



U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service

## Species Profile

Environmental Conservation Online System

# Ivory-Billed woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)

**Kingdom:** Animalia **Class:** Aves **Order:** Piciformes **Family:** Picidae

**Listing Status:** **Endangered**

**Where Listed:** **WHEREVER FOUND**

**Quick links:** [Federal Register](#) [Recovery](#) [Critical Habitat](#) [Conservation Plans](#)  
[Petitions](#) [Life History](#) [Other Resources](#)

## General Information

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker is noted for its striking black-and-white plumage; robust white, chisel-tipped bill; lemon-yellow eye; and pointed crest. Males are red from the nape to the top of their crest with black outlining the front of the crest. Females have a solid black crest which is somewhat more pointed and slightly recurved to point forward. The bases of the male's red crest feathers are white and may allow a spot of white to be displayed on the side of the crest when the feathers are fully erect. Morphological data from live birds are lacking. Available information from historical sources suggests the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has an overall length of approximately 48-51 centimeters (cm), an estimated wingspan of 76-80 cm, and a weight of 454-567 grams (g). These figures are based on values of "1 pound" and "20 ounces" given in the historical records. However, no clearly documented data are available. In comparison, the more common Pileated Woodpecker has an overall length of approximately 40-48 cm and a weight of 250-355 g.

**This species is listed wherever it is found, but**

**States/US**

**Territories in**

which the

Ivory-Billed

woodpecker,

entire is known

to or is

believed to

occur:

[Arkansas](#)

**US Counties**

in which the Ivory-Billed woodpecker, entire is known to or is believed to occur: [View](#)

[All](#)

**USFWS Refuges** in which the Ivory-Billed woodpecker, entire is known to occur: CACHE RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, WHITE RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

**For more information:** <http://www.fws.gov/ivorybill>

### Current Listing Status Summary

Status	Date Listed	Lead Region	Where Listed
<b>Endangered</b>	03/11/1967	<a href="#">Southeast Region (Region 4)</a>	entire

## » Federal Register Documents

### Most Recent Federal Register Documents (Showing 5 of 5)

Date	Citation Page	Title
07/19/2010	75 FR 41886 41887	<a href="#">Final Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (<i>Campephilus principalis</i>); Notice of document availability</a>
08/22/2007	72 FR 47064 47065	<a href="#">Draft Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (<i>Campephilus principalis</i>)</a>
06/02/1970	35 FR 8491 8498	<a href="#">Part 17 - Conservation of Endangered Species and Other Fish or Wildlife (First List of Endangered Foreign Fish and Wildlife as Appendix A)</a>
04/14/1970	35 FR 6069	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Endangered Species Conservation); 35 FR 6069
03/11/1967	32 FR 4001	<a href="#">Endangered Species List - 1967</a>

## » Recovery

### [Recovery Plan Information Search](#)

- [Information Search FAQs](#)

### Current Recovery Plan(s)

Date	Title	Plan Action Status	Plan Status
07/19/2010	<a href="#">Final Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker</a>	Recovery efforts in progress, but no implementation information yet to display	Final

### Other Recovery Documents (Showing 2 of 2)

Date	Citation Page	Title	Document Type
------	---------------	-------	---------------

07/19/2010	75 FR 41886 41887	<a href="#">Final Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (<i>Campephilus principalis</i>): Notice of document availability</a>	• Notice Final Recovery Plan Availability
08/22/2007	72 FR 47064 47065	<a href="#">Draft Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (<i>Campephilus principalis</i>)</a>	• Notice Draft Recovery Plan Availability

## » Critical Habitat

No critical habitat rules have been published for the Ivory-Billed woodpecker, entire.

## » Conservation Plans

No conservation plans have been created for Ivory-Billed woodpecker, entire

## » Petitions

No petition findings have been published for the Ivory-Billed woodpecker, entire.

