

SPECIES: Scientific [common]	<i>Plegadis chihi</i> [White-faced ibis]
Forest:	Bridger-Teton National Forest
Forest Reviewer:	Randall Griebel, James Wilder
Date of Review:	08/01/2018; reviewed 5/7/2025
Forest concurrence (or recommendation if new) for inclusion of species on list of potential SCC: (Enter Yes or No)	NO

FOREST REVIEW RESULTS:

1. The Forest concurs or recommends the species for inclusion on the list of potential SCC:
Yes ___ No X
2. Rationale for not concurring is based on (check all that apply):
Species is not native to the plan area ___
Species is not known to occur in the plan area ___
Species persistence in the plan area is not of substantial concern X

FOREST REVIEW INFORMATION:

1. Is the Species Native to the Plan Area? Yes X No ___

If no, provide explanation and stop assessment.
2. Is the Species Known to Occur within the Planning Area? Yes X No ___

If no, stop assessment.

Table 1. All Known Occurrences, Years, and Frequency within the Planning Area

Year Observed	Number of Individuals	Location of Observations	Source of Information
1985	1	Big Piney Ranger District Hoback Basin; Jack Creek- Bondurant WY	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (January 2018)
1986	5	Greys River Ranger District Near Spring Creek	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (January 2018)
1994	7	Jackson Ranger District Upper Slide Lake	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (January 2018)
2009	1	Big Piney Ranger District South Cottonwood Crk	eBird Database (July 2018)
2010	3	Jackson Ranger District Snake River- south of Hoback WY	eBird Database (July 2018)
2009-2011	15	Jackson Ranger District Gros Ventre River Drainage	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (January 2018)
2016	2	Greys River Ranger District Little Greys River	eBird Database (July 2018)

- a. Are all Species Occurrences Only Accidental or Transient?

Yes___ No_X__

If yes, document source for determination and stop assessment.

- b. For species with known occurrences on the Forest since 1990, based on the number of observations and/or year of last observation, can the species be presumed to be established or becoming established in the plan area?

Yes_X__ No___

If no, provide explanation and stop assessment

- c. For species with known occurrences on the Forest predating 1990, does the weight of evidence suggest the species still occurs in the plan area?

Yes_X__ No___

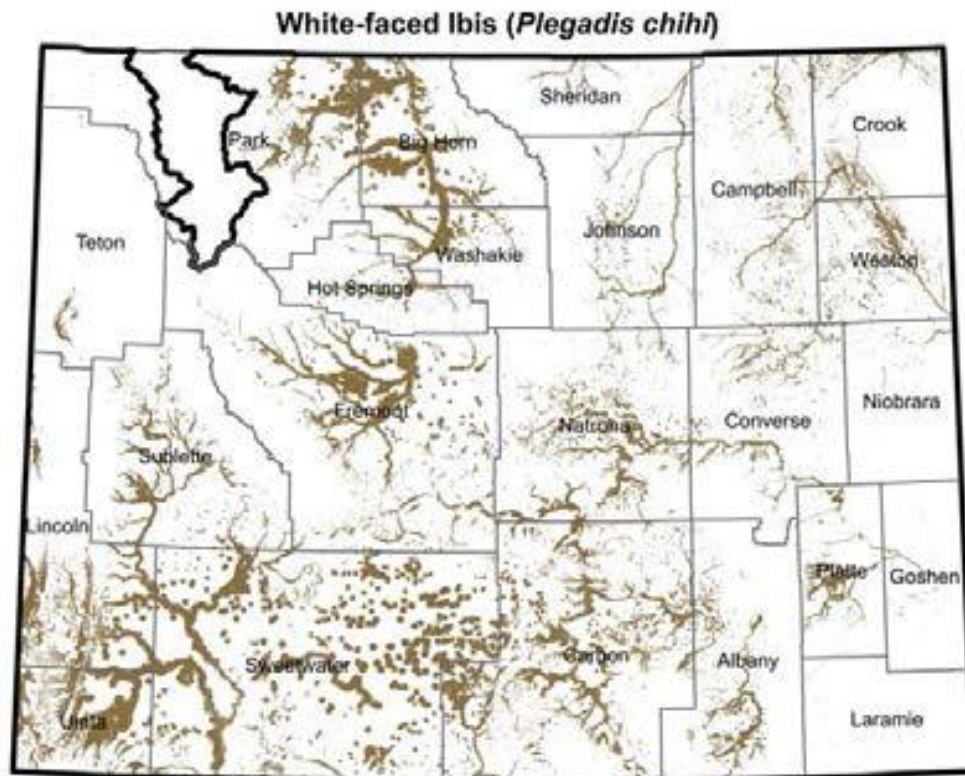
If determination is no, stop assessment. Provide explanation for determination.

