

International Council for Bird Preservation

The Protection of the White Stork in African Countries

Über den Schutz des Weißstorchs in afrikanischen Ländern

By Ernst Schüz

Summary

In the states from which information is available, the situation looks as follows:

- (1) No legislation at all in Guinea-Bissau and Liberia.
- (2) The White Stork is not mentioned in the legislation of Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Togo and the Republic of Central Africa.
- (3) The White Stork is partially protected in Ethiopia, Ivory Coast and Nigeria.
- (4) The White Stork is not on the list of species allowed to be hunted, and therefore protected in Algeria, Gambia and Morocco.
- (5) The White Stork enjoys explicit total protection in Chad(?), Mali(?), Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Upper Volta, and Zambia; moreover due to a general hunting ban it can be considered as protected in Mauritania and Niger.

In some countries new legislation, giving extra protection to many species is said to be in preparation. In many countries there appears to be no enforcement of the legislation, and only a few countries have a confirmed effective enforcement.

Zusammenfassung

Die Zunahme der Bevölkerung und des Fleischhungers, ferner die Ausbreitung von Gewehren und ihr vielfach zügelloser Gebrauch haben den Weißstorch (und andere Großvögel) in Teilen Afrikas (aber auch Asiens) immer mehr in Gefahr gebracht. Ihr sollte entgegenstehen, daß die von 41 Staaten unterzeichnete Konvention der Organisation für afrikanische Einheit über den Schutz der Natur vom 15. September 1968 sich ausdrücklich zum Schutz „aller Störche“ (und anderer Arten) bekennt. Was ist in 12 Jahren aus diesem Übereinkommen geworden? Nach Ermittlungen in 22 hauptsächlich westafrikanischen Ländern lassen sich 5 Gruppen unterscheiden (siehe ‚Summary‘): (1) In zwei Ländern gibt es überhaupt keinen Artenschutz. (2) In fünf Ländern wird der Weißstorch nicht erwähnt. (3) Teilweiser Schutz besteht in drei Ländern. (4) In drei Ländern fehlt der Storch in der Liste jagdbarer Arten, so daß er als geschützt gelten kann. (5) In sieben Ländern ist er ausdrücklich geschützt; hinzurechnen kann man zwei Länder, in denen grundsätzlicher Jagdbann herrscht.

Es gibt folgende Probleme. Einmal sollte jeder Staat den vollen Wortlaut der Konvention von 1968 übernehmen; jetzt sind die Formulierungen vielfach unklar. Sodann sollte eine tatkräftige Überwachung eingeführt werden. Ausgerechnet in drei Ländern vollen Schutzes (Gruppe 5) und in zweien teilweisen Schutzes (Gruppe 3) sind bedauerliche Übergriffe nachgewiesen.

Das Haupt-Anliegen ist freilich erzieherischer Art. Der beste Schutz besteht dort, wo der Storch als Brutvogel in der Sagen- und Gefühlswelt des Menschen verankert ist, nämlich in den Ländern des Maghreb. (Ähnliche Rücksicht wird südlich der Sahara dem Regenstorch, *Ciconia abdimi*, zuteil, der dort die Rolle eines ‚Hausstorchs‘ spielt). In den Zug- und Überwinterungsgebieten liegt den Menschen Schonung und Rücksicht für den Storch viel ferner. Das Aufklären, das Wecken der Achtung vor besonderen Tiergestalten und das Entwickeln eines entsprechenden Verantwortungsgefühls sind notwendig. Daß der Weißstorch (und andere Arten) bei Massenauftritten von Heuschrecken eine Rolle spielen, mag ihn zusätzlich beliebt machen; eine Sicherung bedeutet es für ihn nicht.

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The rapid decline of the White Stork in Western Europe is caused by several factors. One of them is the hunting of the stork in West Africa, which has been reported from Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and the Ivory Coast (Vogelwarte 29, 1978: 276). The number of birds wintering in these countries has drastically declined in recent years.

