

Louisiana PASS



Photo of Ivory-Billed Woodpecker courtesy of Alan Raymond.

For more information on the ivory-billed woodpecker, click on one of these links.

[A drawing of the ivory-billed woodpecker](#)

[About the Ivory-billed Woodpecker](#)

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Tap, Tap, Tap!

Who's that making a tapping noise? It's a woodpecker! But what kind of woodpecker? Could it be an ivory-billed woodpecker? If it is, you may have solved a pretty big puzzle to scientists.

Seeing an ivory-billed woodpecker is awfully rare—one hasn't been seen in 30 years! What's strange is that many people think they have *heard* one, even though they have never been able to see one. This makes scientists wonder if the ivory-billed woodpecker is *extinct* (no longer a living species), or if the ivory-billed woodpecker is just very rare and very camera shy.

Back when ivory-billed woodpeckers were seen, they were found anywhere from Texas to North Carolina, including Louisiana. They mostly lived in old-growth forests and cypress swamps. From the name, you might expect that these birds ate wood, but this is not the case. Their favorite foods included beetle larvae, other insects, fruits, seeds, and worms.

If you're planning to solve this mystery of science, you'd better know what to look for. This woodpecker is mostly black and has a large white stripe that runs from behind the eye and down the neck on both sides. In addition, males have a red *crest* (a long patch of feathers on top of an animal's head). As for size, the ivory-billed woodpecker is about 19.5 inches long. Finally, there's one more feature that will help you spot this rare bird: the color of its bill. If you guessed ivory, you're right!

So the next time you're camping in a forest, keep an eye out for the ivory-billed woodpecker. You could be the first person to see one in over 30 years.

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