

WOODPECKERS

Year-round Species in Florida: red-headed, red-bellied, downy, hairy, red-cockaded, and pileated woodpeckers; and northern flicker

Other Names: sapsuckers, hammerheads, ladderbacks

Appearance: size - smallest is downy (6.5 inches long)
- largest is pileated (16 inches long)
color - mostly black and white, males have some red on head

Range: - all species are found statewide

Habitat: - woodpeckers are found in all wooded habitats

Diet: - insects, acorns, seeds, and tree sap

Reproduction: - excavate nest holes in trees
- 3-6 white eggs are laid from February (pileated) to August (red-headed)

Behavior: - perch and hop up and down tree trunks and other vertical surfaces
- feed on wood-boring insects by pecking into wood
- a pecking sequence (drumming) on dead limbs and other materials to produce a loud sound is used to establish territories and attract mates

Problems: - damage to wood siding due to drumming, feeding, or nest-building activities
- annoyance created by drumming noises

Solutions: - cover siding with a lightweight mesh nylon or plastic netting hung from the eaves and kept at least 3 inches out from the siding
- cover siding with sheet of plastic; woodpeckers will not be able to perch on this smooth surface
- limited success can be obtained with owl and hawk scarecrows, and noise making devices

Legal Aspects: - permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to use lethal control methods; permits from the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are required to destroy nests

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS

Common Name: Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Scientific Name: Picoides borealis

Appearance: size - approximately 7 inches in length
color - back and top of head are black, small white spots on back arranged horizontally, large white cheek patch, adult males have a red streak above the cheek which is visible when the male becomes agitated

Range: - southeastern United States

Habitat: - open old-growth pine forests, preferably longleaf pine (Pinus palustris)
- most populations exist on national wildlife refuges, national forests, military bases, and state lands.

I: - insects
- males feed on limbs and upper trunks of pines
- females feed on lower areas of trunks

Reproduction: - 1-2 young per year
- single breeding female and male per group
- offspring from previous years, usually males, aid with incubation and care of nestlings and are referred to as "helpers"
- breeding pair and helpers form a "group" of 2-6 birds
- female offspring usually leave the group, after their first winter, to find a new group to breed with

Roosting: - individuals roost in cavities in old-growth living pine trees
- a group's cavity trees are located in "clusters"

Behavior: - social nature, gregarias
- excavates cavities in living pine trees for roosting and nesting

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Problems:

- habitat loss (due to clearcutting for agriculture, logging, and unchecked growth of hardwood understory)
- suppression of fire (leads to growth of hardwood trees)
- fragmented populations
- pesticides
- nest predation
- competition for cavities by other species (i.e., flying squirrels, and red-bellied woodpeckers)

Solutions:

- selective cutting (as opposed to clearcutting)
- linking fragmented populations with wildlife habitat corridors
- managed burning
- artificial cavities and starter holes
- safeguard cutting of hardwood for firewood
- movement of juvenile females to groups which lack a female

Legal Aspects:

- protected by the Endangered Species Act