



CAMERA obscura

Wild birds are not the easiest subjects to photograph. Often, approaching close enough for a good image may disturb the bird and even those birds that are habituated to people and cars and don't automatically fly away, typically stop what they are doing and 'freeze'. Sometimes they may move away slowly to increase the distance between them and the 'intruder'. This Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*, however, was completely relaxed in its behaviour as it was oblivious to my presence.

I was photographing from a water-level hide at Zimanga Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal, where special one-way-glass windows obscure any movement within the hide, so you are able to watch the birds behave naturally at close quarters without them being aware of you. The stork repeatedly came right up to the hide window as it methodically probed its way around the lagoon, searching for fish. I chose to take advantage of its proximity and the unusual perspective on offer by using a wide-angle lens, which allowed me to include the lagoon and the distant Lebombo range in the frame.

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Camera: Canon 1D Mk4 and EF 16-35L f4 IS lens
Settings: ISO 800; 1/2000 sec. at f/4.5