

Pileated
Woodpecker



Evidence of the presence of Pileated Woodpeckers is relatively easy to detect. Bent (1964) describes this species as furtive, rather silent in midsummer, and easily eludes observation", perhaps explaining why few sightings of this crow-sized woodpecker have been reported for Prince Edward Island. Despite this fact, the borings created by these woodpeckers in their search for food are rather distinctive. The holes will tend to have amazingly square corners, and are normally 3 or more inches wide. Galleries created by carpenter ants are often visible inside the holes, although Pileated Woodpeckers will create similar holes while searching for other wood-boring insects. If the holes are created in trees or stumps with sound wood, the wood chips on the ground will be quite large, often three or more inches long. Wood chips from rotten wood will, of course, be much smaller. Bent (1964) explains that the borings may run together in large furrows. In Townsend Woodlot I observed one such furrow that was 4 to 5 inches wide and over 5 feet long. Quite often the smaller holes will be situated around the base of the tree, about one foot above the ground.

However, caution must be taken as other woodpeckers may sometimes produce boring which appear quite square, although these holes will be much smaller than those of the Pileated Woodpecker. The large size of **both the holes and the wood chips** removed thereof are quite good hints to identify Pileated Woodpecker work. Any areas containing such sign would be worth further scrutiny during spring and early summer.

Although definite confirmations of Pileated Woodpecker breeding have eluded us thus far, it should be just a matter of time before this happens. Hopefully, once this majestic bird is reestablished here it will become a permanent resident of the Island's bird community.

QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS SLOW BUT ENCOURAGING

Only 10 of the NHS questionnaires included with issue # 110 of the newsletter have been returned to date but these ten have included some great speaker and story ideas. Please ensure that you return yours as soon as possible so that we can use your advice to modify programs.

