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Fact sheets

# Ibis

## Glossy Ibis

The cosmopolitan Glossy Ibis is the smallest ibis in Australia, it looks black when seen from a distance. It is only when seen close up that its red-brown colouring and the metallic iridescent sheen on the wings become noticeable. In flight they resemble Black Cormorants, their regular flapping alternating with short glides, but they hold their necks lower, inclined towards the ground.

## Habitat

The Glossy Ibis frequents at swamps, lake margins and flats, and fields near water throughout Australia. The Glossy Ibis is Nomadic or migratory and is seen occasionally in eastern Victoria but mainly occurs in northern Queensland and central Australia.

## Diet

Glossy Ibises are gregarious birds and feed in small flocks of two or more in shallow freshwater swamps and mud flats, particularly where trees and bushes provide shelter. They walk along and probe their bills into the water and mud, searching for frogs, snails, spiders and aquatic insects. Sometimes they eat beetles and grasshoppers, which they pick off plants.

## Breeding

Nesting in small colonies of 10-20 pairs, Glossy Ibises may breed within colonies of Straw-necked Ibises and Scared Ibises. They start breeding later than the other Ibises, September â€“ April and build their nests sometimes lower or just above the water. A nest platform is built of sticks and lined with aquatic plant material. The common nest site is between upright branches of bushes or tree growing in water. Both sexes incubate up to 6 eggs but mainly 3 green/blue eggs for 21 days.

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