



SPECIES OF THE DAY

The **NORTHERN BALD IBIS**, was once found across Europe, the Middle East, and northern Africa.

- Extinct in the wild by the 17th century, it now survives in Morocco and Syria.
- Since 2002, Waldrapp team, led by Johannes Fritz, has successfully reintroduced nearly 300 of these birds to central Europe.

Aspect	Details
Scientific Name	GERONTICUS EREMITA
Common Names	Northern Bald Ibis, Hermit Ibis, Waldrapp
Description	Migratory Old World ibis bird, 70–80 cm long, glossy black with an unfeathered red face and a long, curved red bill.
Habitat	Open areas such as grasslands, Rocky Mountains, semi-deserts, often near running water.
Historical Range	Middle East, northern Africa, southern and central Europe. Fossil record dates back 1.8 million years.
Current Population	~700 wild birds in southern Morocco (2019); fewer than 10 in Syria; ~2000 in captivity.
Conservation Programs	Reintroduction efforts in Turkey, Austria, Italy, Spain, and northern Morocco; reduced from Critically Endangered to Endangered on IUCN Red List in 2018.
Plumage	Black with bronze-green and violet iridescence; dull red and unfeathered face and head; long, curved red bill.
Sexual Dimorphism	Males generally larger and have longer bills than females; longer bills help in attracting mates.
Historical Decline	Declined due to hunting, loss of habitat, pesticide poisoning, and dam construction.
Current Threats	Continued pesticide poisoning, disturbance, and habitat loss; listed on Appendix 1 of CITES (prohibits commercial trade).