

Visiting Woodpeckers



Northern Flicker

Some woodpeckers are only around our part of Texas in the winter months. Both the Northern Flicker and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker migrate in the spring to breeding grounds in northern and eastern states, so you won't see them around right now.

Northern Flickers are large—between the size of a Hairy and a Pileated Woodpecker. Unlike other woodpeckers, they usually hunt for insects on the ground instead of in trees.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers aren't common at bird feeders either because their primary food source is sap. They drill holes into elm, maple, aspen, and birch trees to collect sap with their long tongues.

Wondrous Woodpeckers

Listen to John Schaust and Brian Cunningham discuss “Wondrous Woodpeckers” on the next episode of *Nature Centered*. The new episode will drop on July 13th.



Nature Centered is a podcast from **Wild Birds Unlimited** about feeding the birds and enjoying nature right in your own backyard. Relax, enjoy the birds, and stay Nature Centered.

austinsouth.wbu.com/nature-centered-onewbu



July 2023

Wild about Woodpeckers!



Hairy Woodpecker

Which woodpeckers do you see in your yard?



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Little Flyers & the Little Flyers Passport

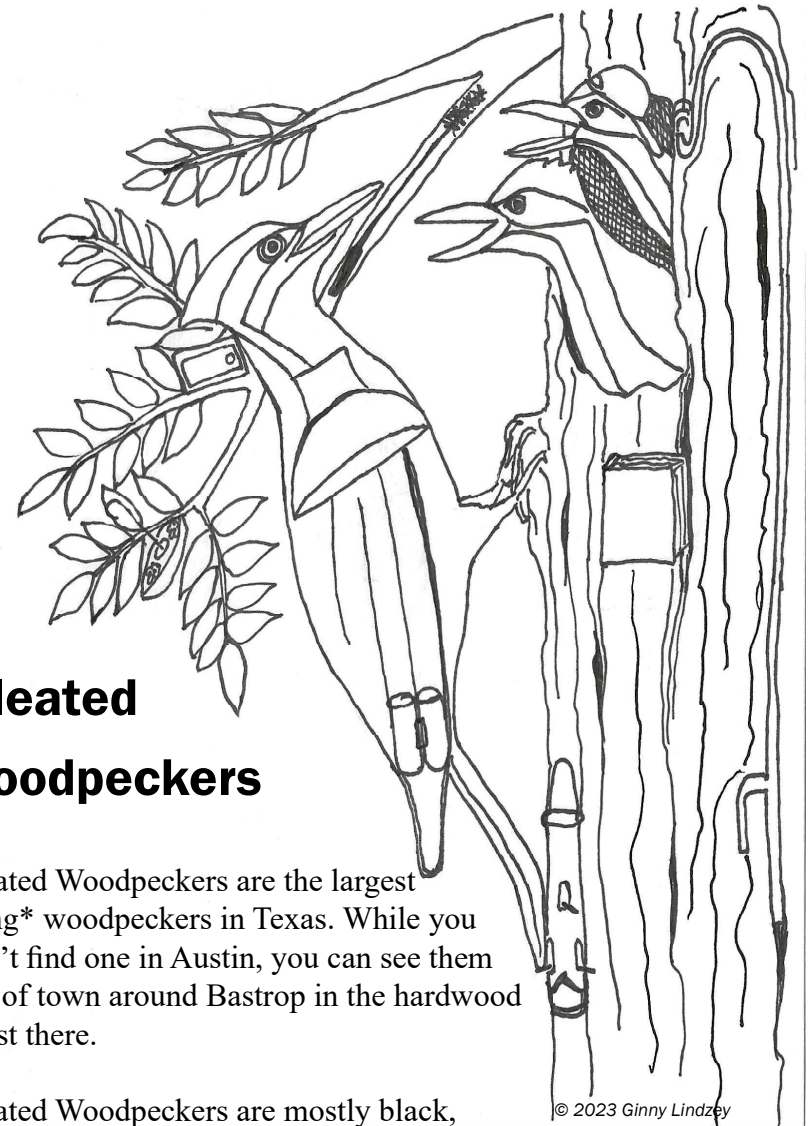
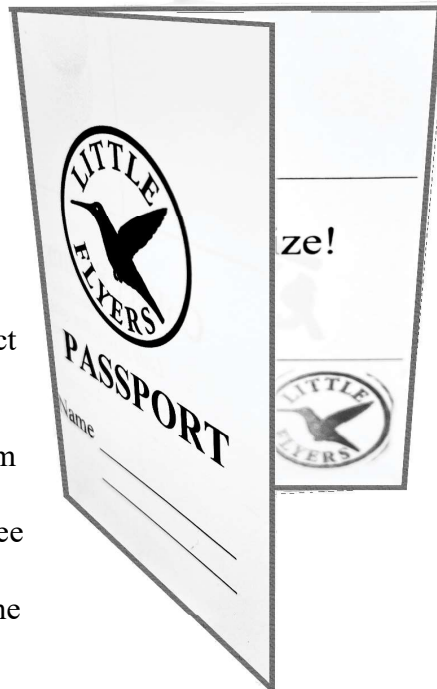
This is our fourth issue of *Little Flyers*, a zine designed for kids. We provide fun information and activities on a monthly basis tailored to our seasonal focus.

