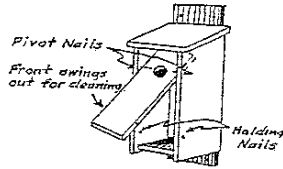
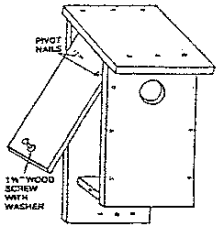


# Woodpecker Bird Houses



Northern  
Flicker

Downy  
Woodpecker

Floor  
of  
Cavity  
(inches)

7 x 7

4 x 4

Depth  
of  
Cavity  
(inches)

16 - 18

8 - 10

Entrance  
Above  
Floor  
(inches)

14 - 16

6 - 8

Size  
of  
Entrance  
(inches)

2 1/2

1 1/4

Height  
Above  
Ground  
(feet)

6 / 20

6 - 20

Place in open wooded areas on dead trees above surrounding foliage. Add wood shavings to bottom of bird house. Rustic houses will probably be more accepted.



## Audubon Society of Portland Wildlife Care Center

5151 NW Cornell Road

Portland, OR 97210

Phone: 503-292-0304

9 am-5 pm - 7 days a week 365 days a year



Administration Offices

Phone: 503-292-6855

Fax: 503-292-1021

Hours: 9 am to 5 pm, Mon-Fri

Nature Store

Phone: 503-292-9493

Hours: 10 am to 6 pm, Mon-Sat

10 am to 5 pm, Sun

Sanctuaries

Every day, dawn to dusk

Rare Bird Alert

Phone: 503-292-6855

[www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org)



Living with Urban Wildlife



Photo: Jim Cruce

# Woodpeckers

# Living with Woodpeckers

Photos: Jim Cruce

Downy Woodpecker



**Natural History**  
 There are six species of woodpeckers found in the Portland-Vancouver metro region: Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Red-breasted Sapsucker. Of

these, the Northern Flicker is by far the most common. With their hard, pointed beaks, incredibly long tongues, and thick, shock-absorbing skulls, woodpeckers are well adapted for excavating cavities for nesting and roosting, territorial drumming, and hunting for insects and sap. Woodpeckers are made for tree living. Their feet are specially adapted, with two toes pointing forward and two toes pointing to the rear and with sharp claws great for scaling up and down vertical surfaces. Woodpeckers also have a short, stiff tail that props them up when climbing.

Both woodpecker parents care for the young, which are born featherless and helpless. The young typically fledge (leave the nest) between 21 and 30 days after hatching. They will remain in the vicinity of the nest for a period of a couple of weeks after fledging, during which time they will learn valuable life skills from their parents.

Woodpeckers play an important role in the health of our forests. Abandoned nest cavities are used by a variety of other birds, and the process of drilling and

Acorn Woodpecker



Northern Flicker



chipping for food and shelter also contributes to the necessary decomposition of dead trees. One of the best ways you can help woodpeckers is by leaving dead trees (snags) standing on your property.

## SITUATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

**Territorial Drumming:** During breeding season (April-June) male woodpeckers will drum on loud surfaces to establish their territory and attract a mate. Favorite sites for this kind of "rat-a-tat-tat" drumming are gutters, downspouts, and flashing, but woodpeckers will also use siding as well.

**Solution:** This kind of activity can best be stopped by making the drumming site unsuitable for noisemaking. This can be done by covering it with a noise-deadening material such as burlap, canvas, foam rubber, or heavy plastic. Once the woodpecker finds that he can no longer produce his noise, he will usually go elsewhere.

Hairy Woodpecker



**Drilling for Insects:** Woodpeckers drill in wood to hunt for insects and to extract sap. This type of drilling usually appears as a series of relatively small holes along an expanse of wood siding. **Solution:** If you are seeing a woodpecker drilling for insects on

Red-breasted Sapsucker

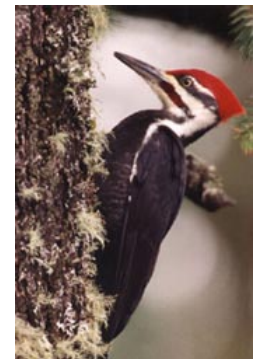


your wood siding, you might want to have your home checked for insect damage. If a woodpecker has found a source of insects, it will be difficult to eliminate the drilling and the solution would be to treat the insect

problem. Other remedies for this are variations on the scarecrow principle. Hanging windsocks, mylar tape, colorful streamers, or hawk silhouettes in the vicinity of the drilling will sometimes frighten woodpeckers away. A more surefire method is to cover the affected area with woodpecker-proof material such as ¼" hardware cloth, netting or plastic. These are short-term fixes in hopes that the woodpecker will move on to find a more suitable place to feed.

**Nest Making:** In a natural setting, woodpeckers nest in tree cavities that they have carved out. These cavities, when abandoned, are used by other cavity-nesting birds such as bluebirds, chickadees, and nuthatches. In urban areas, woodpeckers will sometimes substitute houses for trees. This type of activity can be recognized by the appearance of holes 2" in diameter or larger and can occur in the fall or spring.

**Solution:** Problems of this nature can oftentimes be avoided by not removing snags or by hanging woodpecker nest boxes. Flicker nest boxes are easy to make or they can be bought at the Audubon Society of Portland Nature Store or other local bird shops. Scare tactics as described above can also be implemented to encourage the woodpecker to find a more suitable nesting site.



Pileated Woodpecker