UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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# IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKERS FOUND IN TEXAS

Ivory-billed woodpeckers, considered extinct by most ornithologists, have been discovered in the Big Thicket country of eastern Texas, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today.

Persistent sightings were traced down in that region by ornithologist John V. Dennis, working under contract for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and field verification of several pairs was made in the Neches River valley.

Reports of ivory-bill survival will be investigated in South Carolina along the Congaree River, in Florida along the Apalachicola River, in Alabama and Mississippi along the Tombigbee River and in Georgia along the Altamaha River.

The ivory-bill is America's largest woodpecker--an imposing bird, larger than a crow, with shiny, black and white plumage, scarlet crest, and long ivory bill.

Protected by Federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act among this country, Mexico, and Canada, the ivory-bill has been a victim of environmental changes. It has been confused with the pileated woodpecker so often that birdwatchers began to despair, but the present sightings have been well confirmed, the Secretary said.

Plans for ivory-bill protection include agreements with timberland owners to protect trees needed by the woodpeckers, plus "the best protection of all, an alerted public," the Secretary said.

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