Color the pictures, complete activities, or just create your own works of art! What do you see outside your window?

Kids can earn stamps for the *Little Flyers Passport* by completing the activities and bringing it in to show us. Collect 8 stamps to receive a prize!

Little Flyers is a unique program at the **Wild Birds Unlimited** South Austin located at 3535 Bee Caves Road in Westlake Hills. Come visit us in person or online at austinsouth.wbu.com for upcoming events, birding news, feeders, bird seed, nesting boxes, and more.

The *Little Flyers* zine is created and edited by Ginny Lindzey, including all original artwork.



Pileated Woodpeckers

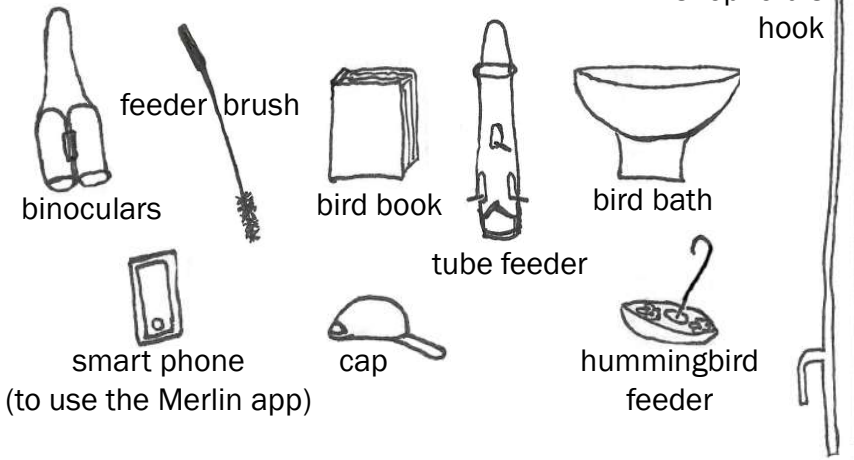
Pileated Woodpeckers are the largest living* woodpeckers in Texas. While you won't find one in Austin, you can see them east of town around Bastrop in the hardwood forest there.

Pileated Woodpeckers are mostly black, with a red crest and bold white stripes on the head and neck. While that red crest resembles a “mohawk” haircut, the name *pileated* actually comes from the Latin word *pilleus* meaning cap.

