



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program

Spring 2007

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 1 No. 2

A Note from the Editor

In the last couple of months the RhWRP has established a committee to guide us in our program. Interest has been phenomenal. We have recorded members from all over Minnesota and as far afield as Florida and Nebraska. At this time we have 55 members and the membership applications keep coming in.

Our initial research has had some surprises and disappointments. We have also found out that much more needs to be learned about the red-headed woodpecker (RhWP).

The most common comment we have received from our members after being asked if they have RhWPs in their area is "I used to have them here but have not seen one in a couple of years." Consequently, one of our endeavors is to locate sites where there are known sites where they are still nesting. If you know of a nest site, please contact me with the location so that we can establish a database of known locations for future study by our members.

In spite of the numerous articles that mention recommended nestbox sizes and placement heights and commercial websites that sell boxes for RhWPs, we have not located anyone who has actually had a nesting pair of RhWPs in their nestbox. We have also had communications from experts who have stated emphatically that they do not use man-made nestboxes. Consequently, our approach to this has shifted from requesting nestbox construction of a standard size and shape to one that uses shapes and surfaces that mimic natural cavities. While we don't want to ignore the experts comments, we want to exhaust the possibilities first. Besides you can't prove a negative and they do nest in cavities. If you have had a RhWP nest in a man-made box, please send us the information and any documentation that you can provide. A photo would be ideal!

Please send any messages to us at jobaud@comcast.net (please note this is an address change from the last newsletter) or call me at 763 572-2333.

Interim Editor—Jerry Bahls

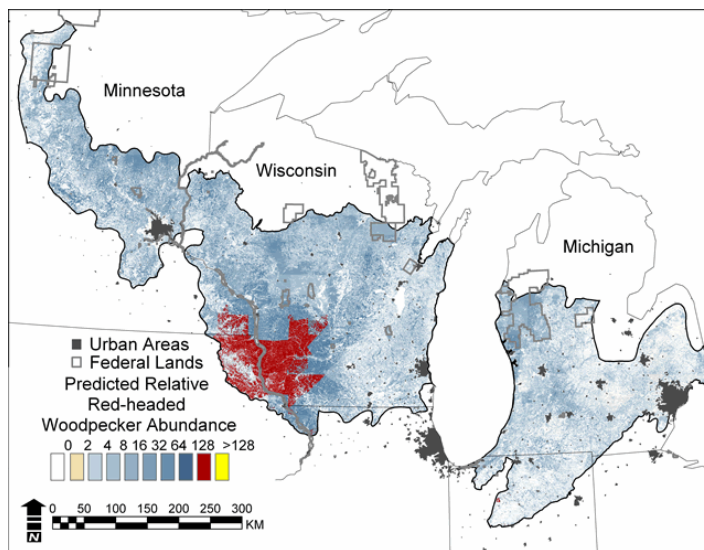
The RhWRP is interested in anyone with engineering and fabrication skills that would be interested in designing nestbox poles that can be inexpensively constructed that will hang a nestbox about 20 feet high. Please contact Jerry Bahls at 763 572-2333 or jobaud@comcast.net.

Habitat Information

Threats

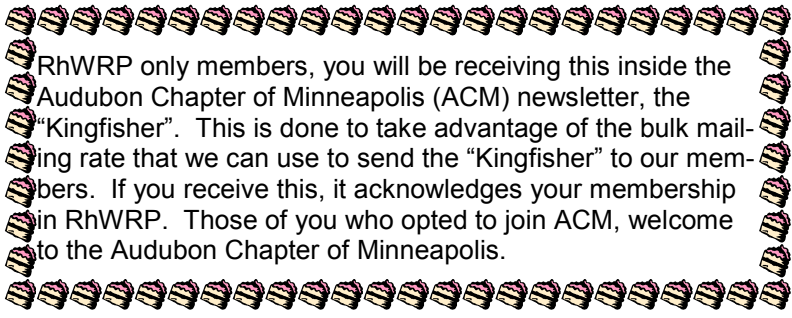
At one time the Red-headed Woodpecker was targeted by sportsmen because of its brilliant red plumage, as an agricultural pest, and for damage to telephone poles. Its population has decreased as a result of food source losses, as evidenced by population declines in association with the decline of beech trees and the disappearance of Rocky Mountain grasshoppers. Collisions with automobiles were particularly common in the mid-1900s and the species is considered a rare victim of tower collisions. Nest failure occurs when nests are excavated in telephone poles recently (within 3-4 years) treated with creosote. Competition for nesting sites with European Starlings was thought to decrease reproductive success, but recent studies show that this may not be the case. The mere fact that starlings nest earlier than this woodpecker suggests that Red-heads may not be vulnerable to starling invasion. Habitat has been degraded by the harvesting of snags, clearcuts, agricultural development, channeling of rivers, regeneration of eastern forests, fire suppression, monoculture crops, and the loss of small orchards.

