

Red-Headed Woodpecker Blitzes of 2012 and 2013

The Red-headed Woodpecker is a charismatic and easily recognizable species that is uncommon and declining throughout much of its range. BCN's 2014 publication ***Chicago Wilderness Region Birds of Concern*** identifies the Red-headed Woodpecker as a Level 1 species. Level 1 classification represents a species that has high regional threats and is experiencing large population declines. Conservation action is needed to reverse long-term declines and stabilize/increase the species' population.

To provide information on the current nesting success of the Red-headed Woodpecker in Chicagoland, BCN conducted a regional Red-headed Woodpecker Blitz in 2012 and 2013. Using established scientific protocols, 56 monitors scoured Cook, Lake, McHenry, Will, Kane and DuPage counties for RHWOs and their nests.

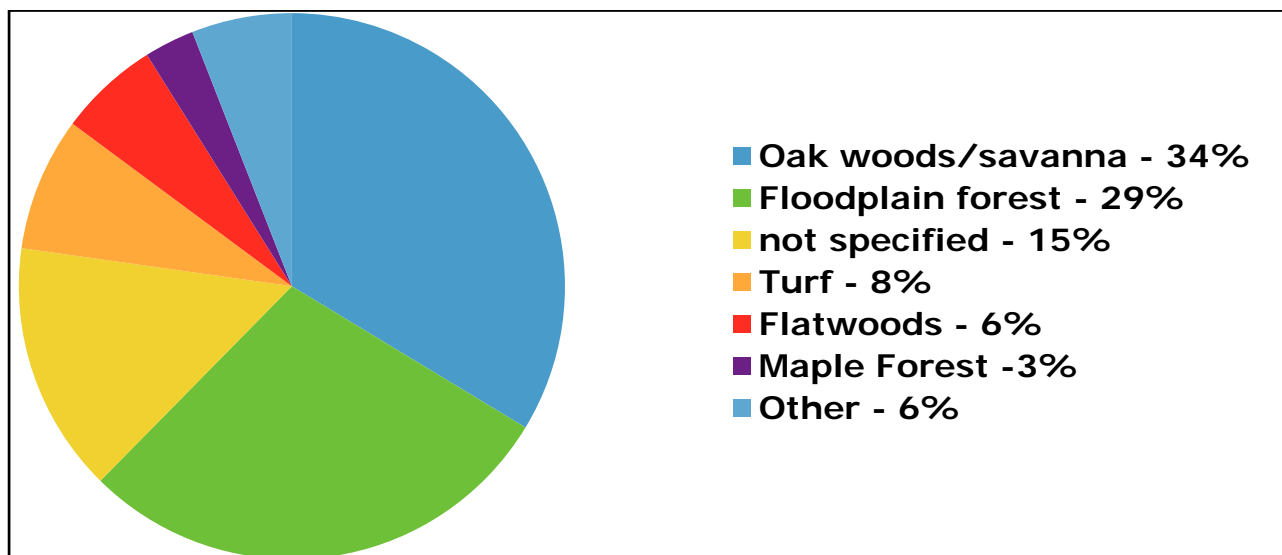
During 2012 a total of 46 monitors located 47 nesting sites. They confirmed 32 nesting pairs and found 30 fledged juvenile birds; the total number of birds observed was 108. In 2013 17 monitors located 22 new nesting sites and confirmed 15 nesting pairs and 13 fledged juveniles; the total number of Red-headed Woodpeckers was 45. The combined totals for both years: 69 nesting sites, 47 confirmed nesting pairs, 43 fledged juveniles and 153 Red-headed Woodpeckers in total.

Northeastern Illinois University students Gant Bowman, Harmony Picciuca and Stephen Doyle took the RHWO observation data sheets submitted by BCN's monitors (aka raw data) and entered, processed and standardized the data for use in a software program – ArcMap. They identified habitat type (see below), mapped nest locations (Figure 2 below), territorial area per nest, tree species and size utilized by RHWOs, plus certain other indicators for RHWO nesting preferences. The analysis also included eBird sightings from 2009-2013.

RHWO nest tree preference: 30% of trees with nests were unidentifiable dead trees (snags), 30% were Eastern cottonwoods, 20% were oaks and the remaining fraction were mostly maples.