d. **Map 1**, White-faced ibis range map of North America.



Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*).

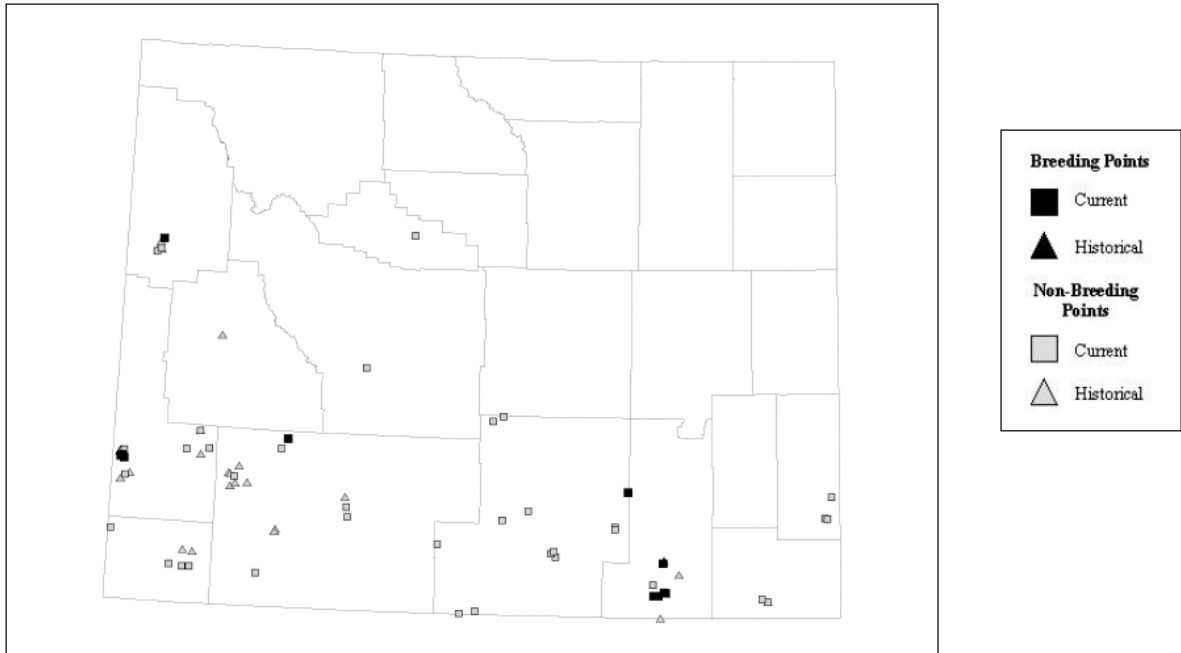
e. **Map 2**, Range and predicted distribution of *Plegadis chihi* in Wyoming.



SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: Sept. 2016. Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*).

