

# Independent Researchers Confirm the Existence of Ivory-billed Woodpecker

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After reviewing new sound recordings from the White River of Arkansas, an independent team of ornithologists has confirmed the existence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Working from previously unpublished data provided to them in the last few days by John Fitzpatrick and colleagues at Cornell University, ornithologists at Yale, the University of Kansas, and Florida Gulf Coast University have concluded that the bird has been indeed been detected for the first time in decades.

Yale ornithologist Richard Prum states, “We were very skeptical of the first published reports, and thought that the previous data were not sufficient to support this startling conclusion. But the thrilling new sound recordings provide clear and convincing evidence that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is not extinct.”

The unpublished recordings include a series of distinctive “kent” call notes and an exchange of the diagnostic “double raps” between two individuals. According to Mark Robbins of the University of Kansas, “The recordings of the double raps sound very natural, and are totally consistent with the behavior of the Central and South American relatives of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.”

These recordings provide the first evidence of the existence of more than one individual Ivory-bill. Cornell researchers plan to release the recordings at a meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union in Santa

Barbara, California at the end of the month.

Prum and colleagues had prepared a manuscript critical of the original reports to the journal PLoS Biology. In that manuscript which is withdrawn, the authors concluded that definitive evidence was still necessary and wrote, “We sincerely hope that this evidence is forthcoming soon.”

Now it is. Prum and Robbins are delighted.

Source: Yale University

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