



# The REDHEAD



## Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Summer 2020

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 14 No. 3

### RHWO NEWS

#### The Future of State-wide Red-headed Woodpecker Research: Members Can Help!

Currently, information on the statewide breeding distribution of Red-headed woodpeckers and the habitats that support them for restoration and conservation efforts are lacking. To extend the study of red-headed woodpeckers beyond the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR), Dr. Elena West has written a proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). It will use cutting-edge technology to identify state-wide red-headed woodpecker distributions and collect information on their reproduction and breeding habitats. The project, **Bioacoustics for broad-scale species monitoring and conservation (LCCMR ID: 2021-396)** is a logical extension of our on-going study of red-headed woodpeckers at CCESR. Identifying new breeding locations and habitats state-wide will greatly benefit monitoring efforts for red-headed woodpeckers in Minnesota.

Your support is needed. Contact any or all of the LCCMR commissioners by email before August 13th. Ask their support of this needed project. Names and email addresses of commissioners at the link below. Be sure to mention you are a RhWR member and the project's title and code: **Bioacoustics for broad-scale species monitoring and conservation. LCCMR ID: 2021-396**

LCCMR member names & email addresses at: <https://www.lccmr.leg.mn/about/members/members-in-dex.html>

### Note From the Editor

The CCESR is a University of Minnesota facility and our Team must follow their rules, which mandates the wearing of masks at all times. Hence the masks in the pictures. So that you know who is in the 1<sup>st</sup> picture on page 2, they are from left – Kirsti Carr, April Strzelczyk and Dr. Elena West. The masked man in the background is Jim Howitz and the masked man you can't see (photographer) is Siah St. Clair, who took all the pictures in this issue.

Jerry Bahls, Editor

### A Note from the Chair

Winter 2020

I hope all are well, safe, and getting out in nature, and perhaps seeing some Red-headed Woodpeckers.

In this time of difficult issues and pandemic uncertainty, the Red-headed Woodpecker Project is moving forward with good progress and data collection. As I write these notes summer is half over and our project work is in high gear. One out-state survey found several pairs of RHWOs in one state park. The research work at Cedar Creek, working with a small crew and within strict UM safety guidelines, has found more RHWO nests than in any previous year. Tracking devices have been placed on fledgling and adult RHWOs. The new nest cameras have produced over 150,000 images and videos, and are creating more every day. We hope to have these images on a public platform soon so all can help in the process of documenting behaviors and nest activities. Some of the nest activities have never been observed before. Part of what is being learned is that it appears RHWOs create their nest cavities that then are in high demand for homes by other animal species, causing intense drama for ownership.

Our project is also supporting future research for RHWOs throughout Minnesota. A proposal will be considered within the next week or so at the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) to gather data on RHWOs throughout the state using new field technology. Approval would give extensive information about RHWO presence and reproductively active areas throughout Minnesota. Land managers and owners would be given Best Management Practices (BMP) information about RHWOs that are forthcoming from the current research being accomplished. Some land managers are already interested in managing their land to attract RHWOs and have contacted us for information.

There is real potential for RHWOs to benefit from the work and research that is being accomplished.

Siah St. Clair, Steering Committee Chair

## 2020 Research Team

Introducing the 2020 Red-headed Woodpecker Research Team. The Team is again led by Dr. Elena West, who is starting her fourth year leading the red-headed woodpecker research.

We are very happy to have April Strzelczyk back for a second year. April is from Carol Stream, IL and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Bemidji State University in 2013. Since then, she has developed a passion for researching human impacts on wildlife populations. April has worked on a range of research projects and has developed wildlife surveys and volunteer programs to promote a better understanding of wildlife in regional parks. Some of her past projects include: distance sampling and mortality rates of white-tailed deer, avian influenza in waterfowl, bird-building collisions, road mortality, and presence surveys of marshbirds, small mammals, fisher, bats, bumblebees, snakes, turtles, and frogs. April in her second season with the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project is looking forward to learning more about these amazing birds.



Kirsti Carr has joined the Team this year. Kirsti grew up in Connecticut and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from the University of Vermont in 2018. She wrote her undergraduate thesis about the basking behavior of Spiny Softshell turtles and also assisted with researching the song structure of southern hemisphere humpback whales. Since then, most of her field work has been with birds, her truest passion, including monitoring Common Loon populations in Vermont and montane songbird surveys throughout New England. Most recently she has worked in California and Nevada, counting and banding raptors in fall migration. She has also worked on nesting studies of Swainson's Hawks, Osprey, and Barn Owls. She's an avid birder and is fascinated by breeding ecology and molt in birds, and has loved working on the Red-headed Woodpecker team thus far.



