

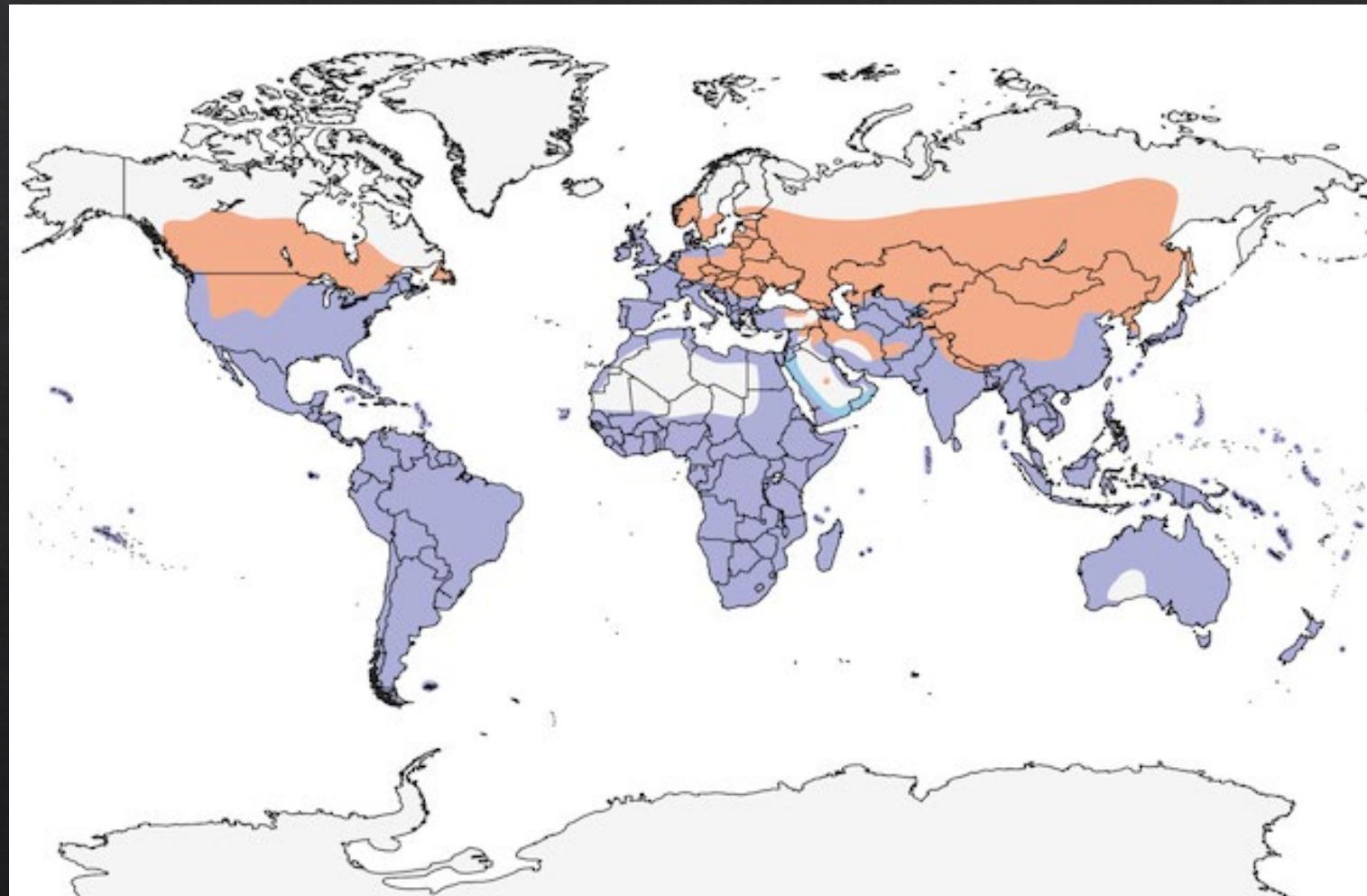
# Herons



Photos by Greg Lavaty

Order: Pelecaniformes

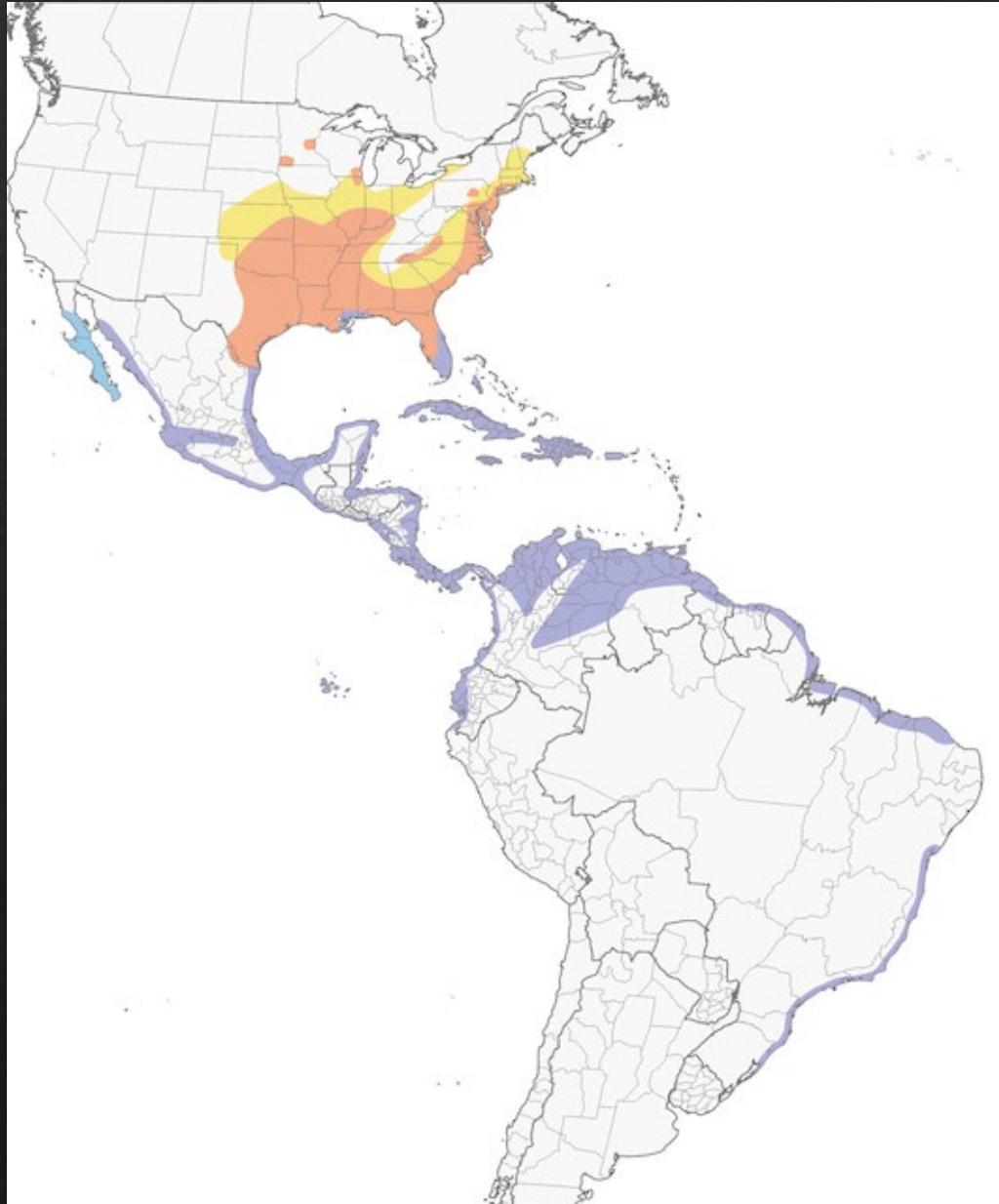
Family: Ardeidae (herons, egrets and bitterns)– 18 genera, 68 species worldwide, 12 species regular in ABA area



