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## WORLD OF WONDER

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# WOODPECKERS OF NORTH AMERICA



**Red-headed woodpecker**  
7.5 inches  
(19 cm)

Found in eastern North America, the **red-headed woodpecker** does not peck trees to find food, but captures flying insects in the air or nibbles insects found on tree surfaces. Populations of the red-headed woodpecker are on the decline.

The **hairy woodpecker** is seen across North America. It looks similar to its cousin, the downy woodpecker, but it is larger and has a longer bill. These birds hitch up tree trunks and along main branches in search of food. They sometimes feed at the bases of trees, along fallen logs and occasionally on the ground.

Woodpeckers tap an estimated 8,000-12,000 times per day.

**Yellow-bellied sapsucker**  
7.5 inches  
(19 cm)

The **yellow-bellied sapsucker's** range extends from Alaska, across Canada, into the northern and eastern United States, to the east of the Rocky Mountains. It travels south to spend the winter in the southeastern U.S., Central America and the Caribbean. It feeds on tree sap by pecking many holes (sap wells) in vertical columns or horizontal bands.



**Hairy woodpecker**  
7.5 inches (19 cm)

Woodpeckers are beneficial birds because they eat huge numbers of insects. Their diet consists largely of wood-boring insects, spiders, caterpillars, berries and seeds. The pileated woodpecker feeds primarily on ants.

You may be able to attract woodpeckers to your yard by offering **suet** and black-oiled sunflower seeds. Downy and hairy woodpeckers and northern flickers are very fond of suet.

**Red-bellied woodpecker**  
8.0 inches  
(22 cm)



The **red-bellied woodpecker** is an eastern North American bird, but its range is expanding, and it is becoming more common farther west and north.

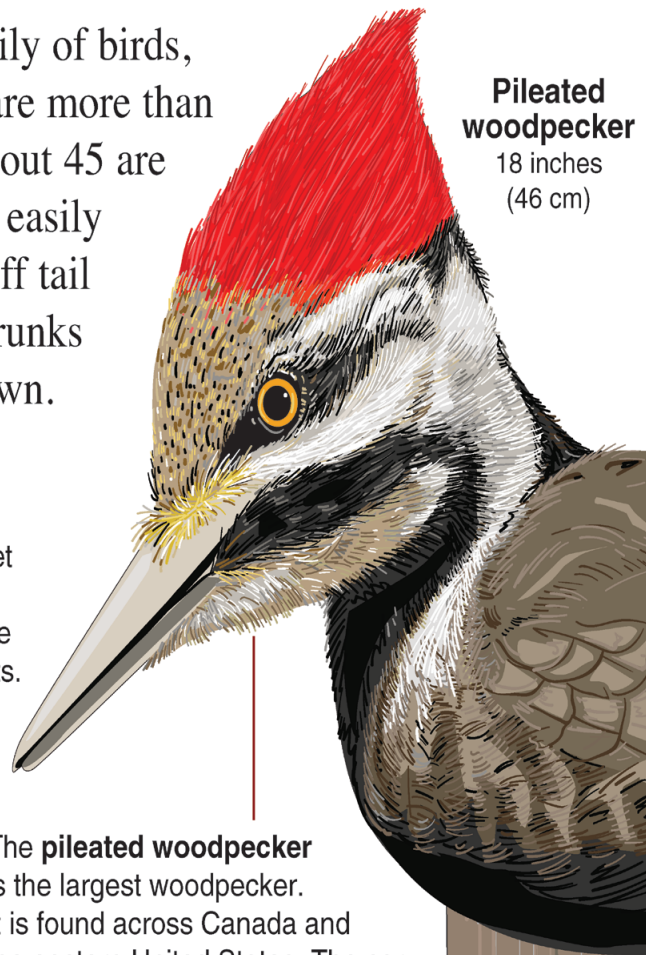
**Downy woodpecker**  
6.5 inches  
(17 cm)



Woodpeckers like to live in wooded areas where they can excavate nests in decaying trees.

The **downy woodpecker** is found across North America and is a familiar sight at many backyard feeders. These birds are quite acrobatic as they move from branch to branch. Vocal in spring and summer, downy woodpeckers make a great deal of noise with their shrill, whinnying call and by drumming on trees.

Downies and their larger look-alikes, the hairy woodpeckers, are some of the first identification challenges that beginning bird watchers learn to master.



**Pileated woodpecker**  
18 inches  
(46 cm)

The **pileated woodpecker** is the largest woodpecker. It is found across Canada and the eastern United States. The cartoon character Woody Woodpecker is based on this bird. The rapid "tap-tap-tap" sound of these birds pecking is called **drumming**. This sound serves to attract a mate and to claim territory.

Female woodpeckers usually lay a **clutch** of four to eight eggs in an excavated tree cavity or birdhouse. It is common for both adults to assist with the incubation and feeding of the chicks.

Woodpeckers have long, barbed, sticky tongues that can extend in order to extract insects.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <https://en.wikipedia.org>; <https://www.britannica.com>; <https://www.exploringnature.org>; [www.allaboutbirds.org](https://www.allaboutbirds.org); [www.birds-of-north-america.net](https://www.birds-of-north-america.net); <http://www.wild-bird-watching.com>; <http://www.defenders.org>

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