



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Spring 2014

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 8 No. 2

RHWO NEWS

Summer Researcher Selected

Brittney Larson will be the new researcher at Cedar Creek and will continue the study began last summer on red-headed woodpecker nesting. It is envisioned that she will monitor at least 20 nests, visiting each nest about 3 times a week. She will use the camera that proved to be highly successful allowing the observer to determine when egg laying began and to count the number of eggs laid. It was also able to see when young hatched and was also able to follow the young's development and, in far too many instances, the disappearance of some young. This will be an area the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) hopes to learn more about. The nest monitor volunteers will be starting their monitoring earlier this summer (about May 15th) to allow Brittney to begin the nest monitoring possibly even before the first egg is laid.

Brittney's assistant hasn't been named yet, but the RhWR and University of Minnesota Cedar Creek staff expect to name someone very shortly.

Brittney has been enamored with birds since she was given her first Peterson Field Guide and pair of binoculars at the age of five. Interest in the feathered creatures in her backyard quickly turned into obsession and eventually evolved into her career. She studied Environmental Science at Bethel University (class of '11) and is looking forward to joining the Conservation Biology graduate program at the U of MN this fall. In the past few years she has enjoyed working as an avian nursery coordinator at the Wildlife Rehabilitation

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A Note from the Chair

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Spring 2014

Good news to report on a number of fronts. All of our five grant application came to fruition. Our thanks to MOU, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, MN River Valley Audubon Chapter, St. Paul Audubon Society and the Patagonia clothing company. And cheers for Jerry Bahls and Chet what's-his-name for the dogged pursuit of these grants. As a result we have enough money to proceed with our research project, which involves stipends for two wildlife technicians who will use the nest camera to monitor clutch size, and hatch success. Brittney Larson will be the lead researcher in this endeavor, and we hope to have her assistant identified with in the next couple of weeks.

Our regular spring survey training has been set for April 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Cedar Creek education center. This is for individuals who have been assigned specific Burn Areas to monitor. Lunch will be provided. This year we are beginning our surveys a month earlier than normal so we can identify nest sites before completed clutches are laid. In so doing we will be able to get a better sense of brood success and how many babies fledge. Please bring your GPS monitors and tick-proof clothing.

Finally, we will have another RHWO festival, hold the 'festival'. Saturday, June 14th will be called "Red-headed Woodpecker Days" and will, as last year did, focus on field trips. There will be no vendors, no workshops, no solicitation. Just come to enjoy the birds and to have access to Cedar Creek. Last year we found 61 different species, including a number of warblers and sparrows (on territory), in addition to an abundance of RHWO. Tours will begin at 8:30 a.m. and continue through 2:00 p.m. Wear sturdy shoes and be sure to tick-proof your clothing.

Chet Meyers, Chair

Continued from previous column

Center of Minnesota, interning at the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve, and volunteering as a state coordinator for the Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz. Last year at Cedar Creek Brittney was introduced to some members of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery and could not wait to get involved in the exciting research. She is thrilled to be working with the Red-headed Woodpecker nest camera study this season and so curious to dig deeper into the lives of this amazing species!

Note From the Editor

The feature topic this month was - "Where have we found funding for our Cedar Creek research?" The Editor thought the readers would like to know the process and thought that goes into getting money to fund projects like the RhWR's research at Cedar Creek. The RhWR is very proud of the fine work that was done there by Pat Hartman and Al Wachutka last summer.

The Membership Dues information is published again this quarter as a reminder that we do need some funds for operating expenses.

Since the running of the RhWR is an all volunteer operation, we'd like to take this opportunity to ask you to help us in any way you can. Time often is more valuable to us than money!

Have a good summer and watch for those redheads!

- Jerry Bahls, Editor

Prescribed Burn at Belwin

On April 22nd, members of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) participated in a prescribed burn at Belwin Conservancy's Preserve at the Lake Edith Natural Area conducted by Prairie Restorations. This burn follows a

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Did you know? That the highest count per party for RHWO's for the CBC was 1.8241 in 1941.

