

Woodpeckers

Owston's woodpecker / *Dendrocopos owstoni* / Osuton oakagera / オーストンオオアカゲラ

The size and plumage of the Owston's woodpecker resemble those of the white-backed woodpecker found throughout Japan: 25 to 30 centimeters long, with a red crown for the male, black for the female; a black stripe from beak to neck; and a black back and wings with white bands. The Owston's woodpecker is much darker on the breast and back, however, and the wings and tail are longer. This woodpecker lives alone or in pairs. It feeds at the trunks of living and decaying trees for insects, larvae, and seeds, and uses its long bill to dig holes for its nest. The female keeps the eggs warm until hatching, and the parents take turns bringing food to the chicks. Their characteristic drumming serves as communication between the adult pair while proclaiming their territory.

Japanese pygmy woodpecker / *Yungipicus kizuki* / Kogera / コゲラ

This is the smallest woodpecker in Japan, about the size of a sparrow, with a total length of 15 centimeters. Its crown is grayish brown, with white patches on the back of the neck, and its back is dark brown with white bands. The neck and breast are whitish and the tail is black. The habitat of the Japanese pygmy woodpecker covers a broad range of landscapes, from mountains to flatlands. It searches tree bark for the spiders, insects, and berries on which it feeds. The birds begin breeding in March, when their squeaky songs and short bursts of drumming signal mating activity and the establishment of territory.