

## Note From the Editor

This issue's topic is "Do RHWOs alter their behavior after human exposure?" After spending some time researching the subject, I could not find anything that related to the red-headed woodpecker. There are some studies that involve other birds, usually those that are on the endangered species list, for example, the red-cockaded woodpecker. There were a few articles that looked at birds in an urban environment and these seem relevant to the topic. So I've included a short article on it.

Nearly all of this issue is devoted to the tremendous success our banding team is having at Cedar Creek. I've included many pictures, because they show the details of the operation. We all need to thank the team for their effort and perseverance.

An interesting thing was discovered when I checked how many RHWOs were banded over the last 50 years as reported by the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. The most that were banded was in 1960 when 24 were banded. In the last 10 years, only 11 were banded (6 in 2009). Our team has banded 27 and we're still banding.

Finally I've included information about joining or renewing a Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) membership. Because of the phenomenal success we're having with the banding our expenses are much higher than we anticipated and hope that we will have more join or renew their memberships. This is our primary source of income.

Jerry Bahls, Editor

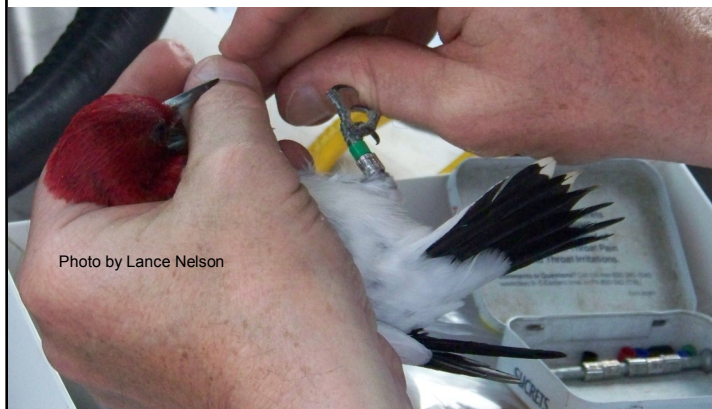


Photo by Lance Nelson

## RhWR Contact Information

### Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

President Jim Egge aubullet2@yahoo.com 612 827-7629  
Website www.AudubonChapterofMinneapolis.org

### Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Chair Chet Meyers chetmeyers@visi.com 612 374-5581  
Treasurer Jerry Bahls rhwracm@comcast.net 763 572-2333  
Recorder <open>  
Editor Jerry Bahls rhwracm@comcast.net 763 572-2333  
Website www.RedheadRecovery.org or http://rhwr.moum.org

## Membership Dues

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all of its revenue from its membership dues. The RhWR dues for new members are \$10/yr. New members will receive a packet, which will include the new RhWR button and sew-on patch as well as the latest "The REDHEAD". Our membership year is July 1 - June 30 (all memberships will expire on June 30 of the year the membership was established). Renewals will remain at \$5/year and will expire on June 30 of the period of renewal. A Lifetime Membership will be awarded for any donation of \$500 or more.

New memberships and renewals can be made by sending your name, address and e-mail address or fill in the membership application form on the last page of this newsletter to the address below. Please make check payable to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis RhWR.

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

Thank you for your continued support.

## Urban Bird Behavior

The measurement of stress hormones is becoming an effective method of determining the physiological impacts of human activity on birds. In Amanda L. Malueg's Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University MS Thesis "Stress in the Red-cockaded Woodpecker: Hormonal Mechanisms of Reproductive Suppression in Helper Males and Impacts of Military Training Activities", it was discovered that by comparing corticosterone levels in two different clusters of male endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers exposed to different training regimes that the cluster exposed to unrestricted training had lower baseline corticosterone. This suggests that these males are habituated to the chronic disturbance. This finding extrapolated to all extensive human interactions suggests that birds constantly surrounded by humans have lower stress levels than birds that have little human contact.



Photo by Lance Nelson

New Feathers

(Continued from page 1 Banding Success)

## Banding

the Federal level as a result of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and its amendments. In order to capture, possess, or mark a migratory bird one must have a permit. In the United States, permitting is a shared responsibility of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the USGS. The FWS administers, among others, incidental take, salvage, scientific collecting permits and the USGS administers banding and marking permits."<sup>1</sup>

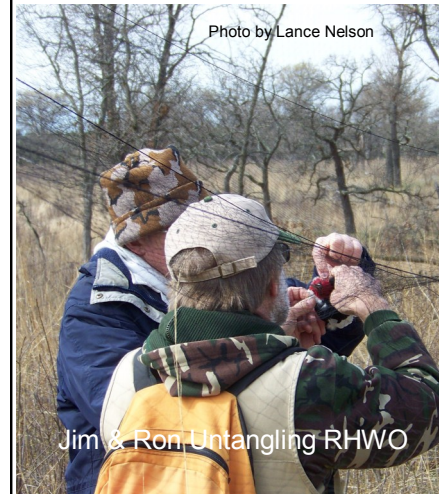


Photo by Lance Nelson

Jim & Ron Untangling RHW



Photo by Lance Nelson

Say aahhhh.  
Measuring tongue

The team is using two techniques to capture the birds. They are using baited Potter Traps and Mist Nets. Ron Refsnider has built several mock Potter Traps as well as the Potter's traps being used. The mock traps, which allow the bird to easily exit after feeding, are placed on feeding platforms about a week before the planned banding date to get the target birds accustomed to going under wire mesh to get food items. It is baited with peanuts or other nuts. Lance says they really like macadamia nuts. If there is a choice, they always take the macadamia nut first. On banding day the mock trap is replaced with a baited Potter Trap. As of May 5th, the team has caught nine using the Potter Trap, including Ari's "Eve".

