores. C'est l'une des causes principales de la disparition de nombreuses espèces en Guinée, dont la Cigogne noire.

Devant cette situation, des dispositions urgentes doivent être prises pour assurer un suivi et une protection de la Cigogne noire, dont le retour en Afrique de l'Ouest est aujourd'hui une réalité tangible. Pour ce faire, un plan de gestion commune et durable des écosystèmes aux niveaux national, régional et international devrait être mis sur pied.

La solidarité Nord-Sud doit prévaloir dans la sauvegarde de l'environnement de la Cigogne noire. Une concertation dans la gestion du patrimoine naturel est nécessaire entre la Guinée et les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest où le retour de la Cigogne noire est déjà signalé, car elle constitue un couloir de migration pour la plupart des migrateurs paléarctiques.

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Amur wetlands conservation in the breeding area of Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and Oriental White Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*)

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The total surface of wetlands in the Amur/Heilongjiang River Basin in the Russian Federation is up to 147,000 km², the most important wetlands are concentrated in floodlands of Amur valley and its biggest tributaries (Amgun, Ussuri, Zeya) as well as on the Amur great plains (Upper-Zeya, Zeya-Bureya, Middle-Amur, Evur-Chukchagir, Udil-Kizi, Khanka Lake). The plains and valleys are largely transformed by human activity, about 24,000 km² of wetlands have been changed to cutting hay fields and pastures. More than 2,450 km² were drained and ploughed, for example as the massive drainage system of up to 100-150 km² in Khanka Lake shores and Arkhara lowlands. The fragmentation of wetlands and human disturbance cause the decrease of water bird's breeding capacity on remaining small patches of wetlands around lakes and bogs. In the neighbouring Heilongjiang Province of China, from former 50,000 km² of wetlands now only 11,300 km² are still available for water birds. In this case, the breeding range of many birds now looks like the

narrowing belt along the Amur/Heilongjiang River and only the regular flooding save these wetlands from agricultural developing. The China economy is emphasizing fast development on northern territories, so the bordering Amur/Heilongjiang River wetlands becomes more and more important for conservation of many endangered species. These wetlands of the still undamed river are the main breeding area of Oriental White Stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) (about 95 % of world number), Red-crowned Crane (*Grus japonensis* - 65 %), White-napped Crane (*Grus vipio* - 50 %), and Hooded Crane (*Grus monacha* - 30 %).

In 1992, the International Conference "Cranes and Storks of the Amur/Heilongjiang River" proposed to establish 22 Ramsar sites in Amur/Heilongjiang River Basin. Based on subsequent studies, the Government of Russian Federation has launched 6 sites in 1994 (Torey Lakes, Khanka Lake, Udil Lake, Bolon Lake, Arkhara lowlands and Zeya-Bureya Plain). By