

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-49

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

rec'd 1/27/02

Date: 2 May 2001 **Number seen:** 1 **Sex:** unknown **Plumage:** Alternate

Locality: Rocky Ford sewage ponds **Elevation:** ~4175'

Nearest town: Rocky Ford **County:** Otero

Time observed: 09:00-09:15 **Duration of observation:** ~5 minutes

Description: While birding with Marshall Iloff and Joe Fontaine, we stopped at the Rocky Ford sewage ponds to see what we might see. At the east end of the NE pond, we found a flock of >50 ibis, so I started scanning through them. I quickly found a Glossy Ibis in the flock and notified the other two. We eventually got good, long looks at the bird in direct comparison with the White-faced Ibis, which comprised the rest of the flock.

The bird was an adult *Plegadis* (large, lanky, long-legged wader, with dark plumage dominated by dark reddish-brown and a variety of iridescent colors; long neck, long, decurved bill) with bare, dark facial skin (not red) that had pale, whitish-blue borders above and below. The bird's eyes were dark, which was very different from the reddish eyes of the White-faced in the flock. The head, neck, upper back, and underparts were a dark reddish-brown. The wings were dark with varying iridescence and the tail was dark. The legs were grayish-green and the tarso-metatarsal joints were darker.

Similar species eliminated by description: White-faced Ibis is the only real contender and it is easily eliminated by facial pattern and coloration, eye color, and by leg color.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): none heard

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 1000s each of both species of North American *Plegadis*.

Light conditions: overcast sky, though brightish

Optical equipment used: Leica 20-60x

Distance, and how estimated: estimated at 80m at closest approach

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Joe Fontaine, Marshall Iloff

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none?

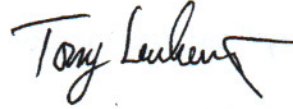
If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none **b) after observation:** none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 27 January 2002 from notes written on the afternoon of 3 May, from memory



2001-49

redd 5/28

Glossy Ibis at Rocky Ford Sewage Ponds, Otero County, Colorado, 2 May 2001

On 2 May 2001 I birded eastern Colorado with Tony Leukering and Joe Fontaine. We arrived at Rocky Ford Sewage Ponds around 9:00 a.m. and found a large flock of about 65 White-faced Ibis present. Tony immediately set about scanning them with a scope and promptly called out a Glossy Ibis. The flock flew before I could locate the bird but it soon settled again and we refound the bird. I studied it for about 5 minutes at about 200 yards through my Swarovski ST80 scope, watching it most of the time at 60x. Skies were overcast and lighting even, but were not conducive to seeing color differences on iridescent feathers.

Description:

Clearly a *Plegadis* ibis, identical in structure to the White-faced Ibis with which it fed. The Glossy was obviously 10-15% larger than the surrounding White-faced. Overall plumage was dark. The head, breast, and belly were rich reddish-purple and the back dark with iridescent feathers occasionally reflecting greens or bronze tones in the poor light. Even in the poor light I could notice a new field mark that I had noticed on the Ft. Collins Glossy Ibises a day earlier. All the White-faced Ibis showed an iridescent, reflective panel on the secondary coverts, which appeared paler and contrasted with the rest of the wings and upperparts. On Glossy this panel was not apparent and was even in tone with the rest of the wing. The head was smooth reddish in color and indicated that the bird was an adult. The legs were dull gray-green with darker joints, unlike the legs of 90% of the White-faced Ibis, which were highlighted with pink or red tones.

The most obvious differences from White-faced Ibis were apparent in the face. The eye was dark, unlike the red eyes of the White-faced Ibis, which clearly showed the dark pupil at that range. The facial skin was dark gray and blended smoothly into a darker bill. On White-faced Ibis the reddish or pinkish (depending on degree of breeding condition obtained) contrasted sharply with a paler gray bill as the facial skin met the bill. The dark gray facial skin was bordered narrowly by a disjunct white or powder blue border. The whitish border was wide across the forehead and narrowed rearward to disappear just over the eye. The rear of the eye had no pale border, but the lower portion of the facial skin was again bordered by this pale band, which began directly below the proximal edge of the eye, widened quickly, before tapering to a point again. It did not cross below the chin.

