

NEWS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIAHistorical and Museum Commission
Commonwealth News Bureau
Room 308, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120**CONTACT:** Jane Crawford
(717) 783-9882**PHMC EXHIBITS RARE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER**

HARRISBURG: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Executive Director Barbara Franco today announced that an ivory-billed woodpecker, a species long thought to be extinct, is mounted and on exhibit at The State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Recent news stories have announced the surprising discovery in eastern Arkansas of the bird, last seen some 60 years ago. That news has been greeted with great excitement in the Ornithology and scientific communities.

“The ivory-billed woodpecker on exhibit at the State Museum gives students and other visitors the opportunity to see a rare bird that most scientists believed was gone from the earth forever. With the discovery of the return of the woodpecker, interest in it has increased and we are happy that we can offer a look at the species,” Franco said.

The female woodpecker, whose latin name is *Campephilus principalis*, was acquired by the museum in the early 1970s and was part of a donated collection. It was collected from the panhandle of Florida in June of 1887. The large-bodied bird was known to inhabit old-growth swampy areas between North Carolina, Arkansas, Southern Texas and Florida. It was also seen in Cuba.

The ivory-billed woodpecker nests approximately 40 feet off the ground, has a wingspan of 30 inches and eats beetle larvae. The bird was the subject of a painting by John James Audubon and its current materialization is a cause of celebration for environmentalists and bird-watchers. One of the world’s largest woodpeckers, its demise is believed to have been caused by the logging of tall trees across the southeastern United States where the birds lived. Numerous scientists are now at work at Arkansas’s 500,000 acre Big Woods ecosystem searching for the elusive birds.

The State Museum of Pennsylvania is located at 300 North St., Harrisburg. Hours of operation are: Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday Noon to 5 p.m.; closed Monday. Admission is free. To view a photo of the woodpecker, visit www.statemuseumpa.org/ivory.html.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is the official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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