

Woodpeckers of Nebraska



Woodpecker Taxonomy

Family

Picidae

5 genera

Melanerpes, Sphyrapicus, Picoides, Colaptes,
Dryocopus

22 species total, 7 species in Nebraska

Pileated, Northern Flicker, Red-headed, Red-bellied,
Hairy, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Downy.

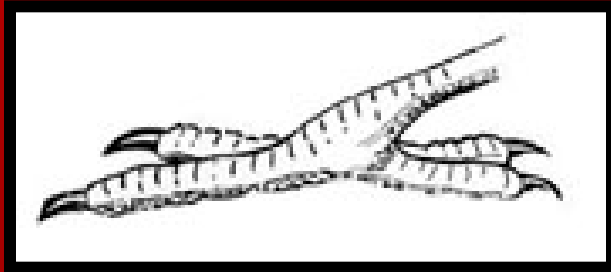
Woodpecker Adaptations: Stiff Tail

Stiff tails are used as a prop while woodpeckers are pecking on trees.



Woodpecker Adaptations: Zygodactyl Feet

Two toes in front, two toes in back. This helps in grabbing onto trees and structures when looking for food and communicating.



Woodpecker Adaptations: Stout, Chisel-like Bill

Used for communicating and looking for food.



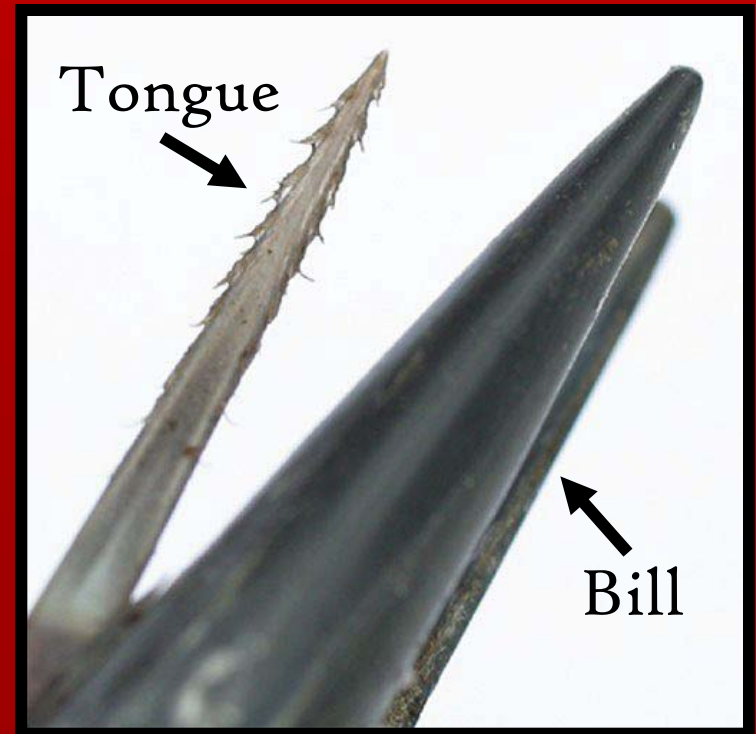
Woodpecker Adaptations: Long Tongue... really long!

Used for exploring inside trees for insects.



Woodpecker Adaptations: Barbed Tongue

Used for pulling-out insects from small
holes in trees.



Woodpecker Adaptations: Communication

Tap...tap-tap...tap-tap-tap

Quiet, irregular drumming similar to Morse code means the woodpecker is searching for insects to eat.

Thump-thump-thump-thump-thump

Fast drumming like a drum roll tells you the woodpecker is establishing his territory.

BAM...BAM...BAM...BAM...BAM

Slow, steady knocking like hammering a nail means the woodpecker is building a cavity for nesting.

Attracting Woodpeckers

Woodpeckers need large trees to build cavities.



Attracting Woodpeckers

Woodpeckers need old-growth trees to find food.

