

THE HABITAT DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION SIZE OF THE BLACK-NECKED STORK *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus australis* IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Knowledge of habitat distribution and population size is important for the conservation management of species. The Black-necked Stork (Ciconiidae: *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus australis*) is listed as an *endangered* species under the New South Wales (NSW) *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and there is ongoing debate on its population size in the State. In this study, the habitat of the Black-necked Stork in NSW was mapped in detail for the first time using 5632 collated records and vegetation, wetland and geomorphological information. The approximate location of known and potential territories was mapped using nest location data, observational records, movement estimates and the distribution of apparently suitable habitat. We estimated a breeding population size in NSW of approximately 75 pairs. We suggest that a greater conservation effort is needed to protect and rehabilitate the wetlands of the major north coast floodplains and we also identify the need for further fieldwork to more accurately determine the numbers and extent of territories.