

ANNUAL REPORT  
1989  
STORK FIELD STATION  
"IT EIBERTSHIEM"  
EERNEWOUDE

"It Eibertshiem" is Frisian for the Storks' house.

Dear stork friends,

Herewith we send you the annual report of "It Eibertshiem", concerning 1989, the tenth report since the opening on May eighth, 1980.

Marginal note:

Environmental problems are getting much attention worldwide. This counts especially for our densely populated country. Over here in less than 20 years an extended environmental legislation came into being, in order to prevent, fight or control threats to the environment. The coming nineties form also in this aspect a more than symbolic future. They will clearly bring life on earth in a turmoil. The enervated technical progress brings, together with a Europe-without-borders, far-reaching consequences. Still we can't help thinking that the situation remains very disturbing, and that the problems are even growing. Can this be one of the reasons why environmental organisations have considerably grown? Interest in nature and environment remains constantly high, but only this is not enough, it will also ask financial efforts. It will be to choose or to lose!

"It Eibertshiem" in 1989

Without doubt many of you will remember the tremendous summer of 1989. We, of "It Eibertshiem", do as well, be it not only for the nice weather. No, for us it was a great stork-year. We were waiting for some more success, and fortunately it came!

In the beginning it didn't seem very favourable, but fortunately we're not very superstitious. However, starting with the first egg at the first of April? Hopefully things will turn out fine. And things turned out fine! At the tenth of April there were five eggs in one, and six in another nest. This was a bit too much, and with the experience of last year still in mind we decided upon putting two eggs in the breeding machine. At the second of May the first chicken\*\* crawls out, that unfortunately drops its head after a week and then dies next day. The other egg turns out to be sterile.

In one stork-nest now three chickens have been born, and also in the other nest a young stork appears, followed by three more. In the mean time a third couple has laid four eggs. Even so, on some days, although it seems incredible, something goes wrong. No indication whatsoever, but still... The log-book of May eleventh:

"Cage nest now two chickens. The largest of the three dead. This morning all right, but can't be saved. What this can be?" (Translated from Frisian, so I may be wrong) Unbearable, but this is how nature works, and in this way we lose some more chickens. But we'll have to accept these kinds of losses.

\*\* Chicken: Young bird, not egg-machine.

This also counted for our third couple. There are still no chickens at the tenth of June, so we decide to take the eggs from the nest. All eggs turn out to be sterile. Pity!

But on the other hand there are many positive things. It happened to be the first time we had three free-living couples. This is a favourable development, looking towards the coming years. Above this, we never before had a year in which we saw two nests with in each two chickens growing up.

A tremendous sight, this coming and going of the storks, the greeting ceremony on the nests, the supply of food, the first time you see the head of a young stork appear above the edge of the nest, wonderful.

Sometimes one wonders: Why do we do all this? But then, if you see it all, you know again. When the young birds have mastered the art of flight, we all are satisfied. Never before we've seen four storks grow up at "It Eibertshiem" in full liberty. A beautiful result. In the beginning of September we see them fly for the last time (for the time being), because afterwards they started their long voyage.

Also in 1989 the working group has carried out many activities. The most noticeable was the covering of the "walking part" of the cage. At first hand this may seem a bit unfriendly. Still we've chosen for this experiment, because:

1. During the feeding of the storks at the time in which they had chickens in the nests we noticed over and over again that the storks were feeding "one-day-chicklets"\* to the still very young chickens. Of course this is a logical result of feeding the storks. Still it caused problems in the sense of a prey too big for a stork of only a few days old. In nature this problem exists to a far lesser extent. The bird searches for prey, and then has to fly over a large distance. During this time the prey partly is digested by strong acids in the stomach. At the station however the adult birds take a few chicklets, and within a few minutes they lay in the nest for the young birds. By covering the cage we thus force the parents to search more for food by themselves. Beside this we now give some small food outside the cage for the free living storks in the period that their young are very small. The experience with this in the last year seems positive.
2. We also were not quite happy with the over and over again clipping or tying up the "ground"storks' wings. The covering of the cage also solved this. In that sense the measurement is bird-friendly, because the "liberty" has increased.

Beside this, we've carried out lots of little works. In the cage each year several man-hours are needed for maintenance. This year we've given all wood a new protective layer, we've put an extra twenty poles, and we've placed a nest on top of a new pole. Situations of nests falling down, as occurs in other places in the country, we'd like to prevent.

We also spent a lot of time in receiving visitors. We often receive excursions of schools, societies, etc. In 1989 many individuals visited us during opening hours.

Amidst our free-living storks in 1989 two casualties were found. One was found dead in Laaxum, another died by electrocution near Wittmund-Upstede. these are cases you'd rather not see, but also in a stork-project you have to face and accept reality, because everywhere in nature victims fall.

\*'One-day-chicklets: Egg-producing birds of one day old.

