

**Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge,  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,  
Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Records**

(Mss. 4171) Inventory

Compiled by Mark E. Martin

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections  
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library  
Louisiana State University Libraries  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2005

## Summary

<b>Size</b>	100 - 4" x 5" resin-coated photographic positive prints; 61 - 2.5" X 3.5" negative exposures; 34 - 35-mm negative film exposures; 1 hand-drawn, two-sided map, 67 cm X 76 cm
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Louisiana--Madison Parish--Singer Tract
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1935-1941
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1935-1941
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	Photographs taken and a map drawn by James T. (Taylor) Tanner during 6 field seasons studying the ivory-billed woodpecker in what is now part of the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge (La.).
<b>Restrictions</b>	There are no restrictions on this collection. However, the negatives in this collection may not be seen without prior curatorial permission.
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<b>Citation</b>	Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Mss. #4171 Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Records, Mss. 4171, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
<b>Stack location(s)</b>	11:31 OS:T

## **Biographical Note**

James Taylor Tanner, was born in Homer, New York, on 6 March 1914. He attended Cornell University and did graduate study under Arthur A. Allen. His master's thesis was on "Sound Recording for a Natural History Museum." His Ph.D. dissertation was "Life History and Ecology of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker," based on 21 months of field studies in the great Singer tract in northeastern Louisiana, the last refuge for this nearly extinct species. Many years later Tanner similarly visited almost inaccessible areas in northern Mexico, but failed to find the Imperial Woodpecker.

Tanner taught at East Tennessee State University from 1940, before serving in the Navy during World War II, reaching the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. From 1947 until retirement in 1979, he was at the University of Tennessee. He founded the ecology program there and directed more than 50 theses and dissertations in cooperation with seven university departments and the ecology section of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

From 1940, Tanner was a member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, serving as editor of the *Migrant* (1947-1955), as state president (1971-1973), and as Curator (from 1974). He was one of the first recipients of the Society's Distinguished Service Award. He did extensive field work involving cooperative projects with the Knoxville Chapter, the state Atlas, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Tanner also was in charge of grants to graduate students in the Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association. He published over 50 articles in refereed journals and *Audubon Magazine*. His *Guide to the Study of Animal Populations* was published by the University of Tennessee Press. Tanner died in Knoxville, Tennessee, on 21 January 1991.

## Historical Note

In 1935, a team of Cornell scientists – including Arthur A. Allen, Peter Paul Kellogg, George Miksch Sutton, J. J. Kuhn, and James T. Tanner – located three ivory-billed woodpecker nests in the Singer Tract. The researchers spent several days closely monitoring one of the nests and produced the first motion pictures and sound recordings ever obtained of the species.

From 1937 to 1941, James Tanner spent a large portion of his time living in the Singer Tract, collecting information about the ivory-billed woodpecker. Tanner used the data for his Cornell doctoral dissertation, which the Audubon Society later published in the *Research report of the National Audubon Society, number 1*, 1942.

In 1941, Tanner and his wife, Nancy Burnham Sheedy Tanner, saw several ivory-billed woodpeckers at the Singer Tract. That same year, the National Audubon Society launched a campaign to preserve the Singer Tract as a refuge for ivory-billed woodpeckers. Tanner did not return to the area until the 1980s, when the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge officially opened.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The 100 photographic negatives and their prints document 6 field seasons during the years of 1935-1941 during which James T. Tanner and associates studied the ivory-billed woodpecker and its environment on the Sanger Tract, Madison Parish, Louisiana, in what is now the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge. Also included is Tanner's hand-drawn, two-sided map documenting nesting sites and other signs of the ivory-billed woodpecker's presence in the Singer and Ayer Tracts, Madison Parish.

## **LIST OF SERIES**

- I. 1935 Field season photographs
- II. 1937 Field season photographs
- III. 1938 Field season photographs
- IV. 1939 Field season photographs
- V. 1940 Field season photographs
- VI. 1941 Field season photographs
- VII. Tanner map of ivory-billed woodpecker territory in Singer Tract, Madison Parish

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Item number	Description	Date	Creator
<b>Series 1 1935 Field season</b>			
4171001p	Cabin on Sharkey Road near Alligator Bayou, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171002p	Woods in flat near John's Bayou, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171003p	Cypress, John's Bayou, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171004p	Paul Kellogg and J. J. Kuhn when sound recording of ivory-billed woodpecker was being made, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171005p	Female ivory-billed woodpecker at nest in red maple, April 1935.	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171006p	Male ivory-billed woodpecker at nest in red maple, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171007p	Male ivory-billed woodpecker at nest in red maple, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
4171008p	Ivory-billed woodpecker pair changing at nest, April 1935	April 1935	James T. Tanner
<b>Series 2 1937 Field season</b>			
4171009p	Sharkey Road, April 1937	April 1937	James T. Tanner
4171010p	James T. Tanner standing next to a large sweet gum, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171011p	James T. Tanner standing next to a big honey locust near Methiglum Bayou, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner

4171012p	Rainey Lake, Greenlea[f] Bend, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171013p	Rainey Lake, Greenlea[f] Bend, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171014p	Cypress on Rainey Lake, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171015p	Oil [old?] field near Mack's Bayou, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171016p	Gum ridge, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171017p	Gum ridge, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171018p	Dead-top gum with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171019p	Dead-top gum with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, May 1937	May 1937	James T. Tanner
4171020p	Mixed woods, May or June 1937	May/June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171021p	Mixed woods, May or June 1937	May/June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171022p	Tensas River near Dishroom Bend, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171023p	Little Bear Lake, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171024p	Little Bear Lake, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171025p	Woods near John's Bayou, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171026p	Tops of sweetgum trees (in John's Bayou or Greenleaf Bend areas), June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171027p	Gum ridge woods, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171028p	Dead top sweetgum, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner

