

1980

Performance Report: Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

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The Center for Conservation Biology

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Virginia PROJECT NO.: E-4
PROJECT TYPE: Research and/or Inventory STUDY NO.: VI
PROJECT TITLE: Endangered Species Investigations JOB NO.: VI-G
PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1980
JOB IV-C OBJECTIVE: To determine distribution and abundance of the red-cockaded woodpecker in Virginia.
To obtain information on behavior, food habits, nesting success, and limiting factors for the species in Virginia.
To make recommendations designed to maintain and increase this species in Virginia.

SUMMARY:

Surveys for the location of active red-cockaded woodpecker sites were continued. Coverage was completed for the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake. Seven active nests were located from which a minimum of twelve young fledged.

SURVEYS:

Surveys were continued to locate active red-cockaded woodpecker sites. Surveys were completed in the cities of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. In addition, all areas in Sussex County in which cavity trees previously had been located were resurveyed.

As a result of these surveys, red-cockaded woodpeckers were determined to be present in nine areas. Seven of these areas were located in Sussex County and two were located in Isle of Wight County.

Population and Nesting Studies

All areas which contained cavity trees were checked several times for woodpecker activity through the use of tape recordings at all sites.

A tape recording of two of the vocalizations of woodpeckers was played at each site during April when birds had established territories. Response to the recording was immediate and continuous. It is believed that the use of a recording prior to the initiation of nesting has no adverse effect on the birds and provides an excellent technique for the location of active sites.

As a result of the use of this technique, seven active nest sites were located in Sussex County. A minimum of 16 adults were seen at these sites, one site having a breeding pair as well as two helpers at the nest.

In addition, birds were seen at two different sites in Isle of Wight County. A single individual was seen at each of these two sites. An active nest was not located at either of these sites although a tree believed to have contained a nest was found after the breeding season. The other bird is thought to be a single remaining individual at a previously active site.

The exact number of young was not determined because of earlier fledging than expected at two nests. A minimum of twelve young fledged at the seven active sites.

Seven active sites represent the largest number of nests located in the state since this project began in 1976. It is believed that this may be attributed to the great effectiveness of the tape recorder in locating birds at sites where nest trees are not readily observed. Two active nests found for the first time in 1980 were located in remote areas by following birds first attracted by the tape recording.

Based on the survey and nesting study this year, it appears that the state population of this species is at least 18 individuals and, perhaps, no greater than 25 individuals. Productivity may be adequate to sustain this very small population.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: June 30, 1981

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue with Remaining Project Plans

COST THIS SEGMENT: Federal \$3,420.12 : STATE \$1,928.88 : TOTAL \$5,358.00 :

PREPARED BY: Mitchell A. Byrd APPROVED BY: Jack W. Raybourne
Chief, Division of Game

DATE: August 1, 1980 J. F. McInteer, Jr.
Executive Director