# Night-Herons



# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



- *Nyctanassa violacea*
- Coastal marshes
- Inland wooded swamps, riparian woodlands
- Most winter in subtropics and tropics
- Central TX – Fairly common in summer, uncommon in winter
- Texas Coast – Common Mar-Oct, uncommon in winter

# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



## Adult

- Slate gray body, striped head
- Bill is short, thick, black, and dagger-like
- Heron-like structure and posture

# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



## Juvenile

- Dull bluish sheen to body
- Dark bill contrasts with paler face
- Small whitish spots and white edges on wing coverts
- Heron-like structure and posture

# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

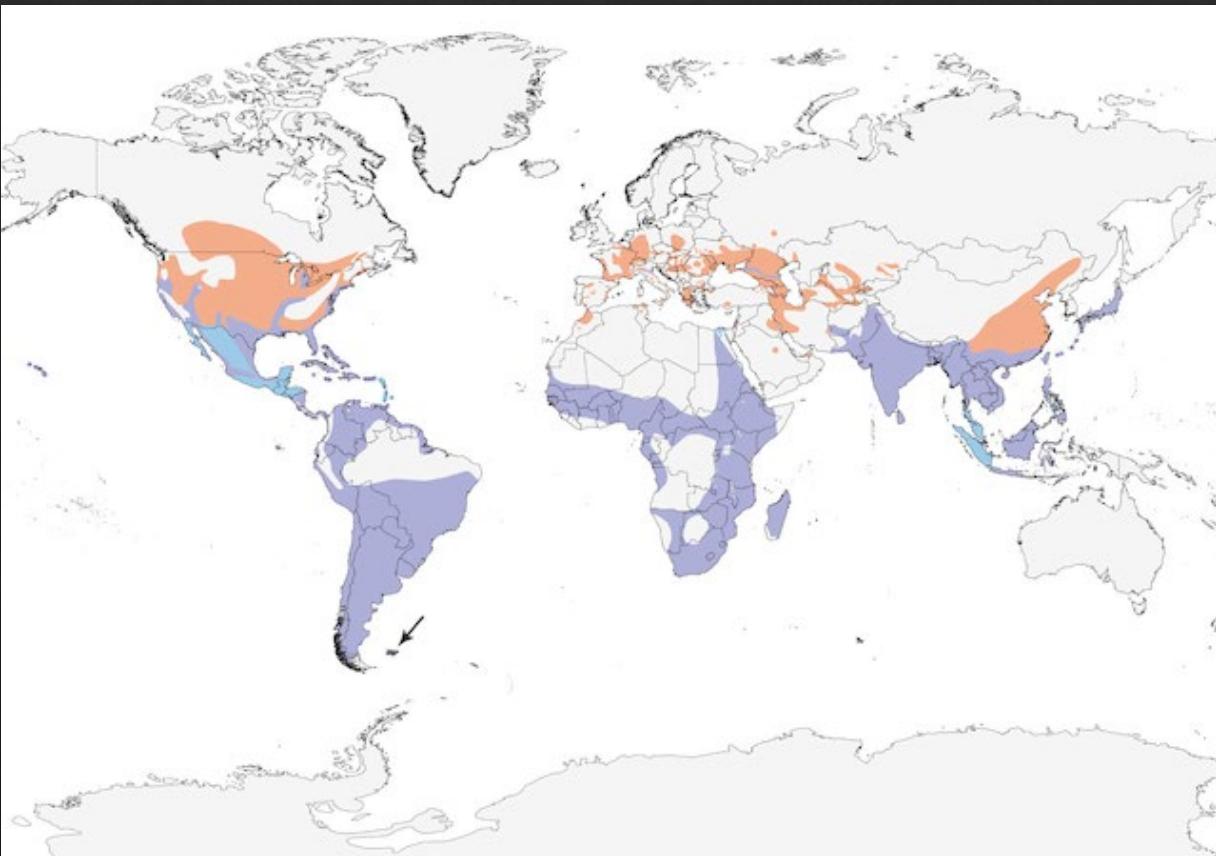


# Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



Legs extend well past tail

# Black-crowned Night-Heron



- *Nycticorax nycticorax*
- “Waterfront Thug”
- Widespread in fresh and salt water habitats
- Roosts in trees and bushes
- Central TX – Uncommon Aug - Mar
- Texas Coast – Common all year

