

Black-winged Stilt

Regno: fauna

Birds

 [cavaliere.jpg](#) [1]

Black-winged Stilt - *Himantopus himantopus*



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Its black and white dress and long red legs render the Black-winged Stilt unmistakable; a very vivacious bird that loves the open, shallow waters of lagoons, salt pans, marshes and artificial lakes.

Sexual dimorphism is not marked (in nuptial dress the darker areas of the male are more glossy and he usually has a larger black hood), while juveniles can be recognised by their brown rather than black dark parts.

Swift flight: the black pointed wings and extended long legs enable easy identification.

Very gregarious, nests in small colonies in shallow water, during this phase it is very sensitive to variations in water level.

Each pair defends the territory around its nest, whilst the entire colony participates in driving off intruders. Winters in Africa.

In Italy the species (called Cavaliere d'Italia, or Italian Knight, ndt) can be considered as the emblem of the environmental associations in their battle to defend what is left of the patrimony of wetlands in the peninsular.

In the early '70s the species was on the point of extinction, but began to gradually increase in numbers as the tendency for reclamation slowly reversed and the first protected areas were established.

The Black-winged Stilt nests in the Fucecchio Marshes, at the Quarrata and Sesto Fiorentino ANPIL Reserve.

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