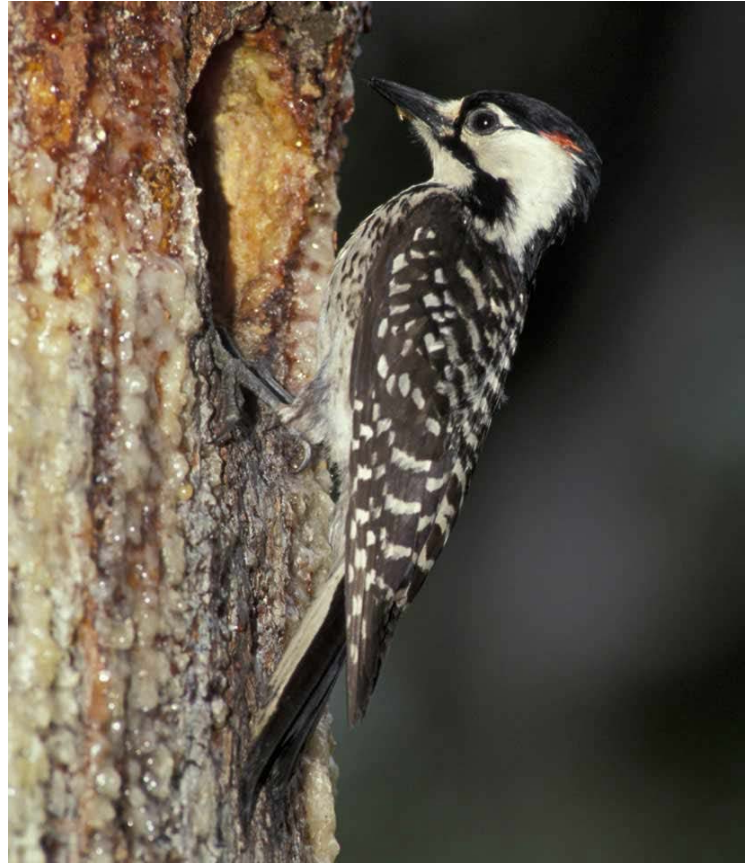


DRAFT – Red-Cockaded Woodpecker -- DRAFT Effects Determination Guidance for Endangered & Threatened Species (EDGES)

South Georgia Coastal Plain Counties

Species Covered by This EDGES: Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) - Endangered

Red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCW) live in mature pine forests—specifically those with 80-120-year-old longleaf pines and/or 70-100-year-old loblolly pines. From the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, RCWs declined rapidly as habitat was altered, primarily for timber and agricultural use. RCWs excavate cavities exclusively in living pine trees, preferring older pines infected with the fungal red heart disease that softens heartwood. RCWs live in groups with a breeding pair and as many as four helpers, usually male offspring from the previous year. Cavity trees occupied by a group are called a cluster and may include 1 to 20 or more trees on 3 to 60 acres. Each RCW group needs about 200 acres of old pine forest to support foraging and nesting habitat needs.



RCWs play a vital role in the intricate web of life of southern pine forests. A number of birds and mammals use the nest cavities that the woodpeckers excavate. Larger woodpeckers

may take over a RCW cavity, sometimes enlarging the hole enough to allow screech owls, wood ducks, and even raccoons to move in. Flying squirrels, several species of reptiles and amphibians, and insects, primarily bees and wasps, also use red-cockaded cavities.

Primary threats to RCWs include loss of old growth pine forests, short-rotation pine production that precludes trees old enough to provide nest cavities, and exclusion of fire, which creates a dense pine/hardwood forest.

This EDGES covers new development, including subdivisions, commercial development, roads, water supply infrastructure, sewer mains, pipe and powerlines, stream restoration/stabilization (including mitigation banks) and similar projects. It does not cover new drinking water reservoirs, airports, or similar large-impact projects.

Endangered Species Act Consultation Checklist:

Applicant:

1. IPAC indicates RCWs may occur in the project area (see range map on Page 2).
 - a. No.....No effect. Provide IPaC information to the Savannah District with application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #2.

2. The Fish and Wildlife Service's Georgia Field Office (FWS-GA) provided documentation stating project impacts to RCWs were likely to be minimal (FWS-GA signed letter or sticker, T&E survey where FWS-GA provided concurrence with negative findings, or similar documentation).
 - a. No.....Provide completed EDGES Applicant Coordination Slip, with supporting documentation to the Savannah District with 404 application/PCN.
 - b. Yes.....Provide FWS-GA project review documentation and/or survey data to the Savannah District with application/PCN.

Savannah District:

3. Aerial photographs indicate the project area is part of a pine forest >100 acres in size.
 - a. No.....NLAA. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #4.

4. The project will remove mature pine trees (>60 years old; >10 inches diameter at breast height) or will involve activities that will compact roots or soils around mature pine trees in the larger forest.
 - a. NoNLAA. Consultation complete. FWS-GA concurrence not needed.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #5.

5. The mature pine forest has an open understory, with few or no midstory or canopy hardwood trees (see photo page 1).
 - a. No NLAA. Consultation complete. FWS concurrence is needed, in writing, for JPNs, but is assumed for other Savannah District actions if FWS-GA does not respond.
 - b. Yes.....Go to #6.

6. Data are provided in the PCN or application to assist the Savannah District and FWS-GA evaluate RCW impacts:
 - a. No.....Request the information and, once received, continue with #6b.
 - b. Yes.....Share data with FWS-GA and continue consultation. If consultation results in a Savannah District determination of:
 - i) NLAA, and FWS-GA concurs, in writing, consultation is complete.
 - ii) MALAA, and FWS-GA agrees, initiate formal consultation.

Information to be Provided the Savannah District for Endangered Species Act Review

- Project location, outlined on a USGS topographic map.
- Aerial photographs of the area, with pine habitats outlined on the photo.
- Photographs of each pine habitat, keyed to the areas outlined on the aerial photos.
- RCW survey report, if conducted.