April Strzelczyk



Kirsti Carr



April Strzelczyk

Kirsti Carr

### RhWR Contact Information

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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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.



# Open Letter from Chet Meyers

## Chair of the Habitat and Education Committee

July 8, 2020

Dear Friends and Red-headed Woodpecker Enthusiasts

By now we are all tired of all the restrictions and limitations imposed by the COVID-19 virus. We are greatly saddened by the death of George Floyd, by a Minneapolis policeman, and by the loss of property that occurred during the protests that followed. So, where's the good news?

Well, this note is to tell you that the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery is alive and well. The birds are as numerous and feisty as ever.

Here's more good news.

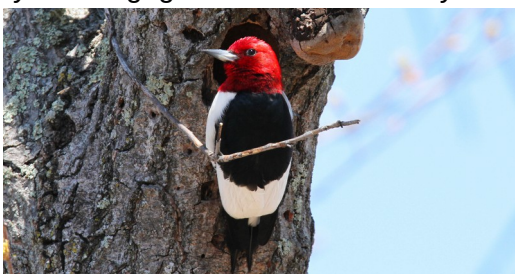
- Dr. Elena West, post-doctoral researcher at the U of MN, is back at the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve (CCESR) with two research technicians and two RhWR volunteers, Siah St. Clair and Jim Howitz, collecting and processing data.
- The research team is monitoring 43 active nests and 33 of these already have young nestlings. Some of the young have already fledged. So far, 17 of the monitored nests have failed.
- Nine adults that had been marked with GPS units last year have been recaptured. Thirteen birds have new GPS units; a total of 25 new units are planned for this year. Six adults with radio transmitters are being tracked multiple times per week to estimate home range and behavior during the breeding season.
- Trail cameras have been attached to seven trees collecting information on activities at nest cavities. Two additional cameras focus on RHWO non-brooding season roosts. We have captured photos of RHWO pairs and nestlings, nighttime visits by mice, flying squirrels with night time sounds of Whip-Poor-Wills, and frogs calling and day-time visits by turkeys, Sand-hill cranes and bison. We hope to be able to turn the many photos captured into something others can participate in, by helping classify images and videos.
- Portholes have been created in 5 trees, so the research team can safely place tracking devices on nestlings before they fledge.
- The bison are back... seventeen in number and, this year, very well behaved.

We really miss those of you who have volunteered in the past with nest surveys and other data collection. We hope that, as the pandemic continues to decline, as management of the pandemic continues to improve, the University of Minnesota can once again open CCESR to you, our loyal volunteers, and on special occasions to the general public. The Fish Lake Nature Trail (adjacent to Cedar Creek with parking at the end of Durant Rd.) is still open to the public and there are a few active nests along that trail.

In addition to all this good news, our Education and Habitat arm continues to stay in contact with our seven Habitat Partners. We did postpone a survey at Nerstrand Big Woods State Park because of the COVID-19 virus, but will complete surveys at Belwin Conservancy, Sherburne NWR, and are in touch with the other Partners. In addition, we continue to update our public information flyers.

So, here's hoping you are sheltering safely and taking advantage of the greater freedom we can experience in the out of doors. Two activities have increased pretty substantially during the pandemic - bird watching and jig-saw puzzle making. So get out there and puzzle over birds.

Stay healthy and engaged when and where you can.



Sincerely,

Chet Meyers, Chair  
Habitat and Education Committee

## 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 (2020) – **All projects at**

**CCESR are cancelled until further notice.** Watch for information to monitor nest camera photos at home.

Email rhwracm@comcast.net to sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities or to ask any questions. Send this info to your friends and bird lovers.

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

## Next RhWR Steering Committee Meeting

The RhWR Steering Committee usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. The next *virtual* meeting will be on September 16, 2020 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. For information check our website at [www.RedheadRecovery.org](http://www.RedheadRecovery.org).

### Important Dates

Dr. West LCCMR Presentation	Aug 3, 2020
LCCMR Grant Decision	Aug 13, 2020
Research Team Meeting	Aug 19, 2020
ACM Board Meeting	Aug 24, 2020
Steering Committee Meeting	Sep 16, 2020
ALL meetings are <i>virtual</i> until further notice.	

# 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.

*I'd like to contribute to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also!* Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (\$20) and as a donor to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (suggested donation \$20). 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