

# Topic of Note

## Notes Regarding the Architectural Impact of Downy Woodpeckers (*Picoides pubescens*)

In October, 1979, when I first approached a new client's residence (situated on the 9th line, Douro Township, Peterborough County) to plan an addition, I realized the existing wood siding had been subject to considerable damage. On the facades of the house (built c. 1972), there were extensive horizontal rows of holes penetrating the siding (Figure 1). In places, the holes were so closely spaced that the wood surface appeared "caved in".

In my conversation with the owners, they said that the damage was caused by woodpeckers. On a subsequent site visit, I observed a Downy Woodpecker adding insult to injury as it drilled into the siding at the second storey level of the east facade. The owners noted that all attempts to scare the woodpeckers away had failed.

The siding in question was "channel siding", a B.C. fir/redwood plywood product shipped in 4 ft. x 8 ft. x  $\frac{3}{4}$ " sheets (the siding had been stained by the owners after installation). This plywood was 5 ply, scored vertically with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide channels,  $\frac{5}{16}$ " + deep at  $5\frac{1}{4}$ " intervals. This particular shipment of plywood was defective — some substrate veneers were not fully joined at

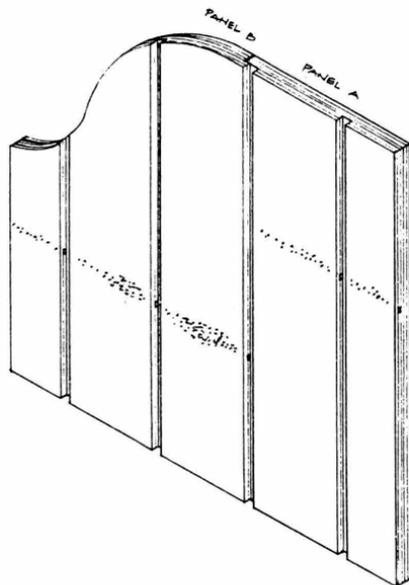


Figure 1: Typical channel siding woodpecker damage.

their seams. Where these imperfect joints had been scored by the channels, a series of horizontal gaps were opened to the exterior. I assume that insects had entered these gaps, and that the Downy Woodpeckers were "pursuing" these insects across the plywood, hence the horizontal appearance of the woodpecker damage.

A vertical 1 x 6 cedar ship lap siding (individual boards) was chosen for the addition. To date,

there has been no woodpecker damage.

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**Eds. Comment:** The Topic of Note is a bird related subject intended to help focus members' attention in writing Notes for Ontario Birds. The April Topic is Unusual Nesting Holes, Behaviour and/or Damage Caused by Woodpeckers and that for the September issue is Interactions Between Snakes and Birds. The December Topic will be announced in the next issue. If you miss the deadline for any given Topic, submit it anyway and we will consider it for the next issue. Of course, we still welcome Notes on all other topics as well. See Ontario Birds Vol. 2: 123-124 for further details.

## Book Review

***Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas.*** 1983. By Doug Sadler. Orchid Press, Peterborough, 190 pp. \$7.50. Available from the author, R.R. #4, Peterborough, Ont. K9J 6X5.

In recent years a growing list of books dealing with the bird life of various counties or regions within the Province of Ontario has become available. Doug Sadler's *Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas* is a welcome addition to the group if for no other reason than the region it covers is a popular resortland. This book provides the visiting birder with some idea of what might be seen within the county at various times of the year.

However, this book is more than just a list of birds in the area, and I commend the author for the unique local flavour of the 33 introductory pages. These begin with a

geographical overview of the county, and continue through archaeological records, historical changes in habitats and birdlife, where to find birds in the county, bird names and recent changes including a quiz (which is quite amusing), to tips for novices. I found the tips to be very thoughtful and something that other authors of similar books should take a cue from.

The bulk of the book is devoted to the list of species, their arrival and departure dates, and the localities in which they have been seen. I enjoyed the author's easy writing style and found such anecdotes as the Barred Owl that liked to ride on curling stones and