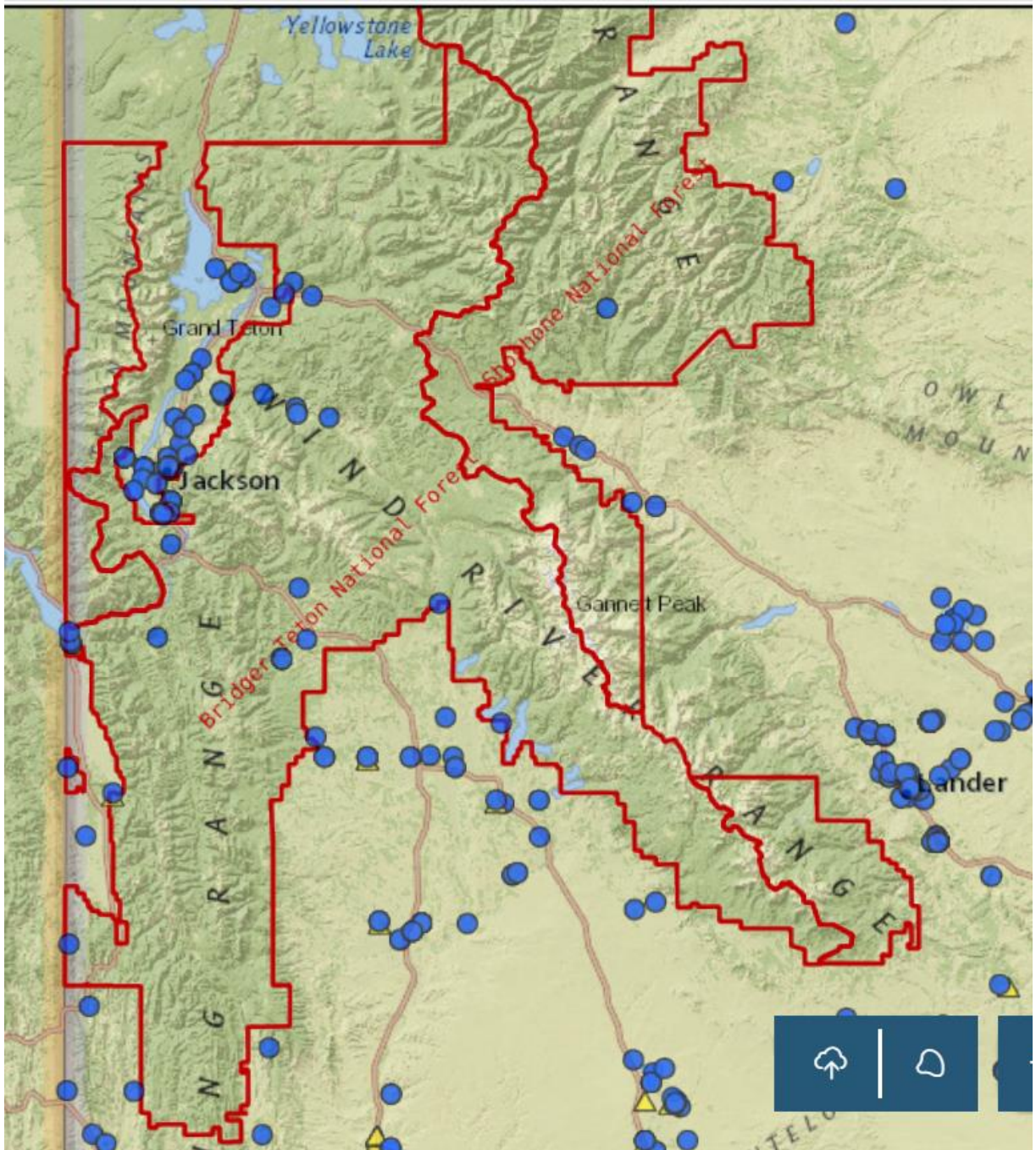
f. **Map 3**, Reported Wyoming White-faced Ibis current breeding occurrences.



D. Dark-Smiley and D. A. Keinath. 2003. Species assessment for white-faced ibis (*Plegadis Chihi*) in Wyoming. Prepared for United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

<http://www.uwyo.edu/wyndd/files/docs/reports/speciesassessments/white-facedibis-dec2003.pdf>.