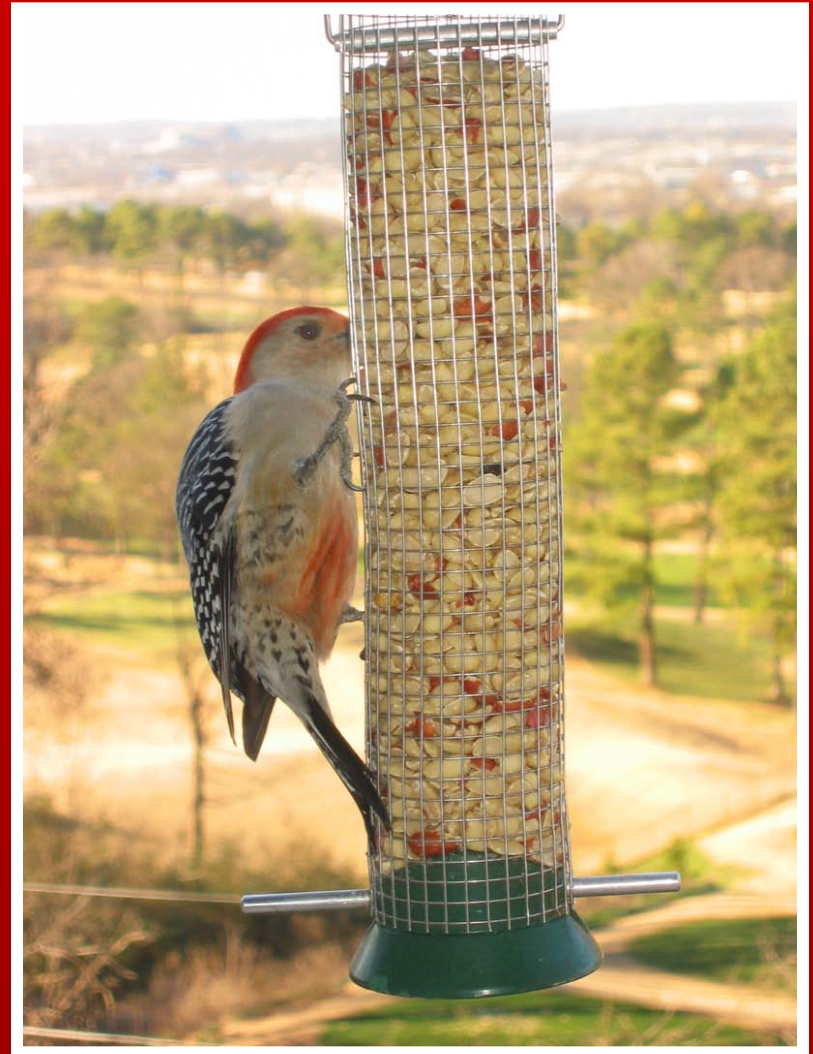
Old growth trees often have the insects woodpeckers eat.



Attracting Woodpeckers

For feeders, try:

- Suet
- Cracked corn
- Peanuts



Woodpeckers of Nebraska

Pileated Woodpecker



Length: 16 1/2 inches... Largest woodpecker in Nebraska.

Wingspan: 29 inches

Weight: 10 oz.

Pileated Woodpecker



Food

In the wild: insects, carcasses, seeds and nuts.

Feeders: Firmly attached suet feeders (not hanging) and deer rib cages.

Pileated Woodpecker



Evidence of
Pileated
Woodpeckers
foraging for
colonies of
carpenter ants.

Pileated Woodpecker

Nest in mature trees.

Cavity openings are approximately 16" in diameter.

One nesting tree and at least two other cavities for alternative sleeping locations.