# Black-crowned Night-Heron



## Adult

- Pale gray with contrasting dark crown and back
- Stocky, no neck
- Shorter legs and longer, slightly downcurved bill
- Red or orange eye

# Black-crowned Night-Heron

## Juvenile

- Flat, dull brown color
- Pale lower mandible
- Large white spots on wing coverts
- Note shorter legs, less heron-like structure and posture



# Black-crowned Night-Heron



# Black-crowned Night-Heron



Only feet extend past tail

# Great Egret



# Great Egret

## Adult

- Largest white heron
- Long legs and neck
- Black legs and feet
- Bright yellow bill



# Great Egret

Stalks slowly with head held high



# Snowy Egret



# Snowy Egret



## Adult

- Dark legs with yellow feet
- Thin black bill, yellow lores

# Snowy Egret



Young birds have variably  
greenish-yellow legs

# Snowy Egret

Very active feeder, often  
crouching with neck coiled



# Cattle Egret



# Cattle Egret



## Adult

- Smaller and shorter than Snowy
- Thick neck
- Short yellow bill
- Legs yellow in breeding plumage, dark in nonbreeding

# Cattle Egret



## Juvenile

- Dark bill and legs

# Cattle Egret

- Struts with head-bobbing action
- Usually in short grass field



# Little Blue Heron



# Little Blue Heron

## Juvenile

- Same size as Snowy
- Thicker, tapered, bicolored bill, gray lores
- Dull greenish legs

