

# Glossy Ibis

*Plegadis falcinellus*

Kingdom Animalia  
Phylum Chordata  
Class Aves  
Order Ciconiiformes  
Family Threskiornithidae



Native to: Africa but migrated to South America and expanded its range to include North and Central America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

## **Status: Least Concern**

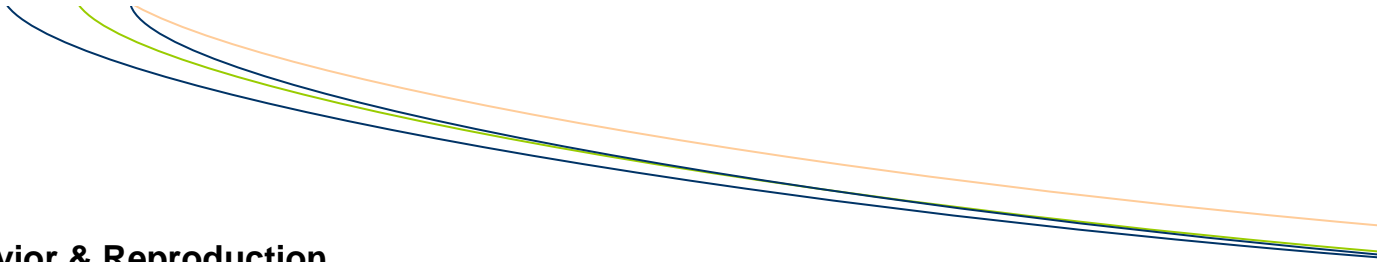
**Wetland habitat loss through drainage, irrigation, clearing, burning, grazing is the largest cause for concern in decreasing populations of Glossy Ibis.**

## **Appearance & Lifespan**

The Glossy Ibis is about 50 cm tall (20") with a wingspan of about 1 m (3.3 '). It has a long, dark gray bill that curves downwards. Dark purple to black feathers adorn its head, back, neck and belly. This bird has legs that are long and black and its wings and tail are a shiny green.

In breeding season the Glossy Ibis has rusty red feathers and a pale blue line around its face. The oldest Glossy Ibis has been recorded at 26.8 years.





## **Behavior & Reproduction**

The Glossy Ibis lays 3 or 4 eggs in a nest of twigs and sticks, usually found in low trees or bushes. It can build its nest in colonies within small groups or in large aggregations of thousands of pairs that may form a breeding population.

The eggs take about three weeks to hatch. Both male and female will incubate the egg, but the female does most of the work. Both parents take responsibility in feeding the chicks. The chicks fledge in about a month. They leave the nest and start to forage when they are two months old.

Sounds made by this rather quiet ibis include a variety of croaks, grunts and a hoarse 'grrrr' while breeding. This species is migratory and travels to warmer climates in the winter months in flocks of over 100 individuals.

## **Ecology & Habitat**

The glossy ibis can be found in a variety of wetlands, including mud flats, wet fields and marshes close to a large lake or river where there is shallow water.

This bird eats crayfish, grasshoppers, small snakes, insects and leeches. The Grassy Ibis probes in the mud with its bill to search for prey.

Here at the zoo, the Glossy Ibis eats whole smelt, fruits and vegetables, hard boiled eggs, and insects.

## **Did You Know?**

1. These birds travel in long lines, either in single file or diagonally with an outstretched neck and trailing legs.
2. This is the most widespread of the Ibis species, it can be found on every continent.
3. Ibises fly with their necks outstretched, their flight is very graceful and often in V-formation.

