



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Summer 2019

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 13 No. 3

RHWO NEWS

The Habitat and Education Committee has increased its efforts to find viable clusters of red-headed woodpeckers (RHWO) in our state. The past three months we have been sending out survey teams (we call them "sleuths") to check out suspected RHWO clusters with varying degrees of success. We have also visited the Habitat Partners we have been working with the past six years to get reports on RHWO and the habitat these agencies oversee.

Minnesota River Valley NWR - Crews are working on reestablishing oak savanna habitat to attract RHWO. Many of the oaks are still small but with burning and efforts to remove thick understory prospects for the future look pretty good.. A single RHWO was seen this spring at the margin of the Rapids Lake oak savanna restoration there.

Sherburne NWR - RHWO have been reported on the Blue Hill Trail and the Mahnomen Trail. On a recent survey of the eastern portion of the refuge we did find one RHWO in an area we had never seen one before. So birds are present.

The Belwin Conservancy continues its efforts to expand its oak savanna habitat. For the first time, in a long time, a bird was spotted in the Lake Sarah area this spring.

Nerstrand Big Woods State Park - Great news here. In
(Continued on next page, Agencies)

Need Matching Grant Donors

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has an anonymous donor who is offering to match up to \$2500 for anyone who donates to RhWR. If you would like to donate to RhWR and have your donation matched by the Anonymous patron, send your donation to the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery at –

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801

Please state that the donation is for the Anonymous match.

A Note from the Chair

Summer 2019

It has been and continues to be a very busy summer for the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project. We are learning more critical information about RHWOs through our research work to help recovery efforts. We are adding new volunteers, as well as connecting with new and previously involved land owners and managers about habitat for RHWOs. More people from many areas are learning about our efforts. And the search for nesting groups of RHWOs throughout the state and region continues.

The education and habitat team has made well over 400 contacts recently through tables at expos and conferences. We were selected to have an interactive "poster" at the National Audubon Conference in Wisconsin the weekend of July 26-29 where many people from all over the country learned about our project.

At Cedar Creek ESR, where the largest known and accessible nesting cluster of RHWOs in the state and region exists, the formal research we initiated is getting fairly exciting. Several nesting pairs this year have again exhibited polyandry, which was discovered last year. All planned tracking devices have been placed on new 2019 nestlings. Several tracking devices have been removed from RHWOs



who overwintered with them in 2018-19. Data from those devices will be analyzed later in the year. Lead researcher Dr. Elena West and the research technicians are currently very busy tracking adults and nestlings every day, as well as documenting second and late nesting attempts. Volunteers continue collecting new data as well. A lot is happening.

Siah St. Clair, Steering Committee Chair

Note From the Editor

There are two important articles in this newsletter. The first is the matching donation article on the front page. We have a willing donor who will match all donations up to \$2500. This would mean \$5000 for the RhWR to help our research and education. So please donate!

The second is the "Report Red-headed Woodpeckers" article. The RhWR is always looking for RHWO sighting so that we can know where they are at all times. By reporting your sightings on eBird we have a means to see where they are. So click on eBird and report your birds!

Jerry Bahls, Editor

Agencies, *Continued from 1st page*

a survey, just completed in late July, six birds were observed including a breeding pair with a juvenile. Reliable reports of another breeding pair and juvenile that were seen at the campground feeders. Rising water levels have flooded and killed a massive number of trees which the manager is allowing to stand and decay.

St. Croix State Park (Hinkley) - Great savanna habitat as a result of straight-line winds blow downs but not enough big trees. Future possibilities and we will continue to monitor.

Camp Ripley National Guard Headquarters. - Birds present in numbers but we cannot survey because they are located within the parameters of the firing range. We do keep in touch and know there are plenty of birds present, we just can't get in to survey them.

Sleuthing efforts in the Milaca area and at Big Marine State Park have been thorough, but revealed no RHWO present. PLEASE keep your ears to the ground and report any suspected groups of RHWO. And remember, (as exciting as they may be) we are not interested in individual sightings. We are interested in small groups of birds (3-4 pairs) so we can work with land managers to preserve and expand that habitat. E-mail group sightings to chetmeyers0@gmail.com (that's a numeric 0 after Meyers).

