

RARE BIRD SIGHTING
DOCUMENTATION:

WHITE-FACED IBIS

TO: Mr. Tom Kent
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FROM: Rick Schmid
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This documentation was written on Wednesday, April 7, 1999, from a combination of notes taken at the time of the sighting and memory.

SPECIES SIGHTED: White-Faced Ibis

WHEN SIGHTED: Friday, April 2, 1999, at 11:30am

LOCATION: Waubonsie Wildlife Area; Fremont County, Iowa; north of Highway 2 near the town of Percival. The bird was seen in the water immediately to the south of the paved road that runs through the Area, and about one-quarter mile west of the bridge.

CONDITIONS: It was cloudy, but it was midday, so the light was fairly good. The bird was very near the road. Total distance between observer and bird ranged from approximately 60 to 200 feet during the observation period, which lasted approximately 30 minutes.

OPTICS USED: Pentax binoculars 16 x 50 and Simmons spotting scope

OBSERVERS: Rick Schmid

DESCRIPTION: At first glance, the ibis appeared to be a small, dark wader. The long, decurved bill was noticed next. The bird was observed for several minutes at fairly close range through a scope, but because of the lack of direct sunlight, it was not possible to determine the exact eye color. There was no noticeable color or marking in the bare, facial skin. The entire face, head and neck were dark brown, with some thin white marks in the head and hind neck. The body was dark, with some violet and green sheen in many of the feathers. The bird was assumed to be a White-Faced Ibis (as opposed to Glossy) because of geographic location.

BEHAVIOR: The ibis was alone. It was walking in water about eight inches deep, probing the bottom for food with its bill. At one point it caught and ate a medium-sized crustacean. It flew a short distance farther from the road but otherwise stayed in the same area.