



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Spring 2013

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 7 No. 2

RHWO NEWS

Teacher Hired to Study Cedar Creek RHWO's

Mary Spivey, Education Coordinator, Cedar Creek Eco Science Reserve, announced that Patrick Hartman, Advanced Placement Environmental Science Teacher at St. Louis Park Senior High School, will be conducting the research on red-headed woodpeckers at Cedar Creek this summer. Pat will be leading a team that will study the red-headed woodpeckers by monitoring their nests and using a newly acquired camera to peek into their nests to determine when they have laid their first egg, how many eggs are laid, when they hatch, how many survive and how many fledge. By diligently monitoring them, it is hoped that greater knowledge will be obtained that will help in their long term population increase.

The new camera that will allow a good view inside the nests was purchased with funds from an anonymous donor.



Photo by Jerry Bahls

Patrick Hartman, new RhWR RHWO researcher

A Note from the Chair

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February 2013

Chet is dealing with removing himself from his long time dwelling and re-establishing himself into a smaller domicile and is making difficult decisions about cherished items.

On May 11th, Cedar Creek red-headed woodpecker monitors will gather at Cedar Creek to be updated on protocols to insure that no ongoing research by others is disrupted. If anyone would like to join us to learn about Cedar Creek and then to accompany monitors to get a feel for what we do, you are welcome to do so. As of this date, May 7th, the RHWO's have not yet returned. We are anxiously waiting for them.

Another date you can put on your calendar is June 8th. Cedar Creek will be holding an open house. There will be more opportunity to learn about the research done there and to participate in a bird walk to see the red-headed woodpeckers and to learn more about our research there and to find out how you can help at Cedar Creek or at other locations around the state. We would like to have volunteers monitor RHWO nests around the state and to report your results to us. While we have collect much very interesting data at Cedar Creek, it would be interesting to get data on nest sites from around the state to help us better understand how we can best help increase their poplation. We would be interested in data like what type of tree is used, how high in tree, distance to nearest tree and foraging habitat near tree. If you would like more information contact Chet or Jerry. Contact information is on the next page.

We would like to welcome Pat Hartman to our team. His addition and help this summer will be a very valuable assistance in our understanding of the red-headed woodpecker. Welcome Pat!!

Jerry Bahls for Chet Meyers, Chair

The red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is the best known species. "There is, perhaps," says Wilson, "no bird in North America more universally known than this. His tricolored plumage, red, white, and black, glossed with steel blue, is so striking and characteristic, and his predatory habits in the orchards and cornfields, added to his numbers and fondness for hovering along fences, so very notorious, that almost every child is acquainted with the red-headed woodpecker."

From *Iconographic encyclopaedia of science, literature, and art*, 1851, Volume 2 (Google eBook)

Note From the Editor

The feature topic this month is - "**The red-headed woodpecker in art and literature.**" I hope you find this issue entertaining. I've scanned the internet literature looking for interesting art and literature items to bring to your attention. In the Spring 08 issue, there are references to a story about how the red-headed woodpecker got its red head and black back. Several versions of this native American story are referenced. In this issue a native American story about how they obtained the flute.

Sometimes a reference (<https://soundcloud.com/#galactic-sherpas/mating-call-of-the-red-headed>) leads you to something completely unexpected as in Galactic Sherpas' "Mating Call of the Red-headed Woodpecker". Surprised?

Poems that include the red-headed woodpecker are - Bud Caywood's "Sudden Afternoon Rain", V.S. Chochezi's "Angels Camp" and Lucille Lang Day's "Aubade In Red".

A couple of children's stories are Eugene Field's "Fido's Little Friend" and Clara Dillingham Pierson's "Among the Forest People" chapter entitled "The Red-Headed Woodpecker Children".

Did you know that the U.S. Postal Service has issued a stamp featuring the RHWO?

- Jerry Bahls, Editor

What's-your-sign?

Is your sign the woodpecker? Here is some information from the Whats-your-sign.com (<http://www.whats-your-sign.com/symbolic-meaning-of-woodpecker.html>).

"...the symbolic meaning of woodpecker indicates a return to our roots, or having trust in our basic (gut) feelings. Dr. Carl Jung observed the woodpecker as a symbol of a **return to the womb** of creativity. In this observation the tree is symbolic of a womb; earthy, grounded, sturdy and secure. The woodpecker's home within the tree is analogous of a fierce determination to return and protect that which is sacred to us.

(Continued in next column Sign)

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Membership Dues Increase

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all of its revenue from its membership dues. Due to increasing costs associated with our projects, we would like to increase our revenue. The RhWR dues for new members will increase to \$15. 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 increase to \$10/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.

Sign (Continued from previous column)

When this bird comes pecking, it is a call for us to return to our roots, back to the womb of our ideas and use our intellect and discernment to follow through with our plans.

This analogy is doubly profound in the case of *red-headed woodpeckers* as the color red is associated with the root chakra¹. Prime, protective energy. Another clear sign for being aware of our core impulses, and our basic beliefs."

1. The word chakra is Sanskrit for *wheel*. Chakra symbols represent the circular centers of energy, and they correspond to the nerve plexuses and organs in the physical nervous system. By focusing on these energy centers, and understanding the function of each, we are able to **balance** our energies, **augment** areas in our lives, and even facilitate healing. <http://www.whats-your-sign.com/chakra-symbols.html>



Photo by Larry Leonard

The following is reprinted with permission.