Feel free to contact me if there are any questions.

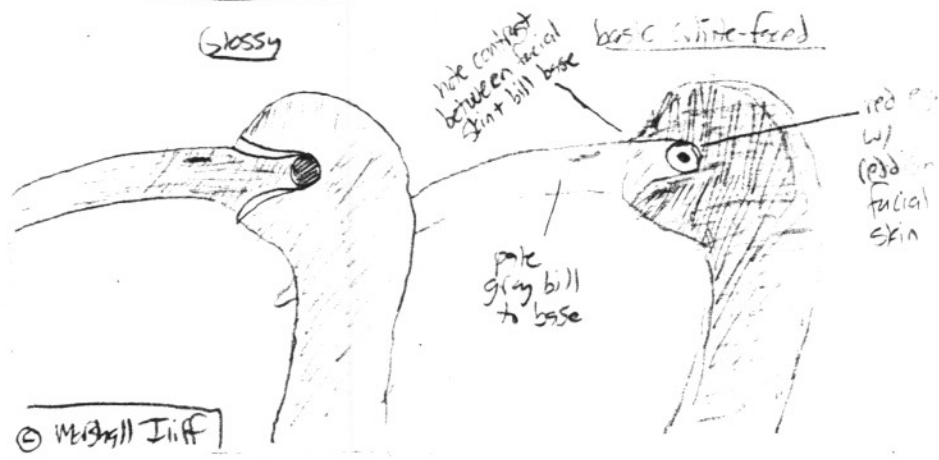
Respectfully submitted,

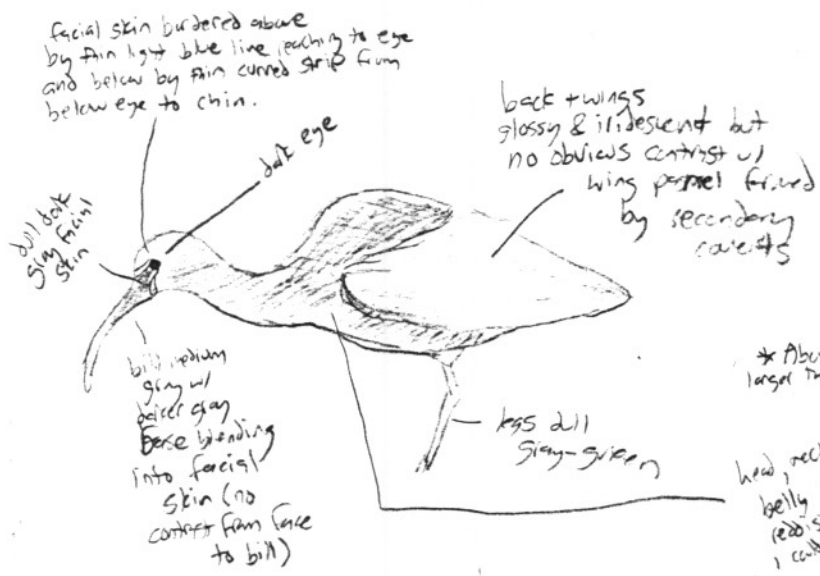
Marshall Iliff
901 Crystal Spring Farm Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21403
miliff@aol.com
(410) 269-1589



Adult Glossy Ibis
Rocky Ford Sewage Plant, CO
2 May 2001

Found by T. Leukering, seen also
by J. Fontaine





facial skin bordered above
by thin light blue line reaching to eye
and below by thin curved strip from
below eye to chin.

dull dark
gray facial
skin

dull eye

back + wings
glossy & iridescent but
no obvious contrast w/
wing panel forward
by secondary
coverts

bill medium
gray w/
paler gray
base blending
into facial
skin (no
contrast from base
to bill)

legs dull
gray-green

* About 10-15%
larger than WFI B form

head, neck, breast
belly + back rich
reddish. In fact I think
I could not compare to
WFI B