



Welcome to the Duke Farms Bird of the Week Project, where you will find materials suitable for formal and informal educators and others interested in learning more about some selected New Jersey species.

We plan on releasing a resource bundle every week or so; quite frankly until our supply of cleaned and prepared bird skulls is diminished. Additionally, we will show you the cleaning process and demonstrate the tedious work involved. Please note that all of the birds seen in this project have been found in their native habitats after their natural deaths.

The Duke Farms Education Staff hopes you enjoy these learning tools. If you have any questions or need ideas on how to modify or apply these lessons, please contact Kate Reilly, Manager of Education, Duke Farms. kreilly@dukefarms.org We look forward to hearing from you.





Meet the Common Woodpeckers of New Jersey



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-bellied_Woodpecker/sounds

Look for the flashy **red-bellied woodpecker** with its red mohawk and zebra striped back in woodlands, suburbs, and at feeders. This striking bird pecks away at trees in search of insects and spiders, but also loves acorns, nuts and seeds. The male chooses the nest sites and excavates them in dead trees. He makes distinct *kwirr* calls and does acrobatics to attract females to his nest choice. This woodpecker doesn't sing but bangs away on wood and metal surfaces drumming for a mate. Listen here: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-bellied_Woodpecker/sounds



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Downy_Woodpecker/sounds

The small checkerboard patterned **downy woodpecker** is common in woodlands, parks and backyard feeders. Males have a tiny red splotch on the back of the head which is missing in females. They pick and probe bark for insects and beetle larvae, but also eat seeds, berries, and acorns. They nest in dead trees and branches and both males and females excavate the nest hole; a job that can take 1 to 3 weeks. The Downy has a *whinnying* call, but males also drum for mates. Listen here:



https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Hairy_Woodpecker/sounds

The **hairy woodpecker** is like a larger version of the Downy. It has a larger head and bill and spends most of its time foraging on tree trunks, not branches like the Downy. They eat mostly insects but will also eat seeds and acorns. They can be attracted to backyard feeders with suet cakes covered with sunflower seeds or peanuts. Hairies excavate nests in dead stubs of big branches and in dead trees. The most common call is a *peek* note but both males and females drum on surfaces that make lots of noise





The **pileated woodpecker** is the largest in the family with a length of 16 to 19 inches! It is black and white with a fire engine red crest at the top of its head. The birds drill rectangular shaped holes in rotten trees to snap up carpenter ants, beetles and other insects. These woodpeckers are forest birds that require large stands of dead trees but do sometimes visit suet feeders. Pileateds are very loud and vocal communicators with a distinct slow drum beat that both sexes use in courtship. Listen here:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pileated_Woodpecker/sounds



The **northern flicker** is another large woodpecker that is mostly brown with black spots on its back and breast, yellow underwings, and a white patch on its rump. The male has a mustache while the female does not. Although they can climb trees they are most often seen digging for insects on the ground! Their favorite food is ants and they use their long, barbed tongues to snap them up. Flickers nest in holes in rotted trees and hammer wood to drum for mates. Listen:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Flicker/sounds





The **yellow-bellied sapsucker** is a small bird with a funny name. Both males and females are black and white with red foreheads. Males have red throats and yellowish underparts. They are unique in that they drill neat rows of little holes in trees with sweet sap. They lap up sap from trees like sugar maples and catch insects along with the sap. Like the other woodpeckers they are cavity nesters, but the male does most of the work. It can take 2 to 3 weeks to carve out a nest. They have a squealing call and irregular drumbeat.

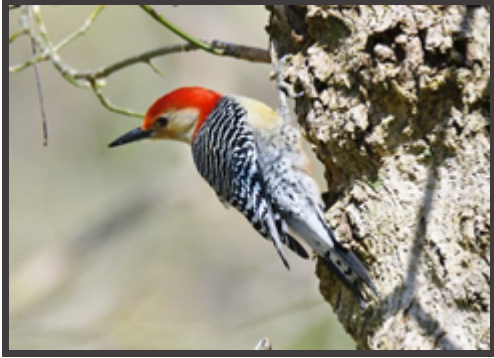
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-bellied_Sapsucker/sounds

Note: All photos and bird sounds are courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Macaulay Library, Ithaca NY



Match the woodpeckers to their nests!

Can you identify the birds?



