

# BOREAL BITS

## PHIL BURKE



### A HOLIDAY NATURE QUIZ

As the old year disappears like morning mist on a winter river, and the year sweeps in like an eagle over a heron colony, let us once again test ourselves with a little nature trivia. This test is best done in pairs with a reward for she or he who gains the best score.

1. Henry David Thoreau is often quoted in this and other nature columns. What is his claim to fame that makes his comments so sought after?
2. Who runs the local wildlife rehabilitation centre?
3. Define dew point.
4. You are in the bush, far away from any other human and suddenly you hear a blood-curdling scream. What animal most likely made it and why?
5. Once again you are in a remote location at night and you hear a sound that immediately makes you think of a warning beeper on a large truck that is backing up. What creature most likely made the sound?

6. You see what looks like a humming bird buzzing your flowers except it is 10:30 at night. You know it can't be a hummer so what is it?
7. Why are 'lady bugs' supposed to be beneficial?
8. I am the official bird of the Yukon, I reach sexual maturity at the age of 3 or 4 years, and I have lived up to 29 years in captivity. What bird am I?
9. I am the smallest woodpecker you will find in the north woods. What am I?
10. Two woodpeckers migrate each fall. What species do this?
11. What three woodpeckers remain to tough out the winter?
12. Where do woodpeckers spend the night?
13. Do woodpeckers ever eat seeds?
14. Goldenrod often is confused with ragweed, the vector of hay fever. But the two plants have entirely different pollen structures. What is the difference?



*(Juvenile eaglet – Photo by PB)*

15. Pickerel spawn when the water temperature reaches a certain level in spring. What is that level?
16. It's a marvellous predator and has been known to eat all kinds of fish, deer, moose, ducks, geese and many other woodland creatures. What is it?
17. You know what a carnivore is, and what an herbivore is, but what is a frugivore?
18. I am an aspen tree and my leaves shake or quiver in the slightest breeze. What am I?
19. What common Lake of the Woods raptor reaches breeding maturity after 4 or 5 years and how is this manifested?

