

BIRDMAN

Woodpeckers common to the Applegate

BY TED A. GLOVER

In the Applegate Valley and surrounding hillsides live several species of woodpeckers. There are nearly 200 species worldwide, found on every continent but Australia and Antarctica, and we can see a few of these nearly every day right here in our own yards.

The most widely seen is the Acorn Woodpecker, black and white with large white eyes surrounded by black, and a yellow throat. The male has a prominent red crown touching the white forehead and the female has a red nape with black separating it from the forehead. While in flight these woodpeckers display a white rump and white patches near their wing

tips. Acorn Woodpeckers feed primarily on acorns as their name implies but, like all woodpeckers, also feed on other nuts, fruits and insects.

The Hairy Woodpecker is also very common in our area. Like its smaller cousin the Downy Woodpecker, it is best recognized by the white stripe in the center of its back and by the prominent white underparts. While these two woodpeckers look quite similar, the Downy is about one-third smaller than the Hairy. Another good difference to note is the Downy has a bill that is about half the length of its head while the Hairy has a bill that is almost as long as its head.

Our largest woodpecker is the Pileated Woodpecker, easily identified by its vivid red crest and crow-like size. It is the only woodpecker in our area with a crest. It is easily recognized by its great size, bounding flight and striking black and white color.

Another bird, often not recognized as a woodpecker, that is seen daily in our area is the Northern Flicker. In this part of the country it is known for the beautiful salmon-colored undertail and underwings, brown-barred back, white rump, and a very noticeable black crescent on its chest.

While there are other woodpeckers in our area of Oregon, these are the common ones. All woodpeckers have very strong

bills for hammering and drilling into tree trunks for insects and have a long sticky glue-like tongue for extracting them. Their beak acts like a chisel to remove bark and find the hiding bugs.

While most birds have one toe pointing back and three pointing forward, woodpeckers have two sharply clawed toes pointing in opposite directions to help them grasp the sides of trees and to help balance them while they drill.

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Walter Lantz may have patterned the call of Woody Woodpecker after the **Acorn Woodpecker**.



Adult **Downy Woodpeckers** are the smallest of North America's woodpeckers.



The **Hairy Woodpecker's** plumage is virtually identical to the smaller Downy Woodpecker.



Northern Flickers, one of the few woodpecker species that migrates, frequently feed on the ground.



The **Pileated Woodpecker's** call is a loud, far-carrying laugh, sometimes described as a "jungle bird."

STINK BUG

FROM PAGE 1

depending on the time of year; so to test these attractants you often have only one chance in the season to evaluate them and then have to wait until next year to try again. We are also looking at combining the attractants with lights to enhance their effectiveness.

The pest threat is very real.

Severe damage to an apple orchard outside of Vancouver, WA, occurred this past year. Control of BMSB has proven difficult. Back east, where BMSB is now a serious pest of peaches and apples, growers are relying on repeated applications of broad-spectrum insecticides for control.

Clearly, a better approach is needed. A researcher in New Jersey explored focusing treatments on orchard borders to catch the bugs as they moved in, along with weed control along the border to deter their movement. The researcher dubbed the approach "CPR" for "crop perimeter restructuring" (a catchy name). The approach seemed to work, with insecticide use reduced by up to 75 percent.

Another subject of intense research is biological control, particularly the introduction of natural enemies from the BMSB's native habitat in East Asia. One site of this research is in Corvallis

on the Oregon State University campus. Initial testing is done in a quarantine facility to be sure that natural enemies do not attack our native species and cause unintended consequences that cannot be undone. These imported and highly specific natural enemies, primarily tiny wasps that parasitize the BMSB eggs, could provide much-needed natural mortality for this pest and help mitigate the extreme population explosions that have been observed, most recently this last fall in downtown Sacramento.

Last summer was very warm and our observations indicated that we had two full generations of BMSB, which was undoubtedly a major factor in the increased BMSB population locally. With BMSB taking up residence here in southern Oregon, the race is on between researchers and the pest population. We like to think that we're smarter than stink bugs, but we know enough to realize that BMSB is not going away. It will take a number of tactics and tools to minimize the threat posed by this new insect invader.

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Photo below: Stink bug (<http://epconlane.com/500>). Photo right: Squash bug (thesideyardgarden.com). Can you tell the difference?



PHOTO CREDIT

All bird photos courtesy of Peter J. Thiemann, Flickr photo stream.
See Peter's story on page 13.

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