

Microtus : Resident all the year.

NOTE : A short, sharp *peck, peck*, continued often into an abrupt rattling cry. He also drums, beating a rolling tattoo with his bill on some resonant limb. This is his love song. But he also drums to tell where a tree is decayed and likely to be an easy spot to chisel out a nest, and to startle borers under the bark, so that they may move. His sharp ears detect the faint noise which they make and he knows just where to tunnel for them.

NEST : *Position*.—In a partially decayed tree, which he chisels out for himself. The opening which forms the entrance is usually on the south side of the tree. In the spring he and his mate chisel out a new nest. In the winter each bird has its own hollow.

FLIGHT : A strong, straight flight, seldom long.

FOOD : Borers, grubs, beetles, insects' eggs.

HABITS : These birds light and remain flattened against the side of a tree hunting for insects. They prop themselves by their stiff, outspread tails. Also their toes are arranged for clinging, two behind and two before. The downy spends the winter in single blessedness, mating early in the spring, when he and his mate chisel out a new home. He is fond of suet or meat and may be coaxed to come quite near if bits of these are hung on a string out of the cat's reach.