The Woodpecker’s Amazing Tool

Depending on the species, woodpeckers have tongues that are up to **4 inches long** that are usually **barbed** at the tip. (If humans had a one that was similar in proportion, our tongues would be over 16 inches long!) They store their long tongues in their heads by wrapping them around their skulls like a tape measure. They use these long tongues to eat their **omnivorous** diets that include insects, spiders, nuts, fruit, and nectar.

Woodpeckers sometimes use their tongues like **spears** to pull insects from the holes they drill in trees. Other species will use them like a **rake** to drag their food out, or to scrape up fruit and nuts from their shells. Their tongues are also coated with **sticky spit** that helps them collect smaller foods, like ants.

Next time you see a Northern Flicker on the ground, take a close look to see if you can see it using its tongue to scoop up ants!
Dear Adults

Happy Birthday, Rookery!

Did you know that the Rookery Activity Book is now officially one year old? It was just over a year ago that Seattle Audubon officially launched our youth membership program. We’ve hosted several fun events, sent out four fun-filled activity books, and have added new members each week. And we’d love to know what you think! Please visit the Rookery page of the Seattle Audubon website to fill out a short 5-minute survey. The information will be used to improve the Rookery program for all our members in the future. Many thanks for your participation, and enjoy!

Mark your calendars for the following scheduled events:

- Holiday Crafts at the Nature Shop Open House: Saturday, Dec. 2nd, 11am-3pm at the Seattle Audubon Nature Shop
- Youth Christmas Bird Count: Saturday, December 16th, 9:30-12:30 at Discovery Park (Registration required, see Seattle Audubon website for more info.)
- Youth Class – The Science of Flying*: Uncover the mystery of bird flight! Monday, January 15th, 3-4pm, Seattle Audubon Nature Shop
- Family Duck Walk*: Thursday, February 22nd (That’s mid-winter break!) 10-11am at Green Lake. (@ the boathouse.)

We are looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

*Rookery members and families only, RSVP at the number below.

For more information, visit www.seattleaudubon.org or call: 206-523-4483

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Puzzles and Games

What makes a woodpecker’s tongue special? Unlock the answer by solving the secret code below!

20 8 5 25 1 18 5 19 15 12 15 14 7

20 8 5 25 23 18 1 16 1 18 15 21 14 4

20 8 5 9 18 19 11 21 12 12 19

**KEY:**

A - 1  N - 14
B - 2  O - 15
C - 3  P - 16
D - 4  Q - 17
E - 5  R - 18
F - 6  S - 19
G - 7  T - 20
H - 8  U - 21
I - 9  V - 22
J - 10  W - 23
K - 11  X - 24
L - 12  Y - 25
M - 13  Z - 26

Read the back cover for more cool woodpecker tongue facts!
**Puzzles and Games**

Connect the dots to reveal the cover bird, then color it to match or get creative!

**Winter Birding Bingo**

Take a walk outside! How many of these things can you spot in your neighborhood?

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**Other interesting things I saw today:**

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What does it mean to be endangered?

When an animal or plant is in danger of disappearing from the earth forever, it is considered “threatened” or “endangered.”

What has caused the Marbled Murrelet to become endangered?

The marbled murrelet has struggled because of lack of nesting habitat due to logging and forest fragmentation. This has led to fewer large trees for nesting, and increased numbers of Steller’s Jays, which are predators to marbled murrelet eggs and chicks.

What can I do to help the Marbled Murrelet?

• When you go hiking or camping in old growth forests, leave no trace – clean up all your food and trash!
• Write a letter to your local representative or the Commissioner of Public Lands to tell them you support protecting the marbled murrelet. For more info, and to learn more about the Marbled Murrelet, visit www.seattleaudubon.org.
**Marbled Murrelet**

**Scientific Name**  
*Brachyramphus marmoratus*

**General Info**  
Slightly smaller than a football, they are black and white during the non-breeding season, then switch to a mottled brown during nesting season. Due to their round body shape and small size, they are often called a “potato with wings.”

**Habitat and Diet**  
Marbled murrelets are small alcids that spend most of their lives in calm coastal waters off the west coast, and nest in old growth trees up to 45 miles away from shore. They feed on small schooling fish and other small sea creatures.

**Nesting**  
Due to their unusual nesting behaviors, the mystery of how they reproduced wasn’t solved until someone discovered a marbled murrelet nest in 1974 while climbing an old growth tree. Females lay one egg in a mossy patch on a large branch high up in a tree. The male and female take turns incubating and flying to the water to bring back small fish for the chick to eat. When ready, the chick flies to the ocean all by itself!

**Behavior**  
Marbled Murrelets often mate for life and are frequently seen feeding in pairs or by themselves.

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**Tweety Tales**

**My Birding Adventure**

There is no better way to spend a day than going on a bird walk. I pulled on my jacket and grabbed a/an__________ to take a winter stroll down__________. The weather was (3)__________, and I was on a mission to find a (4)__________.

Up in a tall evergreen tree I found a/an (5)__________. I almost missed it, but spotted it (6)__________ around at the last minute. As I kept walking, I heard a (7)__________ noise. I wasn’t sure where it was coming from at first, but my bird watching buddy, (8)__________ helped me find it. I watched the (9)__________ bird in the (10)__________ from afar before continuing on my (11)__________ bird walk. In the street there was a crow that’s call sounded like a (12)__________.

After walking for (13)__________ minutes, my (14)__________ was/were so tired. I decided to call it quits and (15)__________ all the way back home so I could eat (16)__________, and write about today’s (17)__________ bird walk.
MARBLED MURRELET