



The REDHEAD



Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery

Winter 2008

A Special Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 2 No. 1

A Note from the Chair

New Developments and Ongoing Efforts

Even in the midst of winter, developments have been fast and furious. In addition to surveys at Cedar Creek, we have begun our effort to map all viable "clusters" (groupings of two or more pairs in close proximity) of RHWO in Minnesota. We are focusing on clusters, rather than single nesting pairs, because a cluster indicates good overall habitat, and we want to work with landowners to preserve that habitat. We will update a map at our website <www.redheadrecovery.org> as information becomes available. You can help by visiting our website and looking at the "Cluster Identification Form." Please forward us any information on clusters that you know of.

Recently we met with representatives from Audubon International who work to certify golf courses that are wildlife friendly. In Minnesota, savanna habitat is key to RHWO survival, but most natural savanna habitat has been destroyed. From a bird's eye view, however, a golf course looks a lot like a savanna. Studies in Ohio have proven that RHWO use golf courses, so long as dead snags and some form of nuts or acorns are available. There are over 400 golf courses in Minnesota, and we know some of them have clusters of RHWO. We will be working with golf course superintendents to provide suggestions for maintaining good RHWO habitat.

We are also creating an attractive sew-on patch and button folks can wear to show their support for our efforts. Join us at our next meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Edina Lunds (on 50th near France) in the Starbucks Community Meeting Loft.

And remember to SAVE THAT SNAG!

SEXY SNAGS

by E.A. Zimmerman

A standing dead or nearly dead tree is called a "snag." One of my all time favorite snags is located near Amarillo Texas. The "First Tree of the Panhandle" was planted in 1888 by a husband attempting to mollify his homesteading wife, who complained of the monotony of the barren high plains. It was the only tree for miles around and became a local landmark. It managed to survive droughts, blizzards, summer heat and sandstorms. Ironically, it was nailed in 1969 by an

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Did you Know? Courtesy of Alyssa DeRubeis

Habitat Information

Surveys at Cedar Creek to Begin This Spring

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery has developed a formal proposal with Cedar Creek Eco Systems Science Reserve to survey and study Red-headed Woodpeckers (RHWO) on their property. Cedar Creek is about 40 miles north of the Twin Cities near the town of East Bethel and has the largest concentration of RHWO in our state. Our work there will provide an excellent opportunity to study the bird's nesting habits and habitat. Surveys will focus on the southeastern sections of Cedar Creek that have been restored to oak savanna through regular prescribed burns. Five teams of two individuals will visit Cedar Creek once in April, May, June, and July to collect data on types of trees used for nesting, location and height of nest cavity, and other habitat specifics. In addition, we will be cooperating with the Minnesota DNR Nongame Division doing breeding bird surveys on seven bird species of special concern in that area. Our thanks to the folks at Cedar Creek for being so supportive of our work for this wonderful bird.

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unfortunate aerial herbicide application. The deceased tree was left in place because of its historic significance. But in an era of manicured lawns and orchards, and clear cut logging, many snags are cut down, and dead branches are trimmed. So why is this a problem?

Snags supply living quarters and refuge for wildlife. The trunks and roots of snags in rivers and streams act as critical shelter and spawning sites for fish. Birds and creatures like brown bats and peepers often roost in cavities for protection from the elements and predators. Woodpeckers, owls, wood ducks and flying squirrels rely on cavities for nesting (thus qualifying snags as "sexy.") While artificial nestboxes enable species like bluebirds to compete with the more aggressive starlings, some birds like nuthatches prefer the real thing.

Snag and den trees also provide food for a wide variety of animals. "Den trees," which have hollow trunks and/or limbs, are often alive and may continue to produce fruits or nuts (called "mast.") Also, insects are attracted to decaying trees. Even-aged, young softwood tree stands do not support many different kinds of insects compared to older growth, which means fewer birds and mammals. Reducing insect-eating wildlife populations can seriously affect a forest's ability to withstand insect attacks in the future.

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So instead of automatically felling and removing snags:

- Leave an average of seven snag/den trees per acre, evenly distributed throughout your property. Trees larger than 8" diameter at breast height are the most valuable for cavity nesters.
- Practice sustainable forestry and selective thinning. When properly utilized, patch cutting is a valuable wildlife management tool that creates young, brushy habitats essential to many species.
- Leave some logs or large fallen trees on the ground. They offer perches for hawks and squirrels; and loads of insects and other invertebrates for wildlife to eat.

Of course, if a snag or dead limb poses a safety hazard – e.g., because it is hanging over a path, building or electrical lines – it should be removed. In some cases, a diseased limb threatens a living tree and needs to be trimmed. Consult a licensed arborist for advice and assistance in safely removing or saving trees.

- Reprinted with minor editing from www.ourbetternature.org/snags.htm

RhWR Contact Information

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Next RhWR Meeting

The RhWR will meet March 12, 2008 (7:00 pm) at the Lund's Store 1 block west of 50th & France in Edina. All are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Check our website for current information.

Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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Place
Stamp
Here

Did you Know? The main threat to the red-headed woodpecker is the extensive removal of snags.

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! 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