

Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Recovery starts here...

Monday, May 23, 2005

W E E K L Y U P D A T E

Outreach

More than 500 Arkansans Attend Town Hall Meetings

The Service and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission hosted three town hall meetings to discuss the progress of the recovery efforts for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker since its rediscovery was announced three weeks ago. The meetings were held to



outline for citizens what has happened and what we expect to happen in the near future related to the recovery efforts. Nearly 300 people attended the meeting in Brinkley, roughly 150 people attended in Augusta, and more than 100 people attended in Stuttgart. Staff from Sens. Lincoln and Pryor and Reps. Berry and Snyder were also in attendance at each of the meetings.



Arkansans gathered in Brinkley on Tuesday, USFWS photo.

The Nature Conservancy also participated in the meetings with a presentation about

the discovery that included the now famous video of the woodpecker.

Overall, the meetings were positive. Issues raised ranged from the biology of the woodpecker and its habitat needs to the status of water projects and waterfowl hunting seasons. The public is excited about the future and expressed support of the inclusive approach the Service and its partners have taken in communicating the steps of the recovery process.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker Continues to Attract Media Attention

The Service continues to coordinate media outreach with the Big Woods Partners. This week, the following media outlets visited the area:

- *St. Louis Post Dispatch*
- *Outside Magazine*
- *National Public Radio*
- *Washington Post*
- *Knight Ridder News Service*
- *CBS News' 60 Minutes*

Access

At the town hall meeting in Brinkley, the Service announced the opening of a 1/4 mile long lake within the Managed Access Area on Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The Highway 17 bridge crosses the lake and is a popular public access point for boating, fishing and birding activities.

Section 7 Consultations

An internal Service team has been established to conduct section 7

consultations to address the potential effects of hunting and recreational public access on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker at Cache River NWR.

Partnership Coordination

On Tuesday, May 24 and Wednesday, May 25, the Service will conduct a series of conference calls to announce members of the core recovery team, which includes the Executive Committee, the Corridor of Hope team, and chairs for the two working groups, biology and habitat conservation.



Kayaker on Cache River NWR
Mark Godfrey/The Nature Conservancy

The Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) have initiated plans to develop a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) protecting the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and its habitat. CREP, administered by FSA, is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, restore wildlife habitat and decrease erosion through partnerships with state, federal and tribal governments as well as private organizations.

Big Woods Birding Festival

The Fourth Annual Big Woods Birding Festival took place on Saturday in Clarendon, Arkansas. The Service provided maps of bird viewing areas in the north and south of Cache River NWR.

