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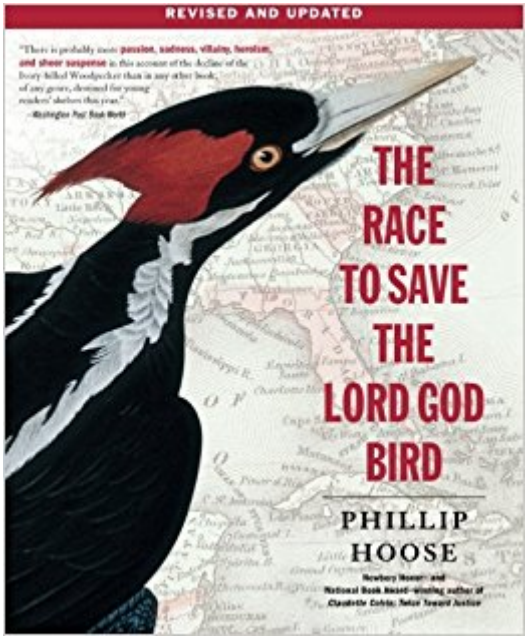
The Race To Save The Lord God Bird



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Synopsis

The tragedy of extinction is explained through the dramatic story of a legendary bird, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and of those who tried to possess it, paint it, shoot it, sell it, and, in a last-ditch effort, save it. A powerful saga that sweeps through two hundred years of history, it introduces artists like John James Audubon, bird collectors like William Brewster, and finally a new breed of scientist in Cornell’s Arthur A. "Doc" Allen and his young ornithology student, James Tanner, whose quest to save the Ivory-bill culminates in one of the first great conservation showdowns in U.S. history, an early round in what is now a worldwide effort to save species. As hope for the Ivory-bill fades in the United States, the bird is last spotted in Cuba in 1987, and Cuban scientists join in the race to save it.All this, plus Mr. Hoose’s wonderful story-telling skills, comes together to give us what David Allen Sibley, author of The Sibley Guide to Birds calls "the most thorough and readable account to date of the personalities, fashions, economics, and politics that combined to bring about the demise of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker."The Race to Save the Lord God Bird is the winner of the 2005 Boston Globe - Horn Book Award for Nonfiction and the 2005 Bank Street - Flora Stieglitz Award.This new edition of the author’s award-winning history features a new chapter about the endlessly debated 2004 Arkansas "rediscovery" of the ivory-billed woodpecker that made headlines around the world, as well as an expanded introduction and more than a dozen new images.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Grade 6 UpÃ¢â ¬â œThis meticulously researched labor of love uses drama, suspense, and mystery to tell the story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the first modern endangered species. Its story is also the story of America, its economics and its politics, its settlement and its development, its plume hats and its environmental protection laws. In 1800, the large and impressive woodpecker lived in the southeastern United States, from Texas to the Carolinas and as far north as Indiana. By 1937, it could be found on only one tract of land in northeastern Louisiana. Its last confirmed sighting was in Cuba in 1987. Hoose skillfully introduces each individual involved through interesting, historically accurate scenes. Readers meet John James Audubon as well as less familiar people who played a part in the Ivory-bill story as artists, collectors, ornithologists, scientists, and political activists. Sharp, clear, black-and-white archival photos and reproductions appear throughout. The author's passion for his subject and high standards for excellence result in readable, compelling nonfiction, particularly appealing to young biologists and conservationists.Ã¢â ¬â œLaurie von Mehren, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Brecksville, OH Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
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Gr. 5-8. Hoose details the history of the Ivory-billed woodpecker through the lives and work of those who studied it, painted it, and tried to save it from extinction as settlers and loggers reduced its habitat. Increasingly threatened by those who would kill it for sport, for its feathers, or paradoxically because its rarity made it valuable to collectors, the woodpecker found protectors in a growing number of scientists and bird lovers who took up the challenge of observing the bird and attempting to save the dwindling species. Once a distinctive inhabitant of wilderness areas in the southeastern U.S. (with a related variety in Cuba), the Ivory bill has evidently died out as a result of loss of habitat. A great deal of original research went into the writing of this book, as evidenced in the text and the detailed, discursive source notes that are appended along with a time line and glossary. Science, economics, and social and timely political history are intertwined in this precise, chronological record. Profusely illustrated with black-and-white photos. Carolyn PhelanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gave as a gift. They loved it!

We read it for my granddaughters eighth grade year of homeschool as a part of our studies on conservation. She is especially interested in anthology, and this was very appropriate for older kids to understand.

An incredibly fine work that should be in the library of every conservationist. The story of the Ivory billed wood pecker is a story of a lost conservation battle with devastating consequences. The lesson is powerful.

