

Ivory-billed Woodpecker

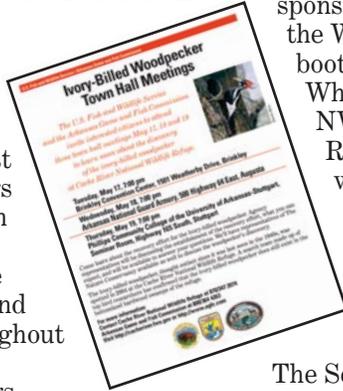
Recovery starts here...

Monday, May 16, 2005

WEEKLY UPDATE

Outreach

The Service is moving forward with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to host three town hall meetings – May 17, 18, and 19 – in Brinkley, Augusta, and Stuttgart, Ark. We have issued a press release and distributed flyers throughout the corridor of hope announcing the meetings. Questions and answers on key issues are being developed.



The Service is preparing to launch new web pages dedicated to the recovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker at www.fws.gov/ivorybill/. This page will be the central source for information about the recovery plan and will feature information about our partners. We have also created an e-mail address, ivorybill@fws.gov, for citizens and partners to accept requests for information or general comments from the public. This will be publicized in a news release next week.



In addition, the Service is working with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to announce the formation of the Ivory-bill woodpecker recovery team during the week of May 23.

Cache River NWR manager Dennis Widner and his staff continue to concentrate efforts on local outreach. This week Widner received a standing ovation after making a presentation to the local Rotary Club. He also did interviews with local TV and was the guest on a radio talk show in Searcy, Arkansas.

The 4th annual Big Woods Birding Festival will be held May 21 in Clarendon, Arkansas. Past attendance has ranged from 300-600 in the past. This year's theme is "What's in the Woods?" and is focused on Ivory-billed

Woodpecker. The Service is a supporting sponsor of the festival. Friends of the White River NWR will have a booth this year to promote both the White River and Cache River NWRs. Biologists from White River and Cache River NWR will partner with TNC and AGFC staff to offer boat tours and answer questions about both refuges (<http://www.clarendon-ar.com/festival/>).

The Service continues to coordinate media outreach with the Big Woods Partners. On May 19-20 we will be hosting **Seth Borenstein from Knight-Ridder**. We will also be providing interviews for local media to promote local birding opportunities in conjunction with the May 21 birding festival.

We are working with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to facilitate a series of outreach coordination meetings and conference calls with the Big Woods Partnership to better identify our outreach needs and strategies as we move from discovery to the recovery.

Responding to Sightings

The Service and Cornell have coordinated to create to e-mail addresses for the public to report sightings at ivorybill@cornell.edu. We are planning a joint press release next week to announce the new email address and will include a U.S. postal address where sighting information also can be sent. Next week to coincide with the press release we will also ask Acting Director Matt Hogan to send an e-mail to all FWS employees providing them with this information.

Access

The Service established a 5,000-acre managed access area where the woodpecker was



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discovered to give the agency time to evaluate public use impacts in the area. Cache River National Wildlife Refuge covers nearly 62,000 acres so this 5,000-

acre managed access area is an appropriate step to ensure this rare, second chance is not lost, and that our statutory legal obligations are met.



George M. Sutton/Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Section 7 Consultations

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated it will quickly reinstate consultation on the Grand Prairie irrigation project.

In addition, the Service's Ecological Services office opened discussions with staff from both the Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges, and representatives from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Wildlife Management Areas in an effort to begin Section 7 consultations on activities taking place on these lands, including hunting, public use, and forest management.



Recovery Plan Status

The Service this week completed the proposed framework for the recovery planning team, which includes the Corridor of Hope Team, an Executive Committee, and two working groups: biology and habitat conservation. Regional Director Sam Hamilton will extend formal invitations to prospective team members by mid-May.

Partnership Coordination

The Service will begin regular conference calls with partners to keep them informed of our collective work to recover the woodpecker across its range.

