

First records of Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* in French Guiana

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Cet article présente les premières données de l'Ibis falcinelle *Plegadis falcinellus* en Guyane française. En Amérique du Sud, cette espèce inféodée aux zones humides est principalement répartie dans le nord du continent en Equateur, Colombie et au Vénézuéla. De septembre 2018 à juillet 2023, 29 observations d'ibis du genre *Plegadis* pour un nombre d'individus indéterminé ont été faites sur cinq sites littoraux guyanais de Mana dans l'ouest à Cayenne dans l'est. Seulement sept Ibis falcinelles adultes ou subadultes ont été identifiés avec certitude. Concernant les autres observations, l'âge, la distance d'observation ou la qualité des documents n'ont pas permis d'écarter un hybride ou un Ibis à face blanche *Plegadis chihi*. Cependant, nous considérons que toutes ces données concernent probablement l'Ibis falcinelle et que celui-ci apparaît manifestement en expansion dans le nord-est du continent. Nous présentons toutes les données d'ibis du genre *Plegadis* en Guyane, les critères complexes d'identification avec l'Ibis à face blanche et rappelons brièvement l'historique de la colonisation de l'Ibis falcinelle dans le Nouveau Monde. Enfin, nous discutons de l'origine de ces individus et évoquons une potentielle future nidification en Guyane française au regard de l'existence de milieux favorables à l'espèce en nidification, la régularité des observations ces cinq dernières années et la présence d'adultes en plumages nuptiaux.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* is a widespread monotypic species that breeds in North, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Central and South Asia, Africa, the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia¹¹. It can be found in various natural and artificial, mainland and coastal wetlands. It frequents marshes, lakeshores, wet or flooded meadows, rivers, streams, estuaries, coastal lagoons, and rice fields¹¹. Usually gregarious throughout its life cycle, it often breeds in colonies (mainly in multispecies heronries). This species is known for its highly nomadic behaviour outside the breeding season, with some populations being migratory, but others generally considered sedentary and/or dispersive¹¹. In South America, Glossy Ibis is distributed in the north and north-west, in Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador¹¹. It would seem a candidate vagrant to countries in north-east South America.

Glossy Ibis is closely related to White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*; indeed, the two were formerly considered conspecific¹⁹. Migratory populations of White-faced Ibis breed in south-west Canada and western, central and southern United States and winter in Central America²⁴. In South America, sedentary populations occur in south-east Bolivia, Paraguay, southern Brazil, northern Argentina, Uruguay and Chile²⁴. It has not been recorded in French Guiana⁹: the closest extralimital record comes from Aruba¹³, some 1,915 km distant. We judge it a more unlikely vagrant to French Guiana than Glossy Ibis.

In this paper we present the first records of Glossy Ibis from French Guiana, obtained between 2018 and 2023, and discuss identification criteria. We also briefly review the history of colonisation in the New World, discuss the origin of these individuals and consider the possibility of future breeding in French Guiana.

Field observations

On 8 September 2018, two Glossy Ibises, including at least one adult, were observed by PL on the coast of Mana, western French Guiana, 30 km from the border with Suriname (c.05°38'48"N 53°42'10"W). They were feeding alongside Great Egrets *Ardea alba* and numerous shorebirds on a former rice-growing polder that was created in 1982. Within this now-abandoned polder, wetlands have varying water levels within and between paddy fields. The ibises foraged 900 m from the seafront in habitat ranging from grassy and muddy areas to open water of various depths. They were observed through a telescope, and photographs were taken (Fig. 1). One (unaged) bird remained until 9 September 2018. On 16 September 2018, two birds were seen and photographed in flight by AV (<https://ebird.org/checklist/S48545133>) on the same polder not far from the first location. Unfortunately, they quickly disappeared into marshy vegetation. On 22 December 2018, one bird was observed by GC, OC and Florence Lierman, in the same sector of the Mana polder. The observation was brief as the bird disappeared behind vegetation.