



## Sacred ibis

(*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)

Originated in Sub-Saharan Africa. Introduced as an ornamental species in France.

### Description

- White birds with a featherless black head and neck (the skin is black) and wing feathers tipped in black
- The birds stand 65 to 75 centimetres tall with a wingspan of 110 to 120 cm
- Weight approximately 1.5 kilograms
- The long, thick bill is black and curves down
- The average life span is approximately 20 years
- Young birds have feathers on the head and neck, but progressively lose them at the age of 2 to 3 years

### Ecology and reproduction

- Preferred habitats are large, open spaces near wetlands:
  - agricultural areas, tilled land, bird farms in open fields
  - dumps containing food waste
  - more or less wet meadows, marsh fields and flooded reed beds, coastal habitats, etc.
- The birds gather at night in groups of up to several hundred
- The species is an opportunistic carnivore consuming a wide range of prey, including invertebrates, amphibians, fish, bird eggs and chicks, etc.
- The birds often feed in groups and with other species
- Breeding takes place in large groups with nests positioned very close to one another
- Eggs are laid between April and July:
  - 2 to 3 eggs on average per season
  - incubation for approximately 28 days
  - the chicks leave the nest after 14 to 21 days and can fly after 40 days
- The species is gregarious and highly tolerant of human contact

### Documentation

- Sarat E. (coord.) 2012. Vertébrés exotiques envahissants du bassin de la Loire (hors poissons) : connaissances et expériences de gestion. Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage, Plan Loire Grandeur Nature, 128 pp.
- Clergeau P., Yésou P., Chadenas C. 2005. Ibis sacré *Threskiornis aethiopicus*, état actuel et impacts potentiels des populations introduites en France métropolitaine. Rapport Inra-ONCFS, Rennes et Nantes. 53 pp.

Author: Emilie Mazaubert, Irstea

#### Classification

Order	Pelecaniformes
Family	<i>Threskiornithidae</i>
Genus	<i>Threskiornis</i>
Species	<i>T. aethiopicus</i> (Latham, 1790)

