



Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Picoides borealis



Date of Listing: Endangered, 1970

Size: 8 inches long

Diet: Insects found under the bark and along the branches of pine trees

Where it Lives: Open pine forests with large, widely-spaced older trees – Pineywoods of East Texas.

Reproduction: 2-4 eggs

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers sleep (roost) and nest in cavities (holes) of live pine trees. Cavities are built only in large, old pines. These woodpeckers live in family groups which may include the male and female, their chicks and young adult "helpers." These "helpers" help build cavities and care for the chicks. The birds peck the bark around the entrance to get the sap (resin) flowing around the hole. The sticky sap keeps predators like snakes away from the nest cavity.

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are endangered because the open forests with big, old pine trees have been replaced by forests with younger, smaller pines. Also, periodic natural fires, which historically kept the pinewoods open, have been suppressed since settlement. Periodic fire is needed to control the brushy understory and keep the pinewoods open.