

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

GLOSSY IBISPlegadis falcinellusLocation: Lake Cheraw; 10 miles north of La Junta; Otero County, ColoradoDate: April 28, 1995Setting:

This bird was found at Lake Cheraw by Joe Roller, a few days earlier. I found it on this day at 8:17 a.m. and watched it at close range until about 8:35 a.m. It was in the small pond on the west side of the main highway at Lake Cheraw with about 25 White-faced Ibis. The day was overcast. I was only about 75 yards away and stayed in my car where I observed the bird with my binoculars and my Kowa TSN4 (20-60x) scope. All the ibises were standing quietly, perched in a tight flock in open water and flooded grass. When I pulled up they became alert and watched me. After a few minutes they began striding off slowly, feeding as they went. I had excellent views of the bird in side-by-side comparison with the "everyday" ibis'.

Description:

The bird was an adult in breeding plumage. It was roughly the same size as the White-faced Ibis (WFI) -- about 24" tall. I tried hard to see if this bird was bigger than the White-faced Ibis but I thought that it was the same size. The plumage was nearly identical; perhaps with less of a "greasy" green gloss to the lower back. The legs were long and grayish-green with dull red joints (not deep red like the WFIs). The feathering around the face patch was deep glossy greenish-brown like the rest of the plumage, without the WFI's white border. The facial skin was gray (not red) with a brilliant, bright blue border. This border was thin at the lower edge, non-existent behind the eye and much wider at the upper edge, especially in front where it met the bill. The blue edge was continuous over the top of the bill at the front of the face. The bill was extremely long, down-curved and looked dull brown. The iris was brown (not red).

Similar Species:

Obviously the White-faced Ibis is the main ID contender. This Glossy Ibis really stuck out with the brilliant blue edge to the gray facial skin (not red facial skin like the WFI). The Glossy Ibis in breeding plumage lacks the white feathered edge to the face and has less red legs and a brown, not red, iris.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Glossy Ibises in Florida on several occasions. I have experience with both ibises' in Colorado (including the first state record of Glossy Ibis) and other states.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation. See attached field drawings.

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

