

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

(ACCEPT 7-0)

GLOSSY IBISPlegadis falcinellusLocation: About 5 miles east of Las Animas along Highway 50; Bent County, ColoradoDate: May 7, 1995Setting:

It is possible, though not likely, that one of these birds was the Cheraw bird of late April / early May (about 25 miles west). I stopped at a flooded alfalfa field along the north edge of Highway 50 about 5 miles east of Las Animas. The field was teeming with birds – a few gulls, about 8 species of shorebirds and, most obvious, about 220 White-faced Ibis. The ibises were walking and feeding. I looked through the ibises from my car with my scope (Kowa TSN4 20-60x). I suddenly saw a Glossy Ibis at very close range in the closest group. I was astonished. It was an obvious, beautiful breeding-plumaged bird – and big. I could easily find and re-find the bird by scanning the ibises for a taller, bulkier bird and more especially by scanning their legs for the one thick pair! As I continued to scan I found a second bird. I almost didn't believe it but I was able to re-find the first bird and I easily turned my scope from one bird to the other – there were two Glossy Ibises present! I watched these two from 10:32 a.m. until 10:47 a.m. in direct comparison with White-faced Ibises. I saw the two Glossy Ibises in flight and at rest and in excellent light (full sun from behind me). The distances ranged from about 50-200 yards.

Description:

Both birds were breeding-plumaged adults. Although they were in the same general ibis flock they did not associate nor did they even approach each other. The first bird was clearly larger than the White-faced Ibis (WFI). It was about a head taller (1-2"), had a thicker neck and stood taller with longer and thicker legs (particularly between the body and first joint). The other bird seemed closer to the size of a WFI – about 24" tall. The plumage was identical to the WFI – deep reddish-brown with a greenish gloss. The birds differed from the WFI in having distinctly grayish-green not reddish legs with barely redder joints. Both had gray (not red) facial skin with a narrow, bright blue border, widest at the top and in front of the eye and non-existent behind and around the eye. Both birds lacked the white feathered border around the facial skin. The bill was long, greenish-brown and down-curved. The iris was brown, not red.

Similar Species:

The White-faced Ibis is the very similar. For main differences, see the Description section above. These birds had gray (not red) facial skin with a bright blue border. They lacked reddish legs and white feathered borders to the face.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Glossy Ibises in Florida on several occasions. I have previous experience with both ibises' in Colorado and other states.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.

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