

1 Genetic differentiation and historical demography of wood stork populations in Brazilian  
2 wetlands: Implications for the conservation of the species and associated ecosystems.

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4 Running title: Conservation of wood storks in Brazilian wetlands

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18 **ABSTRACT**

- 19 1. Wetlands are increasingly threatened by anthropogenic actions worldwide. Genetic  
20 monitoring of associated wildlife provides valuable data to support their conservation.  
21 Waterbirds such as the wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) are good bioindicators of  
22 wetlands disturbances and destruction.
- 23 2. This study investigates past and contemporary levels of genetic diversity,  
24 differentiation and demographic processes in 236 wood storks from two major wetlands in  
25 Brazil in which breeding colonies are concentrated, using nine microsatellite loci and a  
26 237-bp untranslated fragment of the mitochondrial Control Region.
- 27 3. Amapá populations (northern region) showed slightly higher levels of genetic diversity  
28 than Pantanal populations (central western region) and both populations had a low number  
29 of effective breeders.
- 30 4. Results from assignment tests, *F*-statistics, AMOVA, spatial and non-spatial Bayesian  
31 clustering analyses support the hypothesis of ongoing gene flow among colonies within  
32 regions, but significant differentiation between regions.
- 33 5. The better supported Bayesian coalescent models based on both markers indicated that  
34 the northern population exchanged migrants with unsampled populations, and that the  
35 central western population was founded by individuals from the north. Mitochondrial  
36 estimates revealed that the timing of population divergence broadly overlapped the Last  
37 Glacial Maximum (LGM), and that the central western population expanded more recently  
38 than the northern population.
- 39 6. The results support the hypothesis that the coastal wetlands in northern Brazil  
40 remained stable enough to shelter large wood stork populations during the LGM and storks  
41 colonized freshwater wetlands in the central western region following deglacial warming.
- 42 7. Conservation policies and protective measures should consider Amapá and Pantanal  
43 wood stork populations as genetically differentiated units and priority should be given to  
44 Amapá populations which represent the source gene pool. Continuous genetic monitoring  
45 of wood storks could help detect genetic signs of changes in demographic trends that could  
46 reflect alterations or degradation in wetlands.
- 47 *Keywords:* birds, genetics, indicator species, wetlands.

## 48 INTRODUCTION

49 Wetlands constitute a complex interface between aquatic and terrestrial environments (Junk  
50 *et al.*, 2014; Kingsford, Basset, & Jackson, 2016), and can be either riverine, palustrine,  
51 lacustrine, estuarine, groundwater dependent or constructed wetlands (Kingsford *et al.*,  
52 2016). These ecosystems currently cover only 1.1% of the Earth's surface (Kingsford *et al.*,  
53 2016), and approximately 20% of the surface of South America (Junk, 2013). Recent  
54 estimates report that wetlands provide more than 25% of highly valuable and essential  
55 ecosystem services (Kingsford *et al.*, 2016). Wetlands also provide a habitat for many  
56 species of birds, mammals and other vertebrates, which depend on these environments for  
57 breeding, nesting, roosting and foraging (Brandolin, Ávalos, & de Angelo, 2013). Despite  
58 their value, wetlands are heavily impacted by anthropogenic activities and climate change, and  
59 are increasingly modified, reduced, fragmented or destroyed (Brandolin *et al.*, 2013; Junk,  
60 2013). Hence, wetlands are declining throughout the world and the rates of loss of these  
61 environments in South America are the highest of any continent (Kingsford *et al.*, 2016).  
62 Past climatic fluctuations in wetlands may as well have exerted an impact on the  
63 demographic dynamics of the wildlife dependent on these ecosystems, causing extinction  
64 and recolonization events (Gray *et al.*, 2013). In face of current threats to wetlands and  
65 associated species, population genetic studies can provide valuable data to assist  
66 conservationists and contribute to habitat protection and management policies, thereby  
67 supporting ecosystem conservation (Faulks, Kerezsy, Unmack, Johnson, & Hughes, 2016;  
68 Willoughby *et al.*, 2015).

69 Waterbirds such as storks, herons, egrets, ibises and spoonbills, are conspicuous  
70 inhabitants of wetlands. These birds are very sensitive to environmental changes and  
71 alterations in the hydrological cycle of wetlands and are good bioindicators of the status of  
72 these ecosystems (Amat & Green, 2010; Del Lama, Dosualdo Rocha, Figueiredo Jardim,  
73 Tsai, & Frederick, 2011; Frederick, Gawlik, Ogden, Cook, & Lusk, 2009; Kushlan, 1993;  
74 Mistry, Berardi, & Simpson, 2008). Waterbirds are therefore regarded as good models to  
75 explore the effects of contemporary environmental changes on population demography  
76 (Gray, Hagy, Nyman, & Stafford, 2013). In the wild, waterbirds can be relatively easily  
77 accessed at their breeding sites for the purposes of population genetic monitoring. Natural

78 populations of waterbirds can be either panmictic or exhibit genetic structure, which occurs  
79 when a population is composed of subpopulations that differ in genetic composition  
80 (Chakraborty, 1993). Assessing levels of genetic diversity and the degree of gene exchange  
81 (or isolation) between subpopulations can offer clues regarding historical and contemporary  
82 events as well as aspects of the ecology and behavior of waterbirds (Friesen, Burg, &  
83 McCoy, 2007; Geraci *et al.*, 2012; Reudink *et al.*, 2011). Thus, gathering genetic  
84 information on waterbirds that breed in threatened wetlands can help identify past and  
85 current demographic trends, predict the potential fate of populations, and contribute to  
86 defining the conservation status of species.

87         The present study focuses on the wood stork *Mycteria americana* Linnaeus, 1758, a  
88 long-legged wading bird that has been used as a model to help monitor and protect some of  
89 the ecosystems in which it inhabits (Frederick *et al.*, 2009). Native to the Americas, this  
90 species breeds in spatially restricted colonies associated with freshwater and estuarine  
91 wetlands ranging from the southeastern United States to northern Argentina (BirdLife  
92 International, 2012). Wood storks can rapidly abandon traditional breeding sites if changes  
93 in water levels preclude efficient foraging to fulfill their energy requirements in the  
94 reproductive season (Bryan, Meyer, Tomlinson, Lauritsen, & Brooks, 2012; Frederick &  
95 Meyer, 2008). Even minor shifts in the hydrological regime constitute a threat to the fate of  
96 populations by imposing serious negative effects on nesting and foraging ecology (Griffin,  
97 Morris, Rodgers, & Snyder, 2008) and hindering the ability of parents to raise their young  
98 (Bryan *et al.*, 2012). Although currently listed as ‘least concern’, decreasing population  
99 trends worldwide highlight the need to reconsider the conservation status of the wood stork  
100 in much of its distribution range (BirdLife International, 2012). Populations breeding in the  
101 US have recently been re-categorized as ‘threatened’, mostly due to continual habitat loss,  
102 modification and fragmentation (North Florida Ecological Services Field Office, 2014). In  
103 Brazil, most wood storks breeding colonies are concentrated in the Pantanal wetland  
104 (Antas, 1994; Cardoso, 2011) and the northern coastal region (Miño & Del Lama, 2014).  
105 Some isolated colonies are located outside those areas in the states of Minas Gerais and  
106 Bahia, but are opportunistically occupied and abandoned after a few breeding cycles (S. N.  
107 Del Lama, pers. comm., April 2016). The major wetlands in which wood storks reproduce

108 in Brazil are differentially affected by anthropogenic impacts: the Brazilian Pantanal in the  
109 central western region of the country is highly menaced by land conversion for pastures,  
110 agriculture, and dam building, and undergoes heavy pesticide use, as well as other threats  
111 (De Pinho & Marini, 2012; Junk *et al.*, 2006); the coastal wetlands of Amapá state in the  
112 northern region still represent a more or less pristine ecosystem, with more than half legally  
113 protected in the form of conservation units (Ministério Público do Estado do Amapá, 2011).