# Little Blue Heron



- Subtle dark tips on primaries

# Little Blue Heron



- Year-old birds mottled with gray

# Little Blue Heron



Stalks slowly with neck  
forward and bill angled down

# Reddish Egret



# Reddish Egret



## Adult

- Shaggy plumes
- Long dark legs, long neck
- Bicolored bill is long and heavy

# Reddish Egret



## Juvenile

- Dark bill

# Reddish Egret

Active, dancing foraging style



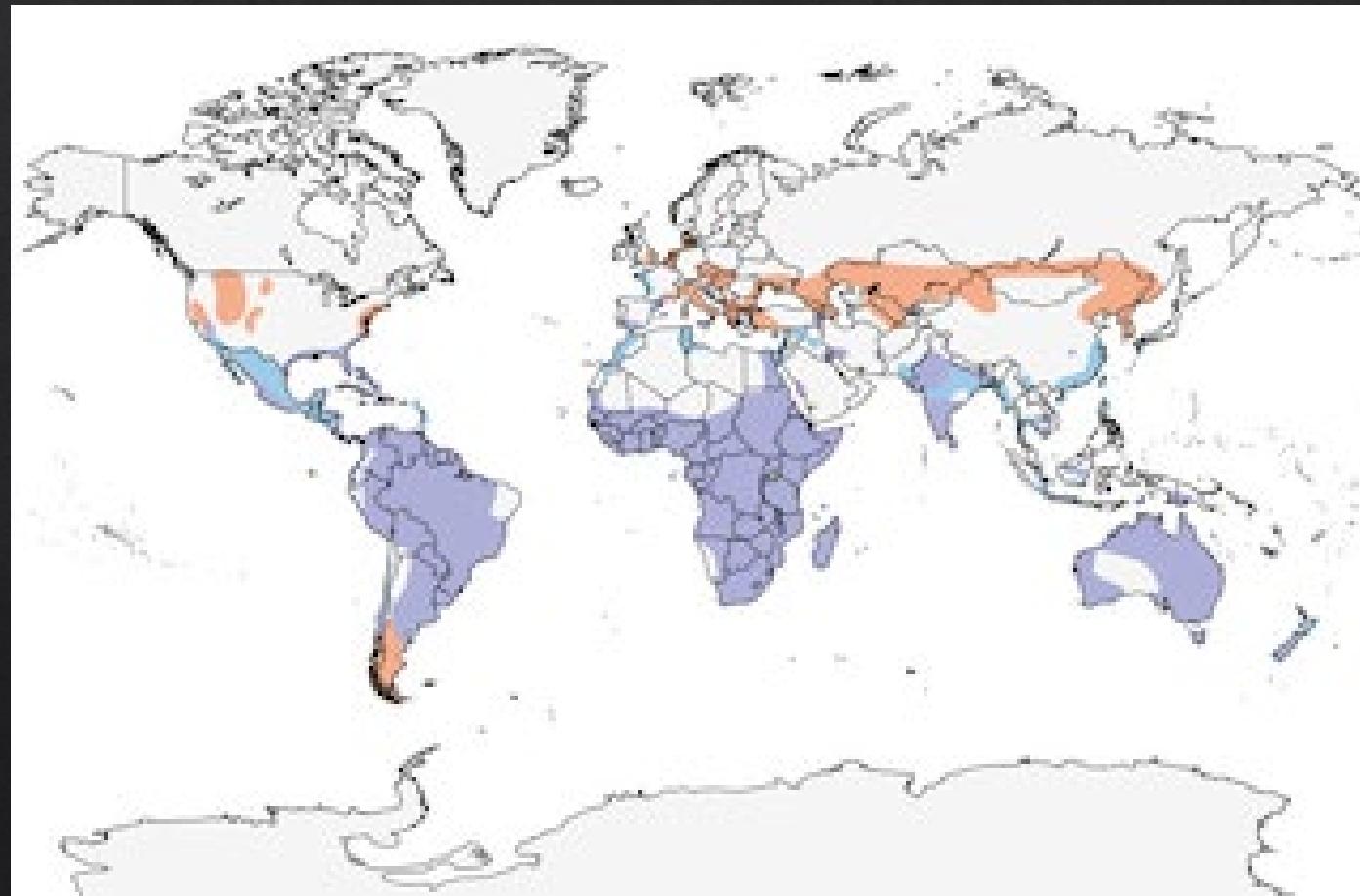
