

!!CAVITY TREES ARE REFUGES FOR WILDLIFE!!

For many people, a dead or dying, partly hollowed tree is hardly worth preserving. Yet to many birds and mammals, reptiles and amphibians, these “cavity” trees are vital for nesting, rearing young, roosting, feeding, storing food, escaping predators and hibernating.

What are cavity trees? A cavity tree is a dead or dying tree that has one or more holes on the trunk or main branches. Occasionally, cavities can be found in healthy trees. Cavities are either excavated by birds, or created by decay and broken branches.

The table below describes the wildlife species in the Maritime provinces that use cavity trees. Some of these species require large cavities, and therefore even larger trees, like the rare and beautiful Wood Duck, the insect-eating bats, and the endangered American Pine Marten. Other species, like the Black-capped Chickadee, and the Red-backed Vole, can make use of cavities in much smaller sized trees.

Minimum tree diameters for cavity-using wildlife species of the Maritimes

<8"

Black-capped chickadee*
Downy woodpecker*
Boreal chickadee*
Red-breasted nuthatch
Winter wren
Deer mouse
White-footed mouse
Red-backed vole

6-12"

Black-backed woodpecker*
Northern three-toed woodpecker*
Hairy woodpecker*
Yellow-bellied sapsucker*
House wren
White-breasted nuthatch
Brown creeper
Chimney swift
Great crested flycatcher
Tree swallow
Eastern bluebird
House sparrow
Starling
Southern flying squirrel
Northern flying squirrel
Ermine

12-18"

Northern flicker*
Boreal owl
American kestrel
Northern saw-whet owl
Purple martin
Northern long eared bat

>18"

Pileated woodpecker*
Wood duck
Common goldeneye
Hooded merganser
Common merganser
Barred owl
Silver-haired bat
Keen's myotis
Eastern pipistrelle
Small-footed bat
Red squirrel
Grey squirrel
Porcupine
American pine marten
Fisher
Long-tailed weasel

>24"

Little brown bat
Big brown bat
Red fox
Raccoon
Black bear

*Primary cavity excavators