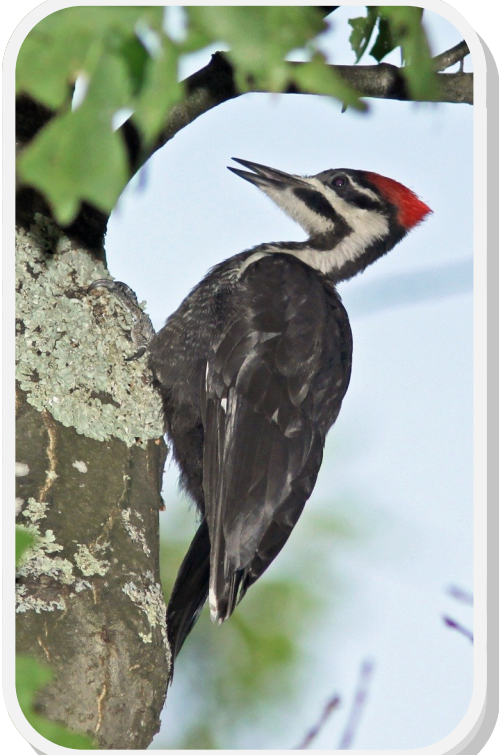
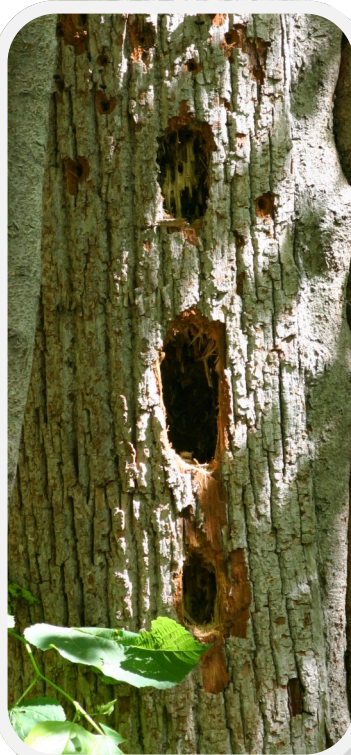
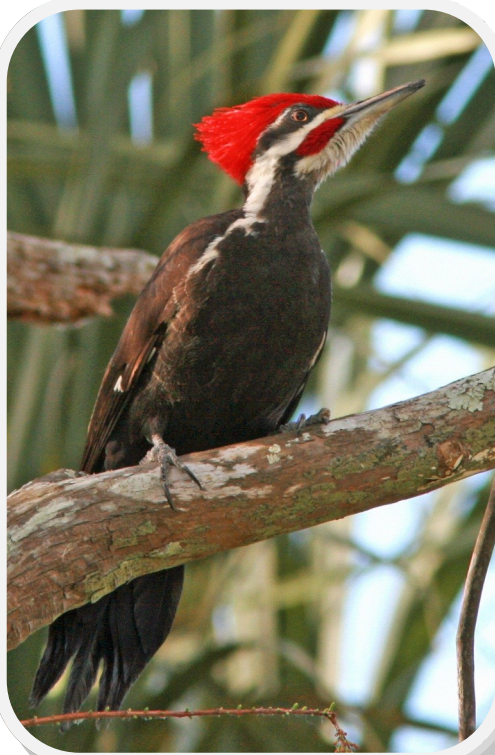


# Woody Woodpecker Returns to Waterloo



This pair of pileated woodpeckers nests along the Discovery Center's lowland woods trail. The male (left) has a red "mustache." The female (right) has a black "mustache."

The tree (center) exhibits typical rectangular pileated woodpecker feeding holes. Carpenter ants are their favorite food, although they will also eat other insects and even berries when available.

This is the bird whose flaming red crest and maniacal call inspired the cartoon character "**Woody Woodpecker**." With the extinction of the ivory-billed, the pileated becomes the largest woodpecker in the U.S. It grows up to 19 inches long with a wing span of over two feet.

This bird of mature forests nearly disappeared from our area when the lands were cleared for farming. When the Waterloo Recreation Area was created, the forests were allowed to recover and the pileated woodpecker returned. Because these birds require large home territories, they are still not encountered very often. A breeding pair needs more than 100 acres of mature forest for successful nesting.

The park provides an important reservoir of forest habitat for these magnificent birds. As their numbers have increased, they are beginning to spread into surrounding private wood lots and residential areas as well, and are occasionally seen at feeders in winter.

This woodpecker is a primary cavity nester, using its nest cavity just once, and then leaving it behind for wood ducks, owls, squirrels and raccoons to use in subsequent years.

Although they are now established in several areas in the park, one of the most accessible places to see them is along the Discovery Center's trails to the beech woods, lowland woods and bog.