## "It Eibertshiem" in 1990

What will happen with the storks in 1990 of course we can't tell you yet. Still, some things are known already. For at the eighth of May it is exactly ten years ago that "It Eibertshiem" was opened. Related to the possible cases of breeding by the birds... (from here some text is missing; my guess: festivities will be later in order not to disturb the nests).

## Further developments

In 1989 nationally we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the stork-project. In this year also the twelfth station was opened, in Rossum. We wish all luck to the family Lips and their cooperators over there. For the stork-project 1989 has been a good year. No less than 150 chickens were raised, of which almost 100 free living. Most of them emigrated in autumn, and we hope to meet them again in the future.

## The meadowbirds

Who has ever seen storks arriving in spring? On those lovely sunny days of February, March, which are warmer, lighter, happier and livelier than any other day in the year, both storks, or one of them, suddenly stand on the old nest. The one who is lucky can see them arriving, because they travel during daytime, but so high, that the travelling company is out of the reach of our eye, so that we only can hope to see those few that separate themselves at a certain spot from their companions, and then glide down in great circles to their summer residence.

Where do they come from? In "l'Ami Fritz" Rabbi Sichel says: "From Jerusalem", and this nice remark would stay stuck in your memory until you believe it. In summer now Jerusalem is crowded with storks, because the Turks honour them even more than we do, but also the Turkish birds are migratory birds,, which move to the springs of the Nile, or beyond.

Our storks also go this far, but choose their route across Marocco along the West African coast. They also penetrate into South Africa, and if there are grasshoppers enough they even may stay a summer for breeding.

When the storks have finally arrived on their nests, the noisy life starts. Everything is inspected, and with great diligence they restore the nest. They keep on building long after the eggs are laid, yes, even until the young fly away. They should build, because in spite of the masonry with clay and the strengthening with sods, the wind sometimes tears away large parts.

They don't have a voice, they only can hiss and growl a bit, but with their bill they express their happiness, excitement, fear, love and hate, by the well-known clattering. Above this all kinds of movements of the neck, wings and legs can be added,, so that looking at a stork-household is a very interesting and diverting affair.

Beautiful are their flightstunts. Sometimes they glide in opposite circles upwards, both at the same time, the wings unmoving, and spread so wide, that their primaries are extended widely, like the fingers of a giant hand. At other times one flies over the nest while the other is clattering on the edge, head in the neck, the bill straight in the air. The other turns and glides at full speed towards the clatterer, like wanting to

push it off, but at the right moment the latter takes off, and now the first is clattering on the edge. This is repeated several times. Then again they both stand on the edge of the nest, with spread wings, now slowly swaying here and there, then bending like a clasp-knife. This comparison goes completely, because their heel-joint really is elastic and remains in extreme positions without muscular effort. Remarkable is the behaviour of birds from a certain region towards each other.

It is known, and without doubt, that storks gather in August at certain places, and that then some birds, presumably the old, weak and maimed, are expelled from the troop, and killed. This is the famous "stork-court" But also a stork-police seems to exist, that functions the whole year round, and especially makes its influence felt in spring, during the occupation of the nests. If a new couple occupies a nest without proper permission, it is chased off by the police force. Sometimes it happens, that the nest is broken down completely.

Of this all hardly anything is known for sure. If you notice, observe or photograph something about this in your surroundings, I'd be most happy to hear from you.

Bloemendaal, 31-12-1903

Jac. P. Thyse

Note: Jac. P. Thyse is considered to be the founder of nature protection in the Netherlands.

#### The one who is lucky to see them arriving

This was almost ninety years ago, and still, or even more than then it is a "hit" if you see a stork arriving. We've had ninety years of Birdprotection by now (Congratulations), and not only on behalf of the stork, we'll need at least ninety more years of Birdprotection.

#### Future

As "It Eibertshiem" we're active now for ten years with storks, while the re-introduction scheme is running for twenty years. In those years a lot has changed, and still has not. For Thyse writes: "Of all this hardly anything is known for sure". This still counts if you look at things like: Food-supply in relation to ground water level, use of pastures, intensity of fertilizing, structure of the vegetation, etc. But also the demands put to the breeding-biotope are not sufficiently known. This all deserves further studies, since we want to preserve the stork. We have to conserve the yet undisturbed habitats, and if possible improve them. This task is lying in front of us, and with this we'll have to work in the coming years. Note: **Together!** Your support, in any aspect whatsoever, remains indispensable.

(The report here continues with the -outdated- agenda for 1990, and another request for support. I think those things don't need to be translated).

More information:  
H. Folkertsma  
Hegedijk 1  
8642 WH Lutkewierum  
Friesland - the Netherlands  
tel +31-(0)5152-559

Financial support:  
"It Eibertshiem"  
Mr. Troelstrawei 41  
9001 CT Grou  
Friesland - the Netherlands  
Postal giro 2807066 (min. Dfl 7,50)