



Woodpecker Facts



The downy woodpecker is the most common woodpecker in North America.

The Woodpecker is one of the most interesting types of birds. There are over 200 species of woodpeckers that can be found all around the globe except in Australia, New Zealand and Madagascar. Woodpeckers live in forests, backyards and various other types of habitat where trees are available. Several species of woodpeckers are endangered or already extinct due to habitat loss and increased urbanization. Also, chemical pollution and usage of aggressive pesticides negatively affects survival of woodpeckers in the wild because it induces destruction of the eggs.

Did you know?

Woodpeckers have bristle-like feathers over their nostrils help to keep wood particles from being inhaled.

11 interesting facts about woodpeckers

- 1.** The downy woodpecker is the most common backyard woodpecker in North America, and is one of only about two dozen woodpecker species found in the United States.
- 2.** The most common plumage colors for all woodpeckers are black, white, red and yellow. A few species also have orange, green, brown, maroon and gold in their coloration.
- 3.** A woodpecker's tongue is up to 4 inches long depending on the species, and it wraps around the skull. Many woodpeckers have barbed tongues that help them extract bugs from trees and holes.
- 4.** Most woodpeckers have zygodactyl feet, which means they have toes facing the front and toes facing the back to help them grip trees and poles vertically. They use those toes with their stiff tail feathers to brace on trees as they climb.
- 5.** Woodpeckers eat bugs, sap, fruit, nuts and seeds. In the backyard, they are often attracted to suet feeders or nut feeders.
- 6.** Woodpeckers build nesting holes in the trees all year round. Old holes often become home for other birds and mammals, such as starlings, chickadees, owls, and squirrels.



Pilated Woodpecker excavating a hole on a power pole, one of their favorite spots to hunt for food.



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- 7.** Woodpeckers do not have vocal songs, and instead they drum on resonant objects such as hollow trees and logs, utility poles, chimneys, rain gutters and trash cans. Woodpeckers drum to attract mates, establish territories and otherwise communicate, and both genders are known to drum. Both males and females are able to drum the trees. Since woodpeckers do not have vocal cords, this activity also plays an important role in communication.
- 8.** Between feeding, excavating nest cavities and drumming, woodpeckers can peck up to 20 times per second, or a total of 8,000-12,000 pecks per day.
- 9.** Woodpeckers don't get headaches from pecking. They have reinforced skulls structured to spread the impact force, and their brains are tightly cushioned and protected.
- 10.** The average life span of a wild woodpecker can last from 4-11 years, depending on the species.
- 11.** The greatest threats to woodpeckers include habitat loss through urban development and population sprawl, insecticide use that eliminates food sources and natural disasters such as forest fires that eliminate dead wood for feeding and nesting.

How to Get Rid of Woodpeckers

Installing Woodpecker Netting: One way to deter pest woodpeckers is using woodpecker deterrent netting. Hanging a plastic netting from the eaves of your home or building creates a "curtain" that the woodpeckers cannot get through. This will force the woodpeckers elsewhere to do their dastardly deed of creating holes in your wood siding.

Woodpecker netting can easily be attached to the end of the eave of the home and draped down. This blocks the wall making it difficult for the woodpecker to get at the siding of the home. Once the woodpeckers have gone it is safe to remove the netting and save for the next spring or fall, when woodpeckers are active again.

Using BeakGuard® Woodpecker Deterrent: BeakGuard® uses a common compound that will not harm woodpeckers or any other bird species. In fact, the ingredients in BeakGuard® are used in many consumer products on the market today. Products like nail biting and thumb sucking deterrents used to break children of these habits use this technology. BeakGuard® is specially engineered to leave a durable, long lasting finish. It resists dirt pick up and holds up to season after season of rough weather. It leaves a vapor permeable, flexible membrane that ensures the color won't fade or change in tone.

Easily applied to latex painted surfaces, wood, fiber-cement, stucco, aluminum or vinyl, BeakGuard® is an elastomeric acrylic. You can apply it with a brush, roller, paint pad or appropriate spray equipment. One gallon covers about 180 square feet. Thinning of the product is not recommended. BeakGuard® should be screened prior to spray application, and the manufacturer recommends that you don't thin the product. Back-roll BeakGuard® when applying over acrylic finishes or other textured substrates. Depending on your climate, BeakGuard® usually dries in just 24 hours.



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