

Woodpecker = Specht

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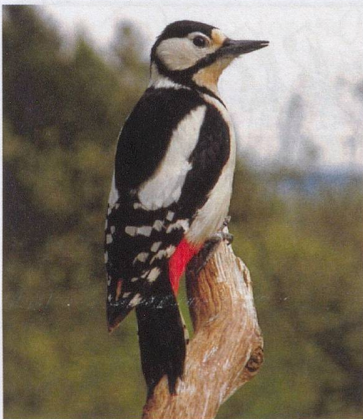
FAUNA IN SWITZERLAND

Woodpecker – Specht

There are about 200 species of woodpeckers. Many are threatened or endangered due to loss of habitat or habitat fragmentation.

Most species have predominantly white, black and brown, green and red plumage. Many species exhibit patches of red and yellow on their heads and bellies. The dark areas of plumage are often iridescent.

to maximise the area of contact between the brain and the skull. Woodpeckers have zygodactyl feet, i.e. the second and the third toe face forward and the first and fourth face back. This foot arrangement is good for grasping the limbs and trunks of trees. Woodpeckers can walk up a tree trunk to forage for food or excavate a nest. In addition to the strong claws and feet woodpeckers have short



Woodpeckers have strong bills for drilling and drumming on trees, and long sticky tongues for extracting food. The bill's chisel-like tip is kept sharp by the pecking action. The long sticky tongues, which possess bristles, aid the birds in grabbing and extracting insects deep within a hole of a tree. It had been reported that the tongue was used to spear grubs, but more detailed studies published in 2004 have shown that the tongue instead wraps around the prey before being pulled out.

Many of the foraging, breeding and signaling behaviors of woodpeckers involve drumming and hammering using the bill. To prevent brain damage from the rapid and repeated hammering, woodpeckers have evolved a number of adaptations to protect the brain. These include small brain size and the orientation of the brain within the skull

strong legs. The tails of woodpeckers are stiffened, and when the bird perches on vertical surfaces, the tail and feet work together to support it.

Some woodpeckers may join mixed-species feeding flocks, although they tend to stay at the edges of these groups. Woodpeckers are diurnal, roosting at night inside holes.

Woodpeckers nest in cavities. The excavated nest is usually only lined from the wood chips produced as the hole was made. Woodpeckers excavate one hole per breeding season. Woodpeckers are typically monogamous. A pair will work together to help build the nest, incubate the eggs and raise their young. However, in most species the male does most of the nest excavation and takes the night shift while incubating the eggs.

from Wikipedia