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Second Record of White Ibis in North Dakota

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Notes

SECOND RECORD OF WHITE IBIS IN NORTH DAKOTA – The breeding range of the white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) in the United States is generally restricted to coastal regions along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean north to Virginia (Frederick et al. 1996, *Conserv. Biol.* 10:203-216). During the breeding season, the white ibis is nomadic and highly opportunistic in its use of unpredictable food resources (Frederick et al. 1996; Bildstein 1993, *White ibis: wetland wanderer*. Smithsonian Inst. Press, Washington, D.C.). There is one previous record of a white ibis in North Dakota on 4 August 1954 (Gammell and Huenecke 1955, *Audubon Field Notes* 9:34-36; Lokemoen 1979, *Prairie Nat.* 11:97-110). Here, we report an account of the second white ibis for North Dakota.

During surveys of wetland-dependent breeding birds in Kidder County, North Dakota, on 20 June 1995 at 0900 CST, JWM observed a white, long-legged, long-necked wading bird with dark wing tips fly 3-4 m overhead. The bird landed out of sight in a semipermanent wetland basin. The wetland (T43N R74W, Section 35, NE 1/4) was located in a Waterfowl Production Area directly south of Lake Josephine and 2.4 km northwest of Tuttle. The bird was seen again wading in the wetland, 15 minutes after the first sighting, and it was identified by JWM as a white ibis based on the following characteristics. The bird's bill was long and strongly decurved, and the bill, facial skin, and legs were pink. The bird's plumage was white with no brown or gray streaking, which indicates that the bird was an adult white ibis. The white ibis did not vocalize and was not associated with any other birds. The bird flew from the wetland and was not observed again on that day. LDI returned to the site on 22 June, but did not relocate the bird.

Most inland records of vagrant or dispersing white ibis in the United States occur during late summer or early fall (Kushlan and Bildstein 1992, *White ibis in The birds of North America*, No. 9 [A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, eds.]. Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, D.C.: The American Ornithologists' Union). Inland records of white ibis were reported in 1995 in several other Great Plains states, including Iowa (5 - 16 September, immature, first state record; Kent 1996, *Iowa Bird Life* 66:16-26), South Dakota (14 - late July, adult, fourth state record; Berkey 1995, *Nat. Audubon Soc. Field Notes* 49:943-945; Palmer 1995, *South Dakota Bird Notes* 47:94-99), and Minnesota (13 May, adult, first state record; Towle and Schumacher 1995,

Loon 67:71-72). All of the above observations, including the North Dakota sighting, represented single birds, and most occurred during early or mid summer. Towle and Schumacher (1995) suggested that weather patterns at the time of their observation may have been responsible for the occurrence of the adult white ibis in Minnesota. The wide range in dates and widespread locations of the inland records in 1995, however, suggest that these vagrant movements may have been stimulated by factors on the species' breeding grounds. The white ibis is known to abandon nesting locations when breeding and feeding opportunities become degraded (Frederick et al. 1996).

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