



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Fall 2022

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 16 No. 4

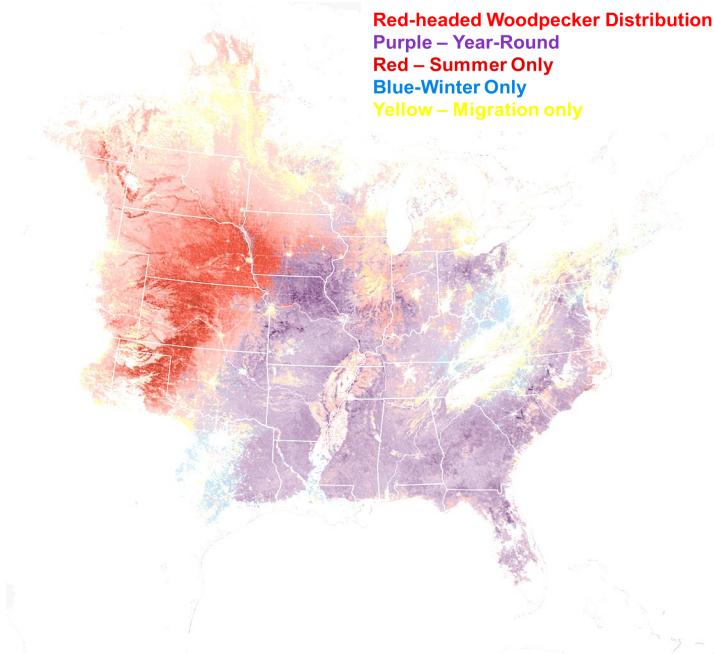
RHWO NEWS

Why Red-headed Woodpeckers Migrate

All this past summer, Siah St. Clair and I have been looking at the northern pin oaks at Cedar Creek to see how the acorns were developing. To our dismay, we could not find any acorns. When Jerry Bahls, Siah, and I did the annual northern pin oak acorn survey in August, we found an average of only three acorns per tree. This confirmed our suspicion that there would not be enough acorns for any Red-headed Woodpeckers to overwinter at Cedar Creek this year. We saw the last of the birds on September 15. All are long gone now, hopefully to where they have been able to store sufficient hard mast to last the winter.

Continued on page 3, Minnesota

Red-headed Woodpecker Distribution
Purple – Year-Round
Red – Summer Only
Blue – Winter Only
Yellow – Migration only



Attention!!!

The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) April 2023 program (April 11 at 7:00 pm) will feature Dr. Elena West who will speak on "Bioacoustics for Broad-Scale Species Monitoring and Conservation". You must advance register for the program. Go to https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MJQzwt2wRDCXpi7byJ4tEw to register. Look for a replay on the website if you can't attend. Check the ACM website for all programs and get on their list.

A Note from the Chair

Fall 2022

Greetings to all on a very pleasant fall day outside as I am writing this short message. As we were finishing up this season's Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) field research work a few days ago, I was reflecting on what an excellent year it has been for accomplishments and what great promise and challenges the upcoming season holds.

In 2022 the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project (RhWR) reached its budget goals thanks to all the generous donations and memberships. Dr. Elena West's research activities included placing Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) throughout Minnesota to record the location of RHWOs in the state. This will be done again next summer to gather more data. Over 30 RHWO nests were documented at Cedar Creek ESR (CCESR) in East Bethel, with information on nesting success collected. Eight RHWO nest cameras at CCESR created 116,693 new pictures and videos of activities at the nest cavities. Lots of exciting new behaviors were recorded. The Education and Habitat team worked with multiple habitat partners about creating and maintaining habitat for RHWOs.

The 2023 season of activities is on the horizon. Planning and budget goals are in place to assist more learning and research and for distributing to the public what has been learned over the last few years. A new membership renewal effort will be out in a few weeks. Please be generous with your gifts. The funds the RhWR provides are helping to learn completely new information about RHWOs and how to help restore their population.

Siah St. Clair, Steering Committee Chair

RhWR Volunteer Opportunities

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has a need for many volunteers now and through 2023. Here is a list and a very brief description of the duties -

- Communications Representative on Steering Committee - Oversee website, newsletter and Facebook™ page and be communications advocate
- Newsletter Writers - Draft articles of interest to readers
- Lead Citizen Science Projects - Recruit and organize volunteers for RhWR citizen science projects
- Classify RhWR videos at <https://z.umn.edu/woodpeckercams>

Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities or to ask questions. Send this info to your friends and bird lovers.

Note From the Editor

You will note that the “RhWR Volunteer Opportunities” is on the front page. The intent is to get some serious scrutiny. The volunteers that arrange and chair the meetings, raise the funds for projects, publish “The REDHEAD”, and attend planning meetings are nearly the same six or seven individuals that did it ten years ago. You can start helping by simply attending our virtual Steering Committee meetings. You can be admitted to the Zoom meeting simply by sending an email to Siah St. Clair a few of days before our regularly scheduled meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of every other month. Siah will confirm the date and will put you on the list of the meeting announcement that contains the date and time and the Zoom address.

