



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Summer 2008

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 2 No. 3

Nestbox Information

Cedar Creek Nestbox Results

On Saturday March 29, 2008 Jack Hauser, Dan Gransee & Dan Kahl placed seven "Experimental Red Headed Woodpecker (RHWO) Boxes" in the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel. The box designs were Typical JGH box with slanted roof (413, 414, 499) and the JGH Snag box, (565, 566, 567, 570). The dimensions of the Typical JGH box is 5.5" x 4" floor, 5" floor/entrance-bottom, 2.125" x 1.75" oval entrance hole, 15° sloped roof with large overhang. The dimensions of the JGH Snag box is 5" octagon floor, 7" floor/entrance-bottom, 2.25" x 1.75" oval entrance hole, 15° sloped roof with large overhang and is a man-made log painted gray with painted knot holes and cracks to look like a snag. The boxes were mounted 5' on pole (413, 414, 499) and hung 20' up in oak tree (565, 566, 567, 570). All the boxes were filled to the roof with wood chips to simulate a solid but decaying tree.

The boxes were first checked on June 2nd with the following results. Boxes 413, 414 and 565 were still full of wood chips. Box 499 had 2/3 of the chips removed and an Eastern Bluebird (EB) had built a nest and laid 4 blue eggs in it. Box 566 had the chips removed to the bottom of the hole and a Tree Swallow (TRES) had placed two white feathers in it and laid 3 white eggs. A European Starling was found dead on the ground below Box 567. The box had had all the chips removed and a European Starling had laid 5 blue

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A Note from the Chair

Cedar Creek Survey Efforts Very Successful

This has been a busy and exciting month for Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery. We have been surveying the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Eco Systems Science Reserve for nesting RHWO and trying to estimate a total census. While we do not have exact numbers it seems clear that, during the breeding season, there are at least 50 birds present. Thus far our nest surveys have turned up eight successful nests (i.e. adults feeding young). Usually RHWO do a pretty good job fledging young, but we will be looking for fledglings in the coming weeks. For many of us, including me, this was a first time event...actually finding a nest with young in it. We divided Cedar Creek into seven survey areas, delineated by burn unit roads. Four of the seven areas had no nesting birds, but the other three had eight nests and we expect to find more. If you want to visit Cedar Creek you should be able to see RHWO along the west side of Durrant Road, which runs north of County Road 26. *Please do not enter the area, as it is closed to the public.* There will be a public walking trail around Fish Lake that will be opened at some point in the future. It is easy to see and hear birds by driving north on Durrant Road and looking west. Please respect the private residences along the east side of Durrant.

Cluster Identification Continues

We have identified five locations in Minnesota where RHWO clusters can be found. Our Web site lists them. This is where we really need help from Audubon birders. We want to identify the best RHWO habitat that presently supports more than one breeding pair in a ¼ mile radius. Then we will contact landowners and work to preserve that habitat. If you know of such locations, please fill in our "Cluster Identification Form" available on our Web site and e-mail it back to us, or call one of us let us know.

Patches and Buttons

By the end of summer we will have both sew-on patches and pin-stick buttons available with a handsome logo and RHWO picture. Watch for more news on this.

- Chet Meyers

Please Renew

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) receives almost all of its revenue from its membership dues. It is time to renew your membership. The dues remain at \$5/year. Please make check to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis and send your renewal dues to -

