



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Winter 2023

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 17 No. 1

Note From the Editor

While searching the internet for the latest Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) research articles, I came across this journal published in Gaines, NY by Frank A. Lattin entitled *"The Young Oologist"*. The first edition was published in May 1884. The journal was for bird egg collectors. A subscription cost 50 cents a year.

Collecting bird eggs was put forward as a scientific endeavor. In an article on *"Instructions for Collecting Birds' Eggs"* by J. P. Norris it states "Collecting birds' eggs for scientific purposes, requires far more discrimination than collecting specimens in any other branch of Natural History. Animals, birds, insects, shells, plants, etc., carry their own identification with them; and knowing the locality, a person well versed in the particular science in question, can at once pronounce what they are. But with birds' eggs it is different. Without [sic] they are properly identified and authenticated, they are of no value for scientific purposes whatever. Therefore—Identification and Authentication should be the chief aim of the egg-collector, although the other details should not be neglected.

...Whenever the collector does not positively recognize the parent bird of a nest of eggs, the parent should be procured and preserved with the eggs. But if he is positively certain of the identity of the parent, there is no necessity for obtaining it.

When, however, he is unable to procure the parent, either from not being able to shoot the bird, owing to its shyness, then he should make a careful observation of the materials of which the nest is composed—supposing that he cannot bring it away with him owing to its size or unportability—and the nature of the spot where it was found. This should be carefully noted on a register kept for the purpose (a description of which will be given hereafter) opposite to the number which is marked on the eggs.

If the collector is fortunate enough to shoot, snare or trap the parent bird or birds, they should be carefully skinned and labeled with a reference to the eggs of which they are the parents—thus : 'Parent of eggs marked No. -'"

Isn't it great we now have other methods of parental identification.

Editor (Continued on page 2)

A Note from the Chair

Winter 2023

Greetings to all as I write this short message with a temperature of -16 degrees outside. I hope everyone is staying warm but getting outdoors some to enjoy nature in winter. I would like to extend a big thank you to all who have renewed their memberships and/or made donations over the last couple of months. We currently have raised \$18,500 of our needed budget of \$31,175 for this coming season. So, as of this writing we still need \$12,675. We have several grant applications that we are waiting to hear back from. We plan to reach our goal in the next few months. The majority of our budget covers wages for summer research technicians who have already been hired, so reaching our goal is important.

In other activities the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project (RhWR) tabled at the MOU Paper Session on the U of M campus in December and at the Northern Green Expo in Minneapolis in January. Tabling at these events allows RhWR to reach out to many new people and let them know about the population decline of RHWOs and about the work we are doing to help turn that population decline around.

On the research front the Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO) nest cameras documented this past summer three RHWO nests that had two successful broods in the same nest. Two other nest cameras documented two other bird species nesting in RHWO nest cavities. This included a pair of Tree Swallows (photo below) and a pair of European Starlings. The nest cameras continue to document new behaviors at these cavities through this winter. Six cameras are up and gathering new info at nest cavities every day through this winter.

Stay warm and well as we work our way into this new year of learning more to help the recovery of Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Siah St. Clair, Steering Committee Chair



RHWO NEWS

In this the third year of the covid pandemic, Red-headed Woodpecker research at Cedar Creek returned to near normal. Field researchers set out acoustic devices, serviced trail cameras, and monitored nests.

Bird walks returned along the Fish Lake Nature Trail, led by woodpecker researchers. The usual orioles, sparrows, warblers, and vireos made their presence known. The star attractions were, as usual, the Red-headed Woodpeckers. Four young fledged from the nest closest to Fish Lake. The pair along the trail to the bison gazebo, "Boo" and "Spooky", had broods of two and three young. So, bird walk participants could see adults and fledglings once the first young began to fledge in late June. "Boo" and "Spooky" were especially cooperative for photography when peanuts were placed on the feeder near their nest tree.

Visitors to the Fish Lake Nature Trail had ample opportunities to find birds, but those wishing to see the bison were often frustrated. All the bison this year were females and seemed largely to ignore the people close to or within the fenced in bison area. They spent most of the daylight hours close to East Bethel Boulevard and so were seldom visible to visitors to the gazebo.

