



Featured Species Habitat Management Guidance for Pileated Woodpecker

Latin Name: *Dryocopus pileatus*

Scope: Statewide

Rationale - *why we value the species and the problem for the species:*

The pileated woodpecker (PW) is an ecosystem engineer which excavates large nest cavities used for raising their brood. Once their young fledge PWs abandon these holes and do not return, providing nest sites for those secondary cavity-nesting animals, which cannot excavate their own cavities. The availability of suitable nest sites is a population limiting bottleneck for many of these secondary cavity nesters (Newton 1994). Dozens of Michigan wildlife species depend upon abandoned PW cavities, including the wood duck, common goldeneye, bufflehead, hooded merganser, common merganser, merlin, kestrel, screech-owl, saw-wet owl, barred owl, fisher, and American marten. Although PW numbers in Michigan are increasing (Sauer et al. 2014), they are still recovering from the “Big Cut” and its abundance and distribution limits other species. There is still strong competition both within and between species of secondary cavity nesters for the limited supply of PW nests.

Habitat Need - *the cause & effect relationship between habitat and species and its primary limiting habitat need:*

PW prefers more mature and less logged forest stands. They:

- 1) Use both coniferous and deciduous stands;
- 2) Preferentially select for stands with greatest basal area, most canopy closure, and highest crown canopy;
- 3) Have abundance that is positively related to the density of trees with > 12 inch DBH; and
- 4) Prefers forests greater than 40 years old for foraging and greater than 70 years old for nesting and roosting (Bull & Jackson 1995).

Habitat Objectives - *the treatment or management to address the primary limiting habitat need:*

Where possible, maintain a minimum of 3 large diameter trees (greater than 12 inches DBH) per acre as within-stand retention.

Priority Geographic Areas – *the specific geographic areas where we should focus management for the species:*

The 48 Regional State Forest Management Plan Management Areas (33 NLP, 6 EUP, and 9 WUP) and the 10 WLD Project Areas (5 NLP, 3 SELP, and 2 SWLP), which identify the pileated woodpecker as a featured species.

Priority Landscapes – *the landscape, setting, or cover-type where we should focus management within the areas above:*

Where ever timber is harvested.

Population Goal - *the goal for the species, its habitat, or a stakeholder's actions:*

Maintain or increase the existing population as measured by the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS).

Evaluation Method - *the monitoring method to measure progress towards the goal above:*

Evaluate statewide population trends in BBS data annually.

Incidental Species – *other species which may benefit from management for this species:*

American marten; red-headed woodpecker; red-shouldered hawk; and wood duck.

References - citation for documents referenced in this guidance:

- Bull, E. L. and J. E. Jackson. 1995. Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*). in the Birds of North America, No. 148. A. Poole and F. Gill, eds. The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- Newton, I. 1994. The role of nest sites in limiting the number of hole nesting birds: a review. *Biological Conservation* 70: 265-276.
- Sauer, J. R., J. E. Hines, J. E. Fallon, K. L. Pardieck, D. J. Ziolkowski, Jr., and W. A. Link. 2014. *The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2012. Version 02.19.2014 USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD.*