114 In an effort to provide data to support the conservation and management of the  
115 species and its associated ecosystems in Brazil, the aim of the present study was to  
116 investigate the population genetics of wood storks that breed in colonies in the Amapá  
117 coastal wetlands and the Pantanal freshwater wetland. Both nuclear and mitochondrial  
118 markers were comparatively analyzed to explore hypothesis regarding genetic  
119 differentiation and past demographic history of populations established in these important  
120 wetlands subjected to different forms of anthropogenic pressure. The main objectives were  
121 to: 1) evaluate levels of genetic differentiation in order to define conservation units; and 2)  
122 assess past demographic processes in order to identify the source population. The first  
123 hypothesis assumes that there is some degree of regional breeding-site phylopatry in this  
124 species (Coulter, Rodgers, Ogden, & Depkin, 1999; Frederick & Meyer, 2008; Frederick &  
125 Ogden, 1997); thus, the expectation is that populations from different regions will exhibit  
126 higher levels of differentiation than populations within regions. Assuming that the  
127 Equatorial region of Brazil remained humid enough during the Last Glacial Maximum  
128 (LGM: circa 20,000 *yr* BP) to harbor wetlands (Aleixo, 2004), the second hypothesis states  
129 that wood stork populations occupied these restricted areas at the time and then expanded  
130 their range during interglacial periods; thus, the expectation is that northern populations in  
131 the Amapá coastal wetlands (Amazon region) represent source genetic pools. If Pantanal  
132 populations derive from Amapá populations, Pantanal colonies are expected to exhibit  
133 lower levels of genetic diversity.

134

## 135 **METHODS**

### 136 **Study sites and sampling**

137 Wood stork were sampled from three breeding colonies situated in the coastal wetlands of  
138 the state of Amapá (northern Brazil) and eight colonies situated in the Pantanal floodplain  
139 in the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul (central western Brazil) (Fig. 1, Table  
140 S1 in Supporting Information). Larger colonies are more stable over time (Tsai, Reichert,  
141 Frederick, & Meyer, 2016) and were chosen for sampling; the number of breeding pairs in  
142 these colonies ranged between 200 and 2000. The Amapá wetlands are environmentally  
143 heterogeneous due to the interaction between regular tide pulses and freshwater inflow  
144 (Junk *et al.*, 2006). This region has a super-humid tropical climate with mean annual  
145 temperature of ~26.6 °C and a yearly rainfall regime defining a short dry season (three  
146 months) (Sant’anna Neto, Galvani, & Vieira, 2015; Torres & El-Robrini, 2006). Wood  
147 stork colonies in Amapá are established during the peak of the dry period, on temporal tidal  
148 flood plains, and nests are made in shrubs and trees. The Pantanal is the world’s largest  
149 tropical wetland, with 90% of its area situated in the central western region of Brazil  
150 (138,000 km<sup>2</sup>). This alluvial plain has a warm savannah climate, with mean annual  
151 temperature of ~25 °C and a seasonal hydrological cycle, with a wet season extending from  
152 December to May, followed by a six-month dry season (Junk *et al.*, 2014). In the Pantanal,  
153 wood storks breed annually during the dry period, nesting on trees and shrubs in riparian  
154 forest and open wood savanna habitats. In both Brazilian regions, nests are irregularly  
155 distributed in patches of vegetation, reflecting the disposition of shrubs and trees suitable  
156 for nesting. Thus, to obtain a representative sample, nestlings were sampled from nests  
157 throughout the colony, covering most of its surface. Nests were accessed with climbing  
158 equipment or ladders. Blood (0.10 ml) was taken from the brachial vein of nestlings aged  
159 two to three weeks ( $n = 236$ ; one per nest) using sterile disposable syringes with 3% EDTA  
160 as anticoagulant, stored in sterile microtubes containing absolute ethanol and kept at -20 °C  
161 until processing.

162

### 163 **DNA extraction, genotyping and sequencing**

164 Genomic DNA was isolated using proteinase K digestion, followed by a standard phenol-  
165 chloroform procedure (Sambrook & Russell, 2001). Samples were amplified by polymerase  
166 chain reaction (PCR) at nine species-specific microsatellites (Table S2), following

167 Tomasulo-Seccomandi *et al.* (2003) and using fluorescent primers (IDT, Iowa, USA).  
168 PCRs were conducted in a Veriti® thermal cycler (Applied Biosystems®, Foster City, CA,  
169 USA) and genotypic data were collected using a MegaBACE®1000 automatic sequencer,  
170 with ET 550-R as the internal size standard (GE Healthcare, Piscataway, NY, USA).  
171 Alleles were scored using the MegaBACE Fragment Profiler® v1.2 (GE Healthcare,  
172 Piscataway, NY, USA). A subset of samples was amplified at a fragment of the  
173 mitochondrial Control Region (mtDNA CR) following Lopes *et al.* (2011). Sequencing was  
174 performed in ABI Prism 3700/3730 machines using the Big-Dye Terminator Cycle kit  
175 (Perkin Elmer, Waltham, MA, USA). Sequences were aligned and visually verified using  
176 CodonCode Aligner v2.0.5 (CodonCode Corporation) and BIOEDIT 7.0.9 (Hall, 1999).  
177 Coding fragments were trimmed out from all sequences, and further analyses were carried  
178 out with 237-bp fragments of untranslated mtDNA CR, in contrast to a previous study  
179 (Lopes *et al.* 2011) that also included translated fragments.

180

### 181 **Genetic diversity, number of effective breeders and recent demographic changes**

182 Genotypes were checked for null alleles, stuttering and scoring errors using MICRO-  
183 CHECKER v2.2.3 (Van Oosterhout, Hutchinson, Wills, & Shipley, 2004), adjusting allele  
184 frequencies with the Brookfield 1 method (Brookfield, 1996) to account for null alleles.  
185 The number of alleles per locus, number of private alleles, observed heterozygosity ( $H_O$ ),  
186 unbiased expected heterozygosity ( $U_{H_E}$ ) and inbreeding coefficients were computed in  
187 GENALEX v6.5 (Peakall & Smouse, 2012). Allelic richness was estimated in FSTAT  
188 v2.9.3.2 (Goudet, 1995). Linkage between loci and deviations from Hardy-Weinberg  
189 equilibrium ( $HWE$ ) were assessed in GENEPOP v4.2 (Rousset, 2008) with 1,000  
190 dememorizations, 1,000 batches and 10,000 iterations. To account for multiple  
191 comparisons, significance levels were corrected with the Bonferroni procedure (Rice,  
192 1989). Recent reductions in population size were investigated using two-tailed Wilcoxon  
193 tests in BOTTLENECK v1.2.02 (Piry, Luikart, & Cornuet, 1999), assuming a two-phase  
194 mutation model (70% single-step mutations and 30% multistep mutations) with 10,000  
195 iterations. The effective number of breeders ( $N_b$ ) was estimated using the sibship

196 assignment method implemented in COLONY v2.0.6.1 (Jones & Wang, 2010; Wang, 2009,  
197 2013), assuming a sibship *prior* of 2 for each parent and jackknifing among loci.

