



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Spring 2023

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 17 No. 2

RHWO NEWS

Observations of Red-headed Woodpecker Nests with 2 Broods in 2022

Minnesota is at the northern end of Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) breeding range. Summers are relatively short in Minnesota and most nesting pairs of RHWOs have just one brood of nestlings per summer (about 75%). But some pairs have a second brood after successfully fledging the first brood of nestlings. Sometimes the second nests are in the same nest cavity as the first brood, and sometimes they are in a different nest cavity in a different tree. Why some pairs choose to have a second brood immediately after a first successful nest is unknown. And why some pairs choose to use the same cavity or instead a cavity in a different tree for their second brood is also unknown.

In the summer of 2022 nest cameras were placed on 5 different active RHWO nests at Cedar Creek ESR. Just by chance three of the nests with cameras had second broods in the same cavities. Two of the nests were in dead Pin Oak trees and one was in a live Siberian Elm tree. Two of the pairs had been paired together in the previous year and one of the pairs was a new pair in 2022, although the female of this last pair actively nested at Cedar Creek the previous year.



Photo by Siah St. Clair

Nest 277 brood 1c: This picture of the two adults, Lucy and Croix, with a nestling from their first brood of the summer is from 6-28-23

The nest cameras at these three nests accumulated over 40,000 videos of nest activities during the nesting period of both broods at each of the nests. There are excellent videos during the egg laying, incubation, brooding, and

Continued on Page 2, Fledglings

A Note from the Chair

Spring 2023

I hope everyone is enjoying some spring weather after our long winter. The Red-headed Woodpeckers from Cedar Creek are still at their winter retreat in the southern United States, as none have returned yet, and we don't expect to see them for another two weeks or so, as I write this.

Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership and/or made contributions over the last few months. We are within a few hundred dollars of meeting our goal and expect to see those funds very soon.

The research season for this year is upon us as we work to assist Dr. Elena West in her RHWO research. The research technicians that our funds cover wages for begin working on Monday the first of May. These researchers will be placing and managing autonomous recording units (ARUs) throughout Minnesota over the summer to document where Red-headed Woodpeckers are nesting in Minnesota. Two other research technicians that receive our funds begin research work on May 15th. They will work to document the number of tree cavities pairs of RHWOs use as nests and roosts for themselves and their young during their seasonal stay at Cedar Creek.

Volunteer recruitment is nearly complete for this year's breeding bird surveys and nest surveys that we will assist Dr. West with at Cedar Creek ESR from May through July of this summer.

And all the Red-headed Woodpecker nest cameras made it through the winter still taking pictures of how the cavities are used during winter. We removed three of the cameras two weeks ago to keep them safe from the prescribed prairie burns that are taking place as I write these notes.

We expect to be connecting with our habitat partners around the region soon with more information about habitat needs of nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers. Let us know if you see RHWOs nesting anywhere.

Siah St. Clair, Steering Committee Chair

Factoid: From "The Young Oologist" Vol. 1 No. 5, Sep 1884: Notes from Kentucky
C. H. B. – Nests and eggs of the Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Crow and Black-bird are very common here. In every dead tree, or tree of which any part is decayed, one see at least one hole of the Red-headed Woodpecker, more often two or three.

Note From the Editor

Sometime I am asked who is the RhWR affiliated with? Here is the answer.

In the fall of 2006, permission to form the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project was given by the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM). It was formed in 2007 as a Special Committee of the Chapter like the Bluebird Recovery Project had been done many years earlier. Being a Special Committee allowed it to form its own governing body (Steering Committee) and to raise its own funds to do projects. The Steering Committee must follow all guidelines and policies of the ACM.

Being part of ACM allows the RhWR to raise tax deductible funds under the 501 (c3) tax status of the ACM. ACM collects all of the RhWR donations and maintains a separate bookkeeping account for the RhWR. ACM pays all of the RhWR expenses which are deducted from the RhWR account. The RhWR Treasurer monitors the RhWR account and communicates financial information to the Steering Committee.

The RhWR has an advocate on the ACM Board that communicates information to and from the ACM Board. Since the RhWR is responsible to the ACM Board it must follow ACM guidelines and policies for all its communications with the public, hence the importance of the RhWR advocate on the ACM Board. Ideally the RhWR would like to have one member of the RhWR Steering Committee on the ACM Board to fill this role. Currently the ACM Board Chair Marian Weidner is the attending RhWR Steering Committee meetings. Since being on the ACM Board is not a RhWR responsibility, it was not on the list of needed volunteers in this issue's article. However if anyone is interested in joining the RhWR Steering Committee and applying (with RhWR's endorsement) to be on the ACM Board, please let us know. We will do all we can to make it happen if the right candidate volunteers.

Thanks for your generous donations and all your time helping us. Watch for the 'Redheads' this summer!

Jerry Bahls, Editor

Fledglings (Continued from Page 1)

nestling feeding portion of each nest. The three double brood nests produced a combined 14 RHWO fledglings. The first broods had 3, 3, and 2 fledglings, while the second brood success was a bit smaller, with 2, 2, and 2 for fledglings from each nest. It is normal for second broods to have smaller success numbers than first broods with RHWOs at Cedar Creek.

Predators and nest usurpers (Flying squirrels, etc.) appeared to be at minimal intensity near these three nest trees in 2022. A flying squirrel was nesting in a cavity three feet from one of the nests. It was in a cavity that had been used by this RHWO pair the previous year, but it showed no interest in the new RHWO nest. At this same nest a large Bull Snake (a known RHWO nest predator) was found sunning itself on the ladder that was used to access the nest camera. The ladder was about 40 feet from the nest tree, but the snake was not documented by the nest camera in this nest tree, and the nests in this tree were successful.

