

First records of Maguari Stork *Ciconia maguari* in north-western South America

Maguari Stork *Ciconia maguari* is one of three Ciconiidae in the New World and the only representative of its genus in the Americas, where it primarily occurs in eastern South America^{3,12}. In Colombia it is local east of the Andes, from Arauca south to Meta and the río Guaviare⁹. Unlike the Old World White *C. ciconia* and Oriental Storks *C. boyciana*, *C. maguari* is not migratory, but it wanders widely after breeding, responding to food availability³.

We recorded *C. maguari* west of the Andes at two sites in north-west Colombia, 60 km apart, in dpto. Antioquia. The first sightings were made on 27 November 2010 by MF & AA. Two birds were observed soaring with Turkey Vultures *Cathartes aura* at Uno Bay (08°06'N 76°44'W; c.4 m) on the west side of the Urabá Gulf. Another was observed by CO & AQ on 13 December 2010 in the floodplain of the río León (Fig. 1), Urabá (07°34'N 76°46'W; c.25 m), with other large waterbirds such as Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*. Two were seen in the same area on 8 February 2011 by AB, with a third individual a few kilometres to the west.

Despite intensive field work in the north-west Colombian lowlands⁴⁻⁸, including around the Gulf of Urabá, this large and conspicuous species was not found. Surveys of several wetlands in the Urabá region did not find it¹ and the species is not included in Rangel *et al.*¹¹.

Our records might reflect recent colonisation of areas with similar environmental conditions to the species' typical habitat, or might represent vagrants. The species should be searched for in other floodplains within the region. As *C. maguari* is not known to be traded illegally within Colombia, we discard translocation as a possible explanation for these novel records. There are no records of confiscated individuals by the local environmental authority (CORPOURABA). We also discard



Figure 1. Maguari Stork *Ciconia maguari*, río León, dpto. Antioquia, Colombia, December 2010 (Alonso Quevedo)

an escape origin because our records come from two distant areas.

The Urabá Gulf hinterland was formerly covered by dense humid forests typical of the Chocó region⁶, but due to ongoing deforestation, including intensive illegal extraction¹⁰, is currently dominated by extensive pastures, as well as large banana plantations. Thus, *C. maguari* might find appropriate habitat in the region. The nearest published record is from Encontrados, north-west Venezuela² (09°04'N 72°13'W), c.510 km east of our records.

The río León is a tributary of the lower río Atrato, characterised by low vegetation (<3 m) dominated by *Montrichardia arborescens* (Araceae) and several fern species¹⁰, and livestock grazing is severely affecting wetlands. The site was designated a reserve in 1971¹³ to protect the wetland complex, but management has not been effective. Furthermore, wetlands associated with the Atrato and León rivers are some of the most important in Colombia.

Haffer⁶ proposed routes for non-forest faunas to advance in northern South America. Habitat connectivity makes it plausible that *C. maguari* could move from the llanos of eastern Venezuela and Colombia to the Urabá Gulf via the savannas of dpto. Córdoba, west of the northern end of the Andes. The fact that *C. maguari* has reportedly crossed the Andes between Argentina and Chile³ illustrates the species' capacity for more dramatic dispersal.

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