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## Front Cover: **SYRIAN WOODPECKER** (*Dendrocopos syriacus*)

The **Syrian Woodpecker** (*Dendrocopos syriacus*) is a member of the woodpecker family, the Picidae. The woodpecker is a resident breeding bird from southeastern Europe east to Iran. The woodpecker is 23 cm long. The upper parts of the male are glossy black, with a crimson spot on the nape and white on the forehead, sides of the face and neck. On the shoulder is a large white patch and the flight feathers are black. The female is distinguished from the male having no crimson on the nape, and in the young this nape spot is absent. When hidden by the foliage, the Syrian woodpecker's presence is often advertised by the mechanical drumming, a vibrating rattle, produced by the rapidly repeated blows of its strong bill upon a trunk or branch. The Syrian woodpecker's food mainly consists of insects. The neat, round 5 cm diameter nesting hole, is bored in soft or decaying wood horizontally for a few inches, then perpendicularly down. At the bottom of the shaft, a small chamber is dug. The young, when the parents are feeding them, cluster at the mouth of the hole and keep a continuous chatter, but when alarmed slip back into the hole.