



Siah St. Clair

# The REDHEAD



## Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Summer 2018

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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### RHWO NEWS

#### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONDUCT RHWO RESEARCH

Two high school students have been assisting with red-headed woodpecker research at Cedar Creek this breeding season. Byron Gia and Julian Moyer are students at Breck High School and are spending some of their summer at Cedar Creek studying red-headed woodpeckers. Byron and Julian are a part of Breck's Advanced Science Research Program, which gives students interested in science an opportunity to have a tangible research experience. Students are placed in a research lab or project with a science mentor and spend time during the summer pursuing a research project that they help develop.

Byron and Julian are working under the supervision of Dr. Elena West, our lead red-headed woodpecker researcher.



Julian Moyer

Byron Gia

Continued on page 3, Students

### A Note from the Chair

Summer 2018

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project is vibrant and working on many projects this summer with exciting potentials in the near future. The Habitat and Education Team has produced two new public relations handouts to inform the public and interested people and potential donors about what we do. This team's volunteers have also visited more than a dozen sites in Minnesota in the last few months to learn about where concentrations of RHWOs can be found, and, in some cases, where they used to be but are no longer present.

The Research Team of academic researchers and citizen science volunteers has been very active at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. Over 50 nests had been monitored this summer by the end of July. On July 19 there were 5 pairs of RHWOs that were actively feeding fledged babies, and incubating eggs in new nests at the same time! As of the same date, technicians were tracking 10 fledglings with transmitters. One of the transmitters was found very recently inside a Great Horned Owl pellet. So Great Horned Owls have been added to the list of documented predators of, at least, newly fledged RHWOs. Downloaded data from last year's transmitters on RHWOs and from newly placed transmitters will bring new information about the life and habitat needs of RHWOs to us all, including land managers and funding agencies.

A big thank you to all who have been working on these projects, and especially to those working on fundraising to cover the substantial costs of this important work. Jim Stengel has been doing most of this work, and others are involved also. Thanks also to those who have donated funds, through memberships or as specific gifts or grants. The research and information we are gathering is new to science about RHWOs, and will be critical to the successful future of Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Siah St. Clair  
Steering Committee Chair

#### RHWO Volunteer day will be held on

October 20th at CCESR at an undetermined (watch for further details) time. Volunteers will be updated on the results of this summer's research by Dr. West. This will be a good time to see how your efforts contributed to our work. Save the date! Bring your friends!

## Note From the Editor

First a brief explanation of the wonderful cartoon drawn by Megan Massa. One of our fledglings that had been fitted with a radio backpack unfortunately was predated. The backpack was found in a great horned owl pellet.

In researching the starling article I came across an interesting concept about declining populations of wildlife. The concept is evolutionary traps and can be defined as environments that have been altered suddenly by humans, where formerly reliable cues might no longer be associated with adaptive outcomes, allowing organisms to become 'trapped' by their evolutionary responses to the cues and experience reducing survival or reproduction. Ecological traps can occur when organisms make poor habitat choices based on cues that correlated formerly with habitat quality. Ecological traps are part of the broader phenomenon, evolutionary traps. It is highly recommended that reference 4 (Schlaepfer et al. 2002) in the Starling article be read along with the Frei Dissertation (ref. 3). It may explain some of the reasons for the red-headed woodpecker decline.

Jerry Bahls, Editor

### Update of "Naming Rights" Birds

To date we have named birds - Annie, Kathy, Eldon, Stewart, Jerry, Wilson, Catesby, Markie, Maura and Juanita - at the request of generous donors.

Here are the results as of August 1st of the named birds -

Name	Band Colors	Mate	Band Colors	BU	Tree	Hatch date (first nest)	Fledge Date (first nest)	Eggs (first nest)	Nestlings (first nest)	Fledglings (first nest)	2nd Nesting Attempt
Annie	YBMY	Jerry	BKMR	105	71	5/26/2018	6/19/2018	7	3	2	Yes
Jerry	BKMR	Annie	YBMY	309	71	5/26/2018	6/19/2018	7	3	2	Yes
Catesby	BRMY	Unknown	NA	409	12 Foot	5/26/2018	6/23/2018	5	4	2	No
Eldon	MBKO	Juanita	MRYR	105	84	5/25/2018	6/22/2018	5	3	2	Yes
Juanita	MRYR	Eldon	MBKO	105	84	5/25/2018	6/22/2018	5	3	2	Yes
Kathy	BKMY	Unnamed	GRMR	105	142	5/25/2018	6/18/2018	4	4	2	Yes
Markie	MBGO	Stewart	BOMK	103	112	5/24/2018	6/17/2018	6	6	1	Yes
Stewart	BOMK	Markie	MBGO	103	112	5/24/2018	6/17/2018	6	6	1	Yes
Wilson	RYMK	Unnamed	RYMK	103	Forked	5/27/2018	Failed	6	4	None	Yes

Note Band Colors - B - Blue; G - Green; K - Black; M - USGS Band; O - Orange; R - Red; Y - Yellow. Read from top left leg, down; top right leg, down.