Now that fall is giving way to winter, all the Red-headed Woodpeckers and bison are gone, as are most of the human visitors to the bison and woodpecker areas, awaiting their return in May.

Jim Howitz

Editor (Continued from page 1)

Because the content of this journal was so interesting from an historical sense, there will be "Factoid" excerpts from it in the coming newsletters. They will be added as fill for small spots in the newsletter.

Please submit articles to the newsletter that you find interesting. You don't have to write them yourself but reference who did so they can get proper recognition. Send them to rhwracm@comcast.net. Please also send us comments on our content.

Jerry Bahls, Editor

Dear Friend of Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery,

Despite the cold and fifty inches of snow, the warmer weather can't be far off, and with it the continuing work to promote the recovery of Red-headed Woodpeckers in Minnesota.

Here's what's needed.

Currently there is a gap in our funding for the 2023 season. Please renew your annual dues and consider making a larger donation to RhWR so our important field work can continue.

Yearly dues are \$20.00. An additional \$30, \$50 or \$100 or more will help enable field workers to place and maintain listening devices to collect data on Red-head presence throughout Minnesota. We need to fund a number of field workers if the Project's ambitious goals are to be met.

Mail your donation to RhWR in care of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, P.O. Box 3801 Minneapolis, MN 55403, or go online and make your donation at www.minneapolisaudubon.org/rhwo

Volunteer activities in 2023 are also being planned, including another breeding bird survey at Cedar Creek, visits to our many Habitat Partners, and attending educational events to promote Red-head recovery.

Thanks again for your commitment to nature and the Red-head.

Sincerely,

Tom Beer, RhWPR Membership



Photo by Siah St. Clair

RhWR Contact Information

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Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

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Attention!!!

The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) April 2023 program (April 11 at 7:00 pm) will feature Dr. Elena West who will speak on "Bioacoustics for Broad-Scale Species Monitoring and Conservation".

You must advance register for the program. Go to https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MJQzwt2wRDCXpi7byJ4tEw to register. Look for a replay on the website if you can't attend. Check the ACM website for all programs and get on their list.

Faunal Changes, Dekalb Co., NE Indiana

Not many years ago, and in fact within memory of many of the older inhabitants, this county was covered with one grand forest. Only here and there at a distance of from one to three miles from each other stood the settler's modest cabin with its few acres of clearing. At this time the Indian had gone, leaving only the marks of his camp-fires and a few mounds and stone implements scattered here and there, Wolves, deer were not abundant. Only the birds, multitudes of the noblest birds our section of the country ever produced, alone remained to fill the mind of the early settler with wonder and awe. Noble birds, not that they excelled others in sweetness of song or beauty of plumage, but because there seems to be a certain stateliness connected with them, partaking of the grandeur of the vast forest that sheltered their legions. But what great changes a few years have wrought! The "never-ending" woods has been converted into a smiling open plain, well dotted with beautiful groves. The land of this county is mostly rolling but in some parts is almost level. It has a few beautiful streams and only one or two small lakes. A few swamps still exist, although the genuine Indiana Cat-swamp was by no means uncommon in former times. As the appearance of the land has changed so also have its feathered inhabitants. Some species have disappeared entirely, while only a few individuals of others still linger much after the manner of the Red Man when driven from his native haunts. Chief among our noble game birds may be mentioned.

Meleagris gallopaco (Linn.) – Wild Turkey. We speak of it first because we regard it as one of the most magnificent birds that ever inhabited our section. It seemed to be part of the wild forest and bush-covered swamp where the old "gobbler" strutted around with solemn pace, assuming all the dignity of the most pompous old monarch. They were common even abundant residents, to be met with in retired places. They bred here extensively and some of the settlers relate accounts of finding their nests and setting the eggs under the domestic hen; the young turks appearing in due time, only to wander off into the woods as soon as old enough. After the breeding season they congregated in flocks of sometimes as high as a hundred individuals, and their *quit-quit* was not an uncommon sound to the pioneer boy. But they are gone. The pot-hunter was their untiring enemy. None have been observed for several years.

