

## **Downy Woodpecker** (*Picoides pubescens*)

Downy Woodpeckers are the smallest and most common woodpecker in eastern North America. They may be observed all year round. Although both sexes have black and white feathers, males have a bright red cap that differentiates them from the females. They are often confused with the similarly-coloured, but much larger Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*).

Males and females have separate feeding areas during the autumn and most of the winter. By late winter both sexes will be heard drumming on dead tree limbs in their individual territories. If a certain female proves interesting, the male will move into her area.

Both sexes excavate a nesting cavity in a dead tree. Often the entrance hole benefits from camouflage offered by the presence of lichens or moss. Both parents work in tandem to incubate and feed their young.

Downys suffer from predation by squirrels and smaller hawks such as Kestrels.

Folklore tales indicate that if a woodpecker comes knocking in your dreams, you should be more aware of the deeds you do when awake.