October 2019

Huntsville Audubon

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President       Jack Morgan   936-439-4131
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Our Mission
To increase our community’s awareness of the natural world and the need for its preservation, through education and the active enjoyment of birds and other wildlife.

October Meeting
Thursday, October 17th
6:00 pm – snacks and chat
6:30 pm – guest presentation

St. Stephens Episcopal Church
5019 Sam Houston Ave, Huntsville, TX
(map & directions on website)

PRESENTATION—“Woodpeckers as Ecosystem Engineers” by guest speaker, Faith Hardin, whose passion is avian ecology and conservation. Faith will share her research on Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, their cavity excavations, secondary cavity nesting birds that use their abandoned cavities, and whether the foraging actions of these woodpeckers’ impact insect abundance.

VISITORS WELCOME
Please bring a snack to share. Bottled water will be provided.

Our New Website
We have a brand new website! Created by Gary Readore, Huntsvilleaudubon.org has helpful information useful to long-standing members and to those considering joining us for the first time. There you’ll find this and more:
- upcoming events  - an interactive map
- past newsletters  - helpful links
- baby animal/bird rescue information
- printable HAS flyer for display in your office or neighborhood

Gary is a long-time practitioner of Taichi and teaches several classes in Huntsville. He’s also an avid, prolific photographer. Check out his spectacular photos at:
https://garyreadore.smugmug.com

Answer

Which birds are the smartest?
a. owls
b. gulls
c. crows

Answer >>>>>>
Delightful Huntsville Woodpeckers

Most woodpecker species need trees for nest sites and insects that live under the bark. Huntsville has lots of trees and forest areas teeming with beautiful woodpeckers year-round.

Keep your dead trees unless you are certain they are a hazard. Woodpeckers need them as more and more dead trees and snags are removed to provide humans with their aesthetic need for manicured lawns and landscapes. With a dead tree on your property, you are likely to have a happy woodpecker couple claim it to raise their family. Red-headed Woodpeckers often use the same cavity or excavate a new one in the same tree for several years. It's fun to watch Red-bellied and Red-headed youngsters come to your feeders and rewarding to know your dead tree or snag helped them.

Red-headed Woodpecker

These beauties forage in trees, on the ground, and are adept at catching insects in the air. Occasionally comes for suet.

Is this a female or male? It could be either because Red-headed Woodpeckers are sexually monomorphic meaning both sexes look alike. Juveniles start with a brown head that slowly turns red as they molt.

Pileated Woodpecker

It's great fun to see one of these regal crow-sized birds, although you're more likely to hear a Pileated Woodpecker than to see one. They love to forage in a dead tree no matter if it's standing, lying on the ground, or reduced to a large stump. After all, that's where carpenter ants live, their favorite food.

Do they remind you of Woody Woodpecker? They should because this is the woodpecker the famous cartoon character was fashioned after.
Red-bellied Woodpecker

This ubiquitous woodpecker frequently comes to feeders for:
- suet
- black oil sunflower seeds
- peanuts (shelled & unshelled)
- mealworms
- safflower seed
- cracked corn
- fruit

They have also been known to drink sugar water from hummingbird feeders.

Downy Woodpecker

Tiny and very active, these guys can be difficult to view in the trees. Good thing they readily come to feeders, especially if you provide suet or sunflower seeds.

Because they’re small, many join a flock of mixed species in winter. There’s safety in numbers.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are hard to tell apart. The Downy, which is more common in Walker County, has a shorter bill giving it a cute appearance whereas the Hairy Woodpecker (not pictured) has a longer, more woodpecker-like bill. The Downy also has black spots on its outer white tail feathers; the Hairy Woodpecker does not.

Woodpecker photos contributed by Lynette Dobbins and Diana Oliver