

Steve & Regina Garr are the owners of **Birds-I-View** nature store in Jefferson City, Missouri and have spent many years committed to helping our native cavity nesting birds prosper.

Woodpeckers are “Nature’s Home-Builders” because they are **Primary Cavity –Nesters”**. This means they excavate their own nesting cavity each time they nest. In turn, this provides many nest sites for “secondary cavity nesters” such as bluebirds, tree swallows, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, and more!

Many of the organizations devoted to Bluebirds, also provided important data regarding Woodpeckers and other native cavity-nesting birds. The **North American Bluebird Society** (of which Birds-I-View is a Corporate Sponsor, and Steve is a Life Member and former President) as well as the **Missouri Bluebird Society** (Of which Steve & Regina are Charter Members and serve as President & Secretary, respectively) is another great source for information on Woodpeckers. Visit their websites at:
www.nabluebirdsociety.org
www.missouribluebird.org

For links to plans for nest boxes for Woodpeckers please visit:

www.sialis.org

www.audubon-omaha.org/bbbox/

Local Audubon Chapters are also a great source for information on Woodpeckers: Here in Mid-Missouri we encourage you to visit the “**River Bluffs Audubon Society**” And of course Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s *All About Birds* site is a wealth of information : www.allaboutbirds.org

For specific information about Red-headed Woodpeckers, a great site is:
www.RedHeadRecovery.org

Food for Woodpeckers

Most Woodpeckers will eat a variety of foods that home owners can supply. Many species will often accept a variety of fruit & jelly, and they have often been noted drinking nectar from flowers and feeders. They also appreciate mixes which contain dried fruit, tree nuts, peanuts, and sunflower hearts. Woodpeckers consume many insects, often using their tongues to reach into tree crevices and under bark to reach insects other birds cannot. Many varieties of suet are accepted by woodpeckers, and **we strongly suggest continuing to feed suet products well into the summer**. If this is done, woodpeckers will often bring their young to suet feeders to teach them to find food there! **No-Melt varieties of suet can be fed even in 100 degree temperatures!**



↑ Tail-Prop Suet Feeder

Upside-Down Suet Feeders (right) can help deter Starlings & Grackles !



Homemade Suet Recipe for Woodpeckers

1 Cup Lard
1 Cup Peanut Butter
1-1/2 Cup all-purpose Flour
1-1/2 Cup Corn meal (not a mix)
1/2Cup Oatmeal
1/2 Cup mixed nut pieces, or dried fruit pieces
Mix together lard & peanut butter. Microwave for approx. one minute (adjust as needed) Add flour , corn meal , and oatmeal and stir until stiff. Add nuts or fruit. Fill suet logs, spread on bark, or form into cakes to freeze and use in suet feeders. **Woodpeckers (esp. the larger woodpeckers) appreciate a “tail prop” on their feeder.** (See Photo above left)

Habitat Suggestions for most varieties of Woodpeckers:

- Leave dead trees (“Snags”) when possible
- Consider NOT trimming every dead limb from a living tree in your yard.
- Cultivate “park-like” settings of large trees combined with open areas.
- Visit the websites suggested in this Brochure for recommendations for providing nest boxes.

BIRDS - I - VIEW
Jefferson City, MO

Woodpeckers!

Nature’s “Home-Builders”!



Committed to providing products & information that benefit wildlife.

573-638-BIRD(2473)
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All photos by Steve Garr except where otherwise noted

Common North American Woodpeckers known to visit Bird Feeders!



Photo by Ron Erxleben

Downy Woodpecker (above left)

- North America's most prevalent Woodpecker
- Smallest North American Woodpecker
- Thrives in a variety of habitats, from heavily wooded to residential yards
- Can forage for insects on weeds and on much smaller branches than other woodpeckers can utilize
- Male has red patch on back of head
- Small bill is half the length of the head

Hairy Woodpecker (above right)

- Although larger, is similar in appearance to Downy, except bill is longer & heavier. Bill is as long as its head.
- Male has red patch on nape. East of Rockies this can be "divided" into two patches.
- Outer tail feathers are entirely white (Downy has spotted outer tail feathers)
- Often prefers larger trees for foraging & nesting than the Downy woodpecker
- Has many subspecies; experts disagree on the exact number.



Northern Flicker

- A Large woodpecker with two North American subspecies and many hybrids where territories overlap.
- Yellow-shafted Flickers have yellow coloring on underside of tail and wings. Red-shafted have red coloring.
- Black crescent on chest is an obvious ID mark

- Barred on back, spotted on underside. Adult male Yellow-shafted has a black mustache stripe- Red-shafted male has red mustache stripe.
- Consumes large quantities of ants but easily lured to suet feeders and sunflower, sunflower hearts and Peanut and Tree Nut pieces.
- Species is largely migratory



Pileated Woodpecker

- North America's largest "commonly seen" woodpecker" (16-19 inches)
- Red Crest on Head & Black Body/ Male has red mustache, plus red crest continues to forehead on

male only.

- Found in forests with large trees, but at home in suburbs that are at forests edge
- Striking white pattern on underside of wings, best seen in flight
- Diet mostly of ants (esp. carpenter ants) and larvae. Will often visit suet feeders, and some seed feeders. Also eats fruits, berries, and nuts.
- Family groups will frequently forage for insects close together.
- Leaves characteristic rectangular excavations in dead trees caused by foraging for beetle larvae

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

- Our most "migratory" of woodpeckers in Missouri
- Sap makes up about 20% of their annual diet. Drills "wells" in trees for sap that vary in size and arrangement based on season.
- Male has red throat-female has white.
- Will sometimes take advantage of Suet Feeders and nuts and some fruit/jelly.



Red-bellied Woodpecker



- One of the "best-adapted" woodpeckers, populations are increasing in most of its range and is found in almost any type of habitat.
- Known for storing food in crevices of trees and other wooden structures. (These caches often provide food for other bird species)
- This woodpecker does have a red belly, however it is often not always visible in the field.
- Male has red on nape and top of head that extends to his forehead-female only has red on her nape. **Note** the lack of red on sides of head and under neck like that found on the Red-headed woodpecker.
- Easily attracted to feeders with seed, suet, fruit and jelly. Will also consume a variety of insects and even the occasional tree frog.

Red-headed Woodpecker



- One of the most striking of our woodpeckers, is distinguished by its bright red hood, which covers its entire head (ski-mask style)
- Sexes look alike
- Often less common at feeders than other woodpeckers
- Perhaps most omnivorous of

all woodpeckers, consuming everything from nuts & berries to orchard fruits to earthworms and all variety of insects.

- Can "fly-catch" & forage on ground
- Populations overall are in decline. Has suffered because of loss of habitat that contains open understory, large trees (hardwood or pine) and availability of "wildlife trees" (that is dead trees or trees with dead limbs).
- Golf courses can be managed to be ideal habitat for Red-headed woodpeckers.
- **Please visit www.redheadrecovery.org !**

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