198         The number of polymorphic sites (*PS*), average number of pairwise nucleotide  
199 differences (*k*), haplotype diversity (*h*) and nucleotide diversity ( $\pi$ ) (Nei, 1987) were  
200 computed using DNASP v5.10.01 (Librado & Rozas, 2009). Relationships among  
201 haplotypes were assessed using a TCS network model (Clement, Posada, & Crandall, 2000)  
202 visualized in POPART (Leigh & Bryant, 2015). Standard tests of selective neutrality,  $R_2$   
203 (Ramos-Onsins & Rozas, 2002),  $D$  (Tajima, 1989) and  $F_S$  (Fu, 1997), and associated 95%  
204 confidence intervals, were computed in DNASP with 1,000 simulations and a neutral  
205 infinite-sites model assuming a large constant population size (Hudson, 1990). Selective  
206 neutrality was rejected when significant small  $R_2$  ( $P < 0.05$ ) and significant negative  
207  $F_S$  ( $P < 0.02$ ) values were obtained.

208

## 209 **Genetic structure**

210 The distribution of nuclear and mitochondrial variation was inspected on different  
211 hierarchical levels (within colonies, among colonies and between regions) using analysis of  
212 molecular variance (AMOVA) (Excoffier, Smouse, & Quattro, 1992) in GENALEX v6.5  
213 and estimating pairwise  $\Phi_{ST}$  between colonies and regions in ARLEQUIN v3.5 (Excoffier &  
214 Lischer, 2010). Genetic differentiation at nuclear markers was investigated by conducting  
215 frequency-based assignment tests (Paetkau, Slade, Burden, & Estoup, 2004) in GENALEX  
216 v6.5 and at mtDNA by computing  $\theta$  (Weir & Cockerham, 1984) in FSTAT v2.9.3.2 (Goudet,  
217 1995). Significance levels were adjusted using the Bonferroni procedure (Rice, 1989).  
218 Genetic differentiation was also inspected through microsatellites-based Bayesian  
219 clustering analyses, in STRUCTURE v2.3.4 (Pritchard, Stephens, & Donnelly, 2000), using a  
220 dataset with separate samples ( $K = 1$  to 15) as well as pooling colonies into regions (north  
221 and central west,  $K = 1$  to 3). The running parameters were no *a priori* information on  
222 sampling location, admixture model, correlated allele frequencies, degree of admixture  
223 inferred from the data,  $\lambda$  of one,  $10^6$  runs of the Markov Chain Monte Carlo process, burn-  
224 in of  $10^4$  and five independent runs with 20 iterations for each  $K$ . The most likely number  
225 of differentiated populations (clusters) was determined applying the method proposed by



226 Evanno, Regnaut, and Goudet (2005) to STRUCTURE outputs using STRUCTURE HARVESTER  
227 v0.6.1 (Earl & vonHoldt, 2012). Complementary Bayesian spatial clustering analyses were  
228 performed in TESS v3 (Caye, Deist, Martins, Michel, & François, 2016), incorporating  
229 linear global trend surfaces in the *prior* distribution and considering both CAR and BYM  
230 models, which address spatial autocorrelation and complex spatiotemporal processes (e.g.,  
231 massive migration and local mating), respectively (Durand, Jay, Gaggiotti, & François,  
232 2009). Ten exploratory runs of TESS were conducted to determine the maximum number of  
233 clusters ( $K$  max.), setting 10,000 sweeps, a burn-in of 5,000 and starting with a neighbor  
234 joining tree. Thirty runs were then conducted for each  $K$ , setting 50,000 sweeps and a burn-  
235 in of 10,000. The model with the lowest value for the deviance information criterion ( $DIC$ )  
236 and stabilizing at the lowest number of clusters was chosen as the one that best explained  
237 the genetic variation in the data. The results of all cluster analyses were visualized  
238 graphically using POPHELPER v.1 (Francis, 2017).

239

#### 240 **Historical demography**

241 Demographic processes were inferred by mismatch analyses carried out by comparing the  
242 distribution of observed pairwise nucleotide differences among mtDNA haplotypes *versus*  
243 the expected distribution under a model of sudden population expansion (Rogers &  
244 Harpending, 1992; Schneider & Excoffier, 1999). Analyses were run in ARLEQUIN v3.5,  
245 computing the sum of squared deviations (SSD) and the raggedness index ( $r$ )  
246 (Harpending, 1994) and their respective confidence intervals, using 10,000 replicates of the  
247 parametric bootstrap procedure. Time since population expansion ( $t$ ) in mutational units  
248 was estimated using the formula  $t = \tau / 2u$  (Rogers & Harpending, 1992), in which  $u$  is the  
249 mutation rate of the assayed fragment and  $\tau$  ( $\tau$ ) is the mode of the mismatch distribution  
250 obtained for each sample. Divergence rates were set at 2%, 6% and 10% (Div/MY) to  
251 account for uncertainties in the mutation rate of the assayed fragment (Lopes, Brito,  
252 Henrique-Silva, & Del Lama, 2006). To express time since expansion in years before  
253 present ( $YBP$ ), a generation time of four years was used based on the age of the wood stork  
254 at first breeding (Coulter *et al.*, 1999; Lopes *et al.*, 2006).

255 Main past demographic scenarios were modeled for populations using an  
256 approximate Bayesian computation (ABC) framework based on information gathered from  
257 the literature and previous analyses. Initially, five demographic scenarios were simulated,  
258 with different combinations of colonization events followed by either population stability  
259 or exponential population growth, and different migration parameters, totaling 14 candidate  
260 models. Data simulations (100,000 for each model) were performed with the scripts given  
261 in Perez, Bonatelli, Moraes, and Carstens (2016), using empirical sample sizes. *Priors* for  
262 the parameters were drawn from simulated uniform distributions: divergence time ( $\tau$ ) was  
263 drawn from a distribution of 11,000 to 25,000 years and the effective population size of the  
264 ancient population ( $N_e$ ) was drawn from a distribution of 50 to 10,000 individuals. The  
265 mutation rate of microsatellites was set at  $1.1 \times 10^{-8}$ , as determined for *Gallus gallus* (Hillel  
266 *et al.* 2003), and transformed into theta values ( $\theta$ ). *Priors* related to specific models were  
267 also sampled from uniform distributions: the migration rate ( $M$ ) was drawn from a  
268 distribution of 0.1 to 10 individuals per generation; for models simulating long dispersal,  
269 population contraction rates during colonization ( $\theta_{rF-A}$ ) were computed as the ratio  
270 between the  $\theta$  in the ancient population (drawn from 0.001 to 0.1) and the magnitude of  
271 population expansion after colonization ( $\theta_{rC-A}$ ), calculated as the ratio between the current  
272  $\theta$  and that of the ancient population (sampled from 0.01 to 1). After the first run with 14  
273 initial models, a second ABC run was performed, following a hierarchical procedure  
274 (Fagundes *et al.*, 2007), by choosing the five best performing models (ranked by PP) tested  
275 in the first run. This procedure is adequate for determining the behavior of the best model  
276 in relation to different sets of models (Pelletier & Carstens, 2014). The model that yielded  
277 the highest PP and Bayes' factor of relative support (BF) values in the second run was  
278 chosen as the one better that best fit the genetic data.

