**Carpenters of the Forest**

Wood chips fly as a woodpecker’s powerful beak chisels into a tree trunk. Drilling after insects, it may strike at 16 miles per hour, 20 times each second, for hours on end. Just one of these blows would give other birds a concussion, or at least a severe headache, but a woodpecker’s spongy skull and shock-absorbing muscles protect its brain. Special “equipment” helps the woodpecker cling to the bark; two toes angle forward and two angle back for a secure hold, and stiff tail feathers act like a prop.

**Pileated Woodpecker**

Nearly the size of a crow, the pileated (crested) woodpecker is California’s largest woodpecker. Its nest holes are reused by more than 30 species of birds, mammals, and reptiles.

**Acorn Woodpecker**

A tree studded with thousands of small holes signals the presence of a colony of acorn woodpeckers. The tree is their winter storehouse. In the fall, an acorn is tucked into each hole—perhaps as many as 50,000 of them.

**Nuttall’s Woodpecker**

Common in oak woodlands, this small acrobatic woodpecker lives almost exclusively in California.

**Northern Flicker**

Woodpeckers have exceptionally long tongues. On this continent, flickers have the longest tongues of all—the perfect tool for lapping up ants.

**Pileated Woodpecker**

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