

Pileated Woodpecker

Dryocopus pileatus



“The interconnections among species within an ecological system are not always as obvious as those exemplified by the pileated woodpecker. But as long as you can hear pileateds pounding into trees, you’ll know that the intricate beat goes on.”

Lichen, Patricia. [River-Walking Songbirds & Singing Coyotes](#)

Stand quietly and listen. If you hear loud drumming you are the lucky soul hearing a pileated woodpecker hammering on a tree. Anywhere in the forest you may hear its call, "...a loud, far-carrying laugh, sometimes described as a "jungle bird" call due to its wild, unfettered quality." (wikipedia)

Now that the ivory billed woodpecker is probably extinct, this magnificent, colorful bird is the largest woodpecker in North America. Like most of its kind, its strong neck muscles and thick skull protect it from the shock of its head-on encounter with wood.

Large holes in the tree approximately 20 feet behind this sign, and other snags and logs in the area, indicate the presence of pileated woodpeckers in our forest. After the ants or grubs have been vacuumed up by the bird's long and flexible tongue, the hole may be enlarged into a nest or roosting site, often two feet deep within the tree. When abandoned by the woodpeckers, these holes become nesting sites for other birds and animals unable to carve their own spaces - mice, flying squirrels, wood ducks and swallows, to list a few.

Pileated woodpeckers of either sex may drum, but males tend to do so most frequently. The drumming helps to attract a mate, and the pair will stay near each other until the winter. The male does most of the work of creating the hole; the female lays the eggs, and then the male does most of the incubating and feeding of the young. The female stays around the area, presumably to make sure he does it right. The family group will remain together even after the fledglings have left the nest, and both parents continue to feed them into early autumn.

A full grown pileated woodpecker is nearly the size of a crow, black with bold white stripes down the neck and a flaming-red crest. If you are having a really lucky day, you may get to see one of these big birds winging its way through our forest.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pileated_Woodpecker/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pileated_woodpecker

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