Habitat where nests were observed: oak woodland/savanna contained 34% of the nests (an expected result); next was floodplain forests at 29% (an unexpected finding).*

Figure 1 Nest location by habitat type



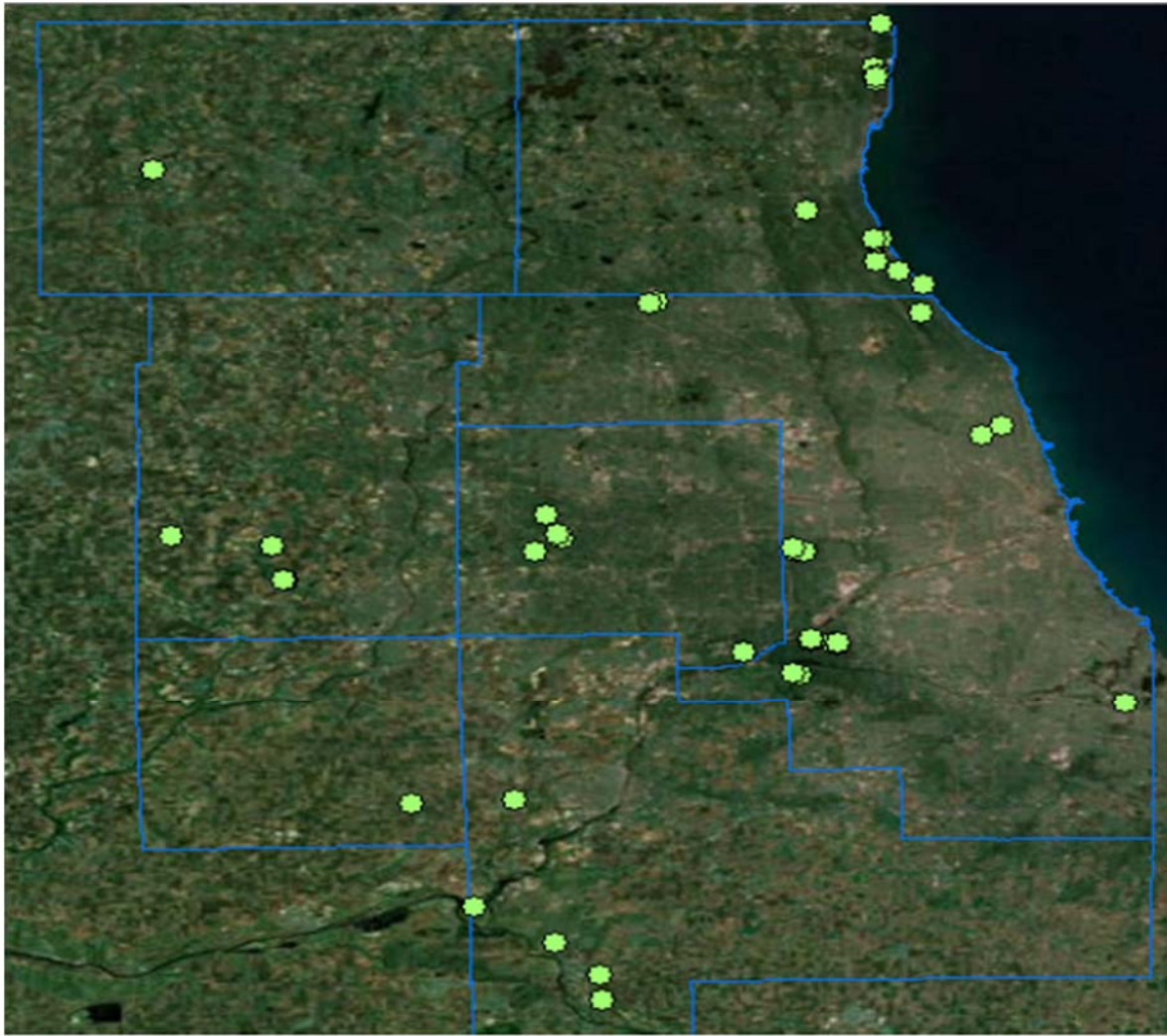


Figure 2 Nest site locations – 6 county area*

We are grateful to Gant Bowman, Harmony Picciuca and Stephen Doyle for their report *Red-headed Woodpeckers of Chicagoland, A look at observed nest locations, sightings, and habitat analysis*, and to their Northeastern Illinois University Professor Caleb T. Gallemore.

The full report by Bowman, Picciuca and Doyle can be read here:

http://bcnbirds.org/greenpapers_files/Red-headed_Woodpeckers_of_Chicagoland.pdf

BCN extends grateful thanks to the volunteer team who coordinated the Blitz efforts and the project organizers: Alan Anderson, Lois Shelgren, Margie Busic, Chris Madsen, Bonnie Duman, Marian Cartwright, Stacy Iwanicki, Lee Witkowski, Al Thomas, Charlie Boyd, Lee Ramsey, Judy Pollock, Karen Glennemeier, Dale Crusoe, Brendan McCooey, Becky Rossof, Suzanne Checchia, Lois Shelgren, Marilyn Schweitzer and James Daley.

