



Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) with individual colour bands

Australian White Ibis are, as the name suggests, a native species. White ibis were uncommon within the Sydney region thirty years ago and were generally seen in small numbers (<10) feeding in and around wetlands. Over the last thirty years their numbers have increased across Sydney, so much so that in December 2003 a Sydney wide count recorded 6000 ibis (NSW NPWS). Unfortunately, this increase has seen white ibis be branded as a 'nuisance' species.

In response to the white ibis management issue, research is currently under way that involves banding white ibis within the Sydney basin, aiming to monitor movement, habitat preferences and survival. All banded ibis (see photo example) have been fitted with a metal Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) band, which is individually numbered (right ankle). Additionally, birds are fitted with a site-specific master colour band (e.g. blue – right knee), which allows the banding location of a bird to be easily determined in the field. Lastly, each ibis is banded with two colour bands (e.g., pink/pink – left ankle), that allows easy identification of individual birds without having to read the numbers on the metal ABBBS band. There are eleven colours (pictured from left to right): red, orange, pink, light blue, blue, pale green, yellow, green, white, black and purple.

Please report all observations of banded white ibis to the ABBBS (www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/). The critical information to record is the site master colour and the two individual colours (e.g. blue, pink/pink), or the number on the metal band (e.g. 121 54321). Partial observations are still valuable, so please report these to John Martin (9339 6678, john.martin@cp.nsw.gov.au).

For more information you can visit the Birds in Backyards or National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) websites and search for 'white ibis'.