Copyright 2007 by National Audubon Society, Inc.



Predicted Red-headed Woodpecker Abundance Map

This map indicates predicted relative species abundance. The predicted count of any cell in the map represents the expected count if a Breeding Bird Survey route were centered on that cell. Each map shows urban areas and federal lands for reference. This is draft result under scientific review. (U.S. Geological Survey, April 27, 2006)



RhWRP only members, you will be receiving this inside the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) newsletter, the "Kingfisher". This is done to take advantage of the bulk mailing rate that we can use to send the "Kingfisher" to our members. If you receive this, it acknowledges your membership in RhWRP. Those of you who opted to join ACM, welcome to the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

Reproduction

Red-headed woodpeckers are thought to be monogamous, though polygamy may occur. There is little information available about formation or duration of pair bonds in this species, though some pairs are known to have mated together over several seasons.

The nest sites range from natural holes, to under roofs of buildings, to fence posts, or utility poles. Preferred nest sites are in dead trees. Both the male and female excavate the nest, though the male does most of the drilling. The cavity is 20 to 60 cm deep and approximately 4 to 5 cm in diameter. ([Smith, Withgott, and Rodewald, 2000](#))

Axley, E. 2002. "Melanerpes erythrocephalus" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed April 11, 2007 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Melanerpes_erythrocephalus.html.



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program at the rate of \$5/year! Please send my membership information to the address below.

Yes, I'd like to join! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis at the rate of \$13/year. Please send my membership information and *Kingfisher* to the address below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

Send this application and make check payable to:
 Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
 RhWRP
 PO Box 3801
 Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801

Nesting Information

The eggs are laid between April and July, with clutch sizes of 3 to 10 eggs, most commonly 5 eggs. Incubation begins after the last egg is laid, and lasts 12 to 14 days. Both parents incubate, with males incubating at night. The chicks are altricial when they hatch; they are naked and their eyes don't open for 12 to 13 days. The young are fed and brooded by both parents and leave the nest at 24 to 31 days old. The chicks are strong fliers and able to catch their own food soon after fledging. Chicks that remain near the nest after several weeks are chased away by the parents. The chicks will be able to breed the next summer.

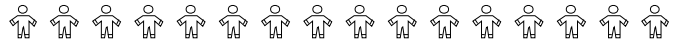
Red-headed woodpeckers have one or two broods a year. Pairs may start a second nesting attempt while still feeding the first brood. Though the second brood can be raised in the same nest, a new nest cavity is usually found. (Smith, Withgott, and Rodewald, 2000)

Axley, E. 2002. "Melanerpes erythrocephalus" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed April 11, 2007 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Melanerpes_erythrocephalus.html.

Other Recovery Efforts

The Red-headed Woodpecker is listed as a priority species in Partners in Flight's Bird Conservation Plan for the Upper Great Lakes Plain (<http://www.partnersinflight.org>). One of the objectives of this plan is to increase Red-headed Woodpeckers by 3% per year in USFWS Region 3 from 1980-2010 as measured by the Breeding Bird Survey.

Copyright 2007 by National Audubon Society, Inc.



RhWRP Committee Members

Please contact Jerry Bahls to help get this program established. Much needs to be done to be ready for the coming nesting season. We meet monthly. Call for information!!

RhWRP Contact Information

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

President John Arthur 952 931-0819
 Conservation Chair Jerry Bahls 763 572-2333
 Website www.geocities.com/audubon.geo

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program

Interim Chair Jerry Bahls jobaud@comcast.net
 Interim Editor Jerry Bahls jobaud@comcast.net