4171029p	Old field in Frisby Bend, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171030p	Woods on "old field," June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171031p	Woods on "old field," June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171032p	Woods on ridge, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171033p	McGill Bend, opening in canopy, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171034p	Partially logged woods in Ayer Tract in McGill Bend, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171035p	Cut-over wood near Singer Tract, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171036p	Recently logged woods in Ayer Tract in McGill Bend, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171037p	Dead limb scaled of bark by ivory-billed woodpeckers, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171038p	Dead hackberry fed upon by ivory-billed woodpeckers, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171039p	Ash tree with ivory-billed woodpecker roosting holes, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171040p	Overcup oak flat, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171041p	Salty spring and deer lick near Methiglum Bayou, June 1937	June 1937	James T. Tanner
4171042p	Cabin on Sharkey Road, near Alligator Bayou, July 1937	July 1937	James T. Tanner
4171043p	Tensas River, July 1937	July 1937	James T. Tanner
4171044p	Poison ivy, climbing, July 1937	July 1937	James T. Tanner
4171045p	Poison ivy, erect, July 1937	July 1937	James T. Tanner
4171046p	Tensas River, December 1937	December	James T. Tanner

		1937	
4171047p	Woods near John's Bayou, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171048p	Woods near John's Bayou, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171049p	Greenleaf Bend, gum ridge, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171050p	Greenleaf Bend, gum ridge near Rainey Lake, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171051p	Old field near Ramsey Bayou, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171052p	Old field near Ramsey Bayou, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171053p	Overcup oak flat, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
4171054p	Buck deer skull, December 1937	December 1937	James T. Tanner
<b>Series 3 1938 Field season</b>			
4171055p	Horse, "Charlie," used in ivory- billed [woodpecker] study in 1938	1938	James T. Tanner
4171056p	Ridge woods, 1938	1938	James T. Tanner
4171057p	John's Bayou, winter 1937 or 1938	1937/1938	James T. Tanner
4171058p	Nestling ivory-billed woodpecker on J.J. Kuhn, March 6, 1938	March 6, 1938	James T. Tanner
4171059p	Nestling ivory-billed woodpecker and J.J. Kuhn, March 6, 1938	March 6, 1938	James T. Tanner
4171060p	Greenleaf Bend, gum ridge, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner

4171061p	Gum ridge, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner
4171062p	Gum ridge, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner
4171063p	Dead-top ash, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner
4171064p	Wood in John's Bayou area, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner
4171065p	End of Rainey Lake, August 1938	August 1938	James T. Tanner

**Series 4 1939 Field season**

4171066p	Cabin at Sharkey Road at Alligator Bayou, Spring 1939	Spring 1939	James T. Tanner
4171067p	Horses in pasture at camp, Spring 1939	Spring 1939	James T. Tanner
4171068p	Jesse Laird and horses, Spring 1939	Spring 1939	James T. Tanner
4171069p	Woods near John's Bayou, Spring 1939	Spring 1939	James T. Tanner
4171070p	Big cottonwood, near Methiglum Bayou, Spring 1939	Spring 1939	James T. Tanner
4171071p	Sharkey Road, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171072p	Sweet pecan with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171073p	Sweet pecan with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171074p	Sweet pecan with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171075p	Sweet pecan with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner

4171076p	Sweet gum with ivory-billed woodpecker feeding sign, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171077p	Ivory-billed woodpecker nest tree, Nuttall's Oak, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171078p	Woods in vicinity of this nest, John's Bayou area, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171079p	Young ivory-billed woodpecker in flight, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171080p	Adult ivory-billed woodpecker in flight, April 1939	April 1939	James T. Tanner
4171081p	Lake in Andrews Bend, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
4171082p	Lake in Andrews Bend, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
4171083p	Gum woods in Andrews Bend, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
4171084p	Rainey Lake, Greenleaf Bend, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
4171085p	Rainey Lake, Greenleaf Bend, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
4171086p	Cypress on Rainey Lake, May 1939	May 1939	James T. Tanner
<b>Series 5 1940 Field season</b>			
4171087p	Temporary camp on Indian Lake	ca. 1940	James T. Tanner
4171088p	Deer pawing, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171089p	Bridge on Sharkey Road over John's Bayou, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171090p	Cypress in Methiglum Bayou, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner

4171091p	Gum ridge woods in Greenleaf, near Rainey Lake, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171092p	Gum ridge woods in Greenleaf, near Rainey Lake, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171093p	Slough or cypress brake, near Rainey Lake, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171094p	Cypress at end of Rainey Lake, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner
4171095p	Trees on gum ridge, Greenleaf Bend, March 1940	March 1940	James T. Tanner

**Series 6 1941 Field season**

4171096p	Recent cutover in John's Bayou area, December 1941	December 1941	James T. Tanner
4171097p	Recent cutover in John's Bayou area, December 1941	December 1941	James T. Tanner
4171098p	Big tree (gum?) in area south of Alligator Bayou, December 1941	December 1941	James T. Tanner
4171099p	Big tree (gum?) in area south of Alligator Bayou, December 1941	December 1941	James T. Tanner
4171100p	Big tree (gum?) in area south of Alligator Bayou, December 1941	December 1941	James T. Tanner

**Series 7 Tanner's map of Ivory-billed woodpecker territory in Singer Tract**

4171101	1 map; 67 cm X 76 cm; pencil on paper, recto and verso, ca. 1940		
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<b>Stack Location</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Contents (with dates)</b>
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OS:T		Series VII.	Tanner map of ivory-billed woodpecker sightings in Singer and Ayer Tracts, Madison Parish