Chet Meyers

Report Red-headed Woodpeckers

The article in the "RHW NEWS" asks you to report clusters of red-headed woodpeckers (RHWO) when you find them. But what if you only see one or two? The information will still be very valuable to us. **Report your sighting to eBird.** [If you have a smart phone, download their app. It simplifies your reporting.] When you do this, this is what happens. eBird puts a pin on a map where it was seen [They get the gps coordinates from you in your sighting report. This is simplified if you have the app.] If others observers also see a RHWO in the same area, a small cluster of pins will appear on the map. This may indicate a cluster, but everyone could be seeing the same bird. Thus our volunteers will investigate the area to determine if this data indicates a cluster.

When you report a bird sighting eBird doesn't just ask where you saw it, it also asks for a breeding code (it's selected from a drop down list) that contains info like "In Appropriate Habitat", "Singing Male", etc. You can also make a comment about your sighting. This info can help researchers determine if the bird is breeding or migrating.

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery's (RhWR) website page "Report Redheads" (<http://www.redheadrecovery.org/report-redheads/>) has a link to the eBird "Explore Data" page for the RHWO. Just click on "click here" in the last line of the first paragraph. You will be taken to a world map that contains all the RHWO sightings. Just zoom in to the location where you saw your bird and click on the map pin [blue and red (recent)] and look for your sighting from the list. Click on the date and see more detail about the visit.

Therefore if you can look at the data, so can our researchers. If enough observers report their sightings, it may be possible to see a migration pattern from the data in the spring and fall. Or your observation may let us know they are nesting in that area. It may also be possible to see where the RHWOs are nesting across Minnesota and the Midwest. This can be very valuable data for our researchers to help the RHWOs recover to a sustainable population in Minnesota and across the whole country.

So always report your sightings on eBird! THANKS!!

RhWR Contact Information

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Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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RhWR Fund Raiser

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

Research Team 2019

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) 2019 research team has again been assembled with three talented researchers. The team is again headed by Dr. Elena West and assisted by Ornithological Research Technicians April Strzelczyk and Sarah Stewart. Below are biographies of this outstanding team.

Dr. Elena West, Post-Doctoral Researcher, University of Minnesota, 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 began work with the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project (Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis) in 2017. In her current position she is conducting research on the annual cycle demography, habitat associations, and migration ecology of red-headed woodpeckers (RHWO) in Minnesota. In this role she is continuing to partner with Dr. Henry Streby at the University of Toledo and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. 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. Elena West



April Strzelczyk

April Strzelczyk is from Carol Stream, IL and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Bemidji State University in 2013. Since then, she has conducted research on avian, mammalian, reptilian, and insect species. April has worked on a range of projects from assessing bird-building collisions, avian influenza in waterfowl, abundance and distribution of sharp-tailed grouse and wild turkey, population demographics of Blanding's turtles, population density of bumblebees, and mortality investigations in white-tailed deer. April has also developed wildlife surveys and volunteer programs to promote a better understanding of wildlife in regional parks, through her work with Dakota County

Parks. She has a broad range of research interests and plans to continue working on projects that involve human impacts on wildlife populations.

Sarah Stewart is from Charleston, South Carolina and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from Clemson University in May 2019. Her previous field experiences with threatened red-cockaded woodpeckers (*Dryobates borealis*) sparked her interest in the ecology of cavity nesters and their impacts on forest communities, particularly those that are fire-dependent. Her work with red-cockaded woodpeckers involved monitoring active nest cavities, collecting and banding nestlings, and estimating fledgling survival by re-sighting color band combinations at nest clusters. During the summer of 2018 Sarah worked on a research project assessing the demography and health status of common map turtles (*Graptemys geographica*) in the oil-polluted Kalamazoo River, Michigan. Her time on the RHWO Recovery Project has already provided her with many rich field experiences, and she looks forward to continuing her work in avian conservation and research after this season ends.



Sarah Stewart

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 (2019) - Monitor roost sites, Monitor mast (Please note requires CCESR training.)

Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities or to ask any questions.

Next RhWR Steering Committee Meeting

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The next meeting will be on September 18, 2019 at the Brookdale Library at 6125 Shingle Creek Pkwy in Brooklyn Center at 7:00 pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please encourage friends to attend also. For current information check our website at www.RedheadRecovery.org.

Important Dates

Research Team Meeting	Aug. 14, 2019
Approx. Migration Start Date	Aug. 20, 2019
Steering Committee Meeting	Sep. 18, 2019
Official End of Breeding Season	Sep. 31, 2019

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

Save that Snag!

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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 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