279 From the empirical and simulated mtDNA sequence data, a set of summary statistics  
280 (*SuSts*) was computed: the proportion of polymorphic sites ( $\pi$ ), the number of segregating  
281 sites ( $S$ ), Tajima's  $D$  and  $\theta_H$  statistic (Fay & Wu, 2000) using a custom PERL script written  
282 by N. Takebayashi (available at:  
283 <http://raven.iab.alaska.edu/~ntakebay/teaching/programming/coalsim/scripts/msSS.pl>). The  
284 simulated nuclear data were converted into microsatellite alleles using 'microsat' (available

285 at: <http://massey.genomicus.com/software.html#microsat>) and further formatted using a  
286 script from Perez *et al.* (2016) to compute the number of alleles ( $A$ ), expected  
287 heterozygosity ( $H_E$ ) and a migration parameter ( $nM$ ) (Excoffier, Laval, & Schneider, 2007;  
288 Garza & Williamson, 2001) in ARLEQUIN (Excoffier & Lischer, 2010). Pairwise  $F_{ST}$  values  
289 were computed between populations for both the simulated and empirical data. The  
290 empirical  $SuSts$  were employed for running the ABC modeling with the best method  
291 (chosen as described above) using the R package abc v1.4 (Csilléry, François, & Blum,  
292 2012) with a threshold level of 0.005, resulting in 14,000 simulations retained in the  
293 posterior probabilities.

294 Population genetic parameters were estimated using neural networks, transforming  
295 parameters with a *logit* correction and setting the *priors* as interval boundaries to ensure  
296 that the estimates would lie within these boundaries. For  $\tau$  and  $N_e$ , present in all models,  
297 estimation was conditional on the overall posterior probabilities. Specific parameters of the  
298 best model were estimated using only the simulations for that model. The performance of  
299 the ABC procedure was assessed by posterior predictive checks.

300

## 301 **RESULTS**

### 302 **Nuclear diversity, effective number of breeders, recent demographic processes and** 303 **structure**

304 Populations in both regions exhibited moderate microsatellite diversity; Amapá exhibited  
305 slightly higher levels of  $UH_E$  (Table 1, Table S2 in Supporting Information). There was no  
306 evidence of linkage between any loci. Significant deviation from  $HWE$  was detected at  
307 locus  $WS\mu 20$  and  $WS\mu 24$  in four Pantanal colonies and at loci  $WS\mu 08$ ,  $WS\mu 09$  and  $WS\mu$   
308  $20$  in all Amapá colonies (Table S2 in Supporting Information). Only locus  $WS\mu 20$   
309 evidenced null alleles in most samples (mean null frequency = 0.21), but removing this  
310 locus from the dataset did not significantly change the results of the subsequent population  
311 genetic analyses. Thus, the final analyses involved a dataset with all nine loci using  
312 adjusted allele frequencies at  $WS\mu 20$ .

313 The  $N_b$  was 25 (95% CI: 15 to 44) for Amapá colonies and 22 (95% CI: 13 to 40)  
314 for Pantanal colonies. There was no evidence of a recent reduction in population size that

315 could have affected genetic diversity in any population (all  $P_s > 0.1$ ) (Table S3 in  
316 Supporting Information). When colonies were set as the potential source in the assignment  
317 tests, on average, only 8.05% of the storks were assigned to their colonies of origin (Fig. S1  
318 in Supporting Information). However, when regions were set as the source, on average,  
319 63.13% of storks were correctly assigned to their regions of origin (Fig. S1 in Supporting  
320 Information). AMOVA using the entire dataset showed that most nuclear diversity was  
321 distributed within (86.00%,  $P = 0.001$ ) and among individuals (13.00%,  $P = 0.001$ ).  
322 However, when pooling individuals from colonies within regions, genetic diversity was  
323 significantly partitioned between regions (1.00%,  $P = 0.001$ ). None of the pairwise  $F_{ST}$   
324 values between colonies within regions were significant (Table S4 in Supporting  
325 Information), indicating a lack of a strong nuclear structure. However, significant  
326 differentiation between regions was found when pooling genotypes from colonies into  
327 regions ( $F_{ST} = 0.006$ ,  $P = 0.01$ ).

328         The STRUCTURE results revealed that, when colonies were analyzed separately, the  
329 highest Delta  $K$  (1.73) occurred at  $K = 10$  (Table S5 in Supporting Information), with  
330 additional peaks at  $K = 8$  and  $K = 3$  (Fig. 2A). However, when pooling genotypes from  
331 colonies into regions, the proportion of individuals strongly assigned to clusters was  
332 maximized at  $K = 2$  [ $\ln P(K) = -2990.98$ ] and the highest Delta  $K$  (3.86) was obtained for  
333 two population clusters (Fig. S2 in Supporting Information). Likewise, TESS results  
334 supported two main genetic components (Fig. 2B) – one from each region –, with genetic  
335 contributions from unsampled populations, as indicated by the model with the highest  
336 likelihood, as well as the lowest and most stable  $DIC$  values ( $K = 10$ ) (Fig. S3 in  
337 Supporting Information).

338

### 339 **Mitochondrial diversity, demographic processes and genetic structure**

340 Fourteen polymorphic sites defined 13 haplotypes in the overall sample. The Amapá and  
341 Pantanal populations had ten and seven haplotypes, respectively (Table 2). The most  
342 frequent and widespread haplotype (A023) occurred in 19 individuals from Amapá and 11  
343 individuals from Pantanal (Fig. S4 in Supporting Information). Colonies from both regions  
344 shared most haplotypes, five haplotypes were private to Amapá and three other haplotypes

345 were unique to Pantanal. Amapá had slightly higher haplotype and nucleotide diversities  
346 than Pantanal (Table 2). Haplotypes from both regions occupy both interior and terminal  
347 positions of the network (Fig. S4 in Supporting Information). There was low but significant  
348 differentiation between Amapá and Pantanal ( $\Phi_{ST} = 0.18$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and AMOVA  
349 revealed that 8.11% of the variation was significantly distributed between regions ( $P <$   
350  $0.001$ ). Similarly,  $\theta$  was low (0.005) and significant ( $P = 0.05$ ).

