



Siah St. Clair

The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Spring 2018

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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RHWO NEWS

2018 Research Team

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery would like to introduce you to our 2018 research team.

Dr. Henry Streby, Assistant Professor, University of Toledo -

Dr. Streby will be overseeing our research at Cedar Creek Ecosystems Science Reserve (CCESR). Dr. Streby is an organismal ecologist with broad research and teaching interests in quantitative wildlife population ecology and evolutionary biology. Henry joined the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Toledo in the fall of 2016. He received his PhD from the University of Minnesota in 2010. He has more than 30 published papers. He began doing research on red-headed woodpeckers in 2017 in northeastern Ohio.



Photo Courtesy of WTOL Toledo, OH

R. Kyle Pagel, Masters student, University of Toledo -

Kyle earned a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife with an emphasis in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota in 2014. He has been on several research projects including breeding colony surveys of black terns in the Great Lakes region, population dynamics of hawksbill sea turtles in Antigua, and the migratory patterns of golden-winged warblers and blue-winged warblers throughout their respective ranges. He joined Dr. Streby's lab in 2017 to start a collaborative project on Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) annual cycle demography, habitat associations, and migration ecology with partners at the Black Swamp Bird Observatory and the Minnesota Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Team.



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A Note from the Chair

Spring 2018

These are exciting times for the Red Headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR). Our efforts over the past 10 years are bearing fruit as more people become involved and more extensive academic research joins the citizen science activities we have been conducting. Through our academic research partner, Dr. Henry Streby of the University of Toledo, our coordinated research on Red Headed Woodpeckers is expanding into 4 states in the region this summer.

Growth of the RhWR has required some restructuring recently. We have been able to function very well as a loose knit ad hoc group since the beginning in 2008. But more activities in all aspects of the project have resulted in the need to become more organized. The result is that the RhWR now has an overall steering committee, and under that committee are two teams. Keith Olstad chairs the Research Team, and Chet Meyers chairs the Education and Habitat Team.

Thank you to the 36 volunteers for well over 1,500 hours worked in the past year. And thanks for those planning on volunteering this coming spring, summer, and fall. We have created a unique partnership with our citizen science projects enabling the academic research to accomplish significantly expanded goals, and education activities throughout the state. Thank you also to the organizations and individuals who have and continue to contribute funds to make these important activities possible, and reverse the decline of Red Headed Woodpeckers.

Siah St. Clair
Steering Committee Chair

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery would like to thank the following for their generous contributions to us so that we can continue our research for 2018 - Patagonia Foundation, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter, Earth Cloud Fund, St. Paul Audubon Society, and the National Audubon Society. We would also like to thank the following individuals who contributed - David Hartwell, Jerry Bahls, Keith Olstad, Craig Mandel, Gene Meriam, Mary Miller, and Mary Wagner. And to those donations for "Naming Rights" - Tom Beer, Kathy Iverson, Thane Dirks, Ellen Ferrari, Ann Laughlin and Debbie Reynolds.

Note From the Editor

We thought this would be a good opportunity to give some recognition to the Streby Lab at the University of Toledo for their collaboration with the University of Minnesota Cedar Creek Ecosystems Science Reserve (CCESR) and the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) in our research over the last year and for the foreseeable future. Our new efforts using GPS, radio transmitters and geolocators would not be possible without the necessary bird permits possessed by the Streby Lab. The article describing Dr. Streby's work in Ohio was marvelously described in three media pieces footnoted in the article. This article is only a brief summary of these three pieces and we urge you to view the full articles.

As you may note Dr. West is currently employed half time by the Streby Lab. It is the desire of the RhWR to fill out Dr. West's employment by raising funds to fill out the other half of her time so that she is working full time on the research on red-headed woodpeckers. We are hoping to secure the needed funds as soon as possible so that she will be retained through June 2019 and beyond. So please send us any prospects for grants or better yet contribute to retain her as our researcher.

Jerry Bahls, Editor

"Naming Rights" Aid Research Funds

The 2018 Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) research at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) needs ten pin point (\$500 each) and ten geolocator (\$150 each) bird tracking devices. We are asking friends to consider donating \$500 for the purchase of one pin point tracking device or \$150 to purchase one geolocator device. You will be given the "Naming Rights" to the bird receiving the device purchased with your donation. To date we will be naming birds - Annie, Kathy, Irma or Eldon, Stewart, Jerry, Wilson and Juanita. YOU can name an additional bird that will provide valuable information that will help in the long term survival of this iconic bird!

*The RhWR reserves the right to reject a name if it is inappropriate.

RHWO Research in Ohio

Dr. Henry Streby and MS student Kyle Pagel began their red-headed woodpecker (RHWO) study in 2017 in the Oak Openings Metropark west of Toledo, OH. While the population of red-headed woodpeckers is in serious decline throughout most of its range in the eastern half of the United States and in southern Canada, this unique bird is doing reasonably well in the Oak Openings Region.¹ "This research should have been going on yesterday - it is kind of a shock that so little has been done," Dr. Streby said. "The population study has been needed for a while, since the species has been in range-wide decline for as long as we have been doing breeding surveys, probably for over 50 years."¹ Dr. Streby said that despite the relatively strong concentration found in Oak Openings, RHWO numbers have fallen by about 80 percent in Ohio, while Michigan has lost 93 percent of its population over the last 50 years.¹ He suspects the chestnut blight that claimed most of the chestnut trees is likely one factor in the woodpecker population drop, and suburban sprawl is also contributing to the problem.¹

