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Oriental white ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (Latham, 1790) at Opel-Zoo Kronberg – Experiences, observations and data since 1982



Haltung des Schwarzkopfibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (Latham, 1790) im Opel-Zoo Kronberg – Erfahrungen, Beobachtungen und Daten seit 1982

Jörg Beckmann*, Uta Westerhüs, Thomas Kauffels,
Martin Becker

Opel-Zoo, von Opel Hessische Zoostiftung, Königsteiner Str. 35,
61476 Kronberg im Taunus, Germany

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Abstract

In 1982 Opel-Zoo Kronberg started keeping Oriental white ibis in central European climate. Since then at least 61 ibis hatched, the total 30-day-mortality was 25% (N = 15). As far as known changes in diet over time and their effects are listed as well as dates of hatching since 1994. Unknown behavior such as allogrooming in young non-siblings, overlapping brood and feeding on willow leaf is described, as well as wing-claws in juvenile Oriental white ibis. In addition we added information from literature to give an overview of this particular ibis species. Oriental white ibis is listed as near threatened since 2004.

Keywords: *Threskiornis melanocephalus*; Ibis; Husbandry; Breeding; Diet change

Introduction

Numerous ibis exhibits in zoos are dominated by three species: the critically endangered Northern bald ibis *Geronticus eremita* (Linnaeus, 1758) and the two not threatened ibis

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: joerg.beckmann@opel-zoo.de (J. Beckmann).

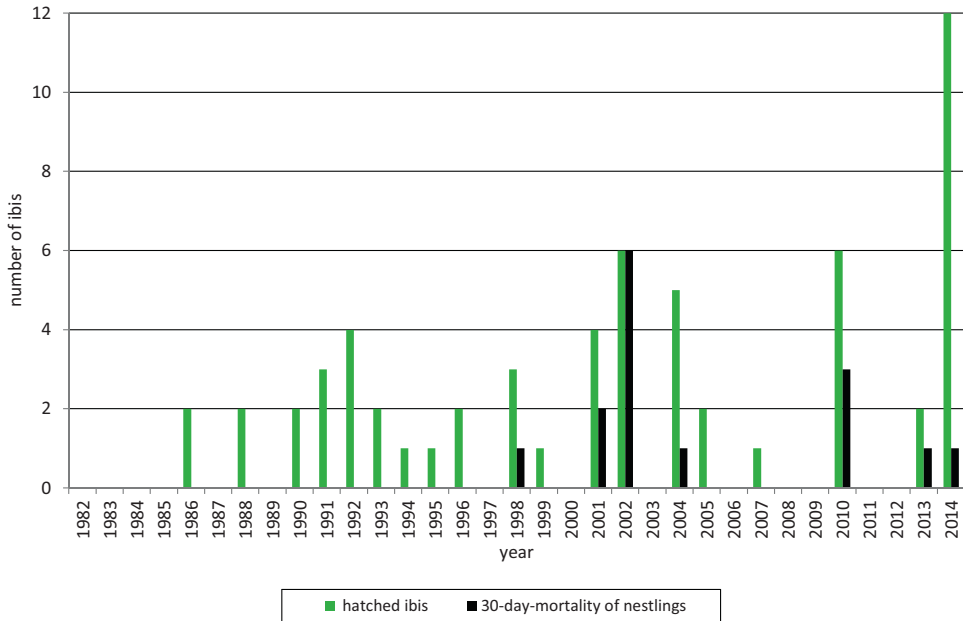


Fig. 1. Number of hatched Oriental white ibis at Opel-Zoo Kronberg per year since 1982 (green), including 30-day-mortality (black).

species Sacred ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (Latham, 1790) and Scarlet ibis *Eudocimus ruber* (Linnaeus, 1758). The near threatened Oriental white ibis (OWI) can seldom be seen in zoological gardens. However, Opel-Zoo has been keeping and breeding this ibis for more than three decades.

In 1982 five founders of unknown sex came to Opel-Zoo via a dealer. Since then at least 61 OWI hatched, the total 30-day-mortality was 25% (N = 15) (Fig. 1). Due to insufficient data recording before 1994 date of hatching is only known for the last 22 years (46 chicks). In this timespan 7% (N = 4) hatched in April, 7% (N = 3) in May, 26% (N = 12) in June, 35% (N = 16) in July, 13% (N = 6) in August and 11% (N = 5) September. Some of the ibis that hatched in September fledged after mid-October. The number of hatched OWI per year varied from zero to twelve (Fig. 1).

Description and behavior of Oriental white ibis

Together with Sacred ibis from Africa and Australian white ibis *Threskiornis moluccus* (Cuvier, 1829) Oriental white ibis forms a superspecies of medium sized, white colored and black-headed ibis. In size and appearance the three species are alike. Sacred ibis has a size of 65–89 cm, Australian white ibis a size of 63–76 cm and Oriental white ibis a size of 65–76 cm (del Hoyo, Elliott, & Sargatal, 1992). In mature birds, head and the upper

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