- g. **Map 4**, Map of White-faced ibis occurrences on the Bridger-Teton National Forest (Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, eBird Database [May 2025])



*Note that in some cases, multiple individuals have been seen at one occurrence location in different years.

3. Is There Substantial Concern for the Species' Capability to persist Over the Long-term in the Plan Area Based on Best Available Scientific Information?

Table 2. Status summary based on existing conservation assessments

Entity	Status/Rank (include definition if Other)
NatureServe Global Status	<p>G5— Secure</p> <p><i>Secure: Common; widespread and abundant.</i></p>
NatureServe State Status	<p>S1B— Critically imperiled (Breeding)</p> <p><i>Critically Imperiled: At very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations), very steep declines, or other factors.</i></p>
WGFD	<p>NSS3 (Bb), Tier II</p> <p><i>Population Status: Vulnerable- Population size or distribution is restricted or declining but extirpation is not imminent</i> <i>Limiting Factors: Severe- Limiting factors are severe and not increasing significantly.</i> <i>Tier II: Moderate priority.</i></p> <p><i>[The WGFD's Species of Greater Conservation Need (SGCN) designation process is based upon its Native Species Status (NSS) classification system that compares population and limiting factor variables using a 16 cell matrix. As a species moves from a placement closest to the upper left corner of the matrix (Aa/NSS1) toward the lower right corner (Dd/NSS7) the species' population status in Wyoming is considered more secure. Numerical scores were assigned to each of these variables and summed to provide a total score (i.e. NSS3). SGCN were placed into one of three tiers based on their total score: Tier I – highest priority, Tier II – moderate priority, and Tier III – lowest priority.]</i> (WGFD - Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need)</p>
WYNDD	<p>Species of Concern</p> <p><i>Species vulnerable to extirpation at the global or state level due to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. their rarity (e.g., restricted distribution, small population size, low population density)</i> <i>b. inherent vulnerability (e.g., specialized habitat requirements, restrictive life history)</i> <i>c. threats (e.g., significant loss of habitat, sensitivity to disturbances)</i> <p>(Wyoming Natural Diversity Database - Species of Concern)</p>
USDA Forest Service	<p>No Special Status</p>

UDI FWS	No Special Status; Migratory Bird
WY BLM	<p>Sensitive</p> <p>1. Sensitive species must be native species found on BLM-administrated lands for which BLM has the capability to significantly affect the conservation status of the species through management, and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is information that a species has recently undergone, is undergoing, or is predicted to undergo a downward trend such that the viability of the species or a distinct population segment of the species is at risk across all or a significant portion of the species range, or b. The species depends on ecological refugia or specialized or unique habitats on BLM-administrated lands, and there is evidence that such areas are threatened with alteration such that the continued viability of the species in that area would be at risk. <p>2. All federally designated candidate species, proposed species, and delisted species in the 5 years following their delisting shall be conserved as Bureau sensitive species (BLM Wyoming Sensitive Species Policy and List; March 31, 2010)</p>
IUCN	<p>LC – Least Concern</p> <p>A taxon is Least Concern when it has been evaluated against the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category. (IUCN – Red List Categories and Criteria)</p>
Partners in Flight (PIF) Continental Concern Score	Not Ranked

Table 3. Status summary based on best available scientific information.

Species (Scientific and Common Name): <i>Plegadis chihi</i> [White-faced ibis]		
Criteria	Rationale	Literature Citations
Distribution on Bridger-Teton National Forest	Breeding colonies of White-faced ibis are distributed across the western United States including the state of Wyoming (Maps 1 and 2). The species can normally be found in the southern portion of Wyoming from May – September. Within Wyoming, there are eight known breeding sites that are distributed across	Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>). D. Dark-Smiley and D. A. Keinath. 2003.

