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FAST FACTS

NAME: Redheaded woodpecker

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* (Linnaeus)

AVERAGE WEIGHT: 56-91 g

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 19-23 cm

AVERAGE LIFESPAN: 10 years

DID YOU KNOW?

This redheaded bird is one of only four woodpeckers known to store food in wood, like trees or fallen logs.

PHYSIOLOGY

Redheaded woodpeckers have a bright, distinct hood that sticks out in flight or at rest. Their wings are black with large white patches and dark eyes. They have a white chest, black and white tail feathers. Its bill is bluish gray with a black tip.

Young woodpeckers have gray heads with some white or red. In September, young woodpeckers start to molt allowing the new adult feathers to grow in. Both male and female woodpeckers look alike.

Chirps are short, one second bursts repeated two or three times. Usually the sound of their regular calls is a CHURR, but when the Redheaded woodpecker senses danger, the call sounds like KRIT-tar-rar or even QUARR QUARR QUARR.

HABITAT/BEHAVIOUR

This type of woodpecker is the more aggressive and omnivorous of its kind, and is the best at catching flying insects. They eat bark, seeds, nuts, berries, fruit, insects, bird eggs, nestlings and mice. It hides insects and seeds under bark, fence posts and under roof shingles.

These woodpeckers prefer to nest in holes in tall or dead trees or branches.

During the winter, woodpeckers fly down to the southwestern part of Texas in the United States of America. This means, they migrate during the colder months.

During the spring or summer, a female woodpecker usually lays between five to seven white eggs. They breed in oak or beech trees, river bottoms, orchards and open wooded swamps. It lives in parts of Manitoba, southern Ontario and Nova Scotia during the warmer months.

There have been some sightings in Quebec, but the number of birds has been declined. This means, the species is at risk.

RANGE

The redheaded woodpecker is found seasonally in southern Ontario and in the eastern US, but sightings of the bird in other Canadian provinces have declined over the years.