The African Convention of the OAU on the Protection of Nature and Natural Resources (1968), signed by 41 states, provides a basis for the legislative protection of all stork species (as well as hamerkops, ibis, spoonbills and herons): „They shall be totally protected throughout the entire territory of the Contracting States: the hunting, killing, capture or collection of specimens shall be permitted only on the authorization in each case of the highest competent authority and only if required in the national interest or for scientific purposes.“

Which countries have followed the directive of the OAU Convention? Through correspondence with the embassies of the Federal German Republic in African countries and various experts, I have tried to evaluate what status the White Stork is given in various national legislations governing the hunting and protection of animals. I give here a brief summary of the information I have received so far, particularly in relation to Western Africa. Where no reference is made to the exact legislation, the information given needs verification.

Algeria Storks are absent from the list of birds allowed to be hunted (Decree of Ministry of Agriculture of 11. 7. 79) and are therefore protected. In their breeding areas the storks are adequately protected as a result of local popular beliefs.

Benin Shoebill, Saddlebill Stork, Marabou, Woolyncked Stork and ‚Ibis‘ (probably = African Wood Stork) are entirely protected; (further) ‚cigognes et spatules‘ are considered as ‚Non Gibier‘ and therefore without protection (Decree 80-38 of 11. 2. 80 re. hunting licences).

Cameroon Marabou partly, and Shoebill entirely protected.

Gambia According to the Wildlife Conservation Act 1977, Legal Notice 36 of

1978, (Suppl. to Gambia Gazette 58 of 30. 12. 78) storks are not among the species allowed to be hunted and therefore seem to be protected.

Ghana The White Stork is not mentioned, but Marabou and Saddle-bill completely protected: Legislative Instrument 685, Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1971.

Guinea-Bissau No legal protection.

Ivory Coast Legislation 65-255 of 4. 8. 1965 gives partial protection to Marabou and Saddlebill Stork which can only be hunted under special tourist hunting licences. Herons, other stork species and Ibis are not allowed to be hunted except by „official and certain sport hunters“.

Liberia No legal protection.

Mali The White Stork is said to be under a general hunting ban. The killing of storks is also against popular beliefs. Occasional poaching possible.

Mauritania Storks are not mentioned as game birds in the Hunting Act 75-003 of 15. 1. 75 and therefore seem to be protected. Hunting is forbidden and can be allowed only for ducks (and gazelles and warthogs) at Keur Massène.

Morocco Storks seem to be protected (Hunting Regulations of 1979/80). Besides protection is given through popular tradition.

Niger The hunting law of 4. 8. 62 (62-28) does not mention the Stork as protected, but due to a general hunting ban of 10. 7. 72 (72-28 PRN/MER/MI) protection seems to be given.

Nigeria According to the Federal Department of Forestry: „all species of European Stork *Ciconia* are protected under existing wildlife legislation in some parts of the country“ (wild animals law of Northern Nigeria 1963, of Eastern Nigeria 1965). – In the Kano State, Edict 13 of 1978: „Hamerkops, African Spoonbill, Herons and Egrets including Bitterns“ are „Prohibited animals“: Storks seem to have been omitted.

Republic of Central Africa Shoebill is entirely, Marabou partially protected. Other storks are not mentioned in Act 60-140 of 1. 10. 60 Para 18. More comprehensive regulations are being planned.

Ethiopia According to Wildlife Conservation Regulations (Amendment) of 12. 4. 74, Legal Notice 445/1974 all storks can be hunted under special permit only. This is said to give the storks quite effective protection.

Republic of Chad Cranes and Storks are said to be protected; they are not considered edible.

Senegal White and Black Stork, Marabou and Saddlebill Stork are entirely protected, (Code de la Chasse et de la Protection de la Faune, Loi 67/28 of 29. 5. 67 and Decret 67-610 of 30. 5. 67).

Sierra Leone White Stork and Marabou are „prohibited animals“, according to the Wildlife Conservation Act 1972.

Togo According to Ordinance 4 of 16. 1. 68, Marabou, Saddlebill Stork, Woolly-necked stork and Abdim's stork are protected; the White Stork is not mentioned.

Tunisia Act 76-91 of 4. 11. 76 has declared the OAU Convention of 15. 9. 68 as national legislation; Storks are therefore entirely protected. The White Stork is also protected through popular tradition. The Association „Friends of Birds“, under the chairmanship of Habib Burguiba jun., honours the owners of successful stork nests each year.

Upper Volta All storks are listed as entirely protected in the Ordinance 68-059 of 31. 12. 68.

Zambia The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1968 gives full protection to all storks (Dowsett, Bull. ICBP XI, 1973: 229.)

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