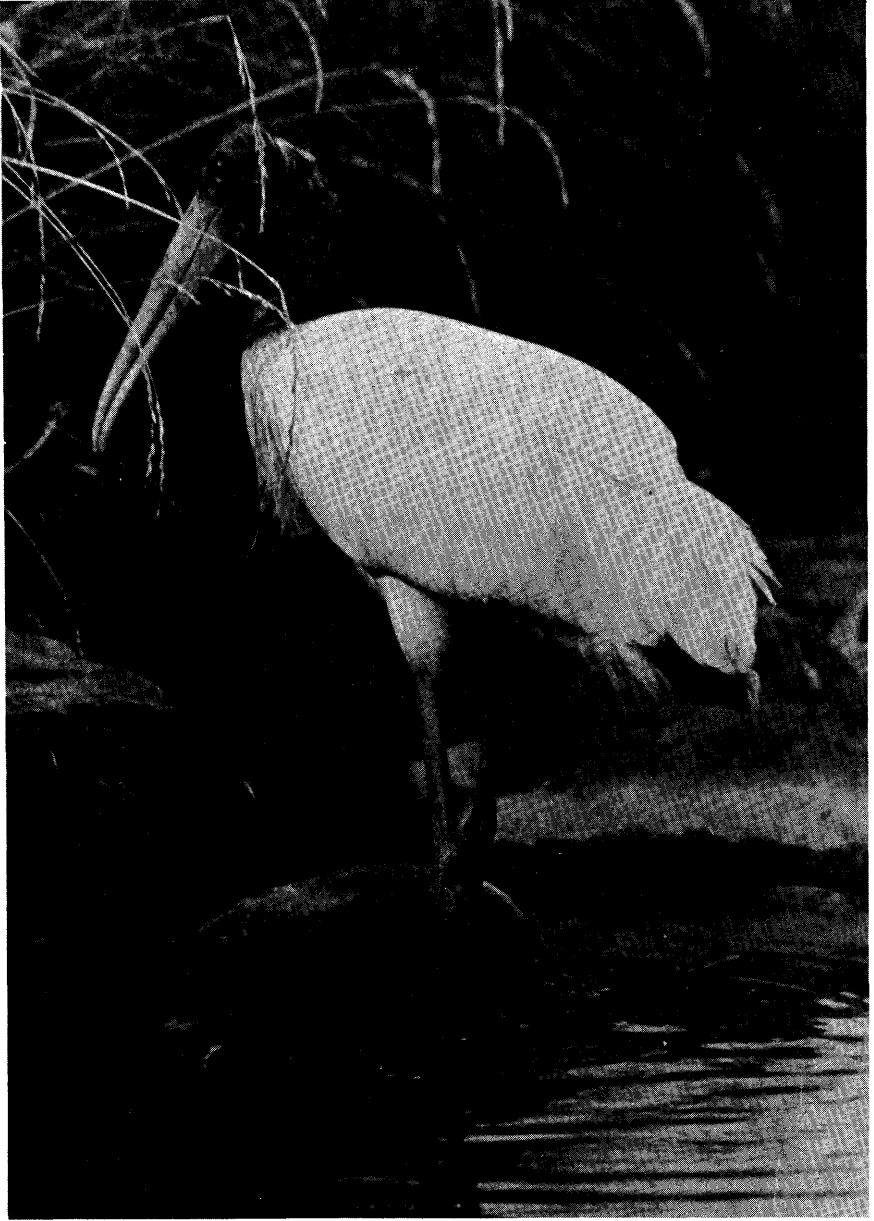




Wood Stork
Portville, Cattaraugus County
August 19, 1978

Tom Davis

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES 30. WOOD STORK

MARY FORNESS

The Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) occurs throughout the Neotropical Region and in the southern portions of the Nearctic, breeding regularly in Florida and occasionally in South Carolina, and wandering widely after the breeding season. John Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, pp. 91-92) describes the species as "very rare" in the state, with 13 known occurrences; according to Bull, only a single upstate record is verified by a specimen—a bird collected at Sand Lake, Rensselaer Co., on June 24, 1876, and now in the National Museum in Washington. Bull lists three sightings of single birds in upstate New York, and many sightings on Long Island between 1958 and 1962. A Wood Stork was seen in a swamp near Fillmore, Allegany Co., in July, 1939, by R. E. Douglas; this bird was never photographed or otherwise verified, and so the species is listed as hypothetical in southwestern New York by C. S. Beardslee and H. D. Mitchell (1965, *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, p. 103).

On August 11, 1978, two Wood Storks, one adult and the other an immature, were found on the U. B. Dam Road, two miles north of Portville, Cattaraugus Co., by Mary Forness, John Forness and Michele Bush. David Freeland, Joseph Thill, Harold Mitchell and Stephen Eaton were all notified that day by telephone.

An intensive search was made for additional birds and for information on arrival dates, numbers, feeding areas and roosting areas. Four individuals were observed flying into the area by J. Friar on or about July 14, 1978. In August, three birds were seen by P. Thorton; at the same time two sightings were made on the Lili Bridge Road, making the possibility that as many as five birds may have been present. The habitat most frequented by the Wood Storks was open pasture land with a winding creek; marshy areas and ponds were used only occasionally for feeding. The Wood Storks were observed in this area for at least 38 days. Reports with photographs placed one of the birds at the New York-Pennsylvania border, 7.4 miles from the first sighting, on August 25, 1978.

This paper represents the first observation of more than two individuals inland in New York State, the first verified sighting in the Niagara Frontier Region, the first inland occurrence in 20 years, and the first occurrence in the state in 16 years.



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I would like to thank Richard S. Johnson for informing me of the presence of the birds.

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