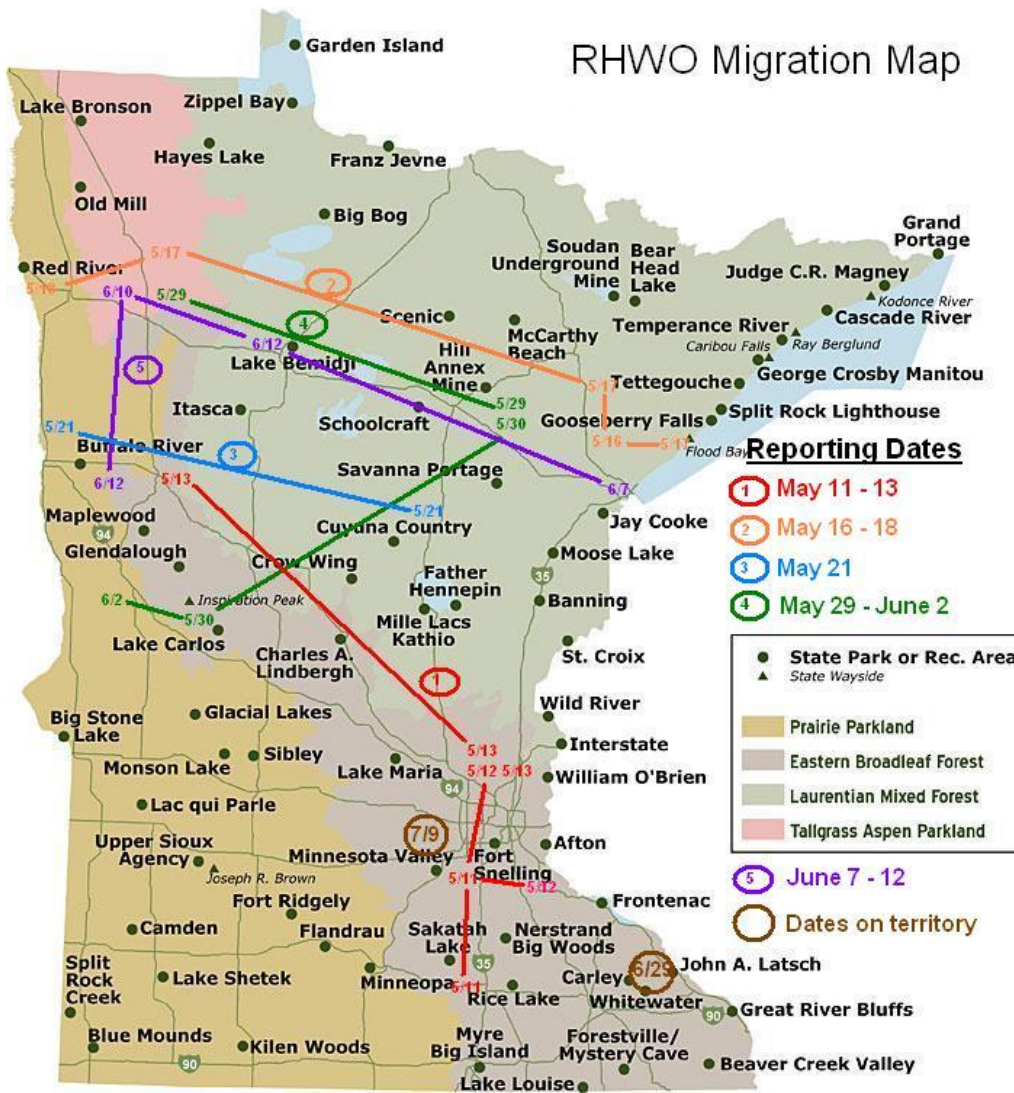
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
RhWR
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0801

Thank you for your continued support.

Save that Snag!

RHWO Migration Map

RHWO 2008 Migration



An attempt was made to track the migration of the red-headed woodpeckers during the spring 2008 migration. Using reports on MNBird, the MOU e-mail bird observation service, observations were plotted on the map. The placement of the observation can only be a gross estimate of the actual site, but gives a useful tool in summarizing the observations. The reporting dates are divided into 6 sets with the earliest reported observations being set 1 in red and the last two in large brown circles with the observation date in the circle. The assumption was made that the last observations were birds that were now on territory and possibly were nesting birds.

Set 1 observations are highly likely migrating birds. Set 2 birds are probably at or near the end of their migration. Set 3 are probably birds at the end of their migration and moving within their nesting territory looking for appropriate sites. Set 4 birds are probably the same as Set 3 with more of a firm territory established. Set 5 birds are likely on

territory and actively building nests holes. The foregoing is a hypothesis based on these observations and RHWO literature.

The 26 observations present on the map suggests a couple of other hypotheses. Migrating RHWO may not use the Prairie Parklands in the southwestern corner of Minnesota as a migration route, but do use the Eastern Broadleaf Forest. It is also curious to see that most of the observations were in northern Minnesota. Does this mean that that is where the largest populations of RHWO's are? Other data does not support that hypothesis.

