



Anybody home?



Here come some yummys.

trunk. Large muscles support stiff tail feathers, allowing easy manipulation. The two, pointed central feathers, reinforced by longitudinal ridge, have barbs curving toward the tree, which further strengthens the tail.

Most birds have anisodactyl feet, three toes forward, one backward. Woodpeckers have zygodactyl feet, two toes forward and two toes backwards. The rear toes improve the sup-

port needed on vertical surfaces. One toe can be extended laterally as the bird moves up a tree.

The second week of July 2007, a storm with high winds blew through Northwest Chicagoland. One of the two dead snags where the woodpeckers were nesting fell down. A volunteer checked the downed snag and reported the Red-headed Woodpecker's nest tree was still standing. However, I returned on several occasions and could not find any sign of woodpeckers. I never did see the hatchlings or juveniles.

Red-headed Woodpeckers excavate their nests in isolated snags, up to 80 feet above the ground, in open woodlands. Removal of dead trees, loss of open wood lots and competition with European Starlings for nest sites are a few reasons for this species' decline. John Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, has said he fears this species will go extinct if something is not done to protect their habitat.

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A Red-headed Woodpecker finds a bee can be a tasty meal.



There's always time for a little fun.