# Ibises



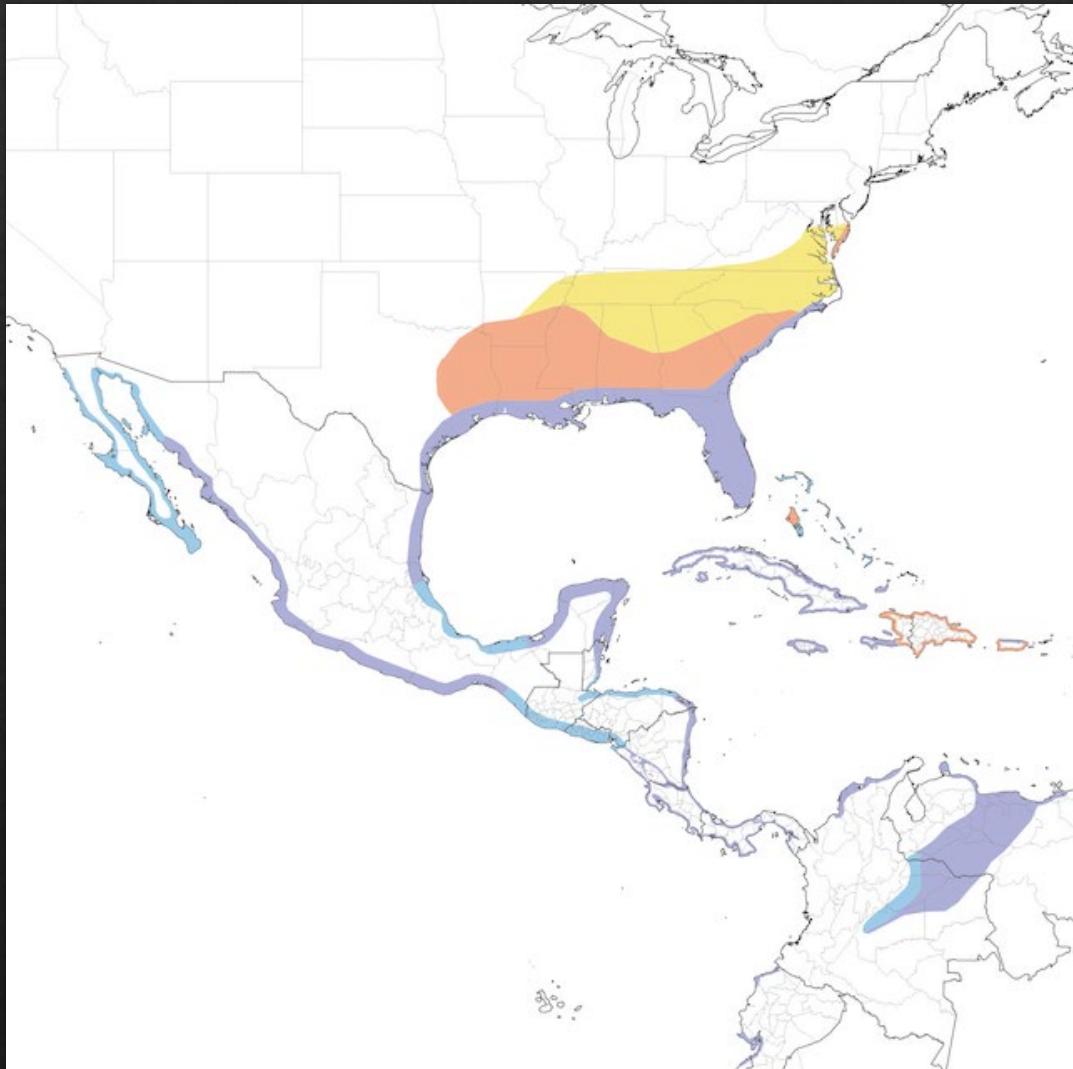
Photos by Greg Lavaty

Order: Pelecaniformes

Family: Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills) – 13 genera, 36 species worldwide,  
4 species regular in ABA area



# White Ibis



- *Eudocimus albus*
- Coastal marshes
- Freshwater marshes and ponds
- Nests in colonies in trees, mangroves and swamps
- Central TX – Uncommon to fairly common July-Oct
- Texas Coast – Common all year

