

presence known by squawks or swoop attacks when you approach the young. It is always in the best interest of the bird to be raised by its parents. Leave the fledgling alone unless a cat or dog is attacking it.

If you have a fledgling bird in your yard and you are concerned about neighborhood pets, turn on a sprinkle to deter pets from bothering the fledgling.

### **BIRD LOOSE IN THE HOUSE**

Confine the bird to one room; turn off the lights and open a door or window. Leave the room; the bird will instinctively fly toward light and escape. Determine how it got in, and seal or screen entryways.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS**

Studies have shown that a small number of birds do carry equine encephalitis viruses, which are transmissible to humans through mosquitoes. While living with the presence of bird does not itself put humans at risk, the presence of mosquitoes is a risk factor.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS...**

All native birds, including woodpeckers, are protected by the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is illegal for any person to possess birds, dead or alive, nesting material, eggs, feathers or bones of a bird without proper permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Ohio. It is also illegal to harm or kill a protected bird species, and it is illegal to remove or destroy nesting material from a nest once an egg has been laid.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

*If you find a wild animal and are concerned, leave it alone and call Brukner Nature Center at 937-698-6493, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.*



5995 Horseshoe Bend Rd.  
Troy, OH 45373

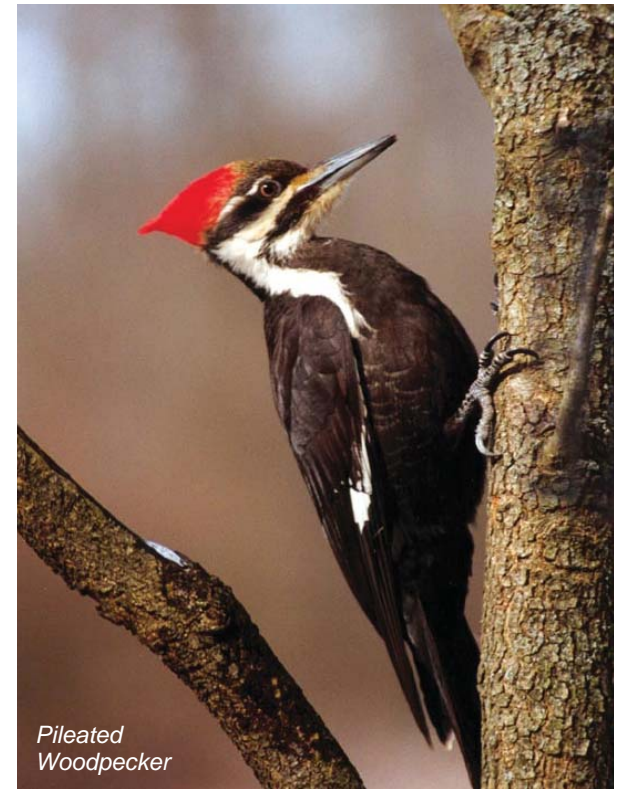
[www.bruknernaturecenter.com](http://www.bruknernaturecenter.com)

*Brukner Nature Center is a non-profit, privately funded organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of wildlife conservation through preservation, education, and rehabilitation.*

*The purpose of our wildlife rehabilitation program is to educate people regarding the natural history of Ohio's wildlife, to offer help and advice when wildlife and people conflict, and to care for, rehabilitate, and release native Ohio wildlife expected to survive in their natural environment.*

# Living with **WOOD- PECKERS**

## in Miami County



*Pileated  
Woodpecker*

# Brukner Nature Center

Woodpeckers have chisel-like beaks and long, flexible tongues designed for drilling and probing under tree bark. Most species peck on dead, dying trees to feed on insects that bore into wood, like carpenter ants, bark beetles and wireworms. Others eat plant material like nuts and seeds or are attracted to suet and sunflower seeds from bird feeders.

## DRUMMING

When a woodpecker's persistent hammering at an area in the spring does not result in the production of a cavity, it is probably a behavior called drumming. Rather than singing to attract females or announce their territories, woodpeckers drum at specific sites within their domain to announce their presence. They usually choose something that will produce a loud, resonating sound, such as a metal chimney cap. They then visit these sites regularly to announce their presence to other woodpeckers in the area.



*Red-bellied Woodpecker*

If you muffle the resonating quality of the object they have chosen, they will not achieve the desired effect by drumming on the particular object. To do this, cover the object with a blanket or foam rubber padding. Continue using this deterrent technique until the behavior stops.

## FEEDING

Woodpeckers locate prey by hearing the sounds they make while burrowing into the wood. If a structure is infested with insects, the

woodpeckers will drill small holes to extract them. However, woodpeckers cannot distinguish the difference between the noises an insect makes and the sound that electricity makes while going through the walls of our houses. Therefore, a woodpecker will drill holes in the siding of a house looking for insects when it is actually hearing the sound of electricity.

If the cause of this problem is an insect infestation, then you need to remove the insects. You may wish to consult a pest control specialist. If they are attracted to the sound of electricity running through the walls of your house, muffle these noises by hanging blankets or foam rubber padding, as described under "Drumming."

## CAVITY BUILDING

Woodpecker holes are round and deep and often occur at loose knots in the cedar siding of houses. Woodpeckers often start a hole and then abandon it to start another. In some cases, they may be confused when the hole penetrates the board and they encounter insulation. Sometimes the cavity is completed and nesting will continue in the wall of the building. This could be the most difficult behavior to try to control but it is also the most uncommon. Be sure to keep in mind that this is a seasonal behavior and that it will only be temporary.

If cavity building can be discouraged before the cavity is fully built, the woodpecker may try to relocate. However, it may return the following



*Downy Woodpecker*

year and try again. Usually a combination of scare tactics and prompt repair of the excavation areas are somewhat effective in trying to discourage cavity building activities. You should fill shallow holes with caulking or wood filler as soon as they are created. Larger holes and loose knots can be filled with wood caulk. You may also try to offer a ready-built nesting box, which they might use rather than making their own. When offering a nesting box, place it directly on the building or on a post in front of the problem area.

## RECOMMENDED DETERRENTS

Items that blow in the wind or shine in the sun will frighten birds. Hang twirled Mylar ribbon, windsocks or aluminum foil strips or display Mylar windmills. Hanging "eye-spot balloons" or beach balls, with circles painted on them to represent large, predator-like eyes, is also effective. To restrict a woodpecker's access, tape Mylar to a favorite perching surface or try hanging a sheet or plastic tarp over the surface. Any of these deterrents should be used for 7 to 10 days.

## FINDING A BABY BIRD

If you find a featherless, downy or incompletely feathered young bird, find its home and place the bird back in the nest. Birds have a poorly developed sense of smell; the parents will not reject the bird because you touched it.

If you find a completely feathered young bird on the ground that looks healthy but is unable to fly, leave it alone. These birds, called fledglings, are out of the nest and live on the ground for approximately two weeks. The parent birds are still feeding and caring for them, and during this time the fledglings are learning to fly. If you watch, you may see the parents make their