

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER

X. Permittees are authorized for scientific research and recovery purposes to conduct presence/absence surveys for Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides* (= *Denrocos*) *borealis*) (RCW) within Texas. The following conditions also apply:

1. Surveys for RCW should be conducted according to the protocol set out in Appendix 4 of the January 2003 Second Revision of the Red-cockaded woodpecker Recovery Plan (Revised RCW Recovery Plan).
2. All persons surveying for RCW should be familiar with the appearance and vocalizations of this species, as well as the habitat required for colonization and foraging, and the activity which indicates presence such as cavities, starts, and resin wells on cavity trees.
3. Historic and current RCW locality information should be obtained from the Texas Natural Heritage Program (512) 448-4311, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Nacogdoches, Texas (903/679-9823), or the USFWS East Texas Sub Office (936/639-8549 or 8546). If the project area is on or near U.S. Forest Service National Forests lands, the District Wildlife Biologists should be contacted for current information.
4. Obtain and inspect current aerial photographs and 7.5 minute USGS topographic maps (1:24,000) of the project area. The aerial photography should expedite the identification of the older pine stands (large old pine trees should have a smooth, dense appearance). The area should then be marked on a topographic map.
5. Ground-truth identified areas utilizing the topographic map to determine if mature pine stands suitable for potential RCW occupation exist within or near the project area.
6. Survey along parallel transects within suitable tracts to identify if RCWs are present (vocalizations, observation of individuals, cavities and/or resin wells in live pine trees, start holes). Transects must be spaced so that all trees are inspected. Necessary spacing will vary with habitat structure and season from a maximum of 91 m (100 yards) between transects in very open pine stands to 46 m (50 yards) or less in areas with dense midstory. Transects are run north-south, because many cavity entrances are oriented in a westerly direction, and can be set using a hand compass.
7. When surveying pipeline/powerline rights-of-way [or any other project effecting RCW habitat], survey the area within 1/2-mile on either side where habitat is suitable for RCWs.
8. When cavity trees are found, their location should be recorded in the field using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, aerial photograph, and/or field map. All potentially disruptive activities near these trees should then cease unless the surveyors are trained and certified to assess RCW cavity status in accordance with Appendix 1 of the Revised RCW Recovery Plan. Activities within active RCW clusters must be conducted only by trained, certified, and permitted individuals. Discoveries should immediately be reported to the USFWS East Texas Sub-office 415 South First Street, Suite 110, Lufkin, Texas 75901 (936/639.8549 or 8546)
9. If cavity trees are found, more intense surveying within 457 m (1500 ft) of each cavity tree is conducted to locate all cavity trees in the area.
10. Annual survey reports associated with RCWs will be directed to the East Texas Sub-office referenced in # 8 above.