

Lesson 7

WHAT WOODPECKERS DO ON THE TREE TRUNKS

1. FEEDING HABITS.

(a) Observations to be made by pupils.

What do they search the tree-trunks for?

Which woodpeckers search the trunks most diligently?

Which bore holes in bark?

Do they return to these holes, and for what purpose?

Do any dart at insects on the wing or in the grass?

Which one often lights on the ground?

Watch what he is after, examine the ground where he has been.

Do they ever eat fruit or berries?

Find which stores beech-nuts in autumn.

(b) To the teacher.

Their food consists of larvae and small insects, found in crevices of bark and in holes drilled into wood; these they get out with their protrusible tongue. This tongue can be extended several inches, and is hard at the end. The tip is sharp and has barbs directed backward. The sap-sucker lives largely on sap which trickles into the holes he drills into the bark. He also eats the soft outer wood. His tongue is quite short. The red-head and the hairy woodpecker, besides digging insects out of bark, seize them on the wing like the fly-catchers. All of the woodpeckers in the autumn eat nuts, seeds and berries, to a greater or less extent. The flicker gets much of its food on the ground and is particularly fond of ants. It sticks its long tongue, covered with a glutinous saliva, down into the ant-hill like a regular ant-eater and the ants which attack it are held firmly. The red-head also comes to the ground occasionally. This bird also stores up beech-nuts in crevices and knot-holes for the winter, and if there are large supplies he frequently does not migrate in the autumn.

2. FLYING HABITS.

(a) Observations to be made by pupils.

Do the woodpeckers fly in a straight line?

Are their flights long or short?