

One Smart Woodpecker

While most woodpeckers carve out cavities in dead trees for their nests, the red-cockaded woodpecker prefers to use the living pine trees of the southern United States. The woodpecker always chooses one of these living southern pines that is over 60 years old. While these pines can live 200 years or more, usually at about age 60 a fungus infection begins to rot away the heart wood at the center of the tree.

Over months or even sometimes years the woodpecker works his way through the living tissue to the hollow center where he will build his nest. The nest cavity is always above the level of shrub growth in order to provide a safe haven from any forest fires.

In addition, surrounding foliage can give the gray rat snake access to the nest. These snakes, natural enemies of the woodpecker, can also climb pine trees. But the snake does not like the gummy resin of the pine tree. In fact, snakes that encounter the resin will begin to writhe and fall to the ground. So to make sure that its home is absolutely safe, the woodpecker drills a series of holes around the hole leading to its nest. The holes are kept open so that the nest hole is always protected by the resin.

The red-cockaded woodpecker carefully selects a site for its home in order to be safe from both fire and a natural predator—using the natural chemistry of the tree to aid its survival. Obviously this intelligence was given to the woodpecker by the Creator since trial and error cannot explain such careful planning.

Acts 17:28

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven; the entire creation bears witness to the fact that You are a caring God not distantly removed from us. Grant me a clearer sense of Your presence in My life and Your desire to be even closer to me that You are now. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

REF.: Mohlenbrock, Robert H. Bienville Pines, Mississippi. *Natural History*.