351

### 352 **Historical demography**

353 Assuming neutrality of the assayed untranslated mtDNA sequence, demographic stability  
354 could not be rejected due to non-significant  $F_S$ ,  $D$  and  $R_2$  values (Table 2). However, the  
355 negative Fu's  $F_S$  and the unimodal pattern of the mismatch distribution curve suggest  
356 population expansion in Amapá (Fig. S5 in Supporting Information). Mitochondrial  
357 estimates revealed that the Pantanal population expanded more recently (Table 2).

358 The results of cross-validation tests of demographic coalescent models showed that  
359 seven PCA axes explained 95% of the variation contained in the *SuSt* and accurately  
360 retrieved the best simulated model among the 14 candidates (data not shown). The models  
361 assuming panmixia were not supported (Table 3). The best scenario (Model 11) assumes  
362 that the Amapá population exchanged genes with unsampled populations and that the  
363 Pantanal population was founded by genes from the Amapá population (Table 3, Fig. S6 in  
364 Supporting Information). This scenario yielded the highest posterior probabilities and very  
365 high values for Bayes' Factor of relative support, both considering the full set of candidate  
366 models as well as when compared to the reduced set of models (Table 3). Posterior  
367 predictive checks showed that nearly all *SuSts* yielded simulated datasets containing the  
368 empirical values, which indicates a good fit between both datasets (Table S6). Past  
369 demographic parameter estimates showed that the Amapá and Pantanal populations  
370 diverged during the LGM (parameter  $\tau$ , Table 4) from a large source population, as shown  
371 by the  $N_e$  in the upper range of the simulated values (Table 4). During the founder event,  
372 the Pantanal population was reduced to less than 10% (parameter  $\theta rF-A P$ , Table 4) and  
373 then underwent moderate exponential growth (parameter  $\theta rC-A P$ ). The Amapá population  
374 also experienced exponential growth, and is currently larger than the Pantanal population

375 (parameter  $\theta rC-A AP$ , Table 4). Coalescent simulations also showed that gene migration of  
376 moderate magnitude likely existed between the Amapá population and unsampled  
377 populations (parameter  $nM$ , Table 4).

378

## 379 **DISCUSSION**

380 Using molecular markers with different modes of inheritance, the present study revealed  
381 significant genetic differentiation among wood stork populations settled in two major  
382 wetlands located in northern and central western Brazil. The coalescent analyses support  
383 genetic exchange between the Amapá population and unsampled populations, as well as  
384 demographic expansion and changes in population size that broadly overlapped the LGM.  
385 These results have implications for the conservation of wood stork populations and wetland  
386 management policies in Brazil.

387

### 388 **Genetic diversity, effective population size and recent demography**

389 Wood storks breeding colonies in the Amapá and Pantanal wetlands have moderate  
390 microsatellite diversity (Table 1), within the range observed in jabiru storks (*Jabiru*  
391 *mycteria*) in the Brazilian Pantanal (Lopes *et al.*, 2011), Oriental storks (*Ciconia boyciana*)  
392 in China (Huang & Zhou, 2011) and white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) in Europe (Shephard,  
393 Galbusera, Hellemans, Jusic, & Akhandaf, 2009; Shephard, Ogden, Tryjanowski, Olsson,  
394 & Galbusera, 2013). Storks therefore appear to conform to the trend of low-moderate  
395 nuclear genetic diversity described for waterbirds (mean  $He$ : 0.44 to 0.83; see Table S1 in  
396 Eo, Doyle, & DeWoody, 2011). The smaller effective population sizes, lower annual  
397 reproductive rates and longer life expectancies of these birds, reported to live up to 18 years  
398 in nature (Animal Diversity Web, 2016), may explain the low diversity pattern observed  
399 (Eo *et al.*, 2011). Wood stork populations from Amapá and Pantanal showed low levels of  
400 mtDNA diversity (Table 2) and lower haplotype diversity than jabiru storks from Pantanal  
401 (Lopes *et al.*, 2011), white storks from Europe (Shephard *et al.*, 2013) and Oriental storks  
402 from China (Zan *et al.*, 2008). According to the mitochondrial theory of ageing, species  
403 with a long lifespan would have lower mutation rates due to reduced oxidative damage in  
404 the mitochondria, which would translate to low levels of mtDNA diversity (Nabholz,

405 Glémin, & Galtier, 2009). The Amapá wood stork population harbors slightly higher levels  
406 of nuclear and mtDNA diversity than the Pantanal population, as expected if the former  
407 was source. Coalescent modeling also showed that the Pantanal population was reduced to  
408 less than 10% of its current size during past colonization events.

409         Neither marker showed signs of a recent bottleneck in the populations examined.  
410 Thus, it seems that the ongoing threats that increasingly affect Brazilian wetlands may not  
411 have yet significantly reduced the genetic variation of wood stork colonies. However,  
412 estimates of the effective number of breeders in Amapá and Pantanal populations were  
413 rather low, suggesting that only a few reproductive wood storks may be contributing to the  
414 gene pools. Thus, these colonies may be prone to genetic depletion, which could hinder  
415 population survival in the long term (Willoughby *et al.*, 2015).

416

#### 417 **Genetic structure**

418 Previous studies based only on one type of molecular marker found low levels of genetic  
419 structure between wood stork breeding colonies located in the Brazilian Pantanal (Del  
420 Lama, Lopes, & Del Lama, 2002; Lopes, Rocha, & Del Lama, 2004; Lopes *et al.*, 2006;  
421 Lopes *et al.*, 2011; Rocha, Del Lama, & Regitano, 2004). In agreement, the results of  
422 genetic estimation, assignment tests, Bayesian clustering and coalescent models performed  
423 in the present study support ongoing gene flow between wood stork colonies within the  
424 Pantanal as well as among those settled within the Amapá wetlands. ABC coalescent  
425 analyses also showed that Amapá population may exchange migrants with unsampled  
426 populations (Table 3). In northern South America, breeding colonies of wood storks can be  
427 found in Guyana (Mistry *et al.*, 2008), Suriname (Spaans & de Jong, 1982), Colombia  
428 (Arango, 2014), the Llanos grassland of Venezuela (Vilella & Baldassarre, 2010) and  
429 Ecuador (Coulter *et al.*, 1999; Santander, Muñoz, & Lara, 2006). Further genetic studies  
430 including samples from northern South America are needed to broaden knowledge on the  
431 effective dispersal of wood storks.

432         Despite ongoing gene flow among colonies within regions and no apparent barriers  
433 to gene exchange, data from the present study also show that wood stork populations from  
434 different Brazilian regions are significantly structured and do not constitute a panmictic

435 unit. The concurrent results of the assignment tests, AMOVA, significant  $F_{ST}$  (Table S4 in  
436 Supporting Information) and  $\Phi_{ST}$  values and Bayesian clustering analyses (Fig. 2; Fig. S2  
437 in Supporting Information; Fig. S3 in Supporting Information) suggest the existence of two  
438 main genetic components: one comprising storks breeding in the Amapá coastal wetlands in  
439 northern Brazil, and another comprising those breeding in the Pantanal freshwater wetland  
440 in central western Brazil. Furthermore, the ABC analyses did not support any of the models  
441 which assumed a single panmictic population (Table 3; Fig. S5 in Supporting Information),  
442 reinforcing the existence of genetic differentiation. Collectively, these results support the  
443 hypothesis of regional breeding-site phylopatry (Coulter *et al.*, 1999; Frederick & Meyer,  
444 2008; Frederick & Ogden, 1997). Significant population structure in the absence of clear  
445 barriers to gene flow has also been found in the roseate spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) (Miño &  
446 Del Lama, 2014) and the great egret (*Ardea alba egretta*) (Corrêa, Del Lama, Rossi de  
447 Souza, & Miño, 2016) inhabiting the same breeding colonies in both regions. Such a  
448 pattern common to three highly dispersive waterbirds suggests that some unidentified factor  
449 may be limiting genetic exchange between individuals inhabiting the two Brazilian regions  
450 analyzed.

