

Search efforts for the possible existence of Ivory-billed Woodpecker have been conducted in a number of Southeastern states, including Arkansas, Texas, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Illinois, Mississippi, and Louisiana with researchers documenting compelling, inconclusive evidence of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in several of these states. At this time, additional federally-funded searches are not planned since most of the identified habitat has been surveyed.

Like many in the conservation area, the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service was hopeful that past field seasons would lead to conclusive evidence of the persistence in the Big Woods of eastern Arkansas, and other parts of the historic range. Several search groups were confident they could locate birds, and additional evidence was collected during the four years of searching.

Auditory encounters and concentrated sightings are additional evidence to support the hypothesis of the continued presence of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in Arkansas and other parts of the range. However, due to the inability to locate birds, we cannot conclude that a population of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers is established in this region.

The Service will publish in the Federal Register a notice of availability (NOA) of the 155-page final Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Copies of the recovery plan will be available by request from the Service's Lafayette Field Office located at 646 Cajundome Boulevard, Suite 400, Lafayette, Louisiana, 70506, or by visiting the web at:

<http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans> or at www.fws.gov/ivorybill/ .