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WOOD STORKS: ICONIC WETLAND DWELLERS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN USA

Simona Picardi, Peter C. Frederick, Rena R. Borkhataria, and Mathieu Basille

Study Description

Wood storks (*Mycteria americana*) have been known to move large distances across their annual range in the southeastern USA, but their seasonal movement patterns had never been quantified. Using a long-term GPS-tracking dataset, we provided the first individual-based description of their movements, which established the status of the population as partially migratory. Partial migration is a common movement strategy for populations inhabiting highly variable and unpredictable environments, of which wetlands are a prime example. Our findings corroborate a growing body of the literature demonstrating the link between spatio-temporal resource dynamics and animal migratory strategies.

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Fig. 1. A wood stork photographed in Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Florida, USA. These iconic birds are becoming an increasingly common sight near artificial water bodies in southern Florida. Photo credit: Simona Picardi.

Fig. 2. A wood spreads its wings while perched on a tree near its breeding colony in West Palm Beach, Florida, USA. Until recently, the wood stork population had been considered not truly migratory. Photo credit: Simona Picardi.

These photographs illustrate the article "Partial migration in a subtropical wading bird in the southeastern United States" by Simona Picardi, Peter C. Frederick, Rena R. Borkhataria, and Mathieu Basille published in *Ecosphere*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.3054