

Nesting of White Ibis
in Warren County, Mississippi

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On 21 June 1975, Louis Cashman and I visited a heronry in east Warren County, Mississippi. The heronry was located in west Carter Lake in the center of Section 14, T 14N, R 4E, on the property of William Ferris. Carter Lake is adjacent to the Big Black River.

Expecting to find Cattle Egrets (Bulbulcus ibis) and Little Blue Herons (Egretta caerulea) we were surprised to also see White Ibis (Eudocimus ibis) among the birds circling the heronry. Boarding a small boat, we approached the nesting area and began to see White Ibis sitting on nests. We estimated that there were approximately 100 ibis nests among thousands of nesting Cattle Egrets, Little Blue Herons, and Anhingas (Anhinga anhinga). About 90% of the birds were Cattle Egrets.

On 5 July 1975, we returned to the heronry and found White Ibis nests with eggs and young. Photographs of these nests (Figs. 1 and 2) are on file in the zoological collections at Mississippi State University and at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.

On 15 July 1975, some immature White Ibis were flying with adults. No further visits were made in 1975. On 13 May 1976, we again visited the heronry and saw adult White Ibis, but no ibis nests. The heronry was abandoned in 1977.

On 25 June 1978, another heronry was located about 10 miles north of the Carter Lake site near the Big Black River. This heronry was on the "Bobb" property. We were unable to get close to the heronry, but did see several White Ibis with the herons and egrets.

To my knowledge, these observations and photographs document the first nesting of White Ibis in Mississippi.

Figs. 1 and 2. White Ibis nests with eggs (top) and young (bottom) at a heronry in west Carter Lake, Warren County, Mississippi, 5 July 1975.

