



Branching Out

Spring 2016

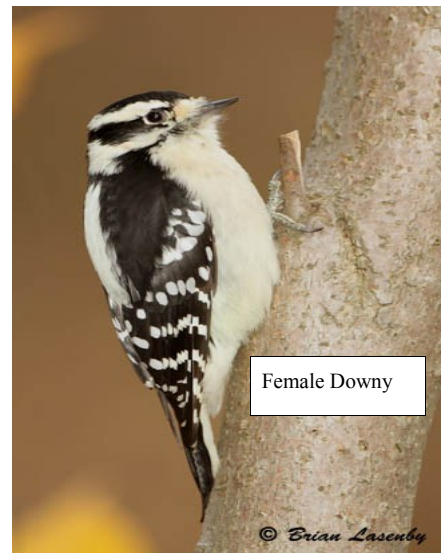


Male Downy

© Brian Lasenby

WOODPECKERS

Huron Woods is home to Red-headed, Red-bellied, Hairy, Downy, Pileated Woodpeckers, Yellow bellied & Red-breasted Sapsuckers, which are also members of this woodpecker family. All are monogamous, over wintering delights to bird watchers. Two toes forward and two pointing backward make tree climbing easy.



Female Downy

© Brian Lasenby

Bird Feeding. A Cautionary Tale Feeders get many birds through harsh winters but...

- ~weakened or sick birds survive and may pass on avian infections
- ~damp grain contaminated with mold can lead to a potentially lethal respiratory infection
- ~ oversupply of food can attract unwanted species such as starlings, pigeons and grackles
- ~food that falls on the ground encourages ground feeder predation by cats and hawks
- ~suet, if left too long in spring, coats and mats feathers leading to inflamed or infected feather follicles, reduced waterproofing
- ~irregular feeding interferes with habitual foraging patterns
- ~ hummingbird food can ferment in only 2-3 days, leading to enlarged livers, if consumed.

Please join us for these COMING EVENTS to expand your knowledge of our woodlands

May 22nd at 1:30 **Poison Ivy Primer- Especially for Newcomers:** identify plants, prevent rashes, treat rashes naturally Meet at HWCA Mailboxes Everyone welcome.

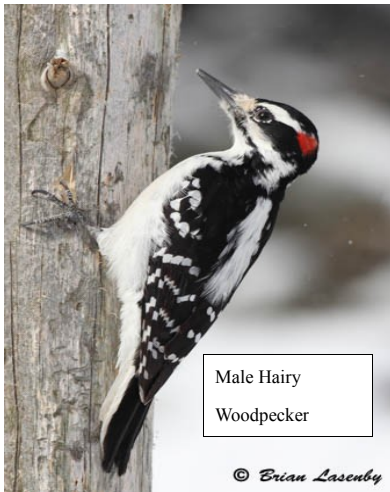
July 3 at 1:30 **SKINKS!** Learn more about these beautiful and endangered lizards with Tanya Berkers of Pinery Park at HWCA Clubhouse Everyone welcome

July 10 at 2:00 **Something Fishy with John Jimmo of ABCA** Concerns about the health of our Old Ausable Channel and its inhabitants at HWCA Clubhouse All welcome



Male Red-headed Woodpecker

© Brian Lasenby



Male Hairy Woodpecker

© Brian Lasenby



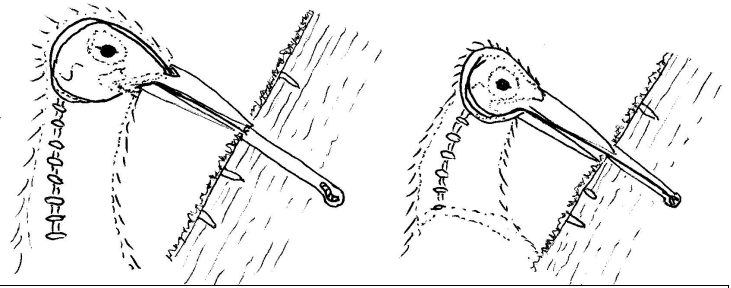
Female Red-bellied Woodpecker

© Brian Lasenby



Pileated Woodpecker

How Woodpecker Tongues Work



Hairy woodpecker's retracted tongue (left) and extended (right) can reach deep into crevices where sticky barbed end secures the prey.

Long tongue wraps around the skull when retracted, then loops around to extend deep into holes to extract insects detected by sound.

SAVING THE CLUTCH A female Pileated Woodpecker retrieved her eggs after the sudden collapse of the nest bearing tree. She and her mate created a new nest and proceeded to care for the hatchlings. Such egg carrying behaviour is rare in birds and any observation of such behaviour needs to be reported to ABCA..

HOW TO DETER WOODPECKERS FROM DAMAGING YOUR HOME

- provide suet, mealworms or jelly as alternate food
- keep a snag or two on your lot to provide ample insects
- provide a woodpecker house but with a large enough a hole to allow adults entry without damaging their plumage
- get rid of ants and other insects in your home (see details below about ant deterrents)
- repair holes promptly and paint or stain the area
- use decoy birds (hawks), windsocks, reflectors to frighten woodpeckers, but note that these strategies work only for a short time; woodpeckers grow accustomed to these fake threats and will likely return

Red-bellied w.p. with protruding tongue



DEFENSIVE BARRIERS TO DETER ANTS

Once you determine the entry point of the ants, create an unbroken line, 1/4" wide of any of the following:

chalk, powdered charcoal, tumeric, cinnamon, cayenne powder, baby powder, powdered cleanser, vaseline, citrus oil

If you have pets, choose materials that are safe in case of accidental consumption