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Membership Dues

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all of its operating revenue from its membership dues. The RhWR dues for new members is \$15. New members will receive a packet, which will include the RhWR button and a 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). Membership Renewal is \$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.

Burn (Continued from previous column)

couple of years of invasive plant removal. The burn is expected to restore the oak savanna at the Lake Edith Natural Area. Since burning the under story has been effective in attracting red-headed woodpeckers to other areas, such as Cedar Creek and Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, the RhWR hopes this will attract red-headed woodpeckers to this area, which appears to be ideally suited for them. The RhWR will be monitoring this area to see if they establish themselves here. The pictures of the burn were taken by Lance Nelson.

How Does RhWR Fund Research?

The question that may come into the minds of many is - How does an organization like the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) fund the type of research we have been able to do on red-headed woodpeckers at Cedar Creek Eco-system Science Reserve (CCESR)? The RhWR started in 2007 with a Collaborative Grant for \$400 from the National Audubon Society. We asked interested parties to join our organization for a very modest fee of \$10 with renewal fees of \$5/year. In 2013, we increased this to \$15 with renewals at \$10/year. These modest funds enabled us to establish a website, produce informational handouts and publish "The REDHEAD", our newsletter. All this on a budget of about \$800/year. No where near enough to fund a multi-thousand dollar project.

The first essential element is to choose a project that has not been studied extensively. The literature does not have volumes of articles written about the red-headed woodpecker. Next chose a subject that is iconic. Talk to anyone who has the smallest interest in nature and birds and you will get the comment "I haven't seen one in years. We'd see them all the time on the *farm (substitute any familiar location)*". Finally get leadership who is very passionate on the subject. An early quote from Chet Meyers is "I'm spending over 40 hours a week on this!" All of this allows an organization to recruit many dedicated volunteers, who can get a project started by doing citizen science. This will take the project a fairly long way and produce interesting results. However at some point it becomes clear that more is needed and that is where the project needs some professional help and that usually requires more funds for equipment and personnel, who can spend more time on the project than volunteers can usually give.

The volunteer project leaders need to identify organizations that can help with possible funding. The RhWR made some contacts with the University of Minnesota and found that they were interested in helping. The RhWR applied for and received another Collaborative Grant for \$800 from the National Audubon Society along with substantial support from CCESR in the form of a National Science Foundation Educational Grant allowing two high school science teachers to be hired to perform the first year of our research project. Armed with this research, the project needs to be publicized as much as possible, especially among potential donor organizations. Presentations at such venues as the MOU Paper Sessions introduces the research to a large knowledgeable audience.

The next step is to prepare a budget that will accomplish your research objectives with the help of your dedicated volunteers and project partners. Then identify potential donors and the amounts that are within their ability to give. Write the grant applications and hope the timing is good. For the RhWR this approach has been successful in obtaining grants from Patagonia for \$2000, from the Minnesota Ornithologists Union for \$1200, from the St. Paul Audubon Society for \$1300, from the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis for \$1000 and from the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter for \$500. The CCESR will contribute about \$3000 of in-kind funds also. The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery wants to again thank these generous organizations for funding this very exciting project.

Since this is a project that the RhWR would like to conduct for a minimum of 3 years and up to 5 years, more funding will be needed in the future. Since some of our funders for this coming summer are not expected to renew their grants in the future because of their limited resources, the RhWR is beginning now to identify other funding sources that may be able to fund this research in the next 3 years. If any of our readers know of potential sources of funding for this research, please pass the contact information on to us so that we may make the applications at the appropriate time.

