

NATURE STUDY LESSONS

Are the wings large or small relatively to the size of the body?

What colors are conspicuous in flight, that are not so, while at rest?

Does it make any noise as it flies?

(b) To the teacher.

The wings of the woodpeckers are relatively small, corresponding to the short flights they make. They usually fly only from a tree to an adjoining one, though they can move far during migrations. The method of flight is very characteristic; it is a sort of series of jumps, making an undulating course like some of the sparrows. They are usually silent while flying, though they often start off on a flight with a chuckle. The red-headed woodpecker during flight shows the ends of the wings black, the parts next to the body white. The large white spot on the base of the tail is a sure mark by which the flicker is identified.

3. SONG OF WOODPECKERS

(a) Observations to be made by pupils.

At what season are they most noisy?

How many songs or calls have they?

At what season do they drum?

Do they drum on the same branch each day?

Do both males and females drum?

How is the drumming noise made?

(b) To the teacher.

The woodpeckers make short calls as they go about searching the trunks for food. All of them have a number of such calls, but none have such a variety of notes as the flicker. They are all noisy during the breeding season, when they drum on logs. Each selects a rotten branch and by a series of rapid pecks brings out the loud resonant drumming tattoo. They go to the same log day after day. Occasionally they will choose the metal eaves-trough of a house. Usually only the male drums, but both sexes of the downy and sap-sucker produce this sound.