Wildlife WHEP Wisconsin 4-H & Wisconsin 4-H Forestry

Website https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/opportunities/projects/outdoor-education/

Email: wi4hwildlifeforestry@gmail.com

"TRACKS" – June 2026

Participation in wildlife & forestry activities is open to all Wisconsin 4-H club members. You can be enrolled in any 4-H project and participate in the activities.

Hello Wildlife WHEP & Forestry 4-H Friends,

While some woodpeckers remain in Wisconsin year-round and others migrate, most people agree that spotting a woodpecker is a delight! At least 10 different woodpeckers have been recorded in the state. **In order of descending size,** they include:

Pileated Woodpecker: the only woodpecker who drills a 4-6" rectangular hole, up to 12" deep, in trees. Once abandoned, these cavities provide nesting sites for other birds and animals.
Northern Flicker: Unlike most woodpeckers, this bird spends most of its time foraging on the ground.
Lewis's Woodpecker: A rare visitor to Wisconsin with a crow-like appearance.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: Common in Wisconsin. Its red cap is visible, while its red belly is typically faint and hard to see. A frequent visitor to backyard birdfeeders.
Black-backed Woodpecker: Elusive and difficult to spot. After a wildfire, populations of Black-backed Woodpeckers often increase dramatically because they feed on wood-boring beetles that infest dead or dying trees.
Red-headed Woodpecker: This species prefers open woodlands, groves of trees near water, orchards, and farmlands.
American Three-Toed Woodpecker: This bird has only three toes instead of the usual four! Like the Black-backed Woodpecker, it often increases in numbers after forest disturbances such as fire or insect infestations.
Hairy Woodpecker: Looks almost identical to the Downy Woodpecker but is slightly larger. Its bill is longer and more robust allowing it to chisel deeper into bark.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Drills neat rows of holes into tree bark to feed on sap.
Downy Woodpecker: The smallest and most common in Wisconsin.

Benefits of woodpeckers include:

They help keep forests healthy by eating insects including ants, beetle larvae, and caterpillars.
When they excavate nesting cavities in dead or decaying trees, they create essential nesting sites for other wildlife, including owls, warblers, and other songbirds.
When they eat seeds, nuts, and fruits, they help with seed dispersal.
Their presence, —especially cavity-nesting species—can indicate a mature, diverse forest with a mix of live and dead trees, which is important for long-term ecosystem resilience.

Sources: 8 Types of Woodpeckers Found in Wisconsin! (2026) - Bird Watching HQ
10 Types of Woodpeckers in Wisconsin (Pictures and Identification)

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********** ***Wildlife & Woods Explorations - Virtual Sessions***: Designed for K-5 and elementary grade youth and family members. Email us your suggestions about topics you would like to see in the 2027 virtual sessions

Wildlife & Woods Careers & Competition - Virtual Sessions: Designed for middle and high school youth, and family members. Email us your suggestions about topics you would like to see in the 2027 virtual sessions.
Email: wi4hwildlifeforestry@gmail.com

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Wildlife & Forestry 4-H Art Contest - Thank you to all the youth for participating in the 4-H Statewide Art Contest.
Remember – many of those art projects make great county fair projects.

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Wildlife WHEP & Forestry Contests **-** Thank you to all the youth for participating in the statewide contest.

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Happy summer. Have fun at your county fair this year. Take lots of projects.

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Kerri, "TRACKS" Editor

Special Thanks" are extended to the following for making the "Wildlife WHEP Wisconsin 4-H" & "Wisconsin 4-H Forestry" programs possible: Northern Kettle Moraine Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited, Wildlife WHEP Wisconsin 4-H & Wisconsin 4-H Forestry –Washington County; Washington County Whitetails Unlimited Chapter; Wildlife WHEP 4-H Wisconsin & Wisconsin 4-H Forestry 4-H Friends, & State Committee Members. Advisor: Carlea Liermann, Calumet Co. 4-H Program Educator