451

## 452 **Demographic history**

453 Evidence from the present study supports the hypothesis that wood stork populations in  
454 northern Brazil established earlier and remained stable during the climatic changes of the  
455 LGM. The Amapá population exhibited a more ancient pattern of expansion (18.73 kyr BP;  
456 Table 2) and diverged from the Pantanal population between 11 and 23 kyr BP (Table 4),  
457 overlapping the period after the LGM. The relatively large mean simulated coalescent  
458 estimates of ancient population size may reflect the historical presence of a large population  
459 in the equatorial region of Brazil (Table 4). Taken together, these findings suggest that the  
460 Amapá wetland remained stable enough for many years, sheltering healthy wood stork  
461 breeding populations. Although the effects of Quaternary climatic and hydrological  
462 changes on different South American biomes are a matter of continuous research and  
463 debate, most paleoclimatic reconstructions of the Neotropics currently accept that  
464 seasonally dry forests, open woodlands and savannas once dominated the landscape



465 (Sant'anna Neto *et al.*, 2015). Highly concordant paleopalynological and paleo-sedimental  
466 records suggest that a more humid climate contributed to the persistence of wetlands in the  
467 equatorial regions of South America during the LGM (Sant'anna Neto *et al.*, 2015). At the  
468 time, savannas would have expanded and dominated the northern portion of the country in  
469 the Brazilian Amazon, where the state of Amapá is located (see Fig. 4.1 in Sant'anna Neto  
470 *et al.*, 2015). In the central western region of Brazil, deglacial warming began immediately  
471 following the LGM and was marked by the onset of a wetter climate (Sant'anna Neto *et al.*,  
472 2015). A sharp shift to wetter and humid conditions occurred between 12.8 and 12.2 kyr  
473 BP, when the Pantanal wetland was a shallow body of water (Whitney *et al.*, 2011).  
474 Mitochondrial estimates in wood storks indicate a more recent demographic expansion in  
475 the Pantanal sample (Table 2) and ABC analyses strongly support the founding of the  
476 Pantanal population by individuals from Amapá (Table 3). These results broadly agree with  
477 the timing of past events in both Brazilian regions examined, including the geological  
478 formation of the Pantanal floodplain (Assine & Soares, 2004; Junk *et al.*, 2014).  
479 Collectively, therefore, the results suggest that wood storks could have continuously  
480 occupied the coastal wetlands of Amapá during the LGM, and migrated southward when  
481 deglacial warming began, colonizing the Pantanal freshwater wetland. A similar pattern of  
482 more ancient demographic changes in Amapá and a more recent expansion in the Pantanal  
483 has been found for roseate spoonbills (Miño & Del Lama, 2014) and great egrets (Corrêa *et*  
484 *al.*, 2016). Such findings of a similar historical demography in species with foraging  
485 patterns and colonial reproduction comparable to the wood stork suggest that these  
486 organisms may respond similarly to future climate changes.

487

#### 488 **Conservation implications**

489 Genetic monitoring of waterbird populations can support conservation of Brazilian  
490 wetlands. Following recent guidelines for the use of genetic monitoring to rank  
491 conservation priorities (Willoughby *et al.*, 2015), this study contributes novel genetic data  
492 to assist in the conservation of wood storks breeding in such ecosystems. The populations  
493 studied here breed in Brazilian wetlands which are important biodiversity reservoirs as well  
494 as stopover and breeding sites for a variety of birds (Junk *et al.*, 2014). However, these

495 wetlands are subjected to different types and levels of anthropogenic pressure. The  
496 Brazilian portion of the Pantanal is highly threatened: only 5% of its surface is currently  
497 protected by the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Sites, 2017). This wetland is mainly  
498 managed by private land owners and is strongly impacted by habitat conversion and  
499 deforestation for cattle grazing, agriculture, hydroelectric projects, and water pollution (De  
500 Pinho & Marini, 2012; Junk *et al.*, 2006). In contrast, the Amapá coastal wetlands are  
501 legally protected in the form of conservation units, which cover approximately 62% of the  
502 state, including a recently declared Ramsar site (Ministério Público do Estado do Amapá,  
503 2011). However, deterioration stemming from dam building, urban development and global  
504 climate change also menace the Amapá wetlands (Junk *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, recent  
505 changes in the Brazilian “forest code” implemented in 2012 significantly reduced the  
506 surface of the mandatory permanent protection zones of wetlands (Wittmann *et al.*, 2015).  
507 Hence, it is expected that the coastal wetlands of Amapá will be impacted by the concurrent  
508 effects of deforestation, accelerating climate change and other anthropogenic disturbances  
509 that are taking place in the Amazon basin and surrounding areas, which will bring drier  
510 conditions to the region (Swann, Longo, Knox, Lee, & Moorcroft, 2015). Increasing habitat  
511 destruction, modification and pollution in wetlands (Junk *et al.*, 2014) can reduce  
512 population size and further cause genetic deterioration of associated wildlife (Willoughby  
513 *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the continuity of wood stork populations in the Amapá and Pantanal  
514 wetlands is of considerable concern.

515         The present study identified different genetic pools of wood storks breeding in  
516 Brazil: solid evidence indicates that colonies established in the Amapá coastal wetlands and  
517 those in the Pantanal freshwater wetland should be regarded as separate groups of  
518 interbreeding individuals. This pattern of genetic differentiation could be partially  
519 explained by past population movements in response to palaeoclimatic changes in wetlands.  
520 Thus, the novel information contributed here can help predict responses to future  
521 environmental changes as well as estimate probabilities of population survival. A pattern  
522 similar to that observed in this study has been previously reported for other waterbirds  
523 inhabiting the same wetlands (Corrêa *et al.*, 2016; Miño & Del Lama, 2014). This multi-

524 species genetic pattern should be taken into account to support future protection measures,  
525 management strategies and conservation policies directed at species and wetlands.

526 Previous studies on wood stork breeding colonies settled in the Pantanal have  
527 resulted in changes in management practices, mainly in the state of Mato Grosso. For  
528 example, eco-touristic practices involving visitation to colonies have changed after studies  
529 involving wood storks (Bouton, 1999; Bouton, Frederick, Rocha, Barbosa Dos Santos, &  
530 Bouton, 2005). Such studies also influenced the design of the 25<sup>th</sup> Article of State Law  
531 9,096 of 2009, which prohibits catching small fishes up to 1,000 meters from breeding  
532 colonies, in order to preserve the feeding items of foraging adult waterbirds and their  
533 nestlings. In addition, the state government of Mato Grosso supported research aimed at  
534 locating new breeding colonies of waterbirds (Cardoso, 2011). The exchange of  
535 information between scientists and local authorities has provided good results regarding the  
536 conservation of this region of the Pantanal. This scheme should also be implemented in the  
537 state of Mato Grosso do Sul. It is highly likely that the Brazilian environmental authorities  
538 will be sympathetic to this approach since it is within the scope of the National Strategic  
539 Plan for Protected Areas (*PNAP*) (República Federativa do Brasil, Decreto N° 5.758, 2006)  
540 and has proven to be very effective in the Pantanal area.