## » Life History

### Habitat Requirements

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was historically described as a resident of large, contiguous forests with numerous large trees. A significant portion of the forest must also be in some stage of decay, providing a continuous supply of food. Bottomland hardwood forests are frequently noted as important. It is unclear if this view is biased by the scant information on habitat use having been gathered near the end of a long period of population decline. Habitats occupied at the time most of the studies occurred may not have been typical or preferred by the species. Rather, the habitat may have been occupied simply because it was the last suitable habitat available. In Florida, baldcypress was noted as an important component of the forest used by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, especially in conjunction with an adjacent pine forest. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers used higher parts of "first bottoms," bottomland forests infrequently flooded and forested primarily with species such as Nuttall oak (*Quercus texana* Buckley [syn., *Q. nuttallii*]), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), in northeastern Louisiana. Researchers also observed that habitat used by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers was also highly favored by other species of woodpeckers, a high density of other woodpecker species being indicative of good Ivory-billed Woodpecker habitat. Habitat requirements likely vary seasonally and with habitat conditions, population density, food resources, and other factors. None of these influencing factors is understood for this species. It is clear, however, that the Ivory-bill requires large tracts of forest for foraging and trees large enough for nesting and roosting.

### Food Habits

Diet is poorly understood and based on anecdotal observations and the examination of the stomach contents of six collected birds. Large beetle larvae appear to be an important component of the diet. These are obtained by stripping bark from recently dead or dying tree trunks and branches and by excavating rotted wood. Members of the long-horned beetle family, *Cerambycidae*, were noted in the stomach of Ivory-billed Woodpecker several times, but many other species of wood-boring beetle larvae have also been documented. The diet, based on historical accounts, included

various nuts, such as pecans and acorn, and fruits, including hackberry, persimmon, wild grape, poison ivy and possibly swamp tupelo. Due to the paucity of data on food items actually consumed by the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, limited conclusions can be drawn concerning preferences. Current research with Pileated Woodpeckers may shed additional light on this issue.

## Movement / Home Range

Ivory-billed Woodpeckers, like other large woodpeckers, should have a greater food demand and, consequently, larger home ranges than smaller woodpeckers. They would also have a greater sensitivity to habitat alterations. This is supported by the fact that 3 other very large woodpecker species that weigh over 400 g (13 ounces) also have large home ranges and are sensitive to habitat alterations. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was known to fly distances of at least several kilometers each day between favored roost sites and feeding areas. Such movements are associated with maintaining large home ranges. However, information on daily movements is limited to one study. The ecology of the species likely includes substantial spatial and temporal flexibility, due to their use of disturbed sites containing increased volumes of stressed and dead trees. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers could have expanded home range sizes in sub-optimal habitats, such as in the regenerating southern forests. There is no evidence to suggest that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is migratory, however, the species may become nomadic in response to a fluctuating and undependable food supply. Researchers have reported the Ivory-billed Woodpecker to be a late riser, leaving its roost after sunrise.

## Reproductive Strategy

Breeding phenology (annual cycle) is poorly known. Generally, it is thought that breeding occurs between January and April. Nest cavities are excavated in a dead or dying portion of a live tree, although in some cases a dead tree may be used. Nest cavities have ranged from 4.6 m to over 21 m up the nest tree with nests rarely being excavated below 9 m from the tree's base. The outside diameters of the limb supporting the cavities ranged from 33 to 55.9 cm. Reported clutch size ranges from 1-5 eggs, but most reports are of clutches of 2 to 4 eggs. Incubation period has never been quantified for an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, but if it parallels the measured incubation period of the Magellanic Woodpecker, it takes about 20 days. This also approximates one historical estimate for the gestation period of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Both sexes of the Ivory-bill incubate the eggs, and it has been documented that both parents feed the young for a period of about 35 days until the young have fledged. The young may be fed by the parents for an additional two months and forage with and roost near the parents into the next breeding season.

## » Other Resources

[NatureServe Explorer Species Reports](#) -- NatureServe Explorer is a source for authoritative conservation information on more than 50,000 plants, animals and ecological communities of the U.S and Canada. NatureServe Explorer provides in-depth information on rare and endangered species, but includes common plants and animals too. NatureServe Explorer is a product of NatureServe in collaboration with the Natural Heritage Network.

[ITIS Reports](#) -- ITIS (the Integrated Taxonomic Information System) is a source for authoritative taxonomic information on plants, animals, fungi, and microbes of North America and the world.

---

Last updated: March 21, 2012

[FWS Endangered Home](#) | [ECOS Home](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Home Page](#) | [Department of the Interior](#) | [USA.gov](#) |  
[About the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Notices](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [FOIA](#)