# White Ibis

## Adult

- All white with black wingtips
- Orange-red bill and legs



# White Ibis



# White Ibis



## Juvenile

- Brown and dingy white
- Orange-pink bill and legs

# White Ibis



## Juvenile

- White rump

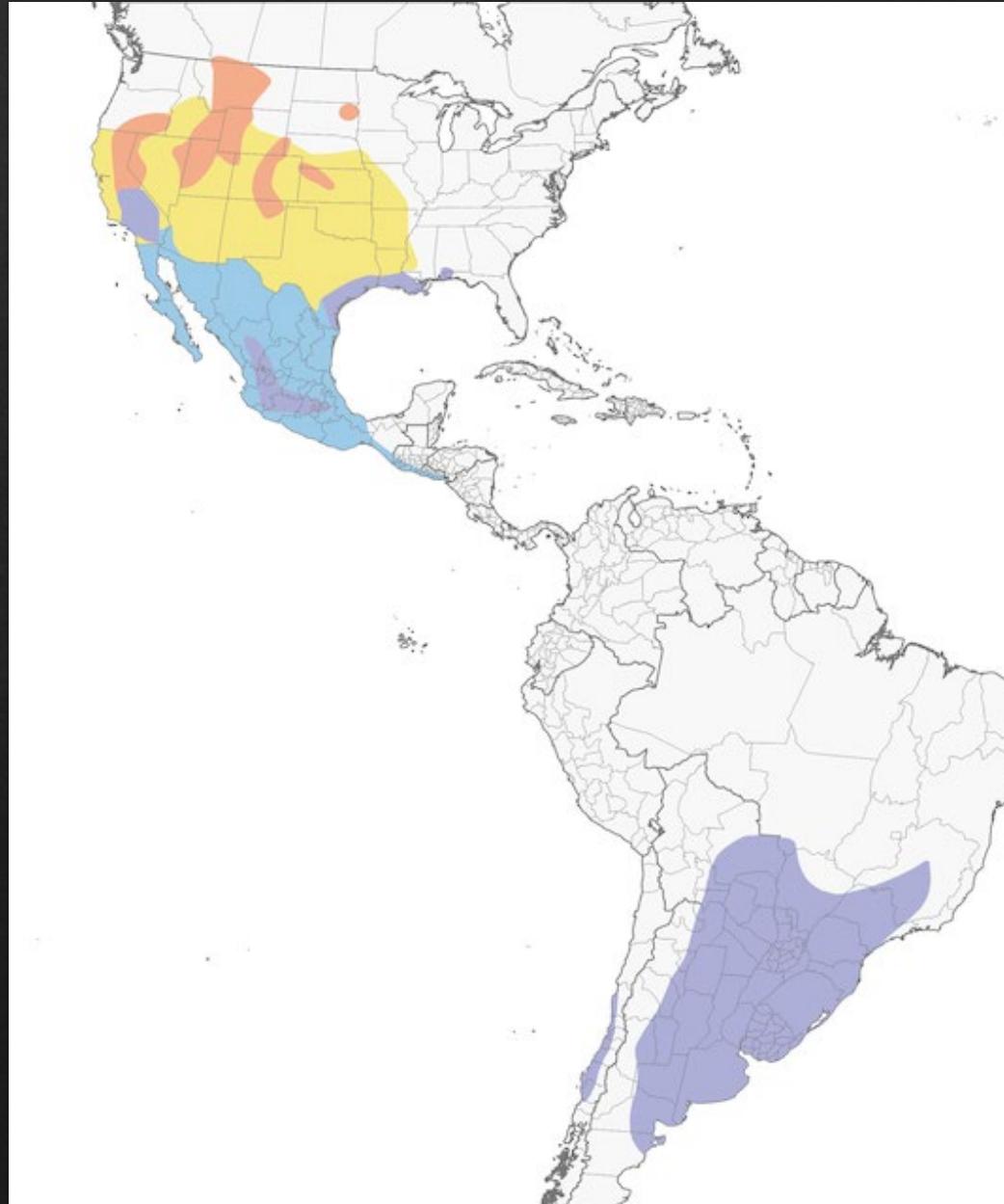
# White Ibis



## 1<sup>st</sup> Summer

- Gradually molt to adult plumage

# White-faced Ibis



- *Plegadis chihi*
- Fresh and salt marshes
- Flooded fields, pastures
- Very social, roosts in large numbers
- Central TX – Uncommon spring migrant, fairly common in fall
- Texas Coast – Common summer resident, uncommon in winter

# White-faced Ibis



## Breeding

- Full white border around red face
- Red iris
- Greenish wings with golden and rose tones

