

Ibis species  
27 Sep 1983  
Otter Creek Marsh, Tama Co., IA  
\*F. Moore, \*R. Myers  
IBL 53:98; 54:38

Record Number: 83-28  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Francis L. Moore  
Myers

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 53:98  
Records Committee: IBL 54:38

VOTE: 7-III

III for sp., Nearly impossible to identify Glossy in fall.

III, Plegadis sp. as suggested by observers. But see Bohlen (Birds Illinois)--Illinois birds assumed to be Glossy until proved otherwise (reverse of Iowa situation). Thus E. Iowa birds bear extremely close study.

III for Plegadis sp.--species can't be told. At least one is adult. If eye really is brown in the adult, this is a Glossy, but that is hard to be sure of.

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

83-28

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: IBIS SP.

DATE SEEN: Sept 27, 1983

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Tama County, Iowa

OBSERVERS: F. Moore, ~~KRANE~~ R. Myers

DATE OF REVIEW: January 1984

METHOD OF REVIEW: Mailed to Records Committee

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: The Committee felt that identification to species could not be made, although at least one of the birds may have been an adult. It was noted that Bohlen (Birds of Illinois) considers Illinois ibises to be Glossies, while at least in western Iowa White-faced are expected. The situation in eastern Iowa is equivocal, and needs some spring sightings, in order to provide evidence for occurrence of either species.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

What species? Ibis (sp.) (Plegadis sp.) How many? 2Location? Otter Creek Marsh near Chelsea, Tama Co., N.E. side of marshType of habitat? Marshy, low water among cattails between two Northern dikes.When? date(s): September 27, 1983 time: 12:15 to 1:00Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Bob Myers, Ed Weinerothers before or after you: Not known

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior. *No voice was heard.*

Ed Weiner, the ranger at Otter Creek Marsh, took us out on the dikes in his pickup the Ibis flew up as we were driving East to West along the North Dike. They flew alongside the pickup for about 30 seconds before going back down into the cattails. The two birds were all dark and when they set their wings to land the sun shining on their back and wings made them look an iridescent green color. The bill on both birds was very long (compared to the body length) and strongly decurved. We could not get them to fly back up again so we drove to the next dike to the South and waded and made noise to get them to fly up again. They did not as we were leaving I looked behind and saw them feeding in a small opening in the cattails. Viewing through the Celestron C90 telescope at 33X, after taking a few pictures through it, showed no white around the base of the bill. The eye looked extremely dark and brownish but in the shade of the cattails could have been somewhat exaggerated in the lighting. One of the birds was of a duller sheen and could have been a younger bird or possibly ~~at~~ a little further into its fall-winter molt. From the brief look at both birds I am tending to lean towards the possibility of them being Glossy Ibis because of eye color but due to closeness of coloration and ability to separate ~~these~~ these two species especially in the fall, I submit this as a Plegadis (SP) sighting.

Similar species and how eliminated: white Ibis is not this dark even in immature plumage. All dark colored heron do not have long decurved bill like these birds.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? Only as to speciesIf yes, explain: Almost impossible (if not impossible) to speciate Plegadis (Glossy and White-faced) in the fall.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Excellent viewing conditions, sunny seen from about 30 feet at closest with 7X35mm B+L Roof Prism binoculars. Also viewed through Nikkormat FTN camera with Celestron C90 mounted on it at 20X at approximately 50 yards.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen quite a few Glossy Ibis and one White Ibis while in Virginia a few years ago. No experience with White-faced Ibis.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NoneHow long before field notes made? 3 HRS. this form completed? 5 HRS.

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

## Notes of Identification - Fall 1983

Ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.) - Both birds were heron-like long-legged waders about the size of a Little Blue Heron but with fairly long decurved bills. Neck and legs were held outstretched in flight. Both appear dark - one was brownish (imm.) and one sort of greenish-purple with a reddish cast. In flight, the backs of both birds showed a greenish tint in the sun. While it is very difficult to separate the two species in fall I believe these birds, at least the adult, were glossy ibis. There was no hint of any reddish facial skin - it was dark (same as bill). There was no trace of any white facial outlining. White-face sometimes retains a short whitish line from eye to bill. The eye appeared dark (brownish), not red. However, in light of the difficulty of the identification, Ibis sp. is probably the best way to leave it. Ed Warner, Wildlife Tech. at Otter Creek, studied these birds for a long time at close range with his scope and he also felt they were Glossy Ibis.