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	<p>most of the southern half of the state (Map 3), and within this range, there appear to be two primary zones where breeding occurs. One is in the southwestern corner of the state and is included in the Great Basin localized breeding area and the other is in the southeastern corner of the state in the Laramie plains region. One consistent feature of these breeding areas is their proximity to irrigated crops. Several of the non-breeding records are also in close proximity to irrigated crops, so this is likely not the only variable contributing to suitable breeding habitat in Wyoming. It seems likely that a combination of factors, such as proximity of foraging grounds and specialized habitat at lakes, play a role in where they choose to breed (Dark-Smiley and Keinath 2003).</p> <p>White-faced ibis have a low distribution throughout the BTNF, the few records there are, indicate they are associated with the larger river systems on the Forest, including the Snake, Hoback, and Gros Ventre River drainages (Map 4). Even within the Forest boundary, locations in the Gros Ventre and Hoback are located on private land inholdings that can be characterized as open, mesic meadows and/or irrigated hay fields. Most of the suitable habitat and occupancy records of the species surrounds the BTNF, with large numbers of birds recorded in the snake river drainage near Wilson, WY, the National Elk Refuge and on private land between Jackson and Hoback, WY.</p>	<p>Species assessment for white-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis Chihi</i>) in Wyoming. Prepared for United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, Cheyenne, Wyoming. http://www.uwyo.edu/wyndd/files/docs/reports/speciesassessments/white-facedibis-dec2003.pdf.</p>
Abundance on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	<p>White-faced ibis has a statewide abundance rank of <i>very rare</i> and there are no robust estimates of the species abundance in Wyoming (WGFD 2017). The species appears to be uncommon within suitable environments, including the BTNF. Between 2009 and 2016, a total of 35 White-faced ibis were detected during surveys for the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program statewide, all in 2011 (WGFD 2017). According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, from 1968–2015, annual Wyoming Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) detections of White-faced ibis ranged from 0 to 7, with none recorded in most years. From 1969 to 2016, a total of 34 individuals</p>	<p>Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>).</p> <p>Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. (2016) The Rocky Mountain Avian Data Center [web application], Brighton, CO. http://adc.rmbo.org.</p>

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	<p>have been recorded on the BTNF at 7 different locations (Table 1). There are no estimates of White-faced ibis abundance for the BTNF. However, occupancy records suggest the species is very rare on the Forest and probably more of an incidental visitor during migration than a permanent resident as the Forest lacks many of the habitat characteristics desired. For example, from 1981-2014, a total of 323 individuals were recorded in the Snake River drainage on the National Elk Refuge and private land between Jackson, Wilson and Hoback, WY with as many as 50 individuals seen at one time. These areas can be characterized as open, relatively flat mesic meadows or irrigated hay fields, usually with wetlands or ponds nearby.</p>	
Population Trend on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	<p>Robust population trends are not available for White-faced ibis in Wyoming because the species is infrequently detected during monitoring efforts (WGFD 2017). However, according to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the abundance of White-faced Ibis has increased across its range and likely throughout the state. North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) survey-wide trend data suggest that White-faced ibis numbers increased annually by 5.13% from 1966–2015 and increased annually by 15.7% from 2005–2015 (Sauer et al. 2017). While these trend estimates indicate the populations are increasing for the western region, the estimates are not statistically significant.</p>	<p>Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>).</p> <p>Sauer, J. R., D. K. Niven, J. E. Hines, D. J. Ziolkowski, Jr, K. L. Pardieck, J. E. Fallon, and W. A. Link. 2017. The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2015. Version 2.07.2017 USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD</p>
Habitat Trend on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	<p>White-faced Ibis habitat includes a variety of shallow wetland features such as marshes, ponds, mudflats, and swamps. In Wyoming, the species is typically associated with marshes, wet meadows, and vegetated shorelines, similar to elsewhere in the species' range (WGFD 2017). As mentioned earlier, proximity to irrigated crops seems to be important for breeding areas as well as large wetlands or lakes that contain high amounts of emergent vegetation, such as bulrushes (Dark-Smiley and Keinath 2003).</p> <p>White-faced ibis nest and roost on islands that have emergent vegetation for concealment, low in trees, in reeds, or floating mats (NatureServe 2017). The majority of breeding colonies in Wyoming can be found in the Bear River</p>	<p>D. Dark-Smiley and D. A. Keinath. 2003. Species assessment for white-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis Chihi</i>) in Wyoming. Prepared for United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, Cheyenne, Wyoming. http://www.uwyo.edu/wyndd/ files/docs/ reports/speciesassessments/white-facedibis-dec2003.pdf.</p> <p>Helmbrecht, D., M. Williamson, and D. Abendroth. 2012. Bridger-Teton National</p>

