



Care For Us

Storks, Ibis and Herons (*order Ciconiiformes*)

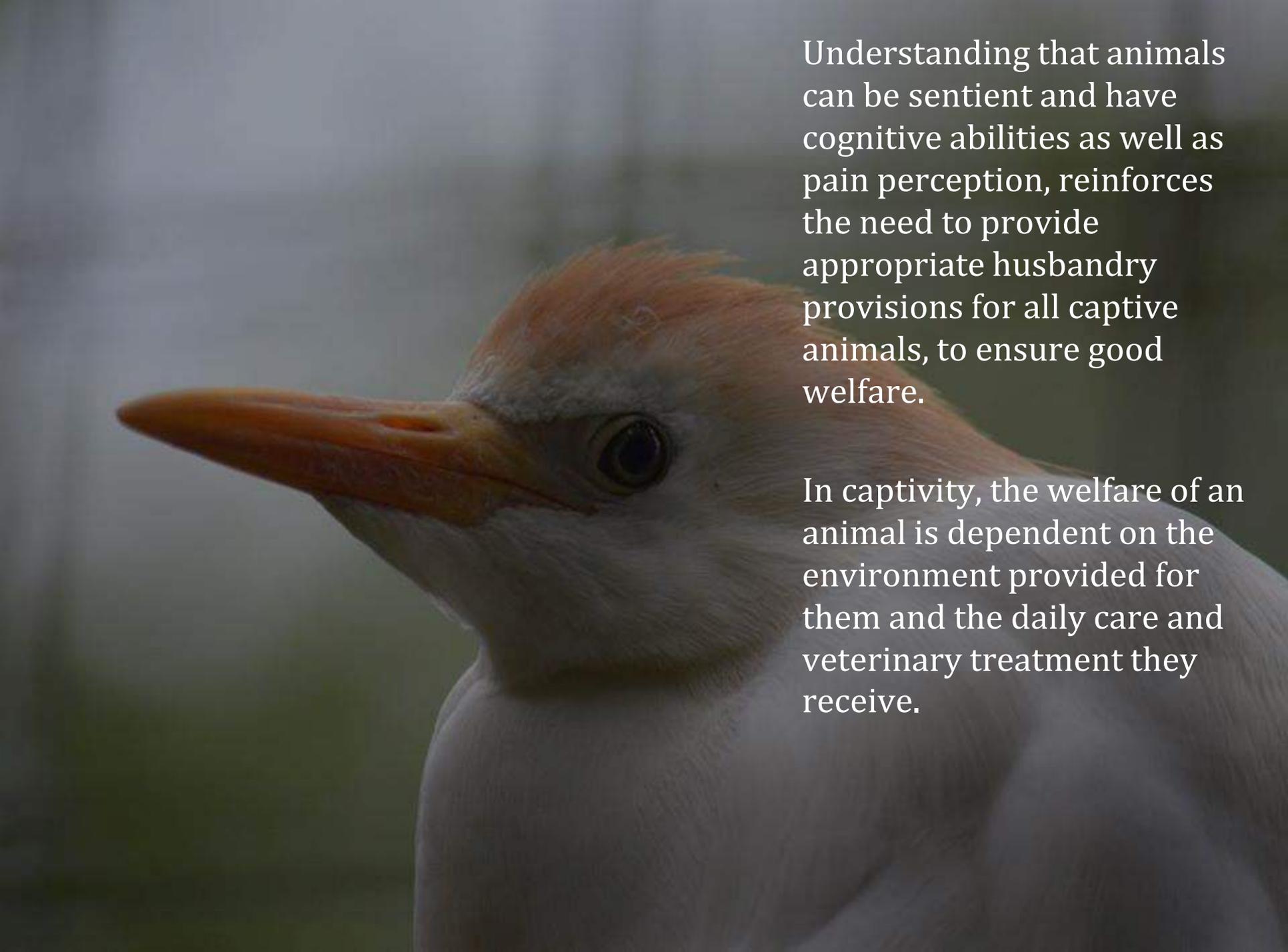
Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have good welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare throughout their entire life.





Understanding that animals can be sentient and have cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure good welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.



Storks, Herons and Ibis are wide ranging and can be found throughout the world except near the two poles.

They all belong to the same order and, depending on the species and space available, can be managed successfully together.

They all have a typically long beak which helps with their specialised feeding. They also have long legs, often with partially webbed feet.

There are certain species that are in decline in certain regions of the world where they once were found. However, many species are adapting to urbanized areas and are capable of living alongside humans.