A. _____



B. _____



C. _____

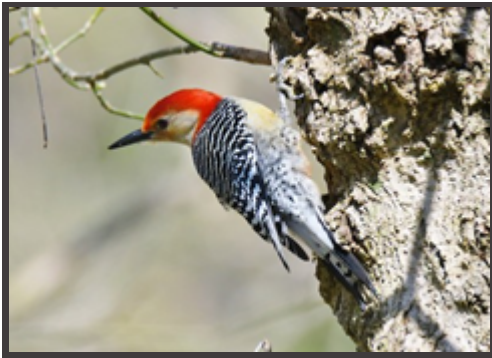


D. _____



Match the woodpeckers to their nests!

Can you identify the birds?



A. Red-bellied woodpecker



D



B. Northern flicker



A



C. Hairy woodpecker



B



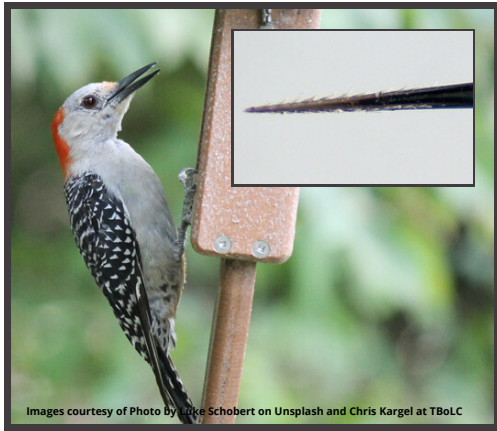
D. Pileated woodpecker



C

Put your observation skills to the test!

How are the red-bellied woodpecker and the yellow-bellied sapsucker the same? How are they different?



Red-bellied woodpecker



Yellow-bellied sapsucker

Both

- **Example:** They have sharp spikes on the tip of their tongue.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Example:** They don't sing, they drum.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Example:** They drill holes in neat lines across a tree.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Put your observation skills to the test!

Now it's your turn to challenge yourself! Pick any 2 woodpeckers and see how they compare!

A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles, one black and one red. The intersection is labeled "Both". Each circle has a box above it and a list of five horizontal lines with a bullet point for notes. The background features two grey squares, each with a red woodpecker silhouette.

Left Circle (Black):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Both (Intersection):

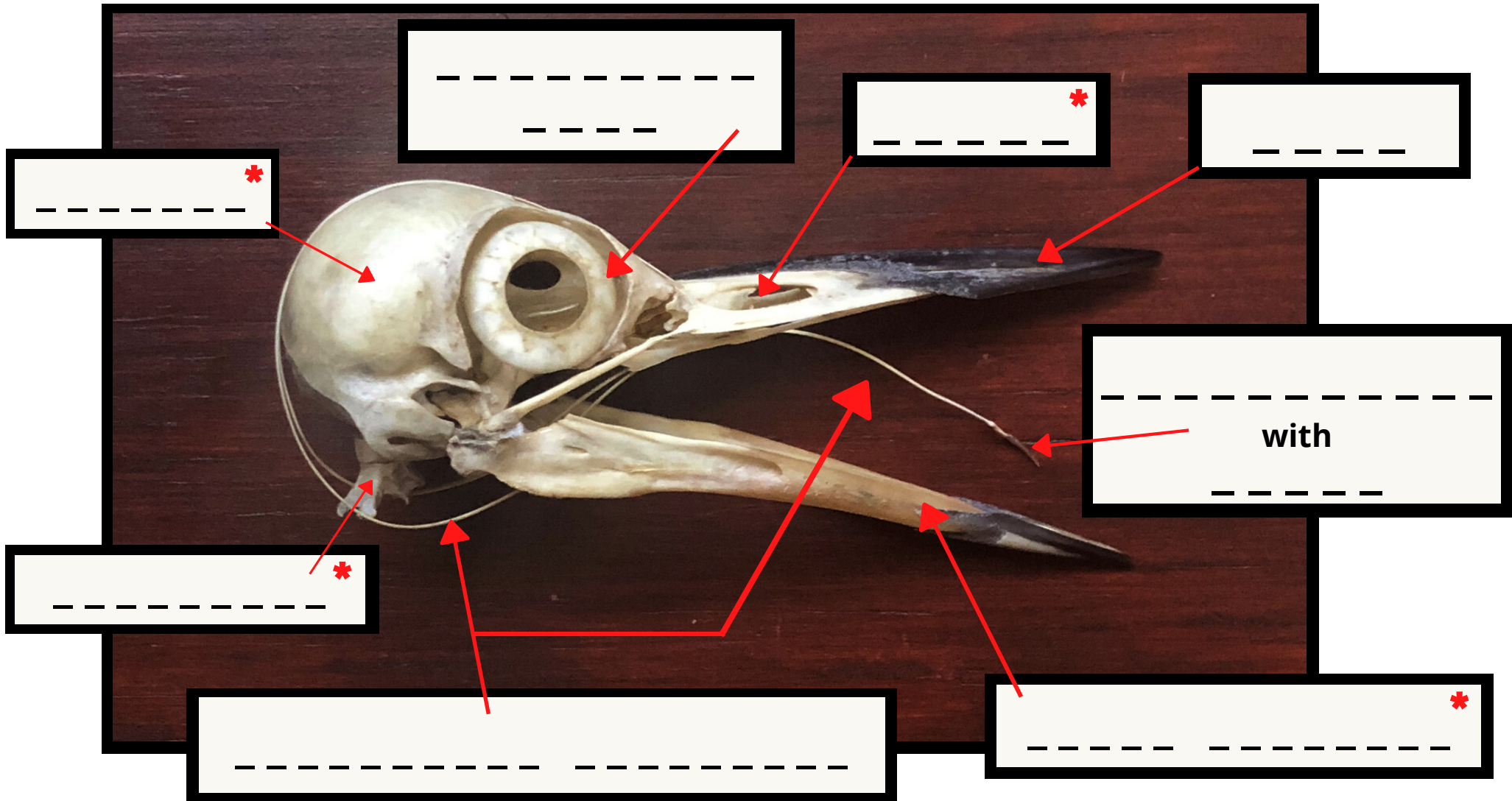
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Right Circle (Red):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Can you label this red-bellied woodpecker skull?

