

ANOTHER BREEDING COLONY OF THE GLOSSY IBIS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Parker *et al.* (1979) listed five breeding localities of the Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* in South Australia (four from the Lake Alexandrina region and one at Bool Lagoon in the South-East), and a report from the Diamantina in the far North-East of a few nesting pairs, which alludes to opportunistic nesting by this species. Breeding was detected in only eleven one degree squares in the compilation of the *Atlas of Australian Birds* (Blakers *et al.* 1984). Seven of these were in the Murray-Darling biogeographical region as defined in the *Atlas*. Two breeding localities (both in the Murray Valley) are listed by Cowling & Lowe (1981) in their review of ibis breeding in Victoria. The known breeding colonies of this species seem inadequate to account for the large total population (*cf* Blakers *et al.* 1984), so reports of new colonies and opportunistic breeding by this species are of particular interest.

On 19 December 1981, we located eight nests of the Glossy Ibis in flooded park-like woodland 18 km SW of Keith. The wetland was one of several in a gently undulating area beside the Black Range and it appeared to be a depression that had filled from exceptional winter flooding.

The nests were all built on branches of slender eucalypts we thought to be Pink Gums *Eucalyptus fasciculosa*, at heights ranging from three to five metres. Each nest contained bluish eggs that in some cases were visible through the underside of the loosely constructed nest bowl.

Single nests of the Pacific Heron *Ardea pacifica*, Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica* and Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* were interspersed among those of the Glossy Ibis. All eleven nests were located in five trees spaced at most five metres apart. Adult birds of these four species as well as three White-faced Herons *A. novaehollandiae*, 55 Straw-necked Ibises *T. spinicollis*, a pair of Yellow-billed Spoonbills *Platalea flavipes* and a Royal Spoonbill *P. regia* were perched in nearby trees or flying overhead.

Unfortunately, no subsequent visits to the Black Range colony were possible. The area certainly represents a new breeding locality,

however temporary, for the Glossy Ibis in South Australia.

During a survey of 93 other wetland areas in the South-East of South Australia, from December 1980 to December 1981, we only recorded nesting by the Glossy Ibis at Bool Lagoon (maximum of 250 birds present). We saw thirty at Mullins Swamp on 26 January, but found no nests of Glossy Ibises among those of the Sacred and Straw-necked Ibises. We saw no Glossy Ibises at the mixed ibis colony in Blue Tea-Tree Swamp in the Marshes Forest Reserve.

Nest sites recorded for the Glossy Ibis in South Australia include beds of reeds and rushes, lignum and shrubs or trees of *Melaleuca* spp standing in water (e.g. Parker *et al.* 1979). The nesting at Black Range in 1981 may constitute the first use of eucalypts for Glossy Ibises in this State. One of us (RJ) has recorded this species nesting in *Eucalyptus rudis* at Chandala Swamp near Gingin, Western Australia.

For a detailed account of breeding by Glossy Ibises in a lignum swamp see Lowe (1983).

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