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Red-cockaded Woodpecker Investigations

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

<u>STATE:</u>	VIRGINIA	<u>PROJECT NO.:</u>	W-77-R-1
<u>PROJECT TYPE:</u>	RESEARCH AND/OR INVENTORY	<u>STUDY NO.:</u>	X
<u>STUDY TITLE:</u>	RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER INVESTIGATIONS	<u>JOB NO.:</u>	X-A-1, X-A-2, X-A-3
<u>PERIOD COVERED:</u>	July 1, 1983 - June 30, 1984		
<u>JOB X-A-1 OBJECTIVE:</u>	To determine distribution and abundance of the red-cockaded woodpecker in Virginia.		
<u>JOB X-A-2 OBJECTIVE:</u>	To obtain information on behavior, food habits, nesting success and limiting factors for the species in Virginia.		
<u>JOB X-A-3 OBJECTIVE:</u>	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. Four active nests were located of which three were successful. Six young were produced for an average of 1.50 young per active nest. Nineteen known adults were located which gave a total known population in late June of 25 individuals compared with 24 in 1983 and 31 in 1982.

SURVEYS:

Surveys were continued to locate active red-cockaded woodpecker sites. Several new areas previously located by air in the city of Suffolk were intensively surveyed on the ground. Although these areas had optimal habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers, no evidence of activity was found.

Six reports of red-cockaded woodpeckers in the state were investigated. In all cases but one, the reports were verified by sightings as being of some other species of woodpecker. The one report which could not definitely be verified consisted of excavations in large, old pines which probably was the work of pileated woodpeckers.

All areas on which birds had been seen were resurveyed for activity.

POPULATION AND NESTING STUDY:

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 vocalization of woodpeckers was played at each site during April when birds had established territories. Response to the recordings usually was immediate and continuous. Once the presence of birds was ascertained, extensive searches were conducted to locate active cavity trees.

As a result of the use of this technique, birds were located at eight sites. One of these sites (see Table 1) contained a single bird. The location of birds and their breeding success is indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Productivity of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia, 1984.

Topographic Quadrangle	Location	Number of Adults	Nest Successful	Number of Young	Nest Failed	No Nests Located
Manry	Wakefield	1		0		X
Manry	Atypical site Intersection of 604-620	0		0		
Manry	Union Camp Sanctuary	2		0		X
Manry	Union Camp Tract Route 622	3		0	X	Nest tree blew down May 8
Manry	Intersection of 604-606	1		0		X
Yale	Intersection of 609-635 (Below Gray)	2	X	2		
Sebrell	Gray Tract Route 608	4	X	2		
Sussex	Sussex School Tract - Gray Lumber Company	4	X	2		
Buckhorn	Perry Lumber Tract - City of Suffolk	2		0		X
Totals		19	3	6	1	4

The breeding season for red-cockaded woodpeckers was late in 1983 with some nests still containing unfledged young well into June. The late season may have been due to the very cold spring which also may have affected adversely nesting success.

Extensive search of the areas in which adults were observed resulted in the location of 4 active nests compared with 5 active nests in 1983 and 7 active nests in 1982. Six young were produced in the four nests for an average production of 1.5 young per active nest.

There were 19 known adults during the breeding season. Two additional birds were seen at one site in March but they could not be located during the breeding season. The number of known adults (19) and the six young produced constituted a total population of 25 individuals. This compares with a known June population of 31 individuals (22 adults, 9 young) in 1982. Since females of the year frequently disperse from the colony, the adult population appears to have decreased slightly.

HABITAT LOSS:

The continued loss of habitat for this species is critical. Two clan sites had some selective cutting following the 1983 breeding season. In two cases, cavity trees were removed from the sites.

The Union Camp tract on Route 622 is very important, presently supporting five birds. The large tract of pine immediately adjacent to this tract was logged in 1983. Since the adjacent tract is the primary foraging area for the clan, loss of the adjacent tract probably will affect the success of the clan. This clan did attempt to nest during the 1984 breeding season but a severe storm with high winds resulted in the loss of the nest tree and the clan failed to produce young.

In view of the small number of birds remaining, it is believed that this species will not survive in Virginia unless virtually all of the remaining clan sites are acquired and placed in sanctuary status.

FORAGING STUDIES:

Studies have been conducted during three winters on the foraging range of clans with emphasis on clan territorial requirements. Data presently are being analyzed and will be presented in a future report.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: June 30, 1984

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS:

COST THIS SEGMENT: Federal \$3,562.00 : State \$1,188.00 : Total \$4,750.00

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DATE: August 1, 1984

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