

Bird of the Month



DESCRIPTION: **ACORN WOODPECKER** *MELANERPES FORMICIVORUS*

SIZE: 8"-9" black and white woodpecker with an all-black back and prominent white eyes surrounded by black, white forehead and cheek, yellowish throat, clown-like face.

MALE: red crown touches white forehead.

FEMALE: red on back half of crown separated from white forehead with black.

IN FLIGHT: note white rump and white patch near tip of wing. Flaps and glides.

NESTING:

Unlike other woodpeckers, nest in small colonies. Excavates cavity in deciduous tree, live or dead, usually an oak, 6-25ft. above ground. Breeds cooperatively with groups composed of up to 4 breeding males, 1-2 breeding females, and up to 10 offspring of preceding years. All group members help with excavating nest and with feeding and brooding young; 3-7 white eggs per female.

FEEDING:

Depends upon acorns and other nuts for survival. Also eats insects, fruit and tree sap. Will come to suet feeders and seed feeders for sunflower seed. Caches acorns and other nuts in holes drilled in trees, utility poles, even buildings. One communal group can store 50,000 nuts in a season for later consumption. **RECOMMENDED ROGUE SEED:** Rogue Wild Bird Nut Treat, Rogue Chickadee, Sunflower seed, black or grey striped. **RECOMMENDED FEEDERS:** Rubicon suet feeder with tail prop, Forever sunflower feeder, Droll Yankee Seed Saver feeder for nut mix.

HABITAT:

Oak and pine woods, parks, suburbs. Locally common year-round resident in the Rogue Valley and foothills. Easily seen near Lower and Upper Table Rocks.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

Very vocal, giving a loud, nasal "wheka-wheka-wheka" and a raucous "jay-cup, jay-cup, jay-cup". Preserving dead snags on trees is important for all woodpeckers — providing food, nest sites, and, for this species, a place to store acorns.

COMPARE TO:

White-headed woodpecker, found mainly in coniferous woods in mountains at the 4000-9000ft. elevation, has a white head, dark eyes, and small red patch on the nape of the neck of the male only.

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