Special thanks to the volunteer monitors who spent time in the field finding and documenting Red-headed Woodpeckers over the two-year period: Kathy Amberg, Gil Anderson, Patti Anderson, Jeff

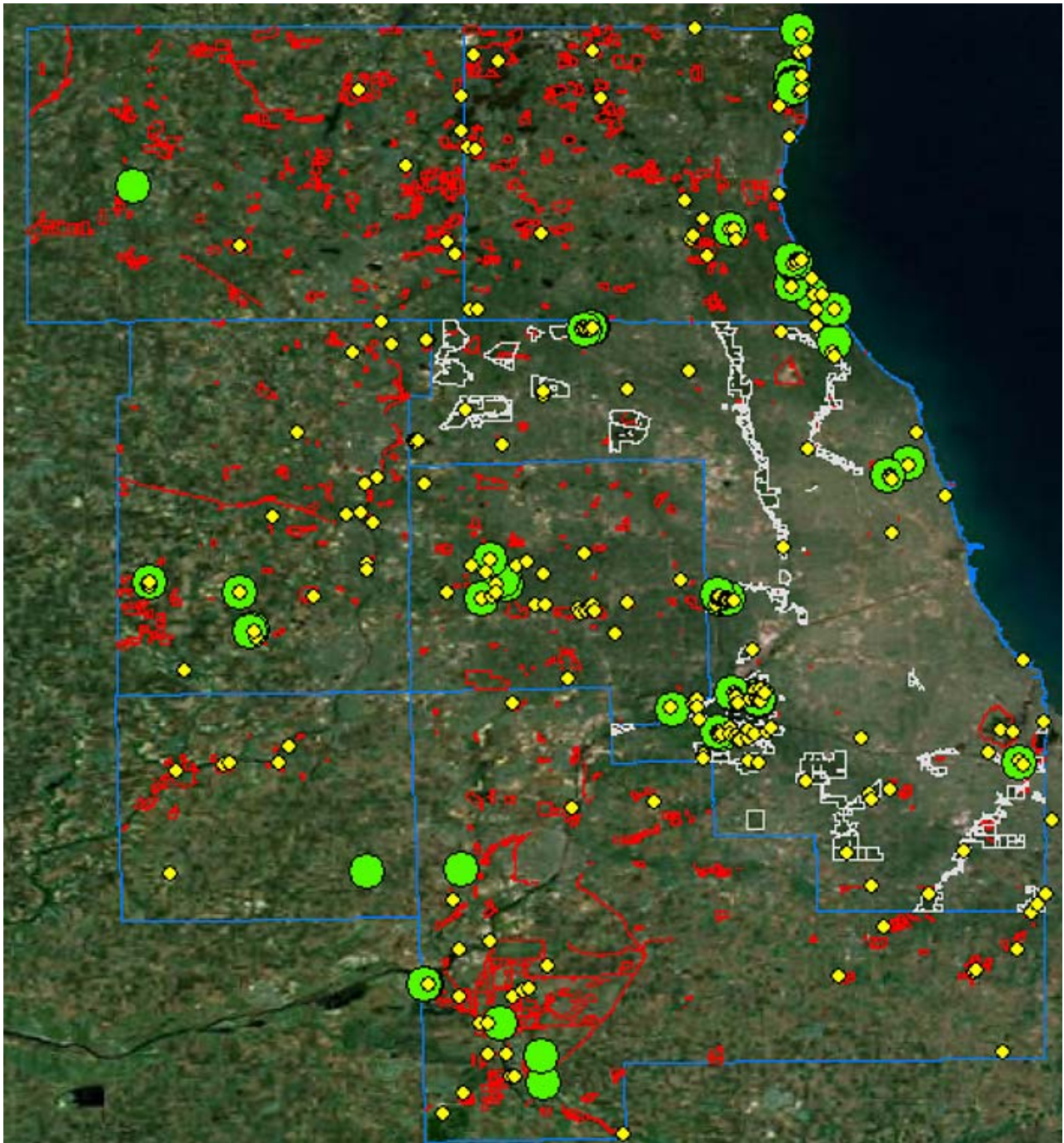
Armstrong, Tim Balassie, Marilyn Bell, Mike Bily, Charlie Boyd, Joan Bruchman, Margie Busic, Alan Busic, Rena Cohen, Carol Cooley, R. Cronin, Michelle Devlin, Carol Fialkowski, Conrad Fialkowski, Bob Fisher, Steve, Fluett, Ed Hammer, Ann Haverstock, Nancy Hulstrand, Ginger Jusko, Mark Jusko, Davida Kalina, Peter, Kasper, Ron Klingensmith, Stephanie Lyons-Olsen, Walter Marcisz, Maureen Marsh, Brendan J. McCooey, Mary Lou Mellon, Marion Miller, Richard Miller, Tom Mulcahey, Marcia Nye, Jim O'Toole, Stephen Packard, Linda Padera, Arthur Peterson, Linda Radtka, Annemarie Rand, Jeff Reiter, Jane Richards, Joe Rockey, Jan Rockey, Laurel Salvador, Vicki Sroczynski, Paul Sweet, Janice Sweet, Susan Tauck, Jay Trees, Bernie Twait, Mike Welsh, Lee Witkowski.