* There is one woodpecker that is larger but it is thought to be extinct: the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

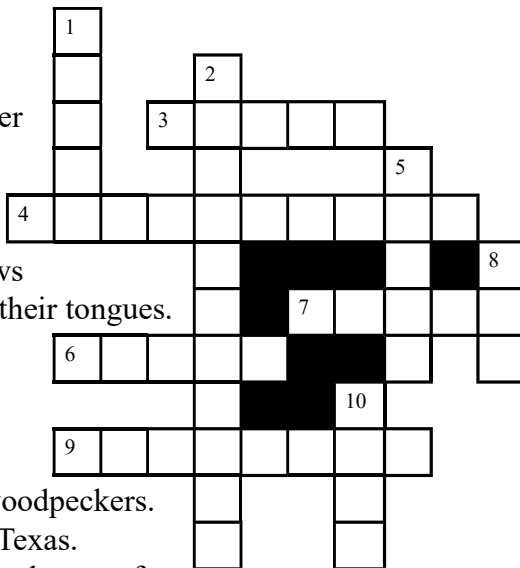
Hidden Pictures

Find the following items hidden in this picture of a Pileated Woodpecker family on page 7 (right).



Woodpecker Crossword

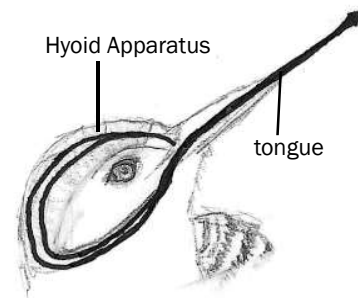
- Often confused for a Downy, but is bigger.
- What this zine is about.
- The smallest woodpecker in Texas.
- Type of foot that woodpeckers have.
- The apparatus that allows woodpeckers to extend their tongues.
- One of the colors that helps to conceal them from predators.
- The other color (see 6).
- Accent color on male woodpeckers.
- Largest woodpecker in Texas.
- Type of tree that woodpeckers prefer.



Cool Woodpecker Facts

Woodpeckers prefer dead or dying trees because they attract insects, which they like to eat. They also eat acorns, fruit, nuts, seeds, and suet, so don't be surprised when they show up at your feeders.

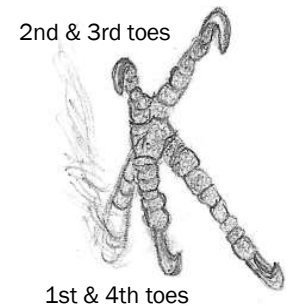
Woodpeckers use their stiff tail feathers for extra support when digging for insects or hollowing out a nest in a tree.



Woodpeckers have long, retractable tongues. They are attached to a muscle-wrapped bone structure called the *hyoid apparatus* which begins behind the right eye socket and forks into two parts wrapping around the skull. It comes together again where it attaches to the tongue and enables the tongue to extend.

Woodpeckers are primarily cavity nesters. They even sleep in cavities throughout the year. While excavating a cavity, a woodpecker's head can strike a tree's surface at speeds up to 13-15 miles per hour and do it at over 100 strokes per minute.

