

## Recent sightings of the African Woollyneck *Ciconia microscelis* in southern Nigeria

The African Woollyneck *Ciconia microscelis* is uncommon in Nigeria, and is mainly found south of the Rivers Niger and Benue (Elgood *et al.* 1994, Borrow & Demey 2014). Relative to other *Ciconia* spp. found in the country, data on the population trends, migration status and breeding of the African Woollyneck remain patchy (Elgood *et al.* 1994). In 2015–19, we conducted Rapid Assessment Surveys of birds and vegetation in southern Nigeria, covering the wet and dry seasons, during which four sightings of 15 African Woollynecks were recorded. We first sighted three individuals at Bonny Island (4°39'N, 7°17'E) on 9 Apr 2015 and two on 19 Jun 2019, all in the same *Delonix regia* tree. Others included an adult along forest edge (Fig. 1) and a pair in a nearby lake at the Okomu National Park (ONP: 6°25'N, 5°25'E) on 26 Apr 2019, and a flock of seven birds foraging in shallow waters in an urban park in Lekki, Lagos (6°56'N, 3°94'E) on 9 Jul 2019. Only two visits were made to each of ONP and Lekki but JDO made more than ten visits to Bonny Island. All of our sightings were in the wet season, and surveys conducted at other sites in southern Nigeria yielded no records, confirming the rarity of the African Woollyneck in southern Nigeria.



**Figure 1.** African Woollyneck next to a termite mound at the forest edge, Okomu National Park, Nigeria, 26 Apr 2019 (photo: AGA).

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