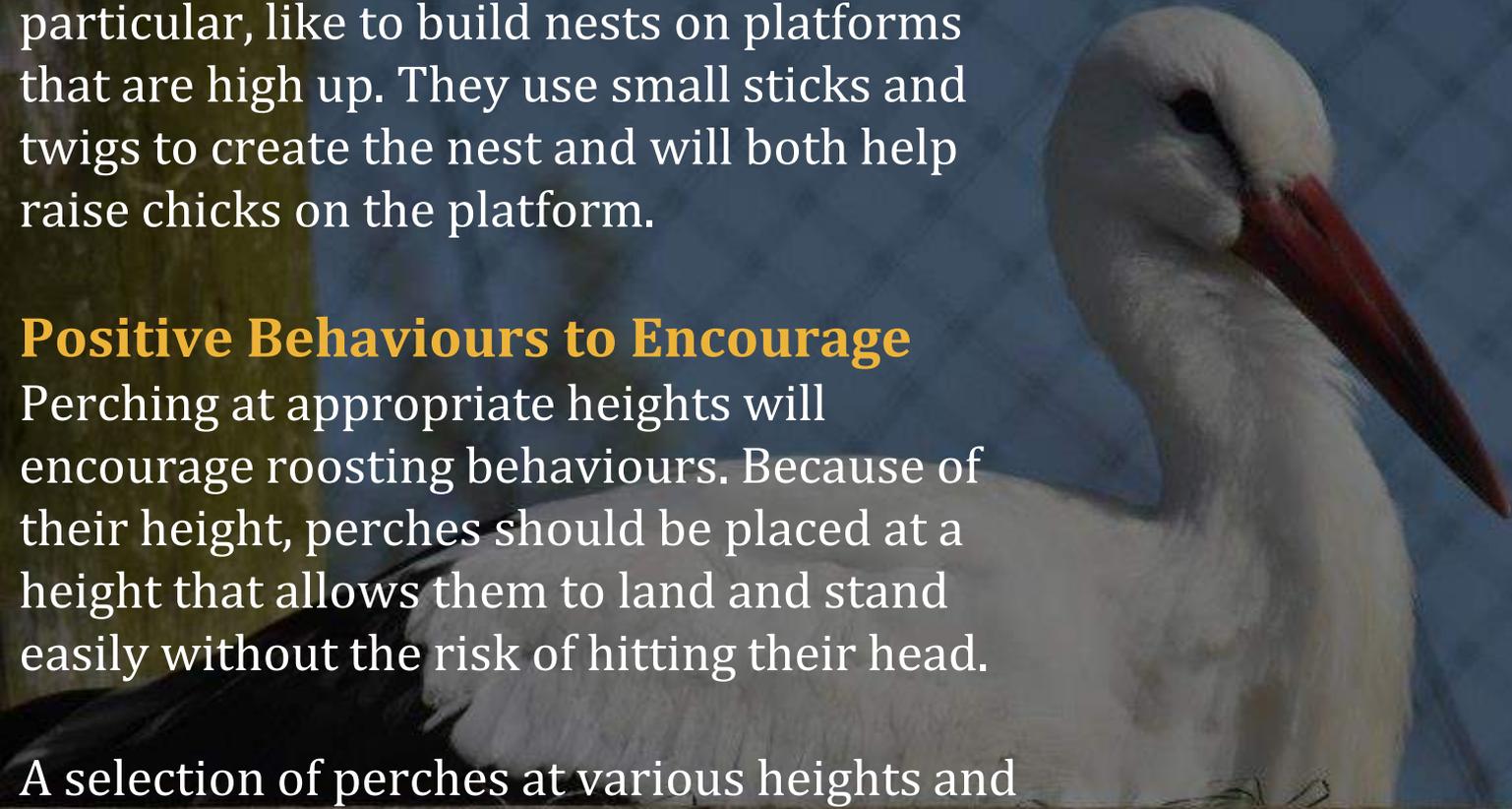
Hérons, Storks and Ibis like to Perch

Hérons, storks and ibis need suitable places to perch, both inside and outside. Storks, in particular, like to build nests on platforms that are high up. They use small sticks and twigs to create the nest and will both help raise chicks on the platform.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Perching at appropriate heights will encourage roosting behaviours. Because of their height, perches should be placed at a height that allows them to land and stand easily without the risk of hitting their head.

A selection of perches at various heights and in various locations encourages choice. Some of the branches can be flexible to encourage balancing and cognitive stimulation.