Northern Flicker



Length: 12 1/2 inches

Wingspan: 18 inches

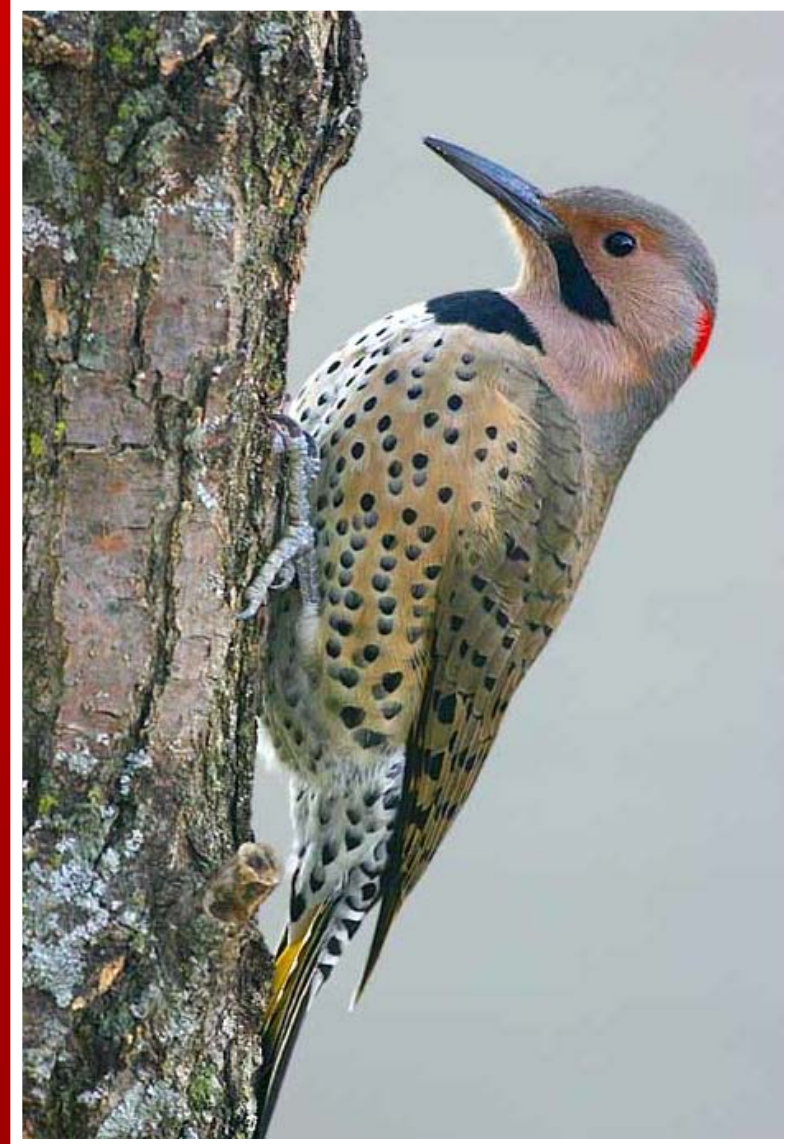
Weight: 3.9 oz.

Northern Flicker

Food

In the wild: insects, numerous fruits and berries, and seeds and nuts. Primary food is ants.

Feeders: Suet feeders, peanut butter, raisins, and apples in feeders.



Northern Flicker aka Yellow-shafted Flicker



Northern Flicker

Typically nests in dead trees.

Nest from 2 to 60 feet above the ground.

Cavity is 10 – 36 inches deep and is unlined.



Red-headed Woodpecker



Length: 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Wingspan: 17 inches

Weight: 2.5 oz.

Red-headed Woodpecker



Food

In the wild: insects, fruit and berries, seeds, nuts.

Feeders: suet, cracked corn, peanuts. In the summer, they can be attracted to oranges.

Red-headed Woodpecker



In flight, the distinct black and white wings are very noticeable and easily identifiable.

Red-headed Woodpecker



Typically nests in live or dead trees, cedar utility poles, or fence posts.

Typical clutch is five pure white eggs.

Incubation is approximately 14 days; fledging after about 4 weeks of care.

Red-bellied Woodpecker



Length: 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Wingspan: 16 inches

Weight: 2.2 oz.

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Food

In the wild: insects, acorns, fruits, and berries, seeds and nuts.

Feeders: cracked corn, suet, peanuts, peanut butter.



Red-bellied Woodpecker



The Red-bellied Woodpecker is easily identifiable by its black and white barred back and wings and the red spot on the back of the head.

Hairy Woodpecker



Length: 9 ¼ inches

Wingspan: 15 inches

Weight: 2.3 oz.

Hairy Woodpecker

Food

In the wild: insects
– ants, aphids, fat
from dead animals,
fruits, seeds, nuts.

Feeders: suet, deer
rib cages, peanut
butter.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



Length: 8 1/2 inches

Wingspan: 16 inches

Weight: 1.8 oz.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



Food

In the wild: fruit and berries, insects and spiders.

Feeders: suet, peanut butter, cracked walnuts, and fruits.

Downy Woodpecker



Length: 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Wingspan: 12 inches

Weight: 0.95 oz.

Downy Woodpecker



Food

In the wild: insects – mainly under the bark of trees and in goldenrod galls.

Feeders: suet, meat scraps, peanut butter, cheese, peanuts, fruit.

Downy Woodpecker



Although Downy Woodpeckers often look like Hairy or Red-bellied Woodpeckers, their size indicates Downy.