

Friends of Deerfield Island Park

July 2021 Meeting Reminder

Save the Date: Our next Board/Members Meeting will be on Friday, July 30 10:00 am. The Parks Department is close to opening the island, but with no official date yet set, our next meeting will still be a Zoom meeting.

Watch your email for Zoom details and agenda to follow next week.

Minutes of June meeting is now available on our website: [Click Here](#)

You can now view the past 2021 newsletters on our website. [Click here](#)



FLORA & FAUNA

American White Ibis

by Diana R. Lopez

Gathering, migrating, feeding, breeding and roosting in groups, the American White Ibis is considered to be one of the most highly recognizable, numerous and sociable of all large wading birds in the southeastern United States. With each step, and in groups, its bright red legs wade in stride like a regimented parade while its curved, orange bill sweeps from side to side stirring up crustaceans and small fish along the fresh, salt and brackish waters of shallow wetlands, estuaries and mangrove lagoons. Opportunistic egrets can often be seen following behind ibis groups to capitalize on any prey or food scraps churned up or overlooked by their efficient, sweeping and probing bills. When feeding on land, groups of ibis heads can be identified bobbing in syncopated rhythm while beaks stab and probe repeatedly, intent on capturing and feasting on unsuspecting insects, frogs and small snakes.

Identification

The body of the ibis is football shaped with an elongated neck, spindly legs and a long, downward curved bill. Except for the fact that the mature female is slightly smaller than the male, both sexes are indistinguishable. Their coloring is almost entirely white, save for their black wing tips and brilliant reddish-pink legs and bill. In sharp contrast, the bare skin around their vivid blue eyes is reddish pink. The ibis holds its neck straight out in flight and is easily identified by its outstretched wings, the tips of which appear to have been dipped in black ink.

Breeding and Nesting

White Ibis males are known to be extremely protective. Ibis breeding generally first occurs at age two, and nest sites can be found both on the ground or in the branches of mangroves, other leafy trees and thickets, usually 2'-15' above ground or water, and sometimes even higher. Both the male and female ibis contribute to the nest building. The male collects and brings most of the material (sticks, cordgrass or reeds) to the nest site, but it is the female who does most of the

construction work. Eggs usually number 2-3, but sometimes up to 5 eggs in a clutch are noted. They are pale blue-green to white in color and blotched with brown. Incubation is shared by both sexes and averages approximately 21 days. Both parents feed the young who can make short flights after 4-5 weeks, are capable of sustained flight at 6 weeks, and who may leave the colony to forage with adults after 7 weeks. The coloring of immature or juvenile ibis (most commonly seen in fall through winter) is brown above and white below the body midline; its neck is streaked with brown, and its legs and bill are reddish-pink like their parents'.

Habitat

White Ibis are common to Deerfield Island and its environs. At dusk they can be seen in significant numbers within the sheltered Mangrove Lagoon of Deerfield Island where they gather, roost and co-exist in groups or colonies where they, along with a variety of other wading birds including egrets and herons, comprise an awe inspiring, peaceful and ethereal and other-world experience.

Did You Know?

A "congregation", "stand", and "wedge" are just some of the collective nouns used to describe a group of ibis.



Ibis in Flight



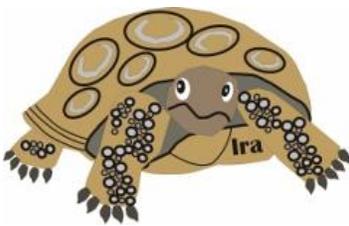
Ibis Flock in Flight



Ibis Flock Feeding



Ibis Flock Perching in Mangrove Lagoon



Friends of Deerfield Island Park (FODIP)

Formed in March 2015

We are dedicated to preserving and protecting our unique green island as a natural habitat for native plants and for the island's animal inhabitants. We have been approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for this purpose.

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