As habitat for the red-headed woodpecker vanishes, so goes this Illinois showpiece.

The Red-headed Stranger

Story By Rachel Mahan
Photo By Adele Hodde

Despite its reputation as an aggressive woodpecker, a decline in red-headed woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus) populations appears to be related to the removal of snags and dead trees.

Rachel Mahan is a science journalist and native of southern Illinois. Her work has appeared in outlets such as Psychology Today, Scientific American Mind and Live Science.com.