541 Results from the present study also revealed that Amapá wood stork populations  
542 belong to the source gene pool and should therefore be given high conservation priority.  
543 This novel information can be used by the Brazilian National Wetland Committee (*Comitê*  
544 *Nacional de Zonas Úmidas, CNZU*) to help formulate conservation strategies and  
545 determine areas that may potentially become new Ramsar sites. A prerequisite of the *CNZU*  
546 is that Ramsar sites lie only within protected areas (Ramsar Sites, 2017; Witmann *et al.*,  
547 2015). Thus, expanding the national network of Ramsar sites in the Amapá wetlands is a  
548 realistic proposal and would be an efficient measure to preserve the source gene pool of the  
549 species. Furthermore, this study revealed that Amapá populations may be exchanging  
550 migrants with other unsampled populations, which underscores their utmost importance for  
551 enabling continuous gene flow between breeding colonies in neighboring areas of northern  
552 South America. By preserving the processes that generate and shape genetic diversity in  
553 Ramsar sites, the Brazilian government would be complying with its commitments of

554 evaluating and monitoring protected areas, which is among the goals of the *PNAP*. Findings  
555 from the present study indicate that such a task can be effectively supported by the genetic  
556 monitoring of waterbird populations.

557

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568

## 569 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

570 Additional supporting information may be found online in the supporting information tab  
571 for this article.

### 572 **Supporting Tables**

573 **Table S1.** Sampling information on wood stork populations.

574 **Table S2.** Statistics of diversity at nine microsatellites per *locus* and colony.

575 **Table S3.** Results of BOTTLENECK tests in wood stork populations.

576 **Table S4.** Pairwise  $F_{ST}$  values and corresponding probabilities observed between colonies  
577 within regions and between regions.

578 **Table S5.** Raw results of application of the method described by Evanno *et al.* (2005) to  
579 the outputs of STRUCTURE analyses.

580 **Table S6.** Posterior Predictive Checks (*PPC*) for ABC simulated summary statistics (*SuSts*)  
581 of genetic diversity.

582

### 583 **Supporting Figures**

- 584 **Figure S1.** Histograms showing results of assignment tests.
- 585 **Figure S2.** Plot of Delta  $K$  vs.  $K$  obtained from STRUCTURE results.
- 586 **Figure S3.** Plot of Deviance Information Criterion ( $DIC$ ) vs.  $K$  max resulting from spatial  
587 Bayesian clustering analyses in TESS.
- 588 **Figure S4.** TCS network of mitochondrial haplotypes.
- 589 **Figure S5.** Graphics showing results of mismatch analyses.
- 590 **Figure S6.** Graphic representation of ABC models of past demographic changes.

591

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TABLES

**Table 1.** Mean estimates of diversity ( $\pm$  standard error) based on nine microsatellites for wood storks from Pantanal freshwater wetland and Amapá coastal wetlands, Brazil. *n*: number of samples genotyped, *Na*: number of different alleles, *A*: allelic richness, *Ho*: observed heterozygosity, *UHe*: unbiased expected heterozygosity, *F<sub>IS</sub>*: inbreeding coefficient (Weir & Cockerham 1984), *PA*: number of private alleles.

Sample (Region)	Colony	<i>n</i>	<i>Na</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Ho</i>	<i>UHe</i>	<i>F<sub>IS</sub></i>	<i>PA</i>
Pantanal (center-west)	Mimoso	6.78 $\pm$ 0.15	2.00 $\pm$ 0.17	1.98	0.36 $\pm$ 0.084	0.37 $\pm$ 0.07	-0.08 $\pm$ 0.12	0
	Fazenda Ipiranga	7.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.00 $\pm$ 0.29	1.97	0.35 $\pm$ 0.089	0.33 $\pm$ 0.08	-0.14 $\pm$ 0.08	0
	Porto da Fazenda	24.78 $\pm$ 0.15	2.67 $\pm$ 0.24	2.25	0.34 $\pm$ 0.075	0.41 $\pm$ 0.06	0.18 $\pm$ 0.09	1
	Baia de Gaiva	12.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.44 $\pm$ 0.24	2.28	0.33 $\pm$ 0.072	0.41 $\pm$ 0.07	0.15 $\pm$ 0.08	0
	Baia Bonita	10.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.44 $\pm$ 0.50	2.26	0.33 $\pm$ 0.101	0.37 $\pm$ 0.09	0.12 $\pm$ 0.12	0
	Fazenda Retirinho	15.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.78 $\pm$ 0.28	2.37	0.34 $\pm$ 0.066	0.44 $\pm$ 0.06	0.14 $\pm$ 0.13	0
	Rio Vermelho	9.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.67 $\pm$ 0.33	2.42	0.42 $\pm$ 0.103	0.41 $\pm$ 0.06	0.03 $\pm$ 0.06	0
	Porto da Fazenda 2000	10.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.22 $\pm$ 0.22	2.11	0.34 $\pm$ 0.091	0.38 $\pm$ 0.08	0.13 $\pm$ 0.15	1
	Tucum 2000	13.00 $\pm$ 0.00	2.44 $\pm$ 0.29	2.24	0.36 $\pm$ 0.091	0.38 $\pm$ 0.08	0.03 $\pm$ 0.15	1
	Fazenda Ipiranga 2000	9.89 $\pm$ 0.11	2.44 $\pm$ 0.38	2.23	0.36 $\pm$ 0.008	0.38 $\pm$ 0.07	0.04 $\pm$ 0.10	1
	Entire region	117.44 $\pm$ 0.242	3.89 $\pm$ 0.48	3.76	0.35 $\pm$ 0.073	0.40 $\pm$ 0.07	0.14 $\pm$ 0.09	4
Amapá (north)	Se Cria	26.00 $\pm$ 0.33	2.78 $\pm$ 0.28	2.39	0.38 $\pm$ 0.071	0.43 $\pm$ 0.70	0.14 $\pm$ 0.10	0
	Fazenda Zelândia	21.78 $\pm$ 0.46	2.67 $\pm$ 0.24	2.32	0.45 $\pm$ 0.092	0.41 $\pm$ 0.07	-0.08 $\pm$ 0.07	0
	Macacoari	34.78 $\pm$ 0.86	2.78 $\pm$ 0.28	2.32	0.39 $\pm$ 0.085	0.40 $\pm$ 0.07	0.02 $\pm$ 0.08	1
	Se Cria 2007	23.67 $\pm$ 0.47	3.00 $\pm$ 0.29	2.37	0.48 $\pm$ 0.081	0.43 $\pm$ 0.06	-0.10 $\pm$ 0.06	0
	Fazenda Zelândia 2007	6.78 $\pm$ 0.15	2.33 $\pm$ 0.29	2.28	0.35 $\pm$ 0.092	0.38 $\pm$ 0.07	0.04 $\pm$ 0.17	0
	Entire region	113.00 $\pm$ 1.81	3.33 $\pm$ 0.24	3.30	0.42 $\pm$ 0.078	0.42 $\pm$ 0.07	0.04 $\pm$ 0.07	1

