

095-01-1995

Department of Biology
Williams College
Williamstown MA 01267
21 October 1995

Mr. Nick Pulcinella, chairman
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
Apartment No. 6 201 Elm Avenue
Swarthmore PA 19081

Dear Nick:

I am enclosing a written description of a Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) that I saw in Centre County on 23 May 1995. I wrote down my observations immediately following observation of the bird, and then typed up the enclosed report. However, I then moved from State College, leaving behind the written report (and most of my other worldly goods). It's been total chaos since, but I finally got back to State College last weekend, and I managed to pick up a lot of stuff, including the report that I'm now sending along. So, even though this record may appear to be dated, it was, in fact, written down almost immediately following the observation.

Sincerely yours,

Ted Floyd

encl.

cc: Frank and Barb Haas

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RARE BIRD REPORT

Species: Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

Number Observed: 1

Date: Tuesday, 23 May 1995

Location: Penn State University retention pond, Centre County

Time of Observation: 6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Distance to Bird: variable, from 15 to 150 meters

Lighting Conditions: variable, with some overcast and setting sun

Other observers present: Carolyn and Kurt Mahan

Subsequent observers: many members of the State College Bird Club, Inc.

Optical Equipment: 10X40 binoculars, 45X scope

Description of Bird:

I first saw the bird at a distance of at least 150 meters. Through the scope at this distance it clearly appeared to be a *Plegadis* ibis, so I got much closer, to (a) confirm the identification to genus and (b) see if I could place the bird to species.

a. Identification as a *Plegadis* ibis. The bird was clearly a *Plegadis* ibis. It was much larger than the ducks and shorebirds with which it fed. It was dark chestnut all over, with long dark legs and a strongly decurved dark bill. At closer range, I could see that the wings and tail contained extensive green and purple shades that were not present so extensively on the rest of the bird. It fed actively in the mud, picking in the mud and sometimes sweeping through it. It put into flight many times, and it jumped around quite a lot. Several times it called, producing a loud and deep growling sound. The large size, bill shape, leg length, and feeding behavior of this bird ruled out nearly any other bird except for an ibis in the genus *Plegadis*. On the one hand, the deep chestnut color and green-and-purple wings suggested against the large shorebirds with decurved bills. On the other hand, the strongly decurved bill suggested against other species of large dark wading birds.

b. Identification as *Plegadis falcinellus*. When dealing with Pennsylvania *Plegadis* ibises, it is very important to consider the possibility of *Plegadis chihi* (White-faced Ibis), for which there is no currently-accepted Pennsylvania record. I am positive this bird was not a *chihi*, for several reasons. The color of the bare parts between the bill and the eye was dark slate-gray. The bill itself was dull brownish. The bare parts between the bill and eye were edged above and below by pale whitish lines, but the white did not join around behind the eye. Also, the whitish lines did not

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join around underneath the bill. The bird's eyes were dark brownish; at no point could I discern any reddish coloration in the eyes. The legs were distinctive, too; they were gray-green, but with chestnut-colored knee joints.

c. Other Notes. The bird was discovered independently by other birders the next day, and it was reported during a meeting of the State College Bird Club also the next day. Many people in attendance at the meeting saw the bird, but I am not aware if additional documentation exists. There have been at least 8 previous records of Glossy Ibis from Centre County, and maybe more. I have seen thousands of White-faced Ibises in the southwest, plus thousands of Glossies in the east. In the southwest, in particular, I was very interested in the problem of vagrant Glossies. Therefore, I have considerable experience in trying to look for Glossies in huge flocks of White-faces. It was interesting to be faced with the opposite problem in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: **Glossy Ibis (Plegadis falcinellus)**

Date of Sighting: **23 May 1995 to 23 May 1995**

Location: **PENN STATE UNIVERSITY RETENTION POND**

County: **CENTRE**

Observer(s): **Ted Floyd**

Date of Submission: **1995**

Submitted by: **Ted Floyd**

Written Description: **YES** Photo: **NO** Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
S. Feldstein			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

5-1-96