The species next claiming our attention is *Ectopistes migratorius* (Linn.) – Passenger Pigeon. Perhaps this was the most abundant migrant that ever passed over, or visited us. And it was more than a migrant, for it certainly bred here. We can hardly credit the stories of the immense numbers of these birds once found here. They tell us of hundreds and thousands of pigeons, flocks and clouds, yes, acres and square miles of pigeons, that nearly obscured the sky and the sound of whose wings was like a distant cataract! During the season of migration they would pass over in countless numbers for days. When they selected a woods for a "roost" they would cover the trees for acres, until they broke them down with their own weight. Lighting on a wheat field they would move across it, the rear part of the flock flying over the front, presenting the appearance of a huge rolling mass of forest leaves driven by the wind. But these accounts can only be listened to by the wondering young ornithologist; he will never be permitted to see anything of the kind here. Will he be compelled to see such a diminishing of the numbers of *our* common birds in *his* short life-time? The last great flight of these birds was about the year 1865. I found a nest containing one egg of this species in 1885. They are now, probably extinct within the county.

Branta Canadensis (Linn.) – Canada Goose. Formerly an abundant migrant, occasionally stopping near small lakes. Has been known to breed near the small lakes a few miles north of us. They have been growing more and more uncommon each year until now a large V is a rare sight. I only saw one flock this year ('88). There were thirty of them on the ground in a field within a stone's throw of me: probably had lost their course.

Colinus virginianus (Linn.) – Bob-white. Former quite numerous. Hard winters and sportsman's gun have almost exterminated them. They are more common now than two years ago.

Ceophloeus pileatus (Linn.) – Pileated Woodpecker. Was once a tolerably common resident; the king of our Woodpeckers known among the farmers as "Woodcock", "Logcock", etc. Usually met with in tamarac swamps. None have been seen for a number of years.

Corvus Americanus (Aud.) – American Crow. Is undoubtedly becoming less abundant each year. The long flocks, both ends of which would almost be lost in the distance are a thing of the past.

The *Anatinae* – River Ducks. During the migrating season, large flocks of the species, frequented our ponds and streams and many were summer residents. They are uncommon now.

The Owls – *Syrnium nebulosum* (Forst.), *Megascops asio* (Linn.), and *Bubo virginianus* (Gmel.) were formerly much more common than now. They were driven away into the most unfrequented places. *Bubo* is fond of chickens and for the sin of one all must perish, regardless of the benefit they be to the farmer both as destroyers of vermin and nocturnal songsters.

While man has been the direct cause of the extermination of some of the species noticed, the disappearance of some of them can not be attributed to the plume-hunter, the collector or the "small boy", but is the inevitable result of the march of civilization, the "survival of the fittest." And the stories of their great numbers will undoubtedly be regarded by the students, of future generations, as the inventions of a race of enthusiastic cranks. But while we mourn the loss of these interesting birds, we can see their places taken up (not in so great numbers, perhaps) by more musical and more useful species. Our song birds are undoubtedly increasing in numbers. We now have Orioles, Thrushes, Warblers, Sparrows, Finches, Wrens and Bobolinks as common birds; and we can only hope that they do not go the way of the birds who inhabited the "forest primeval" or go to make room for the despised English Sparrow.

J. O. S., Waterloo, Ind (Printed in "The Young Oologist" December 1885)

RhWR Volunteer Opportunities

The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery (RhWR) has an increasing need for many volunteers now and through 2023.

Here is a list 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 and Facebook
- Lead Citizen Science Projects - Recruit and organize volunteers of RhWR citizen science projects
- Do Citizen Science Projects (2023) – *Watch for announcements.*

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. Send this info to your friends and bird lovers.

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 March 15, 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	Feb. 20, 2023
Steering Committee Meeting	Mar. 15, 2023
Research Team Meeting	TBA 2023

ALL meetings are *virtual* until further notice.

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 (\$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