

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ABNGE02020

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Plegadis chihi* (Vieillot)
COMMON NAME: White-faced Ibis
SYNONYMS: *Numenius chihi* Vieillot, *Ibis thalassinus*
FAMILY: Threskiornithidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Vieillot, Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat., nouv. Éd., vol. 8, Mar. 1817, p. 303.

TYPE LOCALITY: "Paraguay et dans les plaines de Buenos-Ayres."

TYPE SPECIMEN: Cotype: USNM 084604 (immature male); other USNM Catalog Number = 053670. R. Ridgway 159, 3 Sep 1867. Oreana (Camp 17, Humboldt River Valley), Pershing County, Nevada. In Amer. Nat. 8: 110, February 1874.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: *P. falcinellus* and *P. chihi* are sometimes considered conspecific (The Nature Conservancy, undated), however, no subspecies recognized although two species have produced hybrids in captivity. In wild, both species nest in "same colonies apparently without interbreeding" (Terres 1980).

DESCRIPTION: Wader with long decurved bill, and metallic bronze plumage. In breeding season, adults have distinctive white feathers along edge of bare facial skin (Terres 1980). Iris reddish brown. Flies with neck outstretched, alternately flapping and gliding. Breeding birds show white border at end of bill, also red legs and red lores. Immatures and non-breeding adults lack white on face and red legs. Length 58.0 cm (23.0 in.), width 91.0 cm (36.0 in.)

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: "Breeding adults differ from glossy ibis in having a reddish bill, red eyes, all-red legs, and a white feathered border around the facial skin; border extends behind eye and under chin. Winter adult differs from glossy ibis in lacking the pale line from the eye to the bill." (NGS 1983, in NatureServe 2001).

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Color photo (Terres 1980:570)

Color photo (Peterson 1990:115)

Color photo and distribution map (Ryder and Manry, 1994)

TOTAL RANGE: "Breeds locally from central CA, east OR, s. ID, MT (probably) s. ND, sw MN south into Mex., TX and sw. LA, s. AL, FL and in Cen. and S. Am. Northern winter:

north to s. CA, Baja Calif, S. TX, & LA. Rare straggler to HI" (The Nature Conservancy, undated). Resident in southern part of breeding range, migrates in northern areas.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Breeding not confirmed in state. Winters along the lower Colorado River in southwestern Arizona, in La Paz and Yuma counties. They may use other parts of the state during migration.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Adults walk slowly or rapidly while foraging on land or in shallow water. Young can climb out of nest at age 5-8 days and often seen walking on floating vegetation. Flight is strong and direct with rapid wingbeats, often alternating with gliding, neck and legs outstretched. They have been clocked flying at 30-33 mph. Typically they fly in cohesive flocks in V formation or in long skeins. They are known to soar on thermals, perform elaborate aerial maneuvers, and dive rapidly in free-fall only to pull up suddenly before reaching the ground. Constant preeners that roost close together in communal gatherings with bill tucked in apterium between scapulars and back feathers. They are less aggressive towards conspecifics and heterospecifics that are egrets, herons and other colonial water birds. However, when pressed, they defend nest sites with forward bill thrusts, contact jabbing, and supplanting flights.

REPRODUCTION: Colony breeder, often returning to existing roost sites. Sites are usually in emergent vegetation or low trees and shrubs over shallow water or on the ground on small islands. Clutch size usually 3-4 eggs, incubation 21-22 days. May renest if initial breeding attempt fails. Both parents feed and brood young.

FOOD HABITS: "Typically feeds in freshwater marshes on: crayfishes, frogs, fishes, insects, newts, earthworms, crustaceans, etc." (The Nature Conservancy, undated). Feeds in flooded hay meadows, agricultural fields, and estuarine wetlands (Terres 1980). Feeds in large flocks. Locates prey visually and by tactile probing. May use standing water sources to wash soil from prey items.

HABITAT: Primarily freshwater marshes, swamps, ponds and rivers especially cattail and bulrush marshes. Nests in marshes, in low trees or on ground (bulrushes or reeds) or on floating mat. The world's largest nesting aggregation occurs probably in the marshes around the Great Salt Lake, Utah (D. Paul, in Paton et al. 1992, in NatureServe 2001). Will utilize flooded hay meadows, agricultural fields and estuarine wetlands.

ELEVATION: Elevation ranges between 206 and 215 feet [63-66 m], based on data from the Heritage Data Management System (AGFD, unpublished data, 2002).

PLANT COMMUNITY:

POPULATION TRENDS: Globally secure due mainly to large range; locally fairly common; relatively small number of breeding areas (NatureServe 2001). Global abundance over

10,000 individuals, over 50,000 acres and over 250 miles (NatureServe 2001). Bird population increases in the south-central U.S., may be related to favorable foraging opportunities afforded by expanding crayfish aquaculture (Fleury and Sherry 1995, in NatureServe 2001).

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None (USDI, FWS 1996)
[C2 USDI, FWS 1985, 1989,1991,1994]

STATE STATUS: None

OTHER STATUS: None, USDA FS Region 3, 2013
[Forest Service Sensitive USDA, FS Region 3 2007]
[None (USDA, FS Region 3 1999)]
[Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 1988)]
None (USDI, BLM AZ 2005)
[Bureau of Land Management Sensitive (USDI, BLM AZ 2000)]

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: Vulnerable to habitat alteration, fluctuating water levels, disturbance during nesting, and pesticide contamination.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS:

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: FWS – Cibola National Wildlife Refuge.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Revised: 1995-07-25 (DBI)
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