

A Large Flock of Glossy Ibis in Peninsular Malaysia

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The Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* is the "most widespread ibis species, with populations in Central and South America, the Greater Antilles, southern Europe, Africa, Asia, India, and Australia" (Davis & Kricher 2020). The Glossy Ibis is not a regular seasonal migrant along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway: instead, individuals occur as occasional nomadic vagrants wandering in mainland Southeast Asia. For Peninsular Malaysia, Wells (1999) reports the Glossy Ibis as a vagrant, often a single bird seen infrequently, while Jeyarajasingam and Pearson (2012) describe it as a "very rare non-breeding dispersant". There are intermittent records in eBird for Peninsular Malaysia, usually of a single bird. There are however reports of some expansion in Southeast Asia (Davis & Kricher 2020).

At 0800 hrs on 17 May 2026, I observed an unexpectedly large number of nine Glossy Ibis foraging in an open, ploughed paddy field at Sungai Rambai, Melaka, Malaysia (Plate 1). The birds were encountered feeding on the ploughed muddy fields alongside a mixed flock of egrets, Javan Mynas *Acridotheres javanicus* and Lesser Adjutants *Leptoptilos javanicus*. The birds were seen utilising the long-curved bill to probe deep into the soft mud with rhythmic like motion to extract aquatic insects. All the birds seen appeared to be adults in breeding plumage.



Plate 1: Glossy Ibis feeding with Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia*. Sungai Rambai, Melaka, Malaysia, 17 May 2026.

The Glossy Ibis were observed at the same location on a regular basis from 17-27 May 2026, always in a flock (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Nine Glossy Ibis in flight. Sungai Rambai, Melaka, Malaysia, 17 May 2026.

There have been two previous records of large flocks of Glossy Ibis in the region. In [June 1984, 11 birds were seen](#) at Lorong Halus Wetland, Singapore, and in [October 2022, 8 birds were observed](#) at Sungai Balang, Johor, Malaysia.

This sighting is a significant record for Peninsular Malaysia and may signal larger numbers arriving in the peninsula on migration as we have seen with the Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* and Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger*.

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