Wading birds like to go Hunting

Ibis, herons and storks all eat fish, frogs, snakes and small mammals as typical parts of their diet and they can spend a lot of their time hunting in the shallow waters for their food. They like to wash their food in water before consuming it.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Types of meat such as day old chicks and raw mince can be offered in captivity. Ensure multiple feeding stations are available to avoid aggression and encourage foraging. A large body of water should be available for these birds to wash their food in before they consume it. This is an important behaviour associated with their feeding habits. Scattered insect feeds encouraging foraging and probing behaviours.





Storks, herons and Ibis form Monogamous Pairs

Adult birds form monogamous pairs which usually last a lifetime. These species will happily live in large, multispecies flocks if enough space and perching is available. Storks communicate to each other through beak clattering which is part of their courtship ritual.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Keep these birds in large flocks to encourage mate selection and security to breed. If individuals are being moved to another area/facility, ensure pair bonded birds go together.

Storks, Ibis and herons like to Breed

Storks, Ibis and herons need to be given nesting material in order to build a nest themselves. Courtship displays are also important triggers for nest building behaviours and subsequent breeding. Both parents will help incubate the egg and rear the chick. The chick will eat regurgitated food for the first few weeks of life before moving on to an adult diet. Young birds are curious and will use their beak to explore, probe for food and manipulate objects.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing nesting materials and platforms can help encourage breeding but other factors can impact breeding success such as the weather.





Storks, herons and ibis like to Fly

These birds can fly very long distances in the wild. Flying is important to strengthen muscles and is used to forage, find appropriate nest areas and flight in large flocks.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

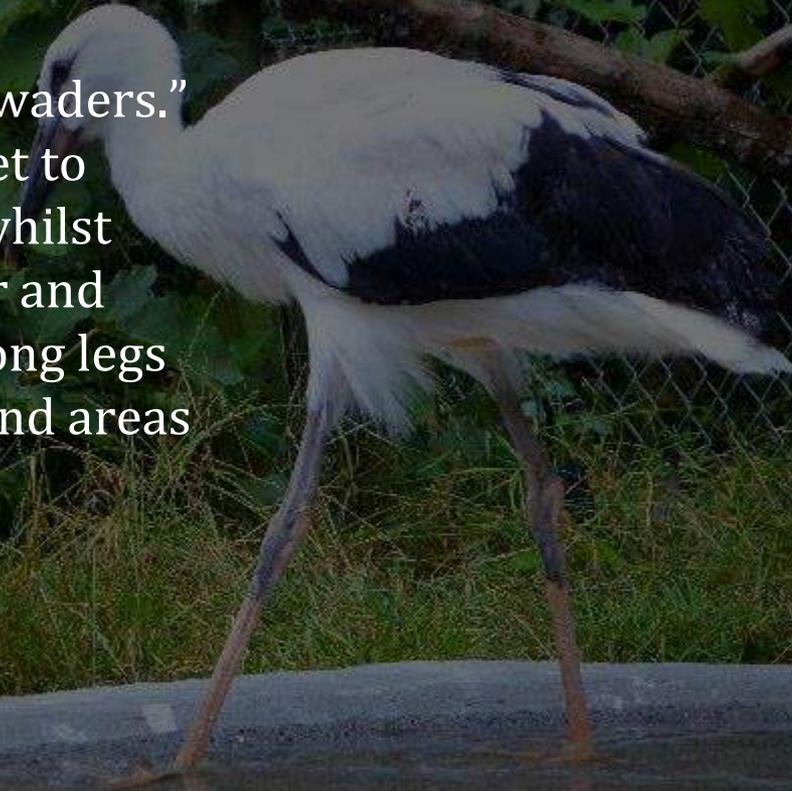
Flying is a behaviour that should always be encouraged by providing a large netted enclosure rather than pinioning or wing clipping. Allow and encourage naturally occurring flight and gliding behaviours as well as wing stretches and feather preening.

Storks, herons and ibis like to Wade in Water

These birds are all classed as “waders.” They have partially webbed feet to help them keep their balance whilst walking through shallow water and muddy areas. They also have long legs to help them in deeper water and areas with long grass.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Giving these birds a large body of water to wade in, wash their food and preen their feathers. Different wade levels and substrate provides choice and rewarding behaviours for the



Storks, herons and ibis Enjoy...

Large bodies of clean water to wash their food and wade in. Lots of naturalistic substrates to probe and explore and lots of places to perch. Nesting material should be provided and social groupings such as breeding pairs should be considered.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

