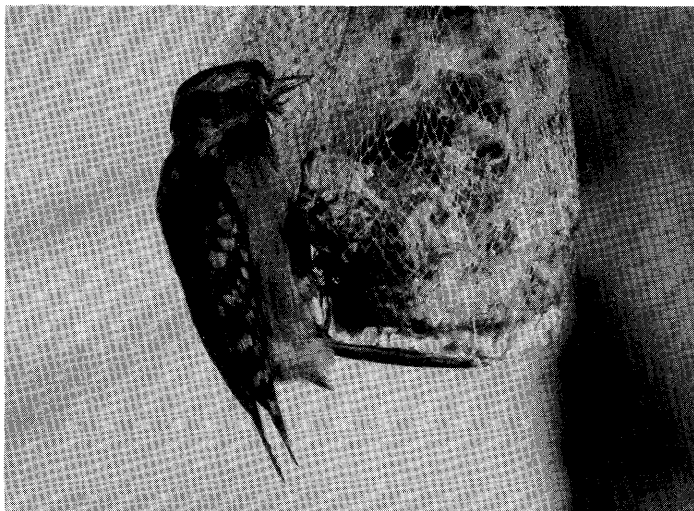


NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

A Melanistic Downy Woodpecker. A dark-appearing Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) came to my suet feeder in early March 1983. At first it was difficult to observe as the other Downies would drive it away almost as soon as it would come in to feed. Gradually the normal Downies became more tolerant. Meanwhile the dark individual was likely to feed at odd times, such as at dusk or during a rain or snowstorm when the other half dozen Downies were absent.



Melanistic Downy Woodpecker at Trumansburg, NY
Louise B. Proskine *May 1983*

Upon close observation, this darker bird was seen to have the usual white patterns of a normal Downy, except that the white was replaced by varying degrees of gray in the wing pattern and on the neck, with medium gray on the back and charcoal on much of the breast and side of the head. The dark whiskers seem very prominent. The head always appeared to me to be flatter than the other Downies but that may be an illusion due to the lack of contrasting black and white stripes on the head of the normal bird. The bird behaved like the other Downies except for its wariness of them. It had no red on the back of the head, nor did it appear with a mate. I have heard no call or drumming.

As of 17 May, this bird still appears at my feeder every two or three days. As it has become better tolerated by the other birds, it has been possible to get some pictures. The bird would appear to be a melanistic Downy Woodpecker.

The bird was also observed by Marie King of Ellis Hollow Creek Road, Ithaca, NY on 18 March.

Louise B. Proskine, Tompkins County, Trumansburg, New York.