


Birbs in the burbs

Pileated Woodpeckers are habitat specialists with specific environmental requirements. They prefer mature old-growth forest with plenty of **snags**—dead trees— for foraging and nesting. In urban areas however, forest cover is minimal and snags are generally removed. How does this large woodpecker species fare in **urban and suburban** habitats?

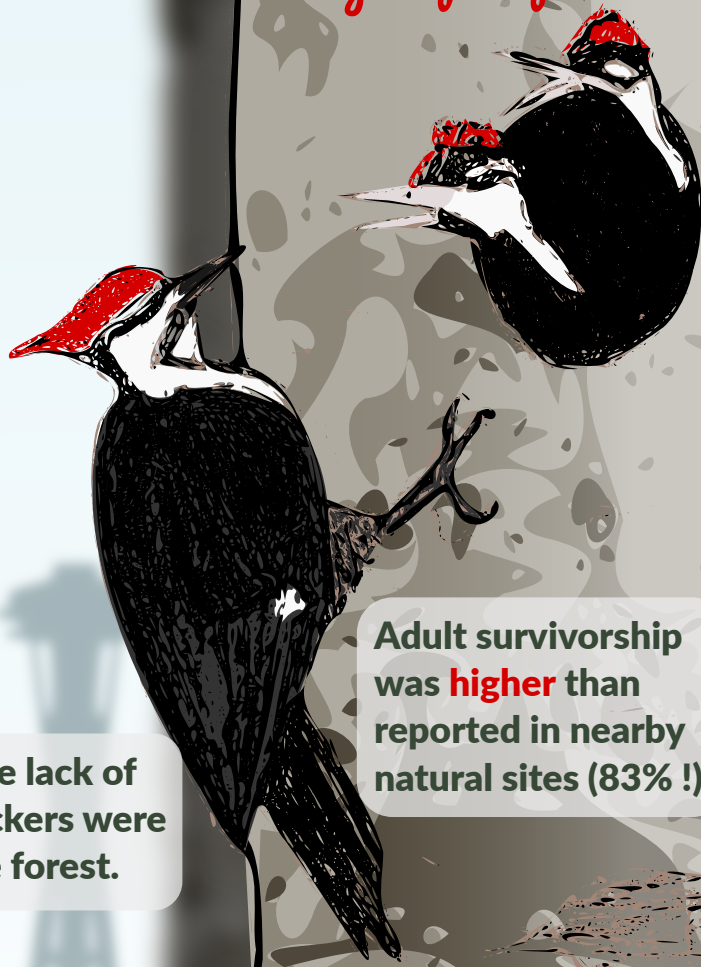
Jorge Tomasevic and John Marzluff used radiotelemetry to locate 14 woodpecker nests in the Seattle area, tracking **nest success** and **survivorship** from 2009 to 2013.



For the most part nests were found in **dead trees**, with a preference for red alders (*Alnus rubra*). However, trees with nests tended to be **smaller** than those generally chosen in natural sites.

Woodpeckers had an average 2 young, and **13 of 14** nests had at least 1 fledgling.

Despite being habitat specialists and the lack of snags in urban areas, Pileated Woodpeckers were quite **successful** in the suburban Seattle forest.



Dryocopus pileatus

Adult survivorship was **higher** than reported in nearby natural sites (83%!).

Suburbs are where many of us frequently encounter and enjoy wildlife. Though they are no replacement for natural habitats, they can be important areas for **conservation**.