It is clear from these observations that no firm conclusions can be made from them. A few hypotheses can be made. That is why the RhWR is pursuing these types of observations. A small set of data can give us clues about the RHWO migration in Minnesota, but we need more observations over more years to give us more data that will give us the 95% confidence that our hypothesis is valid. We would like to continue receiving these type of observations over the next 4 years. This fall the RhWR would like to get observations of this year's young and their movements as well as adult movements. Please report them on MNBird or send them directly to jobaud@comcast.net.

RhWR Contact Information

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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Note from the Editor -

As you can see "The REDHEAD" has expanded to four pages. The red-headed woodpecker on the front page has been changed to a cropped photo by Jim Williams. Some of the standard pieces of information have been moved. In order to continue publishing a four page version, articles from the membership would be a tremendous help. Thanks!!

- The Editor

Wildlife Cycle of a Tree

A tree's capacity to provide wildlife habitat changes over time. As a tree matures and begins to decline (due to insects, diseases, injury or old age), the tree enters into a "wildlife cycle" and plays a vital role in providing habitat and promoting ecosystem biodiversity. Even when a tree dies, its usefulness does not end; it continues to provide valuable habitat for many species of wildlife. When evaluating a tree as a possible wildlife tree, certain characteristics make them suitable for different types of wildlife habitat, depending on what phase of the "wildlife cycle" they are in. The "wildlife cycle" can be simplified into three identifiable phases, each phase being unique and adapted for different types of wildlife:

Phase 1: The first phase in the "wildlife cycle" of a tree involves standing dead or dying trees that initially attract non-cavity nesting species and primary cavity excavators (e.g., woodpeckers). These trees contain sound wood and the branches are intact. Trees in this initial phase provide foraging sites and perches for insect-feeding birds and raptors, singing perches for many songbirds, nest sites for species such as great blue herons, osprey, hawks and eagles, and nesting sites for primary cavity excavators such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, and others.

Phase 2: The second phase in the "wildlife cycle" of a tree involves increased decay. The tree is still standing, but the wood is no longer sound. The branches and bark are shed and the top and larger portions of the stem break off. During this phase, the tree becomes attractive to secondary cavity users that colonize existing cavities, excavated and abandoned by primary cavity nesting species or formed when branches are shed or when tops are broken off. Secondary cavity users include owls, some species of ducks, birds (e.g., bluebirds, swallows, wrens and flycatchers), raccoons, flying squirrels, bats, and some amphibians. These species use the tree for nesting, foraging, roosting, and perching.

Phase 3: In this third and final phase of a tree's "wildlife cycle," decay has reduced the tree to a stump and debris pile. Woody debris is important habitat for many wildlife species such as salamanders, toads, mice, grouse, and woodpeckers. It is used for nesting and shelter, as a source of and place to store food, as a lookout site, for drumming, sunning, and preening sites, and as a natural bridge or highway across streams. Decaying logs also serve as nurse-trees for seedlings and contribute to nutrient cycling.

- Reprinted from - Jill D. Pokorny, **Urban Tree Risk Management: A Community Guide to Program Design and Implementation, Chapter 5, "Correction of Hazardous Defects in Trees"**, By Martin MacKenzie, Tom T. Dunlap, Barbara J. Spears, and Joseph G. O'Brien