Jerry Bahls, Treasurer, Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

RHWO Food

The red-headed woodpecker gets much of its nourishment in the fall and through the winter from acorns and other mast. They've also been seen in the spring picking up acorns to eat. In 2012, they did not overwinter at Cedar Creek and this was attributed to the failure of the acorn crop. This past summer they stored hazelnuts to replace the pin oak acorns that were greatly reduced by insect infestation (see Winter 2014 "The REDHEAD"). Siah St. Clair's picture to the right, shows a burr oak acorn. Siah's picture on the back page shows a hulled acorn, ready to be stored for the winter. Acorns become a big part of a juveniles diet (hulled) before they fledge, if available, and throughout the fall after they fledge. This taste for nuts probably explains their feeding on peanuts and other nuts at your feeder. Gathering acorns when they are abundant and putting them out later in the fall and winter can help with the expense of feeding red-headed woodpeckers, if you are lucky enough to have them visit your feeders. So when planning on restoring red-headed woodpeckers to their earlier populations, oak trees should be prominently included.

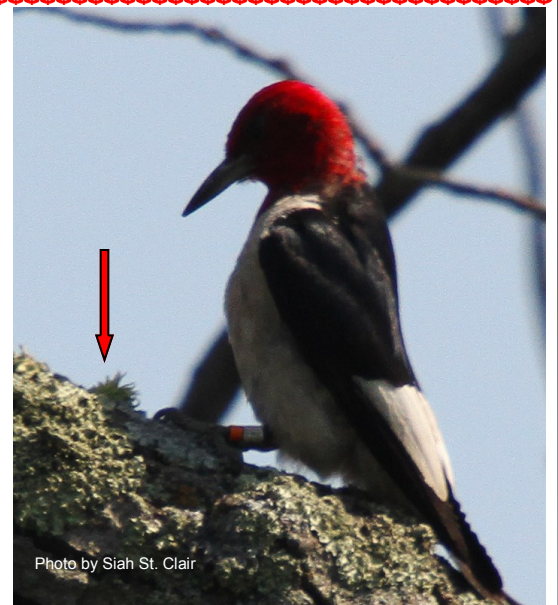


Photo by Siah St. Clair

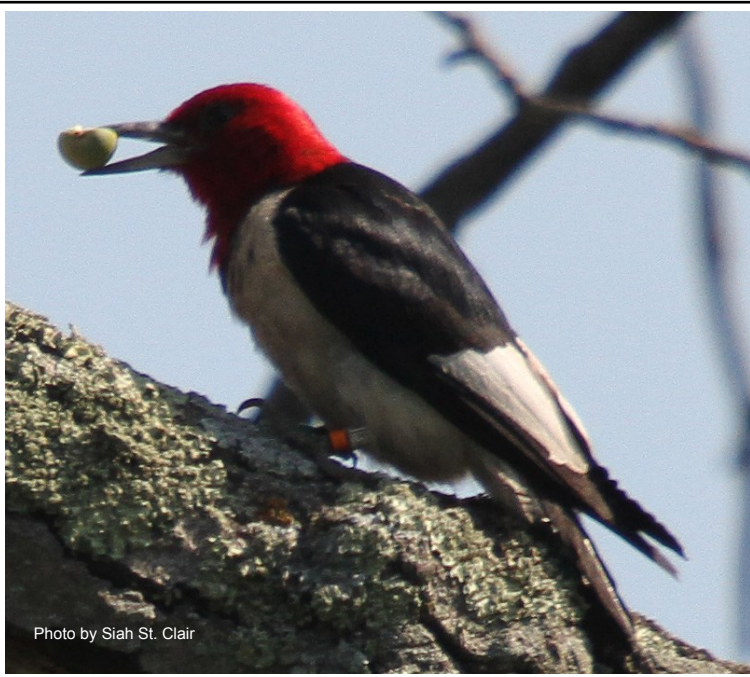


Photo by Siah St. Clair

Summer Issue Feature Topic

The Summer issue's topic will be - "How can you help with the recovery of red-headed woodpeckers?" 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 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. The next meeting will be May 21, 2014. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage your friends to attend also. Check our website at www.RedheadRecovery.org for current information.

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

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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 \$15/year! Please send my membership information to the address below.

I'd like to renew! Renew my RhWR membership for \$10/year.

Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$15) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$12) at the rate of \$27/year. Please send my membership information and *Kingfisher* to the address below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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Send this application and make check payable to:
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PO Box 3801
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