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	<p>drainage and in the Laramie Basin (WGFD 2017). Breeding colonies are not known to exist on the BTNF.</p>	<p>Forest Vegetation Condition Assessment.</p> <p>NatureServe. 2018. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available http://explorer.natureserve.org. (Accessed: July 18, 2018).</p> <p>Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>).</p>
<p>Threats to the Species and its Habitat on the Bridger-Teton National Forest</p>	<p><u>Natural Threats</u></p> <p>The White-faced ibis has moderate intrinsic vulnerability in Wyoming given its specific breeding habitat requirements (i.e. wetlands with islands with emergent vegetation and shallow water) and relatively low fecundity (WGFD 2017). Reproduction may be a limiting factor for this species in the state of Wyoming due to the variation in clutch success (ranging from total failure to nearly every nest fledging at least one young), and that Ibis only produce a single clutch per year.</p> <p><u>Habitat Loss and Degradation</u></p> <p>The most significant threat to the species is continued wetland loss (WGFD 2017). Trampling and grazing of wetland areas by cattle contributes to the degradation of wetland areas on the BTNF. This can result in direct habitat loss and/or disturbance effects to breeding colonies. Drought conditions and the impacts from global climate warming can reduce the suitability and availability of wetlands for breeding in Wyoming (WGFD 2017). As climate warming continues, lower elevation breeding and foraging habitats may disappear or become less-than-suitable, which could elevate the importance of higher-elevation marsh habitats for this species. Additionally, pesticide use continues to impact White-faced ibis breeding habitat in Wyoming. Exposure to such</p>	<p>Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. White-faced ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>).</p>

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	<p>pesticides contributes to reduced breeding success through poisoning and eggshell thinning (WGFD 2017).</p> <p><u>Disturbance</u> Human disturbance at nesting colonies can lead to nest abandonment and reproductive failure (WGFD 2017). This is particularly important on the BTNF where recreational activities are taking place. Recreation in the form of boating, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, camping, and OHV-use, takes place in and along many of the wetland areas on the Forest. Some of the high-use areas include the Gros Ventre, Snake, and Hoback rivers, areas where White-faced ibis have been recorded on the BTNF.</p>	
<p>Summary and recommendations: The Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) does not provide suitable breeding habitat, as there are only eight known breeding colonies in the state of Wyoming at this time. The species can be found near the forest boundary and even with the forest boundary during spring and fall migration but those occurrences are usually associated with open, mesic meadows and irrigated hay fields found on private land. The nearby National Elk Refuge does provide suitable breeding habitat however. Occurrence records suggest that individuals or small groups of White-faced ibis continue to migrate to potential breeding and foraging grounds in and around the BTNF. Thus, threats to the species and its habitat on the forest appear to be relatively minor.</p> <p>Considering the lack of established populations on the Forest and lack of desirable habitat, there is no substantial concern for the species' capability to persist over the long-term within the planning unit at this time. Therefore, it is recommended that the White-faced ibis is not a Species of Conservation Concern for the Bridger-Teton National Forest.</p> <p>Evaluator(s): Ashley Egan, Randall Griebel</p>		Date: Aug 1, 2018