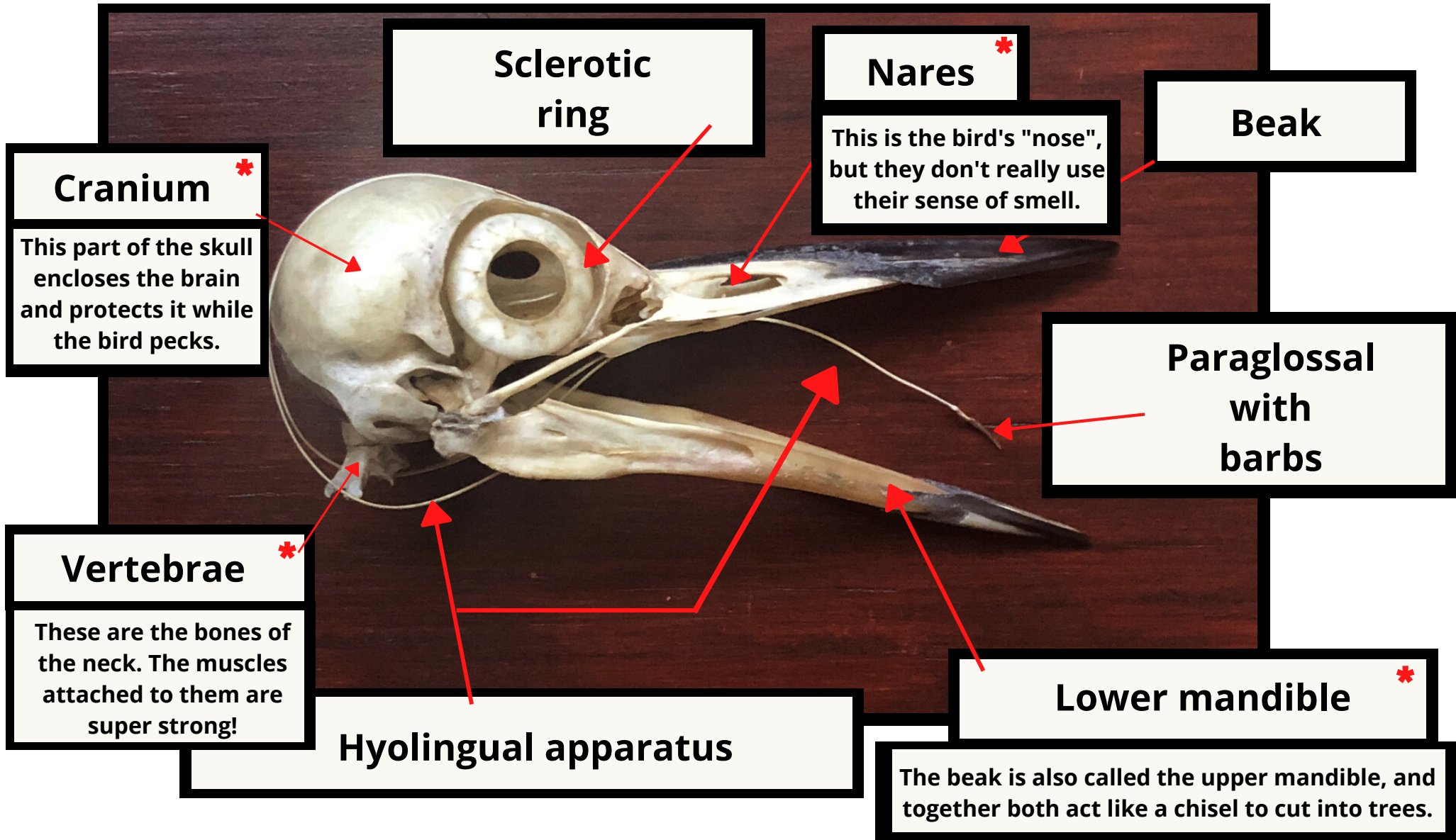
Check out the Woodpecker Skull Tour video and follow along!