A must have for anyone interested in the Ivorybill.

Amazing- We have never laughed so hard at history. The 1870 'Chicago Do Over' was amazing, and I never new Audobon could eat bald eagles like a champion. You've gotta be a F%$ng badass if you're eating bald eagles for breakfast. No big deal.

"The Race to Save the Lord God Bird" is a chronicle of the history and demise of the ivory-billed woodpecker. It was written for children ages 9-12 but is perfectly suitable for adults as well. The book is large format in size, which makes the font bigger, but there is just as much text on each page as in an adult book, and there is nothing conspicuously juvenile about it. The large dimensions allow for nice black-and-white photographs of ivory-bills, their habitat, and the people who studied the birds.Author Phillip Hoose follows human interest in the ivory-bill woodpecker from Alexander Wilson's encounter with the bird in 1809 as he was working on his 9-volume "American Ornithology" to John James Audubon's work sketching the bird in natural poses around 1820. By 1900, large scale deforestation in Southern states had made the ivory-bill rare. At this point, "The Race to Save the Lord God Bird" turns its attention to the collectors who were continuing to mine the population when they clearly shouldn't have been and the beginnings of organized conservation efforts, starting with the "Plume Wars" that sought to end the slaughter of birds to decorate ladies' hats. It describes the 1935 Cornell University expedition by Jim Tanner, George Sutton, Arthur "Doc" Allen, and Paul Kellogg to record bird calls of nearly 100 species in the Tensas Swamp in Louisiana. That's followed up by an account of Jim Tanner's 3 years studying the few remaining ivory-bills for the Audubon Society, 1937-1939, from which he wrote his still-famous book.As Tanner was creeping around in it, the Singer Manufacturing Company sold logging rights to the Singer Tract,

where the last known ivory-bills lived, and efforts to preserve the forest by purchasing it failed. The ivory-billed woodpecker was declared extinct. A couple chapters are dedicated to recent searches for the ivory-bill in Cuba and the United States, but this book was published before the announcement in April 2005 that the ivory-bill may still live. In the back of the book, there are maps of the shrinking ivory-bill habitat 1800-present, a chronology of important dates in ivory-bill and bird conservation, a glossary of terms, a detailed list of sources, and an index. "The Race to Save the Lord God Bird" is a readable and informative account of the actions and circumstances that brought the ivory-bill woodpecker to near-extinction in spite of a persistent human fascination with the bird and concerted efforts to save it. For more information on sightings of the ivory-bill since it was presumed extinct in the 1940s, see Tim Gallagher’s book "The Grail Bird: Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker".

At the risk of sounding blasphemous let me simply say "Lord God, what a book!" This book belongs on your MUST READ list!This is a perfect example of how nonfiction should be written. Every school and public library should have a copy of this book. It is a valuable addition to the study of man, nature, and the environment.Phillip Hoose’s wonderful book captures the reader’s attention and doesn’t let it go till the very end of a beautifully written account of one of the most magnificent birds ever to grace this land. The cover of the book, not to mention the title, immediately attracts attention and after reading it the reader clearly understands why this bird was referred to as the Lord God Bird.Hoose introduces us to collectors like Brewster and Wayne who helped lead to the bird’s demise. There are the corporate villains in the form of the Chicago Mill and Lumber Company and the Singer Manufacturing Company who could have saved the last real refuge of the Lord God Bird but who chose profit over conservation when the Singer Tract was not spared from the woodcutter’s ax. There are heroes to this story. You will meet Jim Tanner, "Doc" Allen, and J. J. Kuhn who worked tirelessly to save the species. Having read this book I felt that Jim Tanner was definitely someone I wished that I had known personally.Educators will find countless lessons on environmental awareness, extinction of species, and the recklessness with which man has "civilized" the wilderness.Well done Mr. Hoose, well done.

I picked this book up based on recommendations from online reader groups who said it would read more like fiction than non-fiction. They were right! Hoose has meticulously researched the plight of the "Lord God Bird", the ivory-billed woodpecker, documenting the efforts to locate the dwindling population and the sad effects of man vs. nature. Well highlighted by photographs, we follow the

loss of this magnificent creature as its habitat is swallowed up by man’s greed in the first half of the twentieth century. Hoose’s writing is vivid and engrossing and caused me to do that rarest of things---go online and research more for myself. Most interesting of all is that just after this book was published, there have been reports of the rediscovery of the ivory-bill! This is a wonderful book appropriate for people of all ages and especially those who are worried about the endangerment of species by mankind’s shortsightedness. Recommended!

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