



Ask the **FWC**

Illustration by Lizabeth West

Where can I find assistance with identifying or excluding woodpeckers?

There are seven species of woodpecker which breed in Florida: red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, red-cockaded woodpecker, northern flicker and pileated woodpecker. Many times, pileated woodpeckers are mistakenly identified as ivory-billed woodpeckers that were once thought to be extinct. Visit the following links for more information:

- www.audubon.org/bird/ivory/challenges.php
- MyFWC.com/bba/PIWO.htm
- www.birdingamerica.com/Ivorybill/ivorybilledwoodpecker.htm

The Florida Breeding Bird Atlas is a great online site for information on woodpeckers. MyFWC.com/bba/species.htm. Just scroll down until you see woodpeckers (Order: *Piciformes*).

Woodpeckers are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Sometimes these birds can become a nuisance by drumming on structures and creating lots of noise or by drilling holes to excavate a nesting cavity on the side of a house.

Learn more about woodpeckers and about how to prevent further damage, at MyFWC.com/critters/woodpeckers.asp.

I want to care for sick, injured or baby wildlife. Do I need a license or permit?

In order to be authorized to possess sick, injured or orphaned wildlife for rehabilitation purposes, a free Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit is required. Depending on the type of wildlife, a specific permit may be required. More information on the permits and links to the applications can be found at: MyFWC.com/permits.

In order to possess or rehabilitate birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a federal Special Purpose Rehabilitation Permit issued by the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service also would be required. To obtain more information on the federal permitting process, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at www.fws.gov. For information about other federally protected species, call the USFWS at (404) 679-7049.

What are the minimum requirements for applying to become a fish and wildlife officer?

To apply to become a fish and wildlife officer, you must be at least 19 years of age, with a high school diploma or GED and one the following:

- 2 years of military experience
- 2 years of public contact experience (any job working with the public or coming in contact with customers)
- 1 year of sworn law enforcement experience
- 30 semester or 45 quarter hours at an accredited college or university

What can I do about noisy or unwanted peacocks (peafowl) on my property? What laws apply to these birds?

Complaints of noise caused by peacocks are handled by local authorities through local ordinances or individually as a civil matter. These complaints come under the jurisdiction of your county commission, county animal control or local community. Depending on where you live, your local sheriff's department, county animal control department or code enforcement officer may be able to respond. If you have a homeowners association, it may be able to help resolve these issues.

It is illegal to release peafowl in the

wild. The FWC authorizes trappers to remove peacocks with the consent of the property owner for a fee. For more information on nuisance wildlife trappers, visit MyFWC.com/trappers/.

Two species, the Congo and Java peafowl, require a permit from the FWC to possess and sell. The remaining species of peafowl such as green, blue and white varieties of peafowl are not considered wildlife. As such, they require no permits for possession or for sale.

How old do I have to be to take the hunter safety course?

There is no set minimum age for taking the hunter safety course in Florida. However, the program is basically aimed at those that are 12 years old and older. Younger children have taken and passed the course, however, the test and lesson text are written on a 12-year-old reading level.

If you will reach the age of 16 during the hunting season, you should have completed the hunter safety course, and you must purchase a license.

Until you reach 16 years of age, you must hunt with an adult (even when bow hunting).

