

Woodpeckers

Woodpeckers are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. [Red-cockaded woodpeckers](#) (see image below) are listed as federally endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

What is the common damage caused by woodpeckers? Common damage caused by woodpeckers is due to birds excavating holes in wood-sided houses or wooden porches. Woodpeckers can also become nuisances during spring because they defend their territories by drumming on resonant parts of houses like gutters and metal chimneys.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? A federal depredation permit must be obtained for woodpeckers. The USDA Wildlife Services facilitates the procurement of federal depredation permits through the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia. A state depredation permit is also required. Once the federal permit is received, a WCA can write the required state depredation permit.

Can woodpeckers be relocated? No, under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act it is illegal to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird without a federal permit.

What can I do with sick or injured woodpeckers? There are licensed [rehabilitators](#) across the state that can take in sick or injured wildlife. Advise the individual to leave the bird alone for 24 hours to see if it can recover on its own before contacting a rehabilitator.

Are there any safety concerns No, however it is good practice to wear gloves when handling any animal.

Non-lethal Options:

- See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document for general ways to prevent conflicts with wildlife.
- When woodpeckers create holes in wood siding and porches it is usually to capture insects that are on/in the wood. Carpenter bees, carpenter ants, and termites are all common food sources for woodpeckers. Treating the area with the proper pesticides will remove the food source and alleviate the problem.
- Harassment
 - Noise deterrents can be effective at deterring woodpeckers if used as soon as the birds have started causing damage and occurs every time the birds come into the area. Individuals will clap, bang pots and pans or trashcan lids, or use airhorns and whistles to scare woodpeckers.
 - Hanging mylar strips or flashing tape create bright glares that can work as a visual deterrent.
 - Spraying woodpeckers with a garden hose can be effective at deterring them from the area. Intent of spraying them with a hose is to frighten not to injure/harm.
- Exclusion
 - Pinning a fine-mesh netting from the roof to the siding can be used to exclude them from damaging the siding beneath the eaves.
 - Plastic sheeting or fine mesh hardware cloth can be placed over areas where woodpeckers have created holes to prevent further damaged.

Lethal Options:

- A federal depredation permit is always required.
 - The USDA Wildlife Services facilitates the procurement of federal depredation permits through the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia.
 - Active nests (nests with eggs or nestlings) are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be removed without a federal permit.
- In addition to the federal permit, a state depredation permit is always required to take woodpeckers.



Southeastern woodpeckers:

1. Red-cockaded woodpecker
2. Hairy woodpecker
3. Downy woodpecker
4. Pileated woodpecker
5. Red-bellied woodpecker
6. Red-headed woodpecker
7. Yellow-bellied sapsucker
8. Northern flicker
9. Ivory-billed woodpecker

- from Thomas M. Imhof's "Alabama Birds"