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878 **Table 2.** Diversity estimates ( $\pm$  standard error), neutrality tests and time since expansion based on mtDNA Control Region haplotypes  
 879 found in wood storks from Pantanal and Amapá wetlands.  $n$ : number of individuals.  $F_s$ ,  $D$  and  $R_2$  statistics are shown with  
 880 corresponding probability values ( $P$ ) and confidence intervals (95% CI). The mode of the unimodal mismatch distribution ( $Tau$ ,  $\tau$ ) is  
 881 also shown. To account for uncertainties in the mutation rate of the fragment analyzed, time since population expansion (YBP: years  
 882 before present) was estimated using 2%, 6% and 10% divergence rates.  
 883

<i>Statistic</i>	<b>Sample (Region)</b>	
	<b>Pantanal (center-west)</b>	<b>Amapá (north)</b>
No. of polymorphic sites, $PS$ ( $n$ )	7 (44)	10 (39)
Mean no. of nucleotide differences, $k$	1.425	1.973
Haplotypic diversity, $h \pm SD$	0.628 $\pm$ 0.000	0.773 $\pm$ 0.000
Nucleotide diversity, $\pi \pm SD$	0.006 $\pm$ 0.000	0.008 $\pm$ 0.000
$F_s$ (95% CI)	0.139 ( $P = 0.22$ ) (-2.42-1.74)	-2.170 ( $P = 0.06$ ) (-4.25-5.69)
$D$ (95% CI)	-0.683 ( $P > 0.10$ ) (-1.69-2.00)	-0.385 ( $P > 0.10$ ) (-1.64-1.85)
$R_2$ (95% CI)	0.115 ( $P = 0.31$ ) (0.07-0.22)	0.096 ( $P = 0.40$ ) (0.05-0.18)
$Tau$ ( $\tau$ ) (95% CI)	2.051 (0 – 5.27)	2.22 (0.12 – 3.33)
$SSD$ ( $P$ )	0.023 (0.40)	0.002 (0.80)
<i>Raggedness</i> ( $P$ )	0.306 (0.81)	0.342 (0.90)
Time since expansion (YBP)		
Divergence rate 10%	17,308.01	18,734.16
Divergence rate 6%	28,846.68	31,223.60
Divergence rate 2%	86,540.08	93,670.88

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887 **Table 3.** List of past demographic coalescent models tested for wood stork breeding colonies from the Pantanal (denoted as P) and  
 888 Amapá (denoted as AP) wetlands, Brazil. Posterior probabilities (*PP*) and Bayes' Factor of relative support (BF) compared to the best  
 889 model (highest *PP*, shown in bold) for the first ABC run; Subset posterior probabilities (*SSPP*) and Bayes' Factor of relative support  
 890 (*SSBF*) for the second ABC run, performed only with the best candidate models for each scenario, marked with an asterisk.

Scenario	Model	Description	First run		Second run	
			<i>PP</i>	<i>BF</i>	<i>SSPP</i>	<i>SSBF</i>
1	1*	Single population with constant size.	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
1	2	Single population expanding.	0.0000	0.0000		
1	3	Single bottlenecked population.	0.0000	0.0000		
1	4	Single population expanding after a bottleneck.	0.0000	0.0000		
2	5	P is founded by AP, ongoing bidirectional gene migration.	0.0029	0.0030		
2	6	P is founded by AP; AP is expanding; ongoing bidirectional gene migration.	0.0040	0.0043		
2	7*	P is founded by AP; gene migration from AP to P.	0.0067	0.0070	0.0001	0.0001
3	8	AP is founded by P, ongoing bidirectional gene migration.	0.0002	0.0004		
3	9	AP is founded by P; Pop P is expanding, ongoing bidirectional gene migration.	0.0001	0.0001		
3	10*	AP is founded by P; gene migration from P to AP.	0.0012	0.0012	0.0006	0.0006
4	11*	<b>AP exchanges genes with unsampled populations and is expanding; P is founded by AP.</b>	<b>0.9487</b>	<b>5.3059</b>	<b>0.9645</b>	<b>27.7816</b>
4	12	AP derives from unsampled populations; P is founded by AP.	0.0179	0.0188		
4	13	AP derives from unsampled populations and is expanding; P is founded by AP, ongoing bidirectional gene migration.	0.0177	0.0186		

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5	14*	P exchange genes with unsampled populations and is expanding, AP is founded by P.	0.0007	0.0007	0.0347	0.0360
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891 **Table 4.** Demographic parameters and confidence intervals (CI) estimated under neural  
 892 network regression for wood stork populations in the Amapá (AP) and Pantanal (P)  
 893 wetlands, Brazil. Population size,  $N_e$ , is given in no. of individuals and divergence time ( $\tau$ )  
 894 is given in years before present and were estimated based on simulations of all models.  
 895

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
$N_e$	5,577.91	3,449.29-8,906.61
$\tau$	14,997.65	11,123.63-24,316.30
$\theta rF-A P$	0.072	0.030-0.094
$\theta rC-A AP$	0.517	0.092-0.891
$\theta rC-A P$	0.145	0.030-0.693
$nM$	0.104	0.100-0.125

896  $\pi$ : Proportion of polymorphic sites,  $S$ : number of segregating sites, Tajima's  $D$ ,  $\theta rC-A AP$  and  $\theta rC-$   
 897  $A P$  is the ratio between the current size of population AP and P, respectively, and the ancient  
 898 population size;  $\theta rF-A$ : ratio between the size of population P and the source population during the  
 899 founder event;  $nM$ : Garza and Williamson's (2001) modified index.

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## FIGURE CAPTIONS

901 **Figure 1.** Map showing wood stork sampling sites. Grey-shaded areas in lower left inset  
902 indicate location of regions sampled within Brazil. Breeding colonies (black dots) are  
903 shown in enlarged sub-figures: three in Amapá coastal wetlands (A) and eight in Pantanal  
904 freshwater wetland (B). Full names of colonies are given in Table S1.

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906 **Figure 2.** Evidence of genetic differentiation between wood stork populations from the  
907 Amapá coastal wetlands and Pantanal freshwater wetlands in Brazil. (A) Membership plots  
908 showing genetic ancestry of each of 236 individuals resulting from Bayesian clustering  
909 analyses in STRUCTURE (Pritchard *et al.*, 2000) for  $K = 2$  and 10; (B) Polygons showing  
910 membership proportions to populations, and membership plots for  $K = 10$  resulting from  
911 spatial Bayesian analyses in TESS (Caye *et al.*, 2016). In the membership plots, each  
912 individual (y-axis) is represented by a single vertical line broken into segments proportional  
913 to its membership coefficients for each cluster. Individuals were grouped into colonies,  
914 separated with white dashed line, coded and arranged as in Table S1.