

White-faced Ibis - *Plegadis chihi*

Abundance: Uncommon

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G5 S1B

Population Status: population size is restricted but extirpation is not imminent; only 5 nesting locations are known statewide

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Human Activity): limiting factors are severe; as with all colonial nesting waterbirds, there is limited available habitat, which is not likely to increase without intensive management and cooperation with private landowners and other land management agencies; sensitive to human disturbance during nesting

Comment:

Introduction

The breeding range of the White-faced Ibis includes several discrete populations in South America, Mexico, the western US, and the Gulf coast. It winters from southern California, east to Louisiana, and south to South America. Although it is scattered across most of Wyoming, the White-faced Ibis is considered an uncommon summer resident. It was documented nesting at 6 different sites between 1982 and 1994.

Habitat

The White-faced Ibis inhabits marshes, wet-moist meadows, lakes, and irrigated meadows. It nests on the ground in bulrushes, cattails, or reeds; on a floating mat; or in a low tree. It usually forages close to emergent vegetation.

Problems

- h Breeding habitat in Wyoming is disjunct and secure breeding sites are limited in distribution.
- h The availability and suitability of breeding sites can be unstable between years as a result of fluctuating water levels and changes in land use practices.
- h This species is sensitive to human disturbance during nesting.

Conservation Actions

- h Continue inventory and monitoring efforts and implement the Monitoring Wyoming's Birds grid-based monitoring program to determine density and population trends.
- h Maintain a minimum of 3 White-faced Ibis breeding locations and 50 breeding pairs of White-faced Ibises in Wyoming.
- h Maintain stable water levels throughout the nesting season in areas where this species breeds.
- h Minimize human disturbance at nesting sites during the breeding season.

Monitoring/Research

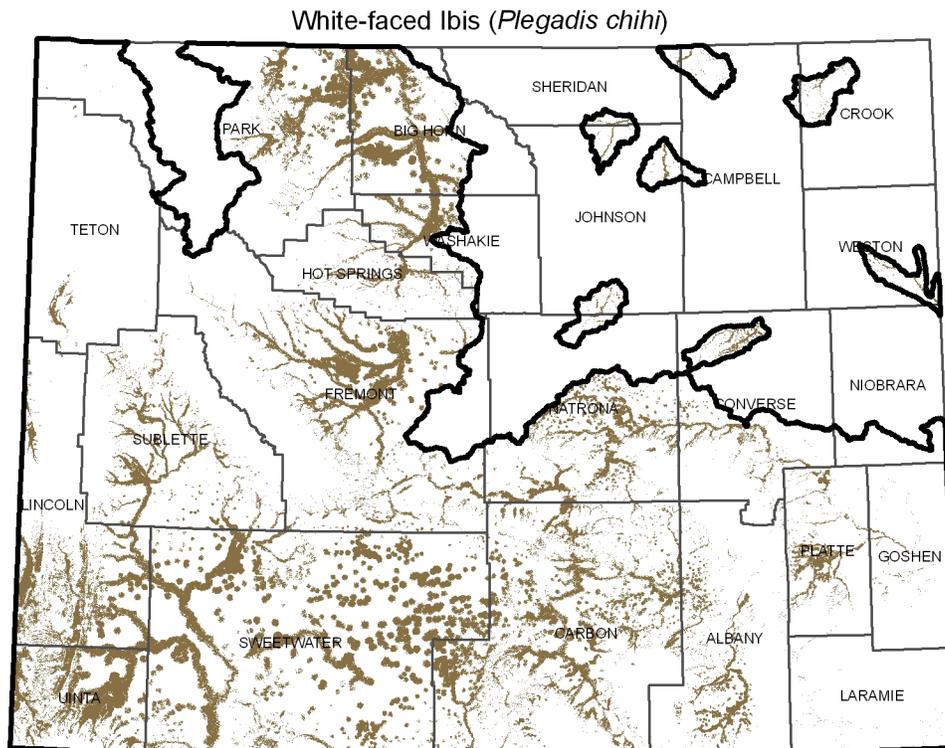
Monitor known nesting colonies a minimum of every three years to determine occupancy and estimate the number of nesting pairs.

Recent Developments

Drought-related habitat changes have degraded some of the historic nesting sites and reduced the number of nesting pairs detected during the past several years. A cooperative, 11-state colonial waterbird monitoring program was initiated in 2009 with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This will conclude in 2011, with an Atlas of all known nesting colonies in the 11 western states produced in 2012.

References

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- Oakleaf B, Cerovski AO, Luce B. 1996. Nongame bird and mammal plan: a plan for inventories and management of nongame birds and mammals in Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Nongame Program. 183 p.
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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.