This fall the woodpeckers have left Cedar Creek. This and other habits of the Red-heads are being carefully studied and recorded by the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR). Your help has been essential to our research, habitat conservation and education work.

Soon you'll get an update on RhWR accomplishments and next year's goals. We hope you read it and then continue your generous support. Please renew your annual dues, and better consider a larger donation. The basic dues remain \$20, but an additional \$30, \$50 or \$100 will help us accomplish our 2023 project goals.

Make your donation by using the form you'll find in our forthcoming mailing. Or you can make an electronic donation to the RhWR by going to <http://www.minneapolisaudubon.org/rhwo2>.

Sometime in the near future funds raised will be used to pay for printing and distribution of the Best Management Practices (BMP) for managing Red-headed Woodpeckers. Since much of the work was done on the University of Minnesota property and since Dr. Elena West, a University employee, is the primary author, the University would like to have the BMPs be vetted through the peer review process. So there will be some delay in issuing them while they go through the process. We hope this will only be a short delay.

Have a good Holiday Season!!

Jerry Bahls, Editor

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Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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Dr. West Research Blog Website www.rhworesearch.org

Membership Dues

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all its operating revenues from membership dues.

- 1) Membership is \$20.00 (\$50 is preferred)/calendar year.
- 2) The newsletter is published for members only.

Send your membership application and renewal to -
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
RhWR
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801

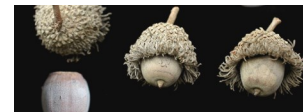
Or make an electronic donation to the RhWR by going to <http://www.minneapolisaudubon.org/rhwo2>.

Thank you for your continued support.

CCESR Oaks

There are primarily two species of oaks in Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) - Burr Oak and Northern Pin Oak.

Burr Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) - The Burr Oak is a member of the White Oak family. It is a large deciduous tree growing up to 30 meters (98 feet) and is one of the most massive oaks with a trunk diameter of up to 3 m (10 ft).



Northern Pin Oak (*Quercus ellipsoidalis*) - The northern pin oak is a member of the Red Oak family. It is a medium-sized deciduous tree growing to 20 meters (66 feet) tall with an open, rounded crown. It most commonly occurs on dry, sandy soils.

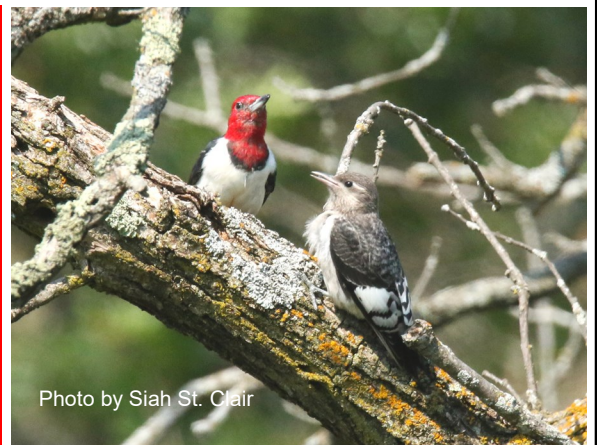


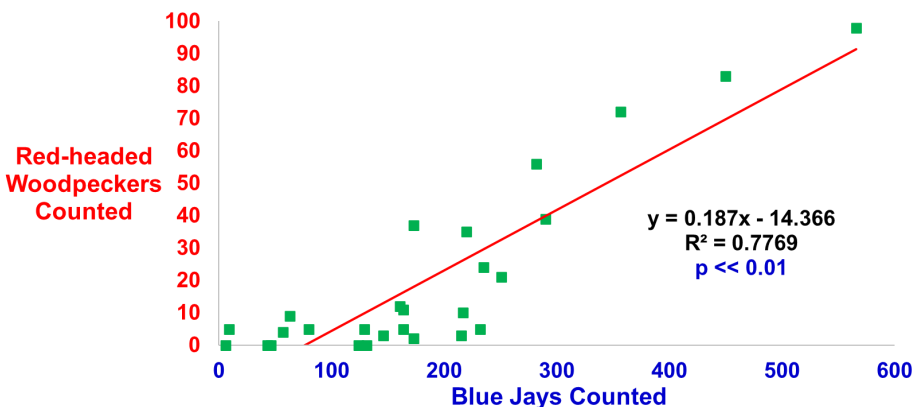
Photo by Siah St. Clair

In the northern and western portions of their range, Red-headed Woodpeckers are classified as facultative migrants. This is because in some winters all the birds migrate, in other winters, some remain on the breeding grounds and some migrate elsewhere, and in still other winters, all or nearly all birds remain on the breeding grounds. In the southern portions of their range, it appears that few if any birds migrate. Because many of the woodpeckers at Cedar Creek are banded, we know that the same bird will migrate in some years and remain for the winter in other years. Comparing Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers, the birds appear to withdraw from the western and northern parts of their breeding range in some years. (See map.)

