



## downy woodpecker

*Picoides pubescens*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Aves  
Order: Piciformes  
Family: Picidae

### FEATURES

At six and one-half inches in length, the downy woodpecker is the smallest woodpecker in Illinois. Its bill is small. It has a white back, white belly, white stripes on the head and white spots on the wings. Other areas of the body are black except for a small, red patch on the back of the male's head.

### BEHAVIORS

The downy woodpecker is a common, permanent resident statewide in Illinois. Nesting takes place from March through June. The nest is placed in a hole in a live or dead tree or stump or in fenceposts at a height of from three to 50 feet above the ground. It often selects a willow or elm in which to nest but will use other trees if they are dead or have dead limbs. Both the male and the female excavate the nest cavity, but the female does most of the work. Three to six white eggs are laid by the female. The male and female alternate incubation duties during the day, but the male only incubates at night. The incubation period lasts 12 days. The downy woodpecker lives in woodlands, woodland edges, weed patches, cornfields and orchards. Its song is a fast series of notes that descend in pitch. The call is "pick." It eats insects, corn and poison ivy berries.

### HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

### ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

### ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.