

# USACE Natural Resource Management

## Non-migratory Birds



### Ivory-billed Woodpecker

### FAST FACTS

**REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS:** This species was listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service in 1967.

According to USFWS, there are two primary reasons thought to have caused this species' decline. First, the large scale logging and conversion of forest across the species' range in the 1800's which would have reduced habitat suitability, limited suitable nest trees, and indirectly destroyed food sources. Second, this logging made it easier for hunters, trappers, and commercial collectors to access the bird and increased instances of direct mortality.

**MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION:** Despite its listing, this bird was thought to have gone extinct sometime in the middle of the twentieth century (*All About Birds, Cornell*). However, in 2004 the bird was rediscovered in Arkansas in the "Big Woods" region.

Though this rediscovery remains controversial, the USFWS worked to produce a recovery plan for this critically endangered species in 2010. However, due to limited knowledge of species' life history, distribution, population, and ecology, formulating a plan was difficult. Moreover, since the species' rediscovery, no further Ivory-billed Woodpeckers have been located. No critical habitat has been designated, as at the time of the species' listing, critical habitat was not a requirement.

**HABITAT NEEDS:** This species once occupied extensive tracts of upland pine forest with large trees. By the 1890's, however, this bird was restricted to bottomland swamps and traveled to pine forests or stands that had been recently flooded or burned in order to forage.

- Bottomland hardwood forest is thought to be important habitat.
- The species has been documented in higher portions of frequently flooded forest and "first bottoms" bottomland forest where species are primarily comprised of Nuttall oak, sweetgum, and green ash.
- Habitat requirements probably vary based on habitat condition, population density, season, etc; however these factors are not understood for this species.

**Size:** This woodpecker grows to be 18-20 inches long and weigh 15.9-20.1 ounces. (*All About Birds, Cornell*)

**Color:** Species is predominantly black with two white stripes down its neck. The upper wings have large white panels which are visible even when folded. Males have a red crest while females have a black crest. (*USFWS*)

*Photo Credit:*

*Left and Right:* Excerpts from a digital scan of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*, Plate 66

*Center:* James T. Tanner, 1937

*Natural Resource Management (NRM)*

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**USACE ROLE:** When the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was rediscovered in the early 2004's, it was found on wetlands that were previously managed by the USACE, Memphis District. The Corps had recently turned over ownership and control of the land to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after having managed the wetland mitigation land for more than two decades. The USACE still owns 1,870 acres of mitigation land in close proximity to the 2004 Ivory-billed Woodpecker sighting.

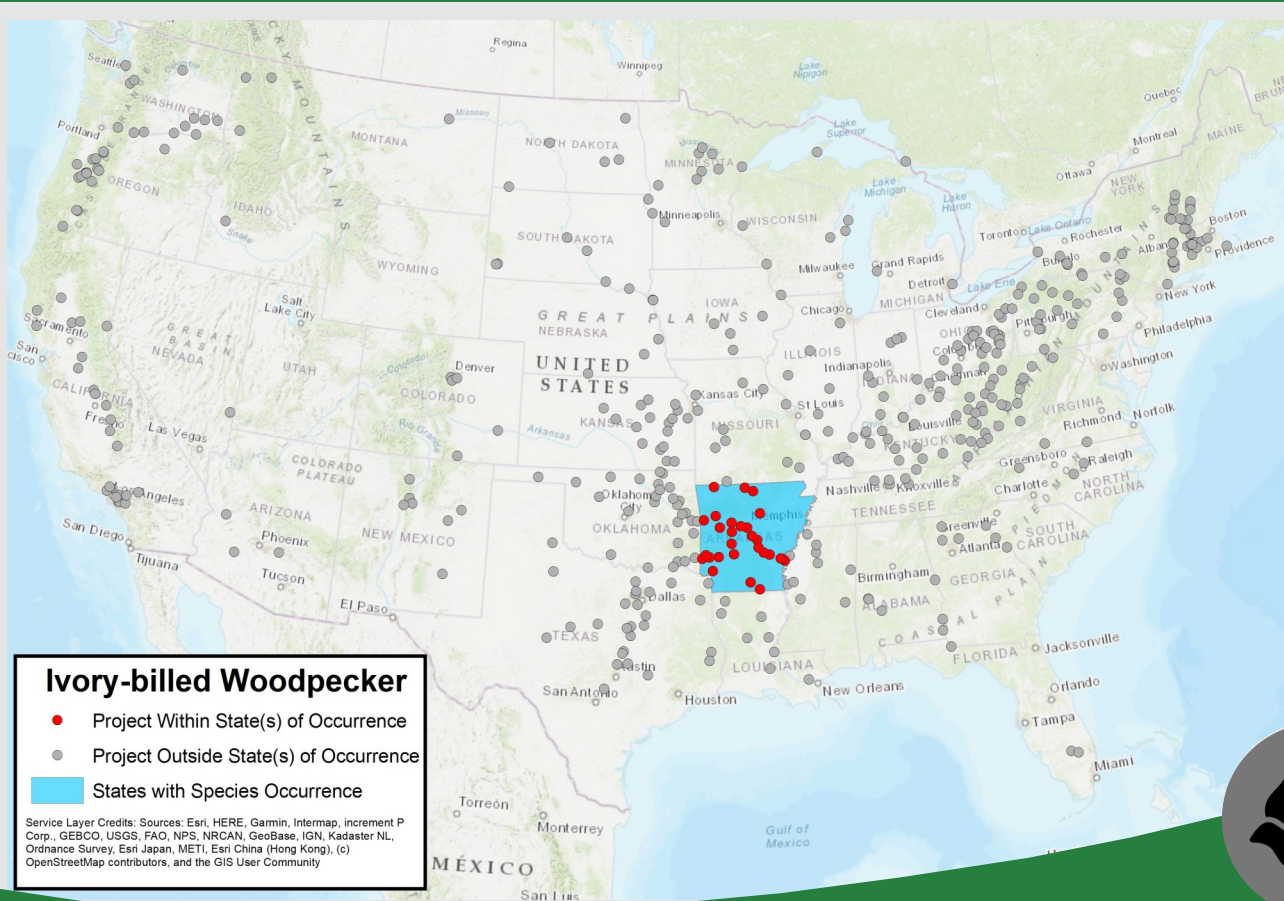
**WHAT IS USACE DOING:**

**1** Though USACE no longer manages the lands that the woodpecker was spotted on, USACE still manages public lands in the nearby vicinity. As such, USACE works diligently to analyze project plans within the area to ensure that they will not have negative impacts on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker or its habitat. All current and future work is closely coordinated with resources agencies including USFWS and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Efforts have been made to assist in recovery efforts for the woodpecker and its habitat.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker**

*(Campephilus principalis)*



Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

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