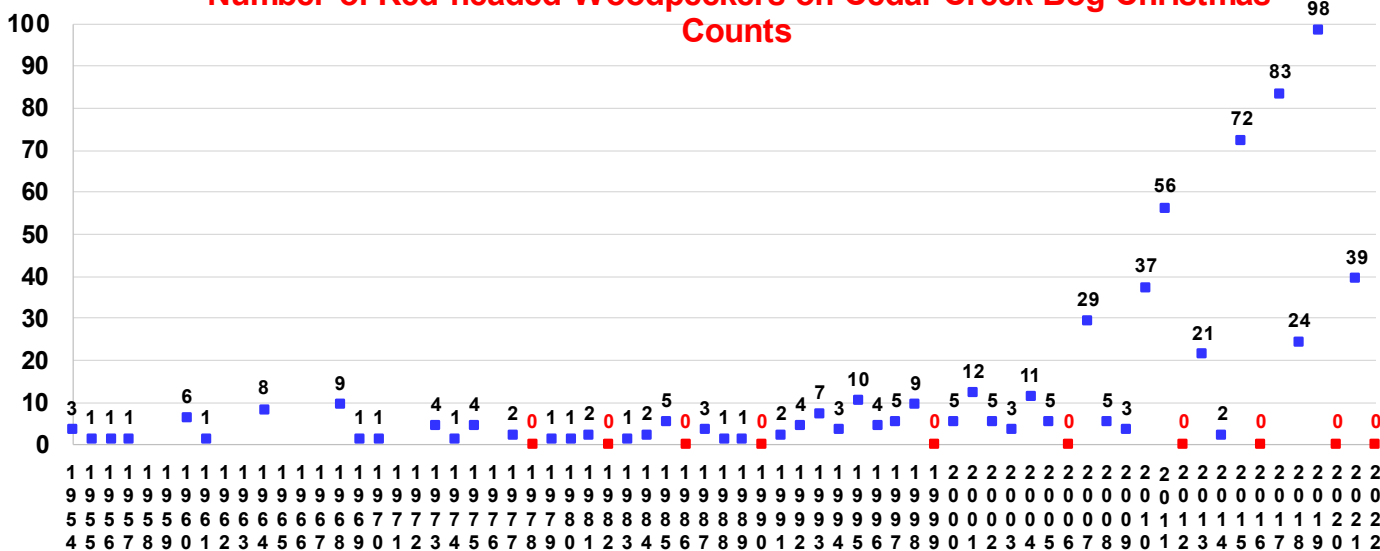
Most species of birds that breed in Minnesota are migratory. With the snow, cold, and ice, there just is not enough food for the many birds such as flycatchers, warblers, swallows, and orioles that breed but do not spend the winter here. These birds are obligatory migrants here. Birds such as Cedar Waxwings that shift their diet from flying insects in the warm months to fruit and can winter here.

Blue Jays are familiar permanent residents here and throughout their range. However, jays are commonly seen undertaking what appear to be migratory movements. Curiously, the numbers of Blue Jays and Red-headed Woodpeckers counted on the Cedar Creek Bog Christmas Count are highly correlated. (See graph) This suggests some common factor, possibly acorn availability.

Relation between Red-headed Woodpeckers and Blue Jays on the Cedar Creek Bog Christmas Count



Number of Red-headed Woodpeckers on Cedar Creek Bog Christmas Counts



Migratory behavior may change. We are seeing far more American Robins in the Twin Cities area in recent winters than forty years ago, but far fewer Evening Grosbeaks. With the warmer winters, some robins and grosbeaks are wintering farther north.

In years with poor acorn crops, our Red-headed Woodpeckers migrate, as presumably they always have. However, in recent years with good acorn crops, more of the woodpeckers have been wintering at Cedar Creek than have ever been found to do so. (See chart) Note that all of the highest counts have been in the last 15 years.

Photo by Siah St. Clair



Next RhWR Steering Committee

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The next *virtual* meeting will be on Nov. 16, 2022 at 7:00 pm. If you would like to participate, please contact Siah St. Clair (stclairs@comcast.net) to be added to the call list. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage friends to attend also.

Important Dates

Steering Committee Meeting	Nov 16, 2022
ACM Board Meeting	Nov 28, 2022
Christmas Bird Count	Dec 17, 2022

ALL meetings are *virtual* until further notice.

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis MN 55403-0801

Save that Snag!

Place
Stamp
Here

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program Membership Application

I'd like to join! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) at the rate of \$20/year (\$50 is suggested rate)! Please send my membership information to the address at right.

I'd like to renew! Renew my RhWR membership for \$20/year (\$50 is suggested rate).

Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$20, \$50 suggested) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$20) at the rate of \$40/year. Please send my membership information to the address at right.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

Send this application and make check payable to:

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - RhWR
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801