The mist net is erected atop with 7-foot extensions to get it higher into the RHW's flight pattern. The net itself is 10 foot high and 40 foot long. It is placed in RHW flight avenues near their nesting or roosting cavities. A "boom box" is used to play a RHW call and drumming directly beneath the center of the net to attract the birds to the vicinity. Experience has allowed better placement of the nets which has given increased success. Seven birds were captured during the last banding session for a total of 26 captured in the mist net. This has been a learning experience for the team. Lance Nelson says cloudy days are more successful than clear days, probably because the net is more visible to the RHW in bright sunlight. Placing the net near low perch trees also seems important in successful capture.

Capture data are collected on the bird such as weight, wing and tail length, eye color and plumage notes. In addition, the team is plucking five breast feathers that are sent to Avian Biotech International in Tallahassee, Florida to sex the bird, using DNA. They are also measuring the length of the stiff tip of each bird's tongue, because in some species of woodpeckers the females have shorter tongue tips. Of the 23 birds for which there is both tongue and sex data to date, only 5 are females (one female's tongue was tipless). Two short-tipped birds could not be sexed.

(Continued on page 4 Color Bands)



Photo by Ron Refsnider

Mock Potter Trap



Photo by Ron Refsnider

Potter Trap



Photo by Ron Refsnider

Let me out of here!!



Photo by Ron Refsnider

Deployed mist net



Photo by Lance Nelson

Nice Wing

(Continued from page 3 Banding )

**Color Bands**

Some individuals do a lot of squawking while being held.

Before release each bird is banded with a Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) numbered aluminum band, which can go on either leg. They are also banded with three colored plastic bands (yellow, green, blue, red, black, and orange) as authorized by the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL). By using these bands, an observer with binoculars can positively identify an individual bird from the position and colors of the four bands on their legs. This ability to recognize individual birds for the first time will allow behavioral and demographic studies of RHWO at Cedar Creek.

Jim expects to band all spring and possibly through the summer and definitely again in the fall.

1. <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/gswwhy.cfm>

Jerry Bahls

**Summer Issue Feature Topic**

The Summer issue's topic will be "What is a savanna?" Send your observations and references to Jerry Bahls (rhwracm@comcast.net) by July 15th. This will be the last announced topic. The hope was that members would respond, but you haven't. Also send any future topics to be featured in the newsletter.

**Next RhWR Meetings**

The RhWR usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7:00 pm at the Lund's Store 1 block west of 50th & France in Edina. However, the next meeting will be **May 12th** at Cedar Creek at 9:00 am. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage your friends to attend also. Check our website (www.RedheadRecovery.org) for current information.

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

**Save that Snag!**

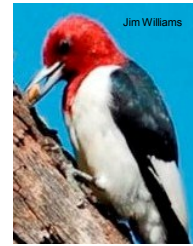
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Here

**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 \$10/year! Please send my membership information to the address below.
- I'd like to renew!* Renew my RhWR membership for \$5/year.
- Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also!* Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$10) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$12) at the rate of \$22/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  
RhWR  
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Spring 2012

# The REDHEAD

*Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery*



A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 6 No. 2

**RHWO NEWS**

**A Note from the Chair**

**Banding Success!**

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery is sponsoring a program to band red-headed woodpeckers (RHWO) at the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. A team of experienced bird banders consisting of Jim Howitz (Lead Bander and Permit holder), Ron Refsnider (Bander) and Lance Nelson have been working to capture RHWO's for banding following the North American Bird Banding Program protocols.

"The North American Bird Banding Program is directed in the United States by the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL), Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and in Canada by the Bird Banding Office (BBO), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). The BBL and the BBO have a close cooperative relationship and share responsibilities and data. Responsibility for migratory birds rests at

(Continued on page 3 Banding)



Photo by Lance Nelson

So are we engaged?

**A Note from the Chair**

**May 2012**

Well, as our editor Jerry Bahls will surely report, we have had overwhelming success with banding RHWO at Cedar Creek. Lance Nelson, Jim Howitz and Ron Refsnider have banded 35 birds as of May 5<sup>th</sup>. Their dedication to this time-consuming (and hand-injured) task has been above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks guys! The vast majority of the birds that have been banded are males who seem to respond to the taped calls quite readily.

Most of Cedar Creek has been successfully burned and we begin our regular surveys of nesting birds in the month of June. We will surely miss our intern Ari Waldstein and all the incredible breakthrough work she did for us last year. All our best to you Ari, and stay in touch.

This year our team will do regular surveys at Cedar Creek but will also concentrate on more advocate work with the seven clusters we have identified throughout the state. We hope to encourage more landowners to 'Save that Snag'. More later on opportunities for the public to visit Cedar Creek and participate in bird tours.

Chet Meyers, Chair



Photo by Lance Nelson

Banding Team Leader Jim Howitz and Ron Refsnider