

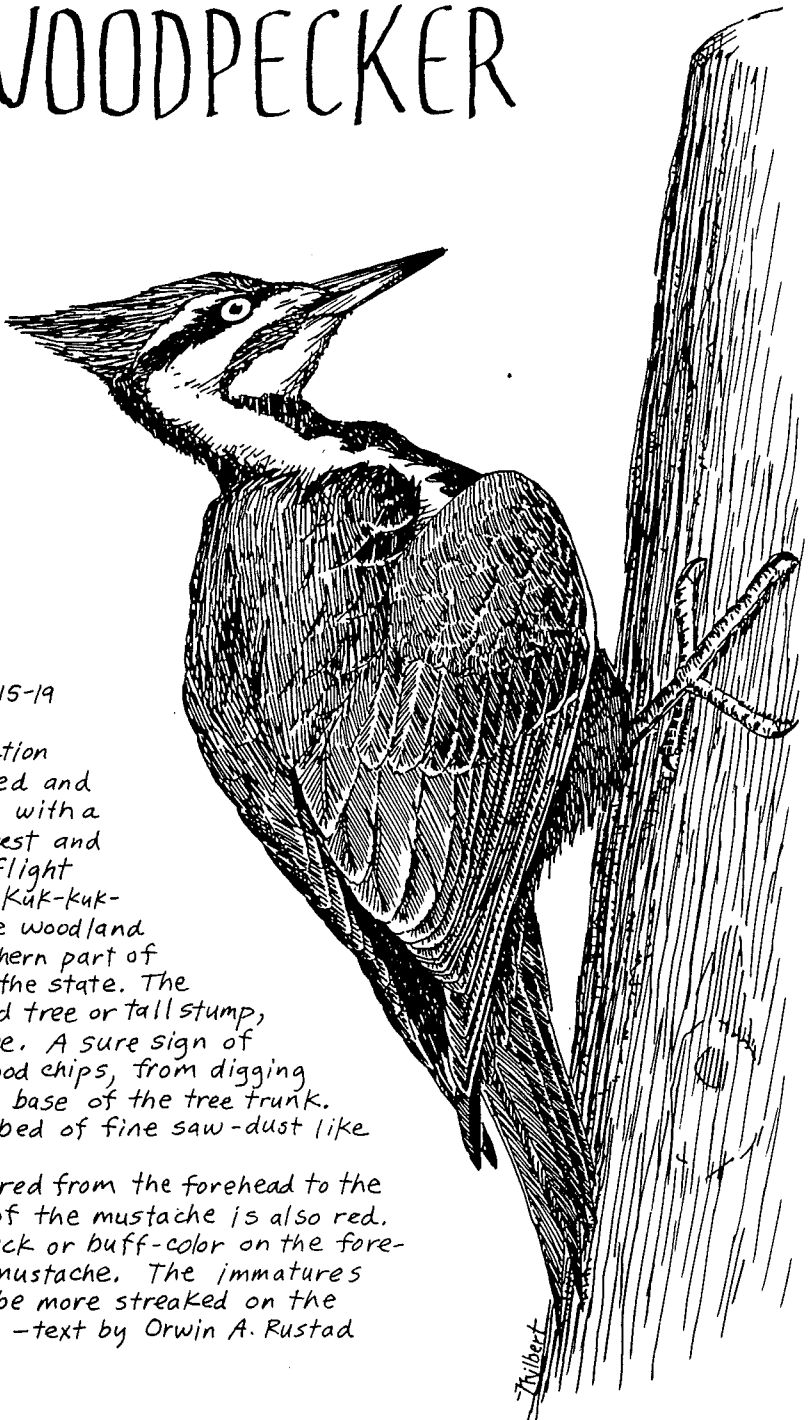
River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

PILEATED WOODPECKER

The Pileated Woodpecker is the largest of our northern woodpeckers being crow-sized, about 15-19 inches in length. Only the rare Ivory-billed Woodpecker is larger, which is now near extinction and presently found only in Cuba. The pileated and the ivory-billed are the only two woodpeckers with a crest. The pileated has a bright, large red crest and flies with a very characteristic undulating flight recognized when it flies by its very loud Kuk-kuk-kukKuk... Kuk kuk call. It is a bird of the woodland found from the hardwood forest of the southern part of Minnesota to the northern Conifer forest of the state. The nest of the pileated is excavated in a dead tree or tall stump, sometimes in the solid trunk of a living tree. A sure sign of its presence are the large chunks of wood chips, from digging its large oval or oblong hole, found at the base of the tree trunk. It lays from 3-6 white eggs layed on a bed of fine saw-dust like fragments of wood.

Field characteristics: The males are red from the forehead to the crown and to the crest; the area front of the mustache is also red. The females have a red crest but have black or buff-color on the forehead and the forecrown, and have a black mustache. The immatures are grayer than the adults and tend to be more streaked on the throat.



-text by Orwin A. Rustad