The 2018 Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) research at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) has ordered 10 more radio transmitters (\$150 each) to track new fledglings. We are asking friends to consider donating \$500 for the purchase of one pin point tracking device or \$150 to purchase one radio transmitter. You will be given the "Naming Rights" to the bird receiving the device purchased with your donation. 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.

### RhWR Contact Information

#### Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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 Website [www.AudubonChapterofMinneapolis.org](http://www.AudubonChapterofMinneapolis.org)

#### Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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 Website [www.RedheadRecovery.org](http://www.RedheadRecovery.org)

### 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](mailto: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.

They have been introduced to the process of scientific inquiry, ornithological field methods, and data analysis. Byron and Julian started their work at Cedar Creek by shadowing Dr. West and her research team to learn a variety of field methods, including nest monitoring, tracking birds marked with radio-transmitters, and behavioral observations to determine the relative effort of parent birds at nests.

For their research project, Byron and Julian are collecting data around red-headed woodpecker nests to determine if there are habitat-level differences between nests that successfully fledge young and nests that fail. They are collecting data on nest trees and the live and dead trees within a 30 meter radius of each nest tree. Approximately 75% of red-headed woodpecker nests at Cedar Creek fledge at least one young. Slight differences in the habitat around a nest tree may be crucial in whether the nest is successful. Other potentially important factors include the number of cavities in each nest tree and the diameter of nest holes. This project is a great contribution to the larger red-headed woodpecker research effort and may have implications for conservation and habitat management.

Once school begins in the fall, Byron and Julian will enroll in the Advanced Science Research class, where they will complete data analysis, write research papers, design posters, and create presentations. They will present their work at the Minnesota Science and Engineering Fair and at the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. There is also a formal seminar presentation held at Breck School given to mentors, research students, and parents. Byron and Julian have thoroughly enjoyed their time at Cedar Creek this summer. They have especially appreciated the opportunity to be fully immersed in a field-based research project and are well on their way to becoming life-long bird enthusiasts, no matter the field they pursue. They are also proud that they survived their first summer at Cedar Creek, including the month of July, also known as the infamous "month of the deer fly". The research team is looking forward to learning more about their findings and continuing to work with them this fall.

Jim Howitz & Elena West

## Starlings Observed at CCESR

It had been reported that the increase of the European starling has had no effect upon North American cavity nesting birds<sup>1,2</sup>. In 2013, Frei<sup>3</sup> published her PhD Dissertation where she reported "European Starling presence near active woodpecker nest sites was the strongest factor influencing Red-headed Woodpecker nest survival. Logistic-exposure nest success assuming constant survival (68%) dropped significantly when starling abundance was considered (to 13%)<sup>3</sup>." She further stated that "...this is evidence of an evolutionary trap<sup>4</sup> where a native species habitat use overlaps that of an exotic species with which it is not adapted to compete. Red-headed Woodpecker nest survival increased later in the breeding season, apparently in response to lessening competition pressure<sup>3</sup>."

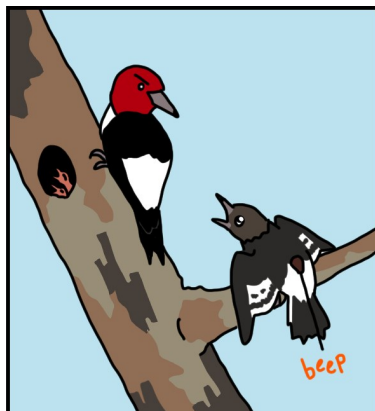
This summer Siah St. Clair photographed this encounter with a starling at a nest that later failed. Jerry Bahls had



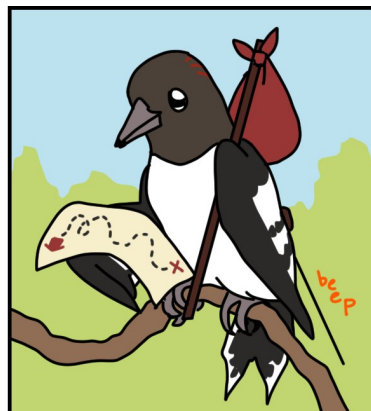
observed a starling at this nest and also at another nest within the bison area. Previous to this few starlings have been reported in Cedar Creek Ecosystems Science Reserve (CCESR). This may be another Citizen Science project for next year - monitoring starlings.

1. Koenig, W.D. 2003: European starlings and their effect on native cavity-nesting birds. *Conservation Biology* 17, 1134–1140.
2. Koenig, W.D., Abstracted in "The REDHEAD", Vol.4 No. 2, Spring 2010.
3. Barbara Frei. 2013. Roles of maladaptive behaviour and evolutionary traps in the decline of a threatened woodpecker. Ph.D. Dissertation. McGill University, Montreal, QC.
4. Schlaepfer, M., Runge, M. & Sherman, P. 2002: Ecological and evolutionary traps. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 17, 474–480.

# Oh, the Places RHWO GO!



At home (still)!



Dispersing!



Inside an owl!

By Megan Massa

MM 18

## RhWR Volunteer Opportunities

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has a need for many volunteers now and through the fall. 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 October 15th. Have you monitored any RHWO nests? Or have you observed any RHWO frequently this summer? 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 September 19th 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

# 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 \$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