

# Woodpeckers

*part 1*

**KYC**

Know Your Campus

Issue 22







Around 180 species  
worldwide  
32 species in India  
10 species in FRI campus



Found throughout the world  
except Oceania and polar  
regions



Wide range of habitats  
forests, deserts, urban  
spaces



Eats insects, fruits, nuts, sap and seeds



Woodpeckers are perfectionists and they create near flawless curved holes. They also like new things. They create new holes all year long and the old holes are often used by other birds.



They are primarily monogamous with aggressive courtship. Due to the lack of vocal songs, they communicate through chirps, drumming on trees, metal roofs and so on.



Woodpeckers peck a tree between 10,000 to 12,000 times a day. Each strike is equivalent of going from 42,000 kmph to a complete stop every second! Yet miraculously they do not get a headache!!! The brain is prevented from trauma due to special air pockets in the skull.

The tongue bone is very large, wrapping around the skull and acting as a safety belt. This distributes the force generated, protecting the brain.



## Brown-fronted woodpecker

*Dendrocoptes auriceps*

19 - 20 cm long

A regular in the montane forests of the Himalayas.

The brownish head is flanked by red feathers in males and black feathers in females.

## Grey-headed Woodpecker

*Picus canus*

28 - 33 cm long

Both male and female sport a thin moustache near the beak.

The bright red in a head signifies a male.





## Grey-capped Woodpecker

*Yungipicus canicapillus*

14-16 cm long

The dark grey crown on the head,

blackish upper and a greyish lower side are noticeable features.

Males have a red streak on the crown which is often not visible.



## Rufous Woodpecker

*Micropternus brachyurus*

Around 25 cm long

Distinct dark brown feathers which differ from individual to individual.

Distributed throughout South and Southeast Asia. Males have a red patch beneath the eye.  
(cover photo)





A composite image featuring two woodpeckers. On the left, a male Streak Throated woodpecker is perched on a horizontal branch, facing right. It has a bright red crown, a pale yellowish-brown body, and a black collar around its neck. On the right, a female Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker is perched on a diagonal branch, facing left. It has a black crown, a lime green back, and a white underbelly with dark streaks. The background is a soft-focus green and blue.

## Streak Throated woodpecker

*Picus xanthopygaeus*

Around 30 cm long

Lime green in colour  
with white scaly  
underparts.

Crown is red in males  
and black in females.

A resident of  
the open  
forests.

## Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker

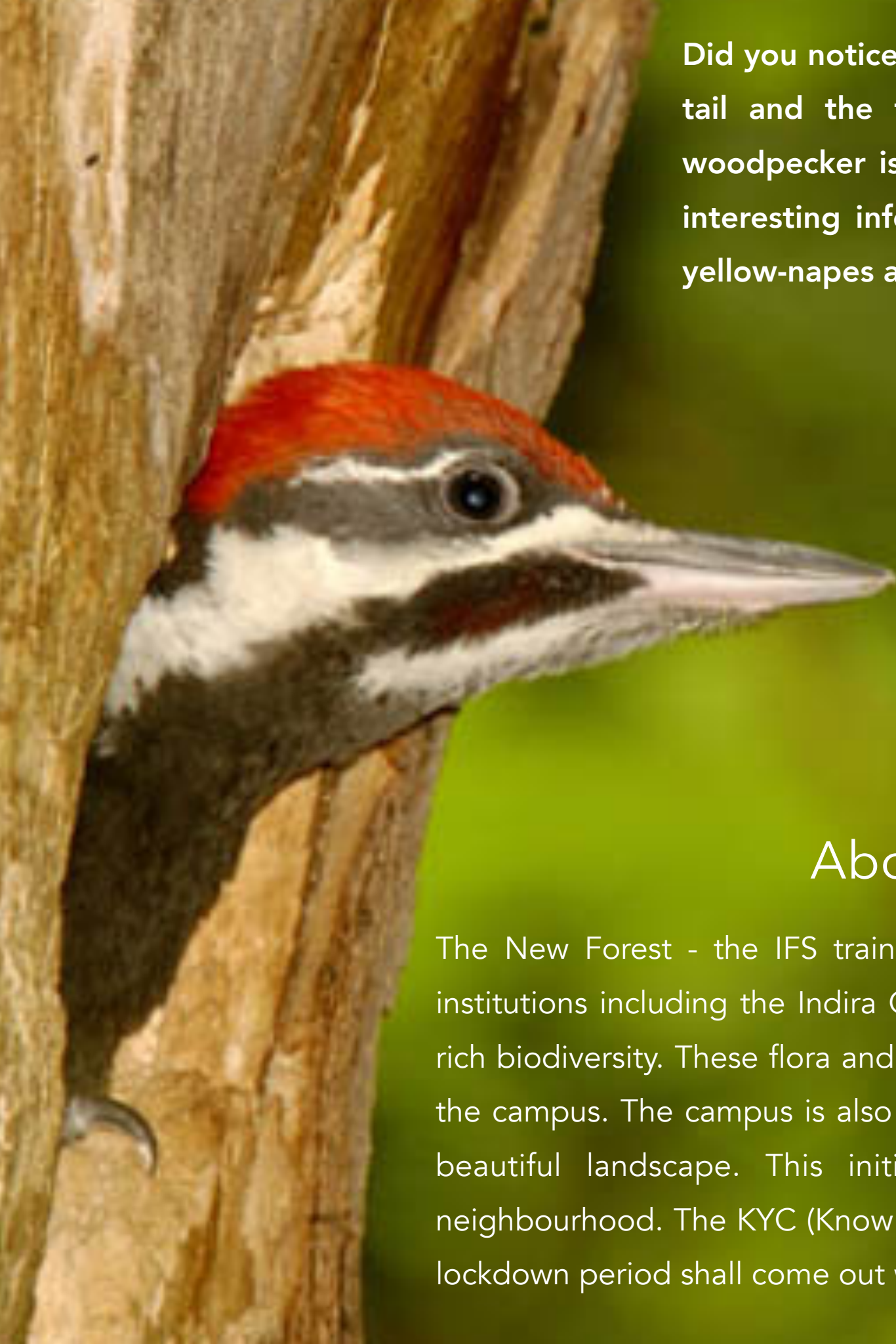
*Dendrocopos macei*

18 - 20 cm long

Pale yellowish brown  
underparts with bright red  
under tail.

The male has an all red crown and  
females have an all black crown





Did you notice the sharp tail spikes in all the woodpeckers above? The tail and the two feet act as a tripod adding stability when the woodpecker is striking the tree. Part 2 of this issue brings you more interesting information and facts about woodpeckers. Watch out for yellow-napes and flame-backs in that issue.

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References : ebird.org

Photos : Google

## About the KYC initiative

The New Forest - the IFS training campus - an area which houses the FRI and its sister institutions including the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) is also home to a rich biodiversity. These flora and fauna become a part of our neighbourhood while we are at the campus. The campus is also adorned with heritage buildings, museums, nurseries and a beautiful landscape. This initiative is aimed at making us more familiar with our neighbourhood. The KYC (Know your Campus) initiative started by the IFS 2019 batch in this lockdown period shall come out with a campus related topic each day.