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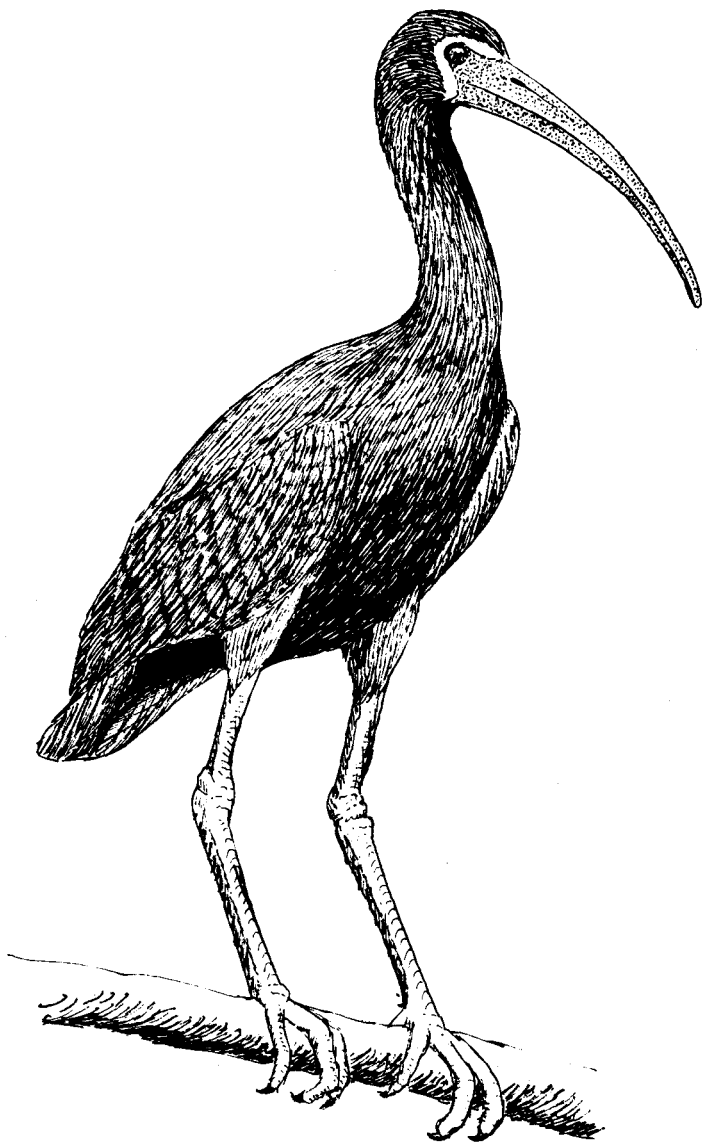
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FAMILY THRESKIORNITH- IDAE (IBISES AND SPOON- BILLS)



White-faced Ibis

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*

Breeding Status: A rare and erratic nester. Bred in Barton County, Kansas, in 1951 and 1962 and near Tucumcari, New Mexico, in 1973. There is a 1904 breeding record for Clay County, Nebraska, and breeding records for Jackson County, Minnesota, in 1894 and 1895. In 1978 nesting occurred at Long Lake N.W.R., North Dakota, and near Edgemont, Fall River County, South Dakota.

Breeding Habitat: Freshwater marshes or brackish marshes in the western and southern states are the typical breeding habitat of this subspecies; cattails, bulrushes, or phragmites are the usual vegetation.

Nest Location: The species breeds colonially. Nests are on the ground in dense vegetation and are constructed of dry emergent plants. When built in bushes or in trees surrounded by water, the nest may have a substantial platform of twigs, but more leafy materials are present than in heron nests.

Clutch Size and Incubation Period: From 3 to 4 eggs, dull blue with a smooth or finely pitted surface. Incubation period is 21 days. One brood per season.

Time of Breeding: In Texas, egg records extend from April 20 to July 2. At least 13 nests were present in Kansas in 1962; nesting records there are for June and early July, as are those for Minnesota.

Breeding Biology: Remarkably little is known of the biology of this species. Monogamous pair bonds are formed, and both sexes help construct the nest, which takes about 2 days. Incubation begins with the last egg. Both sexes also incubate, and during nest relief they do mutual billing and preening and utter guttural cooing notes. The adults continue to add material to the nest during incubation and the fledging period, about 6 weeks. The adults feed the young by regurgitation, with the young inserting their bills into that of the parent, or at times disgorge food into the nest to be picked up by the young. By the time the young are about 7 weeks old they fly with their parents to the foraging grounds, returning with them at night for roosting.

Suggested Reading: Palmer 1962; Burger and Miller 1977.

