

## Station 7: Dead Wood Benefits + Birdsong

This dead tree has many visible holes in its bark and wood. This is the work of wood boring insects which have infested the tree and begun the process of decomposition. This often happens after the dead tree has fallen; however, certain tree species are prone to infestation by specialist insects while standing, such as ash trees which are killed by the emerald ash borer. Dead trees, whether still standing, decomposing on the ground, or floating in the pond, are an essential part of the woodland ecosystem. They provide food for insects, and consequently also food for insect-eating birds and critters. Abandoned woodpecker cavities become nests for snakes, songbirds, squirrels, ducks and owls; mosses, lichens and fungi climb over, or in the absence of, bark. On the ground, worms, salamanders, bees and other insects make homes in the soft wood. In the water, turtles bask on sunny logs, flycatchers survey from above, and fish hide from herons underneath.

This is also a wonderful place to pause and listen to the birdsong from the canopy above. Several local species say their names in their song; the chickadee sings “chicka-dee-dee-dee” and the phoebe sings “phee-ee-bee”.

