

The Woodpeckers of TGO - Nature's Tree Keepers

One of the sounds that truly makes The Great Outdoors RV & Golf Resort feel alive is the tapping and drumming of woodpeckers throughout our community. From the towering pines to old oaks along our trails and golf course, these birds are constantly at work helping nature in ways many people never realize.

Woodpeckers are incredibly important to the ecosystem. By drilling into dead or damaged wood, they help control insects like ants, termites, beetles, and wood-boring larvae. The nesting holes they create later become homes for other wildlife including bluebirds, owls, squirrels, tree frogs, and even some ducks.

Here are four beautiful woodpeckers many of us are lucky to see right here in TGO.

Red-bellied Woodpecker

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is probably the woodpecker most residents notice first. Despite the name, the red on the belly is usually hard to see. What stands out is the bright red cap and neck along with the striking black-and-white zebra pattern on the back.

These birds are highly intelligent and very adaptable. You'll often hear their rolling calls before spotting them climbing tree trunks or visiting feeders. They help keep insect populations under control while also spreading seeds through the foods they gather and store.



Downy Woodpecker

The Downy Woodpecker is the smallest woodpecker commonly found in our area. Tiny, quick, and active, they are often seen hopping along branches searching for insects hidden in bark.

Their small size allows them to reach places larger birds cannot. Even though they are tiny, they play a big role in controlling insects that can damage trees and plants. They are also frequent visitors to backyard feeders and are usually very comfortable around people.



Pileated Woodpecker

The Pileated Woodpecker is truly one of the most impressive birds in Florida. Nearly crow-sized with a bright red crest, this bird often stops people in their tracks when they see one flying through the woods.

If you notice large rectangular holes carved into dead trees, there's a good chance a Pileated Woodpecker was searching for carpenter ants and beetle larvae. These powerful birds help recycle dead wood naturally and create nesting cavities later used by many other animals.

Seeing one in TGO is always special and reminds us how important mature trees and natural wooded areas are to wildlife.

Northern Flicker

Unlike most woodpeckers, Northern Flickers spend a surprising amount of time on the ground. They are commonly seen searching lawns and open areas for ants, which make up a large part of their diet.

They have beautiful spotted plumage and a flash of bright color visible when they fly. Flickers help naturally control ant populations and are another reminder that every species has its own important role in the balance of nature.

Living Alongside Wildlife

Woodpeckers are a wonderful example of why preserving trees, dead snags, and natural spaces matters. What may look like an old tree to us can actually be a feeding station, nesting site, or future home for countless forms of wildlife.

The next time you hear tapping in the trees around TGO, take a moment to look up. You may just spot one of nature's hardest workers helping keep our ecosystem healthy every single day.

Words by Nancy Payne-Clark

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