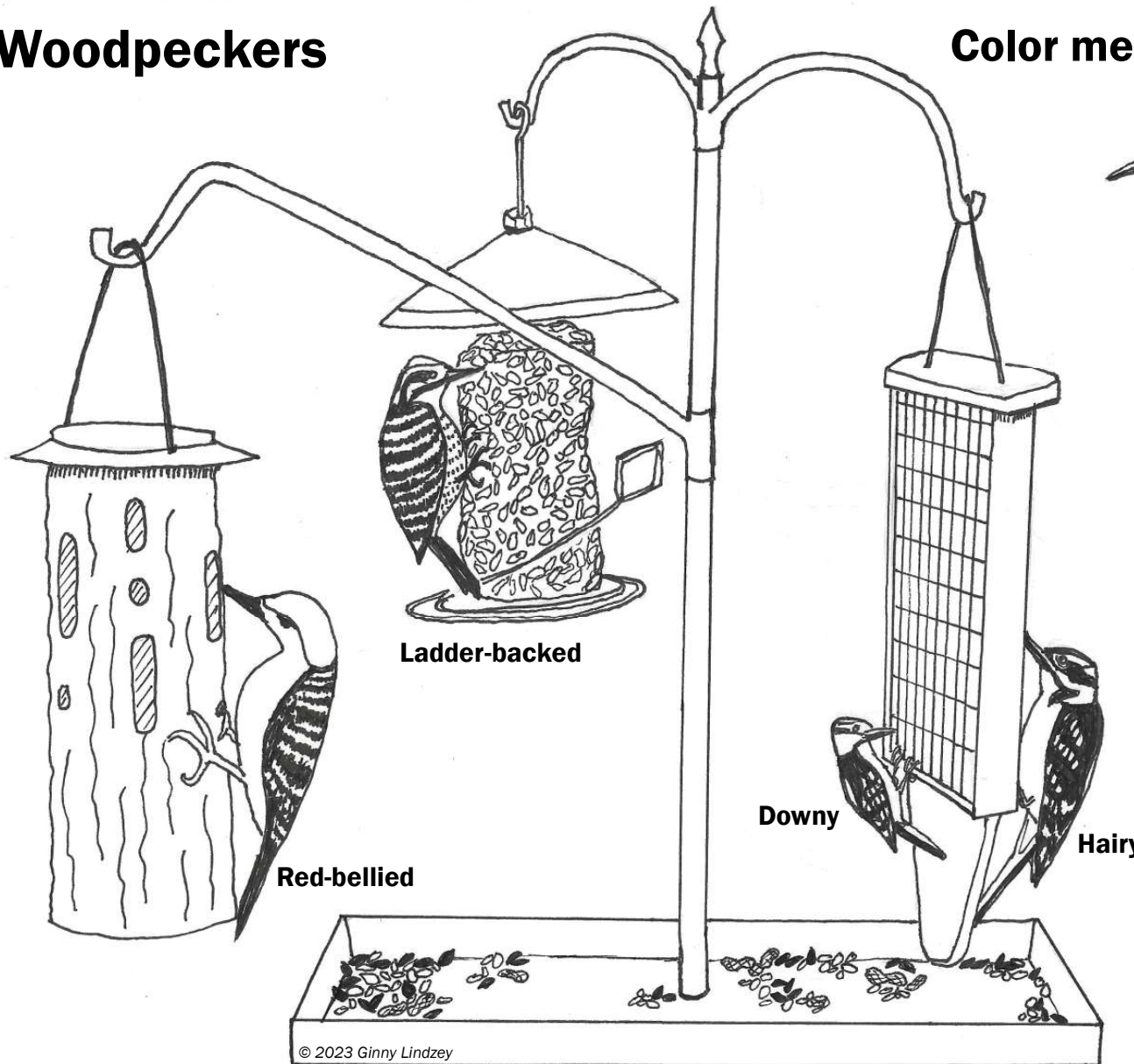
Woodpeckers have *zygodactyl* feet, which means that they have two toes in front and two in back. Having two sets of opposing toes gives them a much better grip on the trees they land on and climb.



The contrasting black and white pattern found on the backs of many woodpeckers helps to conceal them from predators. This is called disruptive coloration. Males often have striking red accents which may seem as threatening as well.

Austin Woodpeckers

Color me!



Golden-fronted

Ladder-backed

Red-bellied

Downy

Hairy

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Here's some help with identifying the different woodpeckers you might see in your back yard.

- **Red-bellied:** medium-large, solid red on back of neck, red on top of head (males only)
- **Ladder-backed:** small-medium, black and white barring down the back, two bold facial stripes, red cap (males only)

- **Downy:** very small, white vertical patch on back, spot of red on back of head (males only)
- **Hairy:** small-medium, white vertical patch on back, bill is longer than a Downy, spot of red on back of head (males only)
- **Golden-fronted:** medium-large, yellow-orange on back of neck, red on top of head (males only)