



## Featured Species Habitat Management Guidance for Red-Headed Woodpecker

**Latin Name:** *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

**Scope:** Statewide

**Rationale** - *why we value the species and the problem for the species:*

The red-headed woodpecker (RHW) is a SGCN (Michigan DNR 2015) and an Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture focal species (Potter et al. 2007). North American Breeding Bird Survey data for Michigan indicate an average decline in RHW of 5.19% per year over the past 46 years (Sauer et al. 2014). RHW declines have primarily been attributed to the loss of preferred snags and trees (Smith et al. 2000).

**Habitat Need** - *the cause & effect relationship between habitat and species and its primary limiting habitat need:*

Smith et al. (2000) describe primary RHW habitat characteristics as:

- 1) Presence of multiple snags for nest, roosts, and feeding, preferentially selecting sites with groupings of snags caused by beaver girdling, flooding, fire, disease, or insect outbreaks;
- 2) Tall trees or snags (> 12 inches diameter-at-breast-height) with little or no leaf canopy;
- 3) Savannah-like dispersion of large trees or < 50% canopy cover, groves of such trees, forest openings, or forest edges;
- 4) Forest stands > 4.942 acres (2 hectares) with open understories; and
- 5) Hard mast-producing trees in RHW winter range.

**Habitat Objectives** - *the treatment or management to address the primary limiting habitat need:*

- 1) Encourage the presence of beavers in priority geographic areas.
- 2) Where possible during salvage cuts, retain patches of from 1 to 5 acres of dead wood left by fire, disease, and insect outbreaks within the priority geographic area.
- 3) Retain snags with greater than 12 inch diameter-at-breast-height.
- 4) Encourage the presence of oak in forest management objectives within RHW winter range.
- 5) Where possible, restore or maintain savanna-like dispersions of large trees with canopy cover of less than 50%.

**Priority Geographic Areas** – *the specific geographic areas where we should focus management for the species:*

The 18 Regional State Forest Management Plans Management Areas in the northern Lower Peninsula (LP) which identify RHW as a featured species.

**Priority Landscapes** – *the landscape, setting, or cover-type where we should focus management within the areas above:*

Wherever there are ephemeral clumps of standing dead timber. Areas where there are existing or remnant oak savannas or prairie-forest transitions. In RHW winter range: where ever oak can be a management objective.

**Population Goal** - *the goal for the species, its habitat, or a stakeholder's actions:*

An increase in the number of breeding RHW observed in the North American Breeding Bird Survey for Michigan.

**Evaluation Method** - *the monitoring method to measure progress towards the goal above:*

North American Breeding Bird Survey data for Michigan.

**Incidental Species** – *other species which may benefit from management for this species:*

Bear; beaver; pileated woodpecker; ruffed grouse; white-tailed deer; wild turkey; and wood duck.

**References** - citation for documents referenced in this guidance:

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). 2015. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) online list of Frequently Asked Questions on the 2009 Revision of the State Endangered Species List. < [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370\\_12141-213610--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12141-213610--,00.html) >. Accessed 9 Sept. 2015.
- Potter, B.A., G.J. Soulliere, D.N. Ewert, M.G. Knutson, W.E. Thogmartin, J.S. Castrale, and M.J. Roell. 2007. Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture Landbird Habitat Conservation Strategy. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fort Snelling, MN. 124pp.
- Sauer, J. R., J. E. Hines, J. E. Fallon, K. L. Pardieck, D. J. Ziolkowski, Jr., and W. A. Link. 2014. The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 to 2012. Version 02.19.2014. USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD
- Smith, K.G., J.H. Withgott, and P.G. Rodewald. 2000. Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). in A. Poole and F. Gill, eds. The Birds of North America, No. 518. The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. 28pp.