Having a second brood increases the potential number of young that a pair produces but requires an expenditure of energy right up until a few days or weeks before the adults need to prepare for migration or cache enough food for the long Minnesota winter.

Siah St. Clair



Photo by Siah St. Clair

Nest 277 brood 2 This picture is of an adult with a nestling from the second brood on August 19, 2023

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Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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Red-headed Woodpecker BMP's

For those of you who are looking for the Red-headed Woodpecker Best Management Practices (BMP's), there is good news. They have been written into the report to the Legislative - Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) as a requirement for the grant Dr. Elena West received from them. The not-so-good news is the University of Minnesota requires documents like these be in their approved format. Dr. West is currently working on this and expect them to be available soon!

Additional RhWR Volunteer Opportunities

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has an increasing need for many volunteers now and through 2023. Filling these positions will help fulfill the goal of restoring the Red-headed Woodpeckers (RHWO) populations. Many of these opportunities are new and administrative in nature. These positions reflect the interest the RhWR has in upgrading our communications and enhanced contact with the public.

Here is a list and a detailed description of the duties. Help with all these tasks can be obtained from any of the current Steering Committee members or they will direct you to someone who can help. The current status of the task is in parenthesis and may include the skills desired –

Do Citizen Science Projects (*Honor time commitment*) – A limited number of citizen science projects will be done in 2023. Currently Teams of advanced birders are needed as alternates for identifying birds visually and aurally for a Breeding Bird Survey Route at Cedar Creek Ecosystems Science Reserve (CCESR). Also alternate Team members are needed to help identify nesting sites at CCESR. However, it is anticipated that more Projects may be added this year and in 2024. If interested, please send a note to Tom Beer (doucetbeer@comcast.net) to be added to our citizen science volunteer list.

Steering Committee members (*Vacancies, currently have 6 sitting members and can have as many as 10*) - The Steering Committee is the governing body for the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR). They are responsible for the organization's activities such as its research projects, community outreach, education projects, and raising and budgeting funds. They are also responsible for recruiting volunteers to run the organization. They also need to attend bimonthly meetings.

Communications Director (*New, Member of Steering Committee, Computer skills*) - The Communications Director will be responsible for the Website, Newsletter, and Facebook™ page and be the communications advocate on the Steering Committee. The Director will be responsible for the Website and its content. The Director will be responsible for apprising the Committee Chair and the Committee of all communications to include those with the public with the approval of the Committee sponsor—the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) Board. The Communications Director will be responsible for the RhWR Newsletter (*The REDHEAD*) and its Editor, the Facebook™ page and the Page Editor, be the primary coordinator between the ACM Board and the Newsletter Editor and Facebook™ Page Editor.

Webmaster (*New, Computer skills*) - The Webmaster will manage the RhWR website and be responsible for its operation and content. The Webmaster will review all content and add, remove and/or update the content as needed. The Webmaster will ensure the website is operating and the technology is current. The Webmaster will forward all communications through the Website to the Communications Director.

Newsletter Editor (*Current Editor would like to step down, Computer skills [Publishing Software like Microsoft Publisher]*) - The Newsletter (*The REDHEAD*) Editor coordinates publication of the newsletter. The Editor is responsible for content, printing and distribution of the newsletter. The Editor seeks content from accurate sources and ensures information is properly documented and accurately referenced. The Editor coordinates with a commercial printer the newsletter printing, copy numbers and payment. The Editor with the Membership Chair is responsible for maintaining an accurate membership mailing list. The Editor is responsible for distributing the newsletter to members and others electronically and by US Mail. The Editor provides additional copies as needed for events and community presentations. (*Current Editor will accept an assistant who will become the Editor*)

Facebook™ Page Editor (*New, Computer skills [Access to Facebook™]*) The Facebook™ Page Editor will coordinate content on the RhWR Facebook™ Page. The Page Editor will ensure content is accurate and current. The Page Editor will post meeting dates, volunteer events, and other timely information. The Page Editor is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date page technologically. The Page Editor may utilize other volunteers with partial control to help manager the page. The Page Editor will coordinate content with the Communications Director's approval.

Citizen Science Projects Coordinator (*New*) - The Citizen Science Projects Coordinator will recruit and organize a list of volunteers for RhWR citizen science projects. When directed by the Steering Committee that a Citizen Science Project has been formed, the Citizen Science Projects Coordinator will contact volunteers from the list of RhWR citizen science projects volunteers requesting their help and coordinate the volunteers' activities on RhWR citizen science projects.

Classify RhWR videos at <https://z.umn.edu/woodpeckercams>

Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities or to ask questions. Do not be shy about forwarding this information to any of your friends and bird lovers. Many of these tasks can be done by agreeing to take on portions of the responsibilities and then adding more later. Start by attending the Steering Committee meetings to learn more about our need and then volunteer to help. Our ideal volunteer is a recently retired individual who needs to fill some of their free time. Fill this in with something you can really get passionate about. The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery needs YOU!!



Photo by Siah St. Clair

Next RhWR Steering Committee

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm every 3 months. The next *virtual* meeting will be on May 17, 2023 at 7:00 pm. If you would like to participate, please contact Siah St. Clair to be added to the call list. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage friends to attend also.

Important Dates

ACM Board Meeting May 15, 2023
Steering Committee Meeting May 17, 2023

ALL meetings are *virtual* until further notice.

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 (\$50 is suggested rate)! Please send my membership information to the address at right.

I'd like to renew! Renew my RhWR membership for \$20/year (\$50 is suggested rate).

Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$20, \$50 suggested) and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (\$20) at the rate of \$40/year. Please send my membership information 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