Criteria for Selecting Wildlife Trees

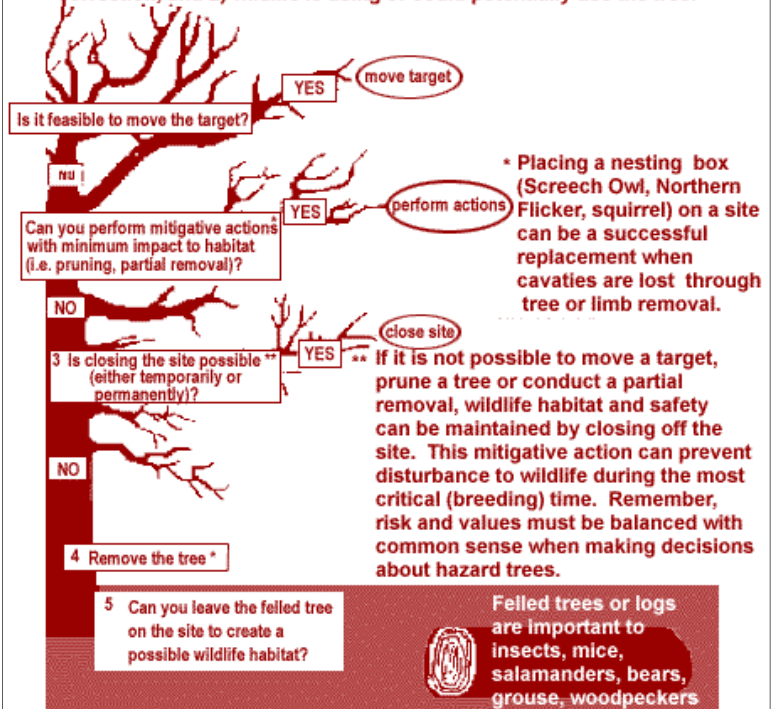
Within community parks and other natural areas, a variety of wildlife trees should be selected for use, ranging from trees suited for long-term management to trees suited for short-term management. Phase 1 trees will be the most valuable trees for providing long-term wildlife habitat since they will remain standing for an extended period and will likely develop a large number of cavities over time. Trees greater than 15 inches in diameter, and more than 50 feet tall, are considered the most valuable to wildlife. These trees should be slow decaying tree species such as oak and pine. Phase 2 trees provide immediate habitat for secondary cavity users and serve as foraging, roosting, and perching sites. To identify Phase 2 trees, look for existing cavities, dens or foraging holes; existing nesting or roosting sites; and/or the presence of fresh scats or bird droppings. Phase 3 trees provide immediate habitat for wildlife and contribute to nutrient recycling. Selecting trees that are currently inhabited or used by wildlife has the obvious advantage for educational purposes and demonstration projects.

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Save that Snag!

Wildlife Habitat / Hazard Tree Decision Model

This model provides a logical order of decision making that will help minimize impact to wildlife and maintain, enhance, and/or create wildlife habitats while addressing hazard tree concerns. Assumptions that are built into the model are: 1) there is a hazard tree that needs correction, and 2) wildlife is using or could potentially use the tree.



Questions? Contact: **Federal** USDA Forest Service:
Durham, NH (603) 868-7600
St. Paul, MN (651) 649-5162
Mortantown, WV (304) 285-1550

Please consult your state wildlife agency or Threatened and Endangered Species Coordinator for more information on wildlife.

"Nestbox Results" (Continued from page 1)

eggs in it. They were removed along with the box. Box 570 had the chips removed to 3 inches below the bottom of the hole and an EB had built a nest and laid 4 white eggs in it.

On July 7th the boxes were rechecked with the following results. Box 413 and 565 had a few chips removed from them. Box 414 was still full of chips and was moved about 50 feet to a more open area. The nest in Box 499 was empty and was removed. Four young EBs had fledged from it. Three TRES' had fledged from Box 566 and an EB had laid 4 blue eggs in it. Box 567 had been removed. Four EBs had fledged from Box 570 and a new EB nest had been built containing 4 new white eggs.

Because the Bluebirds are still active and Red-headed woodpeckers (RHWO) might have a second brood, the boxes will continue to be monitored through August.

While no RHWO used the initial designs of boxes, more

insight into the nesting of Bluebirds and Tree swallows was gained. With the information that will have been gained from the monitoring of the RHWO nest holes and their location on the ground and in the trees, this will provide a better understanding of their nesting habits and help in designing new nest boxes for them for 2009.

Written from Report by Jack Hauser

Save that Snag!

Next RhWR Meeting

The RhWR meets on the 2nd Wednesday each month at (7:00 pm) at the Lund's Store 1 block west of 50th & France in Edina. The next meeting will be on August 13, 2008. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Check our website for current information.

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

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Here



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery at the rate of \$5/year! Please send my membership information to the address below.

Yes, I'd like to join Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis also! Please add me as a member of the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis at the rate of \$13/year. Please send my membership information and *Kingfisher* to the address below.

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