



Who's that knocking at my door?

Why Woodpeckers drill holes:



DRUMMING HOLES

Woodpeckers may use drumming to attract a mate or as a territorial sign. Both male and female woodpeckers drum. Drumming behavior can be more annoying than damaging, but it is also fun and interesting to observe! The next time that you hear a woodpecker drumming on your house, run outside and listen for a response, then look around for possible mates or competitors.

ROOSTING & NESTING HOLES

Roosting and nesting holes are most often begun in houses that are close to wooded areas, and are made of log or have natural wood siding. When beginning to drill nesting or roosting holes, woodpeckers often make several attempts. They are looking for just the right spot. When excavating a hole, a woodpecker will first dig through the outer siding and then continue all the way down into the insulation. It is here that the nesting or roosting area is hollowed out.

Nesting holes are usually built at the beginning of the breeding season in late April and May. As long as a nest is not already established, existing holes can be plugged. If the birds already have eggs or young, consider yourself lucky to have your very own woodpecker family sharing your home! You can watch courtship, breeding, and feeding behaviors. Watch for nestlings peering out while begging to be fed. Especially vigilant watchers may be able to witness young fledging! Once the young have left, you can plug up the hole.

FORAGING HOLES

Woodpeckers searching for insects will create straight rows of holes, often along the siding following gaps. They are looking for insects that have entered the cracks to lay eggs, hide, pupate, or overwinter.

For more information on woodpeckers
http://www.birds.cornell.edu/wp_about/index.html

Woodpecker Deterrents:

The **best** way to keep woodpeckers from hammering on your house is to begin damage control as soon as you hear **the first tap!**

NETTING

One of the most effective methods of preventing woodpeckers from damaging siding is netting. Place a lightweight, plastic netting with a mesh of about 3/4 inch over the damaged area with at least 3 inches of space between the netting and the building so that birds cannot cause damage through the mesh. Netting can also be attached to the overhanging eaves and angled back to the siding below the damaged area. Secure taut but not overly tight. When installed properly, the netting is barely visible from a distance and should offer a long-term solution. If the birds move to another area of the dwelling, that will need to be netted, too. Appropriate netting can be found locally at Holm Town Nursery and Plant Kingdom in Fairbanks.

SOUND DETERRENTS

One of the easiest tactics is to scare problem birds off with loud noises. Hand waving, yelling, even banging on a garbage can lid can frighten the birds away. Be persistent and head out as soon as you hear the first tap! You can also broadcast a recording of a woodpecker distress call, followed by the call of a predator such as a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

VISUAL DETERRENTS

Aluminum foil strips, reflective tape, or windsocks hung from areas where damage occurs may scare away woodpeckers. The strips should be long enough to hang freely and blow in the breeze. Handheld windmills, especially those with reflective vanes, can be attached along areas of damage. The motion may discourage woodpeckers.

OTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

A suet feeder can draw hungry birds away from your home. Keep it supplied with food throughout the fall and winter. Remove the feeder in the late spring when it can attract unwanted visitors such as bears. Put up a nesting box. Woodpeckers are primarily cavity nesters and will sometimes choose an existing cavity or nest box instead of excavating a new one. Be sure to research the appropriate size and to include a few inches of woodchips or sawdust in the bottom for nesting material. Fill the hole with transparent, acetic acid-based caulk. Woodpeckers seem to hate the taste and it can deter them from continuing to excavate the same area. Aluminum flashing can be used to cover existing holes. You can paint it to match your siding!