The Origin of the Flute

(from *The Native American Flute Book* by Bob Edgar)

told by Carol Proudfoot-Edgar

Ancient stories and stone carvings indicate that the flute, like the drum and rattle, has been made and played for tens of thousands of years. These instruments have always been considered gifts from the Spirits. Oral tradition often conveys the circumstances under which these gifts came to the people. Details of the stories vary since the Spirits of the land vary (types of trees, birds, animals). This story comes from the Lakota Sioux. Cedar flutes of modern design are thought to have been used first by the Sioux.

The First Flute

Long ago a young man saw a young woman in his village and longed to find some way to talk to her. He was too shy to approach her directly. She was the daughter of a chief and it was well known that she was very proud. Many men tried to court her but she sent them all away.

One day, this young man went on a hunting trip. He found the tracks of an elk and began to follow them. Although he caught sight of it now and then, the elk stayed far ahead of him, leading him away from the village until he was deep in the hills. Finally night came and he made a camp. He was far from home and the sounds in the night made him feel very lonely. He listened to the owls and rustling of the leaves, the creaking of the tree branches and the whistling of the wind. Then he heard a sound he had never heard before. It was a strange sound, like the call of a bird and yet different from any bird. It sounded as if it came from the Land of the Spirits. Strange as it was, that call was also very beautiful. It was like a song and he listened closely to it. Soon he fell asleep and dreamed.



In his dream, a Redheaded Woodpecker came and sang that strange and beautiful song. Then the Woodpecker spoke: "Follow me" it said. "Follow me and I will give you something. Follow me, follow me."

When the young man woke, the sun was bringing early morning light. There in the branches of the tree above him was the Redheaded Woodpecker. It began to fly from tree to tree, stopping and looking back. The young man followed. Finally the Woodpecker landed on the straight dead branch of a cedar tree. It began drumming with its beak on that hollow limb, which was full of holes made by the Woodpecker. Just then a wind came up and blew through the hollow branch. It made the song that the hunter had heard.

The hunter saw what he should do. He climbed the tree and carefully broke off that branch. He thanked the Redheaded Woodpecker for giving him this gift and he took it home to his lodge. But he could not make it sing, no matter what he did. Finally he went to a hilltop and fasted for four days. On the fourth day a vision came to him. It was the Woodpecker and it spoke again, telling him what to do. He must shape one end of the flute so it looked like the open mouth of a bird. He must carve a block in the likeness of the Woodpecker and fasten it with a reed and thong in a certain way near the other end of the branch. Then when he blew into that end of the flute and covered the holes with his fingers, he would be able to play that song.

The man did as his vision told him. He carved the flute so that it looked like the head and open mouth of a bird. He attached the likeness of the Woodpecker with a reed and thong and when he blew into the flute it made music. Then he began to practice long and hard, listening to the sounds of the wind and the trees, the movement of the waters and the calls of the birds, making them all part of his playing. Soon he was able to play a beautiful song. Now when he hunted and camped far from the village he had his flute with him and could play it to keep himself company and call the spirits of the land to help him.

Finally, he knew that he was ready to visit that young woman he had liked so long from afar. He went and stood behind her lodge and played his best song on his flute. She heard the song and came out into the moonlight. She went straight to where he was playing. She walked up to him and stood close to him and he lifted his blanket and wrapped it around them both.

So it was that the young hunter became the husband of the chief's daughter. He became a great man among his people. Ever since then, young men who wish to go courting have learned to make the cedar flute and play those magical songs. To give honor to the Redheaded Woodpecker that gave such a special gift, many of those flutes were shaped like the open mouth of a bird with the likeness of a Woodpecker attached to one end.

For those who practice and play, the flute has continued to reveal its magical powers for singing songs of the Spirits, for singing love songs to all creatures, and for piercing with joy the heart of the flute player.

© Carol Proudfoot-Edgar 1995

Red-headed Woodpecker Tidbits

Arapahoe words (http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~arapaho/arapaho_english.html)

tónohoužéihii • *na* ['hole maker'] woodpecker, esp. hairy or downy woodpeckers • Source(s):DCAU, Cowell ms, LJC

béé'e'éit • *na* ['it has a red head'] red-headed woodpecker • Source(s):Cowell ms, LJC

"A red-headed woodpecker flew across the river, and the Indian remarked that it was good to eat." Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), U.S. philosopher, author, naturalist. *The Maine Woods* (1864), *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, vol. 3, p. 309, Houghton Mifflin (1906).

"... Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose "Bird Diary" for May 8, 1896, records that he "shot a red-headed woodpecker". *Birds in literature* - Leonard Lutwack (1994), University Press of Florida, page 169 - Google Books.

Summer Issue Feature Topic

The Summer issue's topic will be - "What happens to RHWO's nesting areas when dead trees fall?" Send your observations and references to Jerry Bahls (rhwracm@comcast.net) by July 15th. Also send any future topics to be featured in the newsletter.

Next RhWR Meetings

The RhWR meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7:00 pm at the Lund's Store 1 block west of 50th & France in Edina. The next meeting will be May 11 at 9:00 am at Cedar Creek Eco Science Reserve. 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
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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 \$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 _____

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Send this application and make check payable to:
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Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801