20. What arboreal mammal tunnels through deep snow?

**Answers:**

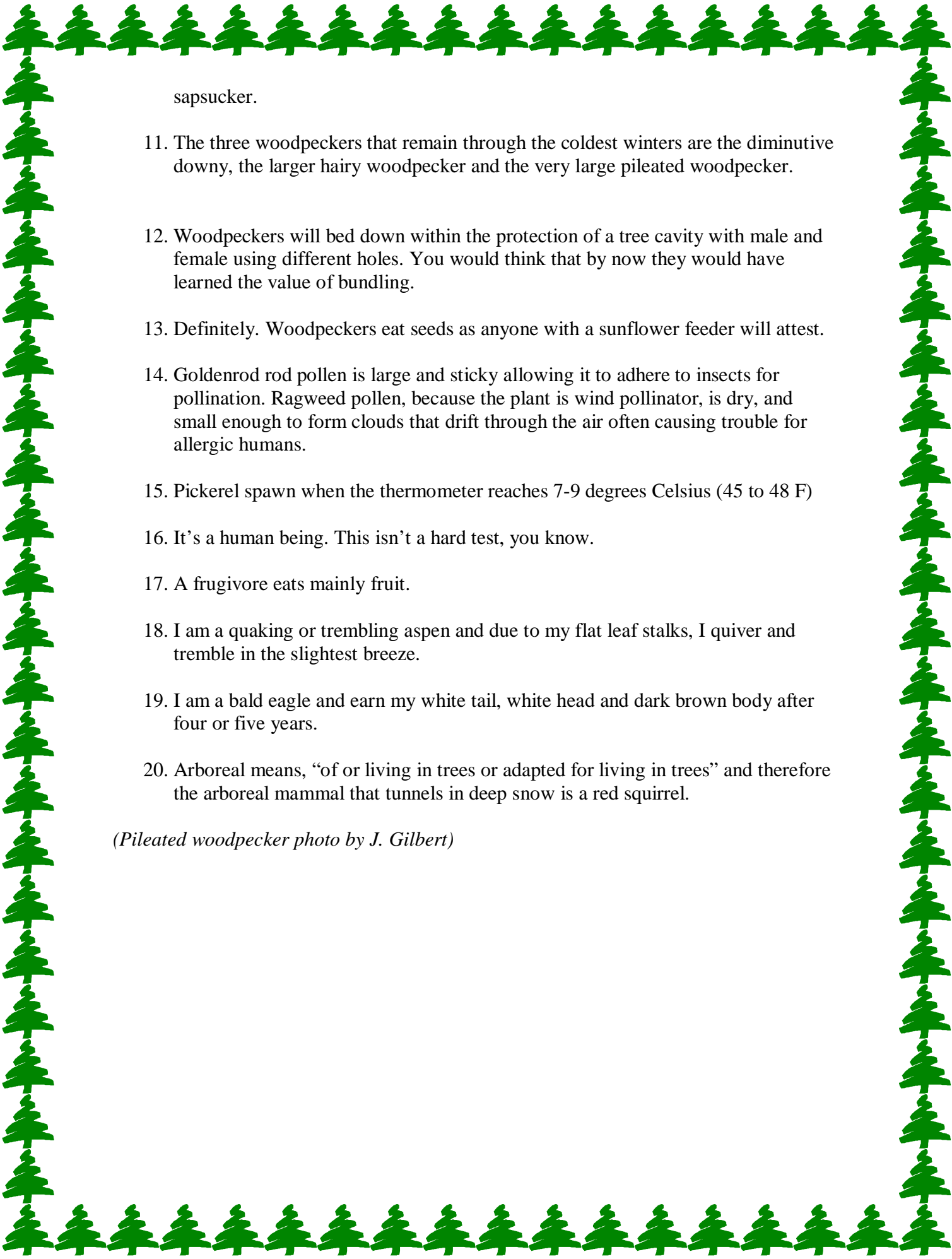
1. Thoreau, an American, went 'back to the earth' in 1854 by building a mean little cabin and spending an entire year there. This philosopher naturalist kept copious notes of his experiences that he turned into a book entitled "Walden; or A life in the Woods."
2. Lillian Anderson operates Iggy's Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre from her home with the help of her husband, Bruce Ranta. The centre is largely supported by donations from the public.
3. Dew point is the temperature at which water vapour condenses into a liquid. Usually the higher the temperature, the higher the dew point.
4. Odds are that a lynx, on the prowl for a mate made the sound and if this were so, the time of year would be March-April.
5. The tiny saw-whet owl does a beautiful imitation of a truck in reverse gear.
6. The hawk moth, a very large insect, hovers around flowers much as a hummingbird would do. They are active in daylight and darkness.
7. "Lady bug" beetles have a voracious appetite for aphids, as do their larval young.



In some area it is possible to buy these insects by the pound from garden centres.

8. Officially known as *Corvus corax*; I am a raven.
9. The downy woodpecker is our smallest woodpecker.
10. The two species of woodpecker that migrate are the flicker and the





sapsucker.

11. The three woodpeckers that remain through the coldest winters are the diminutive downy, the larger hairy woodpecker and the very large pileated woodpecker.
12. Woodpeckers will bed down within the protection of a tree cavity with male and female using different holes. You would think that by now they would have learned the value of bundling.
13. Definitely. Woodpeckers eat seeds as anyone with a sunflower feeder will attest.
14. Goldenrod rod pollen is large and sticky allowing it to adhere to insects for pollination. Ragweed pollen, because the plant is wind pollinator, is dry, and small enough to form clouds that drift through the air often causing trouble for allergic humans.
15. Pickerel spawn when the thermometer reaches 7-9 degrees Celsius (45 to 48 F)
16. It's a human being. This isn't a hard test, you know.
17. A frugivore eats mainly fruit.
18. I am a quaking or trembling aspen and due to my flat leaf stalks, I quiver and tremble in the slightest breeze.
19. I am a bald eagle and earn my white tail, white head and dark brown body after four or five years.
20. Arboreal means, "of or living in trees or adapted for living in trees" and therefore the arboreal mammal that tunnels in deep snow is a red squirrel.

*(Pileated woodpecker photo by J. Gilbert)*