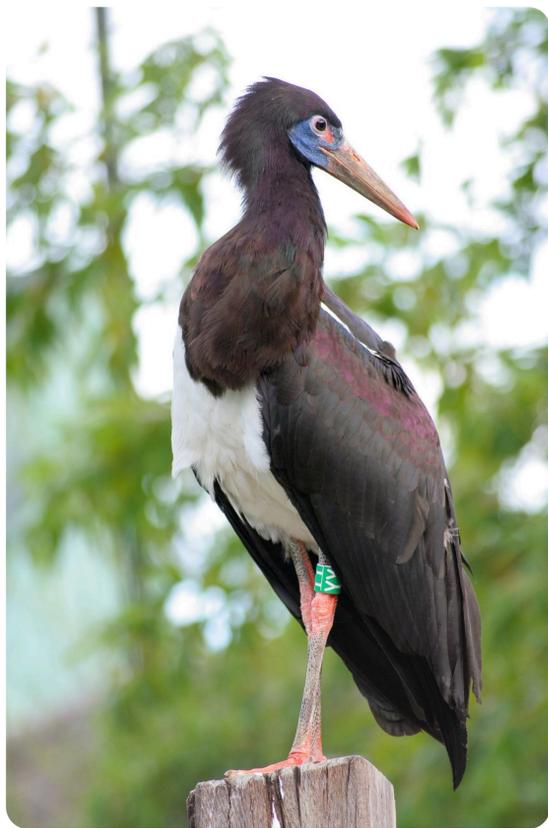




# Ciconia abdimii

Common name: **Abdim's stork**Latin name: **Ciconia abdimii**Local name: **السمرية، كلجو، كلجوية**

## INTRODUCTION

*Ciconia abdimii* is a black stork with grey legs, red knees and feet, grey bill, and white underparts. It has red facial skin in front of the eye and blue skin near the bill during the breeding season. It is the smallest species of stork. The male is slightly larger. Non-breeding adults have bare duller parts. Its young are browner and duller.

This gregarious African migrant often appears in huge nomadic flocks numbering in the thousands, normally in response to heavy rains or large fires, after which they forage on insect emergences. It prefers open grassland and woodland but also uses wetland margins and fields.

In Sudanese culture, due to its seasonal movements to coincide with rainfall, it is believed that it brings rain. Its arrival coincides with the arrival of autumn in the Sudanese countryside therefore, farmers are optimistic about its arrival and consider it as a sign of autumn with abundant rains and a good harvest. This bird is considered a friend of the farmer, as it eats insects and worms that harm crops. A traditional Abdim's stork's arrival welcoming song is sung by the children.

Although it has a large range in Africa, the population trend appears to be decreasing. The species is threatened by habitat degradation through urban development and agricultural activities. The species may also be threatened by the control of its principal food source.

## LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

### Human interaction

The species may be hunted and traded at traditional medicine markets.

### Cultural value

This species is believed to bring good luck, and it is also named the "bringer of rain", so, people encourage them to nest on the roofs of huts and houses. In Sudanese culture, due to its seasonal movements to coincide with rainfall, it is believed that it brings rain. Its arrival coincides with the arrival of autumn in the Sudanese countryside therefore, farmers are optimistic about its arrival and consider it as a sign of autumn with abundant rains and a good harvest. This bird is considered a friend of the farmer, as it eats insects and worms that harm crops.

### Cultural expression

الكلاجوية A proverb is: Alkalagoya that brings the rain news  
جياية خير المطر

A traditional Abdim's stork welcoming song is sung by the children asking the birds when their father's crop will grow imagining that the birds answer them: it will grow tomorrow early morning at the time when soldiers come. The term soldiers is used because soldiers are disciplined and known to start their days early indicating the morning activity of these birds and their regular arrival at the beginning of the Autumn

السمرية أم قدوم عيش أبوي متين بقوم....

بقوم باكر مع العصاكر.....

## THREATS

The species is threatened by habitat degradation through urban development and agricultural activities. The species may also be threatened by the control of its principal food source, locusts, either through direct poisoning (a mass mortality event in Sudan may have been the result of extensive use of pesticides) or through a reduction in the availability of food.

## ECOLOGY

### Type:

Wild

### Role in Ecosystem:

Plays an important role as the natural enemy of agricultural pests.

## HABITAT

Normally found in open grassland and also in areas of cultivation. Typically frequents very dry zones, including semi-desert. Migrant flocks descend into open grassy areas, including airfields and playing-fields. Also occurs often near water. It roosts on trees or cliffs and often rests beside marshes and pools. Many nest in villages, where their reputation as harbingers of rain protects them from human disturbance.



### Food

Carnivore

The species is primarily insectivorous, its diet consisting almost entirely of large grassland insects such as swarming locusts, army worm *Spodoptera exempta* caterpillars, grasshoppers and crickets, although it will also take mice, frogs, lizards, small fish, molluscs, crabs, millipedes, scorpions, water rats and small birds.



### Movement and Communication

This species is an intra-African trans-equatorial migrant, making seasonal movements to coincide with rainfall. After breeding in the wet season of the northern tropics (between May and August), it moves east then south (West African populations), or south (East African populations), through the equatorial rain-belt (September-October), and arrives in the southern tropics early in the southern wet season (November-March). It remains in this southern range until March (when the rains decrease), after which it moves north again through East Africa at the beginning of the long rains (March-April), arriving back in the breeding grounds in April and May before (or just as) the heavy rains begin.

Usually silent away from breeding localities. At the nest, utters a weak double whistle "heep-heep" during display, followed by bill-clattering with the bill pointed skywards.



### Social Habits

Social

Abdim's storks are social birds and have been known to travel in flocks of nearly 10,000 birds. When they breed, they do so in colonies of no more than 20 pairs.

Like other storks, they have a variety of courtship displays, including a head-shaking crouch.



### Reproduction

Oviparous

The species breeds colonially, with nests being built from sticks and vegetation in trees or on cliffs, or on the roofs of huts in villages, and will often be used from year to year unless they collapse (although not necessarily by the same breeding pair).

The breeding season usually starts early in the rainy season. Abdim's Stork breeds in colonies in trees or cliffs with other species. These colonies may gather several thousands of birds.

The nest is a flat platform made with sticks. The male arrives first at breeding grounds where it occupies an old nest where it waits for a female. When she arrives, she is first turned away by the male, but little by little, it accepts one female and the pair bond is formed. The female lays 2-3 eggs, or only one. Incubation lasts about one month in captivity. At hatching, chicks are covered in pale grey down. They fledge about two months later and reach sexual maturity at 4-5 years.

As in other species, young are probably fed by both parents by regurgitation onto the floor of the nest.

### Attributes

#### Size:

Approximately 80 cm (36.3 in.) , Wing length: 40 to 47.5 cm (15.75 to 18.7 in.)

#### Weight:

Approximately 1.3 kg (2.86 lbs.)

Image(s) source :

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