# White-faced Ibis



# White-faced Ibis



## Non-Breeding Adult

- Duller overall than breeding
- Red iris

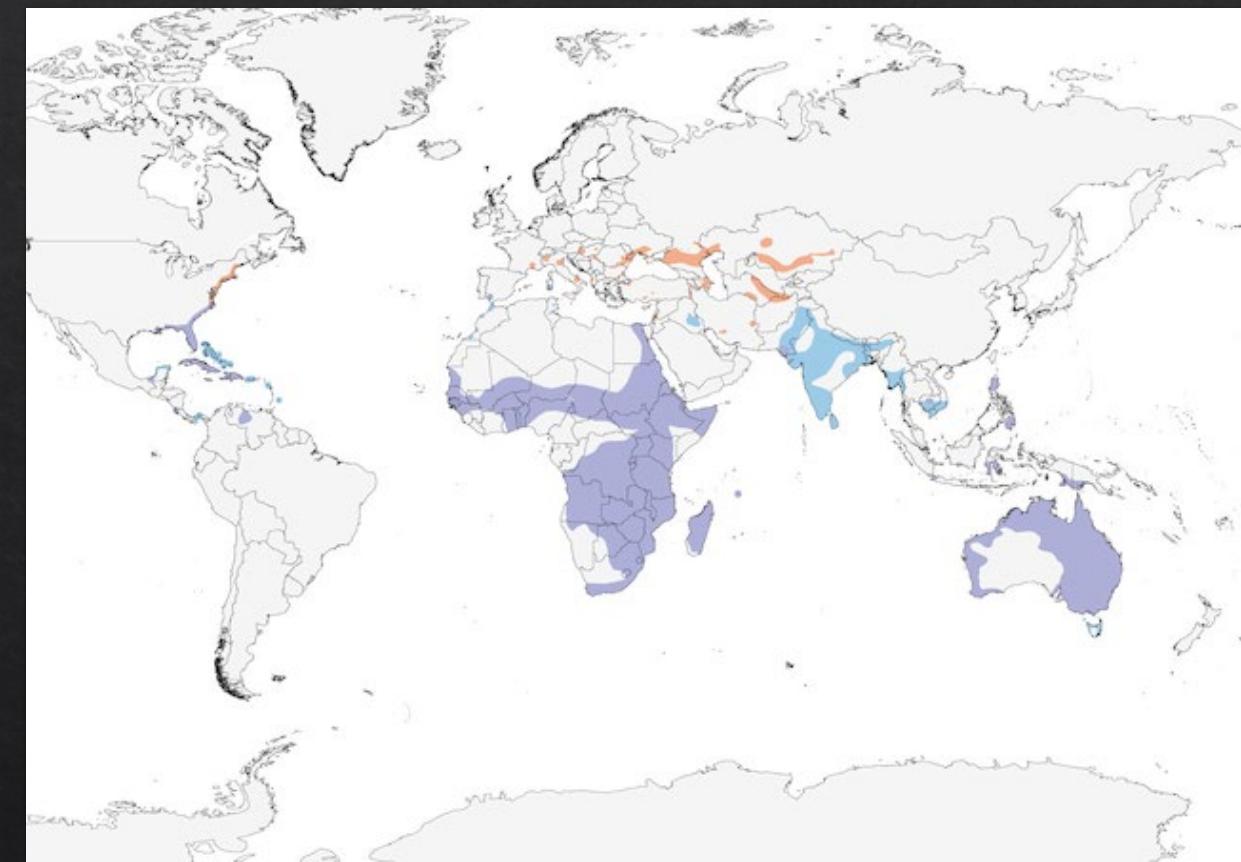
# White-faced Ibis



## Juvenile

- Duller than adult non-breeding
- Has dark iris until Feb., indistinguishable from Glossy

# Glossy Ibis



- *Plegadis falcinellus*
- Fresh and salt marshes
- Primarily coastal
- Very social, roosts in large numbers
- Central TX – A few spring records, rare Aug-Sep
- Texas Coast – Uncommon but increasing summer resident, rare in winter

# Glossy Ibis



## Breeding

- Narrow pale edge around gray face
- Brown iris
- Darker blue-green sheen

# Glossy Ibis

## Breeding

- Blue-gray border broken behind eye
- Gray face
- Brown iris



# Glossy Ibis



## Non-Breeding

- Retains hint of border on face
- Gray face
- Brown iris

## Juvenile

- Brown eye
- Indistinguishable from White-faced until about Feb.

## Glossy Ibis