Don't forget the bonus terms marked with an *! Though not in the video, you can learn more about each on the answer key.

Can you label this red-bellied woodpecker skull?

Check out the Woodpecker Skull Tour video and follow along!





Test Your Knowledge: Woodpeckers of New Jersey



Notice they all have strong pointed beaks that they use like hammers to remove bark and drill into trees. Why do they do this?



Although you can't tell from the photos, woodpeckers have super long tongues (up to 4 inches in length) with sticky tips. Why would a long tongue help a woodpecker?



What other kinds of foods do woodpeckers eat? Do any of them prefer a special kind of food?



Woodpeckers can't sing melodic songs like robins, instead they bang loudly on trees, telephone poles, metal roofs, etc. Why do they do this and what is the banging called?



Look at all the different woodpeckers: how are they adapted to hide and hunt for food in a wooded area?



Which two of these woodpeckers look the most similar?



Which one of these woodpeckers is the largest?



What is the red peak on top of the pileated woodpecker's head called?



Do woodpeckers prefer living trees or dead trees? Why?



Test Your Knowledge: Woodpeckers of New Jersey



Notice they all have strong pointed beaks that they use like hammers to remove bark and drill into trees. Why do they do this?

To find and eat insects and other bugs that live inside the wood/to drink the sap inside the tree/to dig out nest cavities.



Although you can't tell from the photos, woodpeckers have super long tongues (up to 4 inches in length) with sticky tips. Why would a long tongue help a woodpecker?

So it can find insects and other bugs deep inside the tree.



What other kinds of foods do woodpeckers eat? Do any of them prefer a special kind of food?

Acorns, nuts, seeds, fruit, spiders, tree sap. The yellow-bellied sapsucker relies on tree sap from trees like the sugar maple.



Woodpeckers can't sing melodic songs like robins, instead they bang loudly on trees, telephone poles, metal roofs, etc. Why do they do this and what is the banging called?

They do it to attract mates and mark their territory. It is called "drumming".



Look at all the different woodpeckers: how are they adapted to hide and hunt for food in a wooded area?

Their feathers are black and white striped, which allows them to camouflage in the trees/they have feet that let them cling to bark and move up and down the tree/chisel beak that self-sharpens/long tongue to reach inside tree, etc.



Which two of these woodpeckers look the most similar?

The downy and hairy woodpeckers.



Which one of these woodpeckers is the largest?

The pileated woodpecker.



What is the red peak on top of the pileated woodpecker's head called?

A crest.



Do woodpeckers prefer living trees or dead trees? Why?

Dead. Wood softens as it decomposes/insects prefer it.