A best-practice paper is planned, which would make recommendations to land managers and stewards on how they can more effectively manage their natural areas to benefit the Red-headed Woodpecker. This information will be useful across the entire range of this iconic species.

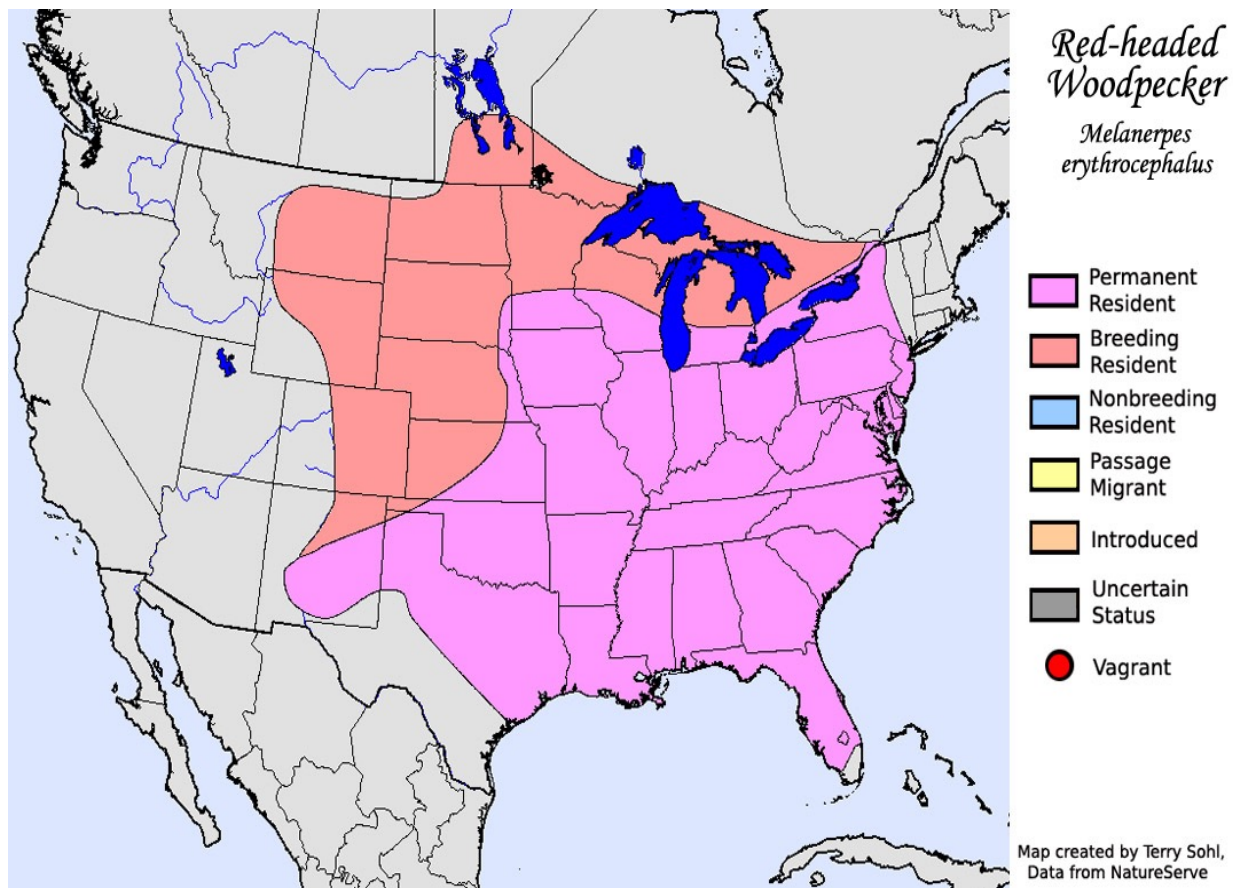
*Gant Bowman, Harmony Picciuca and Stephen Doyle, Northeastern Illinois University, Red-headed Woodpeckers of Chicagoland



Red-headed Woodpecker – Photo by Sid Padgaonkar



Nest site locations (green) combined with additional eBird sightings from 2009-2013 (yellow) and preserved land boundaries (red or white) – 6 county area*



Red-headed Woodpecker range map

Most Common Habitat Types for Red-Headed Woodpeckers in Chicagoland

