

**STORKS IN
TURKEY**
(*Ciconia ciconia*)



The storks are probably the migratory birds which can feel the safest in Anatolia. In the countries which they cross on migration they are hunted everywhere. However, they are known as „pilgrim birds“ in Turkey, so that they are regarded as guests in Anatolia. Unlike other birds they build their nests on village houses, mosques and electric poles and they are likely to accept nests manufactured by human hand (on the roofs) for living.



We can divide the complete European population (90% of the world population is in Europe) into two separate groups, the western one and the eastern one. The western population breeds in Western and Northern Europe. It spends the winters between the regions of Chad and Senegal. The eastern group which comes also here into Turkey spends its winters in East and South Africa.

The estimated number of couples which come for breeding to Turkey amounts to 15,000 - 35,000 approximately, the number of the European couples altogether amounts to 120,000 - 150.000.

The breeding grounds in our country are usually situated in low wetlands at brooks or fields (preferred regions are nearby rivers and seas) and the food consists mainly of frogs, earthworms, beetles and beetle larvae as well as lizards and mice. Of course such food can be

found best in the kind of wetlands listed above.

A strong fall in the stork population was noticed in Turkey in the sixties. We saw more and more empty nests in the villages every year. The most important reason for this decay was that the breeding places were destroyed as well as wetlands were drained and later used for agricultural purposes.

The enormous increase of the use of Pesticides in the agriculture in the consequence also led to a lower population of the storks in Turkey. The high voltage wires and the masts which have been provided for the villages are another reason. The animals came to death if they approached their nests. As population falls as well as in our country as in all of Eastern Europe,



a more conscious use of Pesticides, the intensification of the conservation work and an improved protection of the wetlands could help the storks.

Further knowledge, public awareness and protection work are required in Turkey.

Improved knowledge and support of the public are necessary to secure the future of the storks.



The organization of the Friends of Gökova Akyaka started with the protection of the stork breeding places in the region of Muğla. The stork colonies in the province of Muğla are permanently counted since 1986. According to these values a steady decline of the stork numbers is obvious.

In addition, UNDP GEF/SGP supports the “BIYO GÖKOVA” project which also deals with control and the protection of the nests existing.

The “Storkvillage Akçapınar project” has the aim of protecting the animals in cooperation with the regional administration and combining an alternative, soft tourism with the already existing taraditional one.



References:

Doğal Hayatı Koruma Derneği
Doğa Derneği
Archive of the Association of the
Friends of Gökova-Akyaka

If you wish more information, please consult the following address:

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