

8 Ways to Improve Your Woodland Habitats

Employ these simple practices to enhance the forest health on your property for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people

Forest habitat is critical to the survival of woodland-nesting birds, other wildlife, and people around the world. One indicator of the health of our forests is the presence of diverse bird populations. Unfortunately, many species are in decline. However, through thoughtful forest management and practices, landowners can help reverse this trend and improve habitat to benefit birds, other wildlife, and forest ecosystems as a whole. Here are some simple ways you can help when managing woodlands on your property.

- 1. Around the home, plant native vegetation** that provides fruit, seeds, nectar, and insects for birds to eat all year round.
- 2. Maintain or encourage a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees** on your property. Conifers provide protection from the elements and predators in the winter months.
- 3. Along woodland edges, encourage the growth of vegetation of varying heights**, from grasses and wildflowers, to shrubs, to small trees. This will create habitat for a wide variety of birds.
- 4. Promote a dense understory and midstory of native trees and shrubs** that provides nesting and foraging habitat for species such as the Wood Thrush and Red-eyed Vireo.
- 5. Retain snags and downed deadwood.** Woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, and many other birds nest in holes in snags; while downed deadwood provides protection for ground-nesting birds.
- 6. Learn more about invasive plants** and develop a plan for monitoring and control.
- 7. Promote a diversity of forest age classes** from very young to very old across the property and landscape.
- 8. Keep interior forest intact**, avoid subdividing forest, minimize the construction of new roads or trails greater than 20 feet wide, and keep new buildings close to existing roads.



Photo: Maddie McGarvey/Audubon



Cerulean Warbler.
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