Open Bill Storks (*Anastomus oscitans*) Nest with Subabul Slender Shoot and Green Paddy Grass for Cushioning in Uppalapadu Bird Protected Area of Andhra Pradesh, India

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**Abstract:** Open bill storks (*Anastomus oscitans*) breed and nest in Bird Protected area of Uppalapadu andhra Pradesh. They build their nests on *Prosopis juliflora* trees of irrigation tank bed procuring Subabul (*Leucaena leucocephala*) slender shoot and rice plant (Paddy grass) for cushioning their nests.

**Key words:** Open bill storks • Uppalapadu bird reserve • Nesting material • Subabul slender shoot • Paddy grass cushioning

**INTRODUCTION**

Uppalapadu is a tiny village in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, India. An irrigation reservoir is located having an area of 14 acres. About 7 acres of tank is set apart and declared as a bird protected area by Department of Forest, Government of Andhra Pradesh [1]. Krishna river feeder canals supply water to Uppalapadu reservoir and water resides throughout the year in the 7 acres of protected area. In the protected area the tank bed at middle portion consists of *Prosopis juliflora* and 13 species of migratory birds roost and breed from September/October through April/May months [1]. A four year study on avian biodiversity (Simpson) indices from 2006-2010 were reported recently [1]. Important migratory birds include Pelicans (*Pelecanus philippensis*), Painted stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Open bill stork (*Anastomus oscitans*), Darters (*Anhinga melanogaster*), White ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopica*) etc [1].

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The birds were identified as per Ali and Repley [2]. Field work was undertaken from October through April/May from 2009-2010. Binoculars were used for close observation and digital camera was employed for photography. Bird counts were made in the morning and evening with co-operation of Ranger, Divisional Forest Office Staff of Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh [3,4].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

An interesting observation was made on how and where nesting material of Open bill storks is being procured for nesting on water resistant *Prosopis juliflora* trees present on the Uppalapadu tank bed. It was observed that flock of Open bill storks alight (Fig. 1) on canopy of the Subabul (*Leucaena leucocephala*) cutting a twig viz a slender woody shoot of a branch to pick up (Fig. 2). They bring (Fig. 3) to its roosting and nesting site at Uppalapadu bird protected area (Fig. 4) for building nest. The Open bill storks have powerful long beak (Fig. 2) and easily cuts the slender subabul shoot and carry (Fig. 3, 5). Interestingly Open bill storks also pick up green paddy grass (Fig. 6) also for cushioning its nest. Open bill storks visit and roost from September to December/January during North East monsoon in Uppalapadu a common observation in other bird protected areas [4, 5].
Fig. 1: Flock of Open bill stroks ona Subabul tree adjacent to Uppalapadu bird protected area for picking up slender shoots of canopy

Fig. 2: Open bill strok alighting to pick up a twig Subabul (leucaena leucocephala) adjacent Uppalapadu bird protected are

Fig. 3: A flying Open bill strok carrying Sababul twig towards Uppalapadu nesting site
Fig. 4: Uppalapadu nesting site of Open bill storks and other migratory bird

Fig. 5: A Subabul twig

Fig. 6: Open bill storks alighting at paddy field to pick up paddy grass for cushioning its nest
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