

## Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*

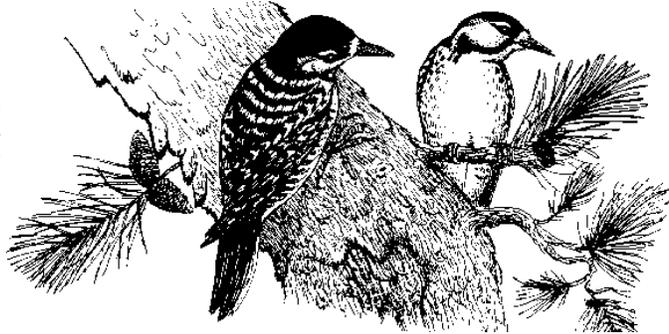
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**STATUS:** Endangered (35 FR 8495-June 2, 1970) without critical habitat. Recovery plan was revised in 1985.

**DESCRIPTION:** A “ladder-backed” 8-inch long woodpecker with a solid black cap and nape, and prominent white cheek patches. The male has a tiny red streak behind the eye and near the ear (the cockade). Similar to the downy and hairy woodpeckers in general appearance, but the red-cockaded woodpecker has a barred back, spotted breast, and the male has red on either side of head rather than on nape.

**HABITAT:** Open, old-aged (60-70+ years) loblolly, shortleaf, and especially slash and longleaf pine woodlands; rarely if ever in dense woodlands. Presence of old trees with heart rot provide roosting and nesting cavity trees. The aggregate of cavity trees is termed a “cluster.” The diet of the woodpecker consists mainly of insects (85%) but also includes small fruits and seeds (15%).

**DISTRIBUTION:** Southeastern U.S. from North Carolina to Florida and west to eastern Texas.



**Present:** Southeastern U.S. pine forest from North Carolina to Florida, west to Oklahoma and Texas.

**Historic:** Western edge of range formerly reached 34 counties in eastern Texas.

**THREATS AND REASONS FOR DECLINE:** Decrease in the quality and quantity of old growth forest nesting habitat, primarily due to short term rotation timber management on private and public forests and to fire suppression. Southern pine beetle infestations on National Forests have contributed to the decline of suitable red-cockaded woodpecker foraging and nesting habitat.

**OTHER INFORMATION:** The red-cockaded woodpecker is a colonial, cooperative breeder, forming family groups (often called “clans”) consisting of the breeding pair and one or more other individual birds. The 1993 red-cockaded woodpecker pre-breeding season population in Texas was 657 birds, with 73% of these on federal land, 18% on private land, and 9% on state land. The U.S. Forest Service has drafted the EIS for Management of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and its Habitat on National Forests of the Southern Region. The final document should be available in June, 1994. The plan calls for establishment of Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) and population objectives for these areas. Appropriate habitat management in HMAs is expected to recover this species throughout its range. The Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are coordinating with state and private landowners to develop a long-term management strategy for red-cockaded woodpeckers on non-federal land, in the form of Memoranda of Agreement or a statewide Habitat Conservation Plan.

### REFERENCES:

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- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). 1985. Red-cockaded Woodpecker Recovery Plan. USFWS, Endangered Species Office, Atlanta, GA.

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