Since the beginning of May 2017, the University of Toledo team has caught 20 RHWO in fine mesh nets, drawing blood samples, attaching the bands and identifying rings and the tracking technology, and then quickly releasing the woodpeckers at the site.¹ Catching the birds can be a difficult operation. Pagel states that "We use calls that imitate the birds and decoys. It brings them lower to the ground and into mist nets. From there we can work with them."³ They are then given a quick medical exam, taking blood and tissue samples to learn about their genetics. From these samples they also will learn something about their stress level and diet. Dr. Streby says the birds are also fitted with tracking devices that are like tiny backpacks, "We want to know how they use their habitat. How well they survive, how well they reproduce. We also want to learn more about where they migrate and why, because some do migrate and others don't."³

"Over maybe the next ten years or so, we'll start to ask those longer term questions of what we can do to help manage and conserve these populations," says Streby.²

1. <http://www.toledoblade.com/Culture/2017/06/25/Study-looks-at-population-drop-of-unique-bird.html>

2. <http://www.wtol.com/story/35499817/ut-researchers-study-declining-red-headed-woodpecker-population>

3. <http://www.13abc.com/content/news/UT-researchers-help-solve-some-of-the-mysteries-behind-423928684.html>

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RhWR Fund Raiser

The Redheaded Woodpecker Recovery now has a fund raiser to help us get the money we need to continue our research efforts. His name is **Jim Stengel** and he can be contacted by email at sheidiss@yahoo.com or by phone at **612 721-9083**. If you know of an organization or individual that will donate money for research, please give him a call.

Dr. Elena West, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Toledo -

Dr. West will again be supervising the red-headed woodpecker (RHWO) research at Cedar Creek Ecosystems Science Reserve (CCESR). She will be working half-time as a post doctoral researcher in Dr. Streby's lab.

Dr. Elena West is an avian ecologist and conservation biologist with broad research and teaching interests in animal foraging and movement behavior, and quantitative wildlife population ecology. Dr. West completed her M.S. in Natural Resource Ecology and Management at the University of Michigan where she also received a graduate certificate in GIS and Spatial Analysis. She completed her PhD in Integrative Biology (formerly Zoology) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she examined the influence of anthropogenic food subsidies on the behavior and ecology of Steller's jays in California state parks. Dr. West began work with the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project (Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis) in 2017 and is currently a postdoctoral researcher and research coordinator with Dr. Henry Streby at the University of Toledo and Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, respectively. In this position she is examining the annual cycle demography, habitat associations, and migration ecology of red-headed woodpeckers in Minnesota and Ohio.



Jesse Beck, Ornithological Research Technician -

Jesse Beck is a Wisconsin native who received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He has been working as an avian rehabilitation and husbandry Intern with the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center, where he has been capturing and providing medical care for injured birds as well as caring for non-releasable rehabilitated birds at the center's bird sanctuary. He will soon be returning to Cedar Creek for his second season with the RHWO Research Team. Previously, Jesse has worked with a small team along the coast of South Africa's Western Cape focusing on the conservation of breeding shorebirds such as the White-fronted Plover, African Oystercatcher and Kelp Gull. Before this he was an Avian Point Count Technician conducting surveys in seven units of Stephens State Forest south of Des Moines, Iowa. He was responsible for identifying and recording locations of all eastern birds by sight and sound. Before that he was a Volunteer Research Assistant onsite at the Tambopata Research Center working on the Tambopata Macaw Project in Tambopata National Reserve, Peru. The Macaw Project is a long-term study established to understand and conserve the six macaw species that occur in the Tambopata National Reserve. During his time there, Jesse conducted various behavioral surveys, climbed to macaw nests to retrieve and measure nestlings and deliver educational presentations to tourists.



Megan Massa, Ornithological Research Technician -

Megan grew up in northern Virginia and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Environmental Science from the College of William & Mary this spring. This past summer, she did research in Australia on Red-backed Fairywrens. Her project included measuring anti-predatory behavior in wild birds, conducting playback experiments of predator calls, and creating 3D models of birds to test predator attack rates. She presented the results of this project at the American Ornithological Society conference in Tucson this April. She has also studied Henslow's Sparrows by doing literature review for the Center for Conservation Biology as well as conducting a field study at Konza Prairie LTER in 2017, where she investigated the relationship between vegetation structure, beetle abundance, burn regime, and Henslow's sparrow occurrence. At the College, she worked in the aviary to band, bleed, and care for captive research birds. As an undergraduate, she led the Bird Club of William & Mary, teaching bird identification and exposing interested students to the ornithology research being done on campus. Through the club, she led an effort to survey and prevent bird window-strikes on campus using William & Mary Green Fee grants.



The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery welcomes all of our research staff for the 2018 research season at CCESR.

RhWR Volunteer Opportunities

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has a need for many volunteers now and over the summer. Here is a list of them in the order of priority and a very brief description of the duties -

- Communications Representative on Steering Committee - Oversee website, newsletter and Facebook page and be communications advocate on Steering Committee
 - Newsletter Editor - Coordinate publication of newsletter
 - Webmaster - Manage the RhWR website
 - Lead Citizen Science Projects - Recruit and organize volunteers of RhWR citizen science projects
 - Do Citizen Science Projects - Monitor RhWR nest sites, Monitor roost sites, Monitor food eaten, Monitor mast (Please note this requires CCESR training.)
- Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities or to ask any questions.

Summer Issue Articles

Send your articles, photos, observations and references to Jerry Bahls (rhwracm@comcast.net) by July 15th. Have you been experimenting trying to attract red-headed woodpeckers? Let us know about your work!

Next RhWR Steering Committee Meeting

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7:00 pm. The next meeting will be on May 16th at the Lund's Byerlys store at 50th & France in Edina at 7:00 pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage 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

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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 \$20/year! Please send my membership information to the address at right.

I'd like to renew! Renew my RhWR membership for \$20/year.

Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$20) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$12) at the rate of \$32/year. Please send my membership information and *Kingfisher* 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