



**CONSERVATION.**  
**EDUCATION.**  
**ADVOCACY.**

Promoting the conservation of wildlife by providing quality habitat is one of the greatest priorities for the Indiana Wildlife Federation. Active management of our forests is essential to effectively provide young, intermediate, and older stages of growth within our forests. IWF fully supports active forest management including the sustainable use of sound timber harvesting practices, prescribed burns and invasive species suppression as a means of providing the varied habitats required by our state's wildlife.

Forests support a major portion of Indiana's wildlife. In habitats ranging from small woodlots to tracts of land over 50,000 acres-- a diverse variety of species can be found inhabiting Indiana's forested lands. Each individual species of native Indiana wildlife has its own set of habitat requirements that enable them to thrive in the natural environment and support their young—those individual requirements may encompass any age or vegetative composition of forest imaginable. Currently, an overwhelming 90% of our forests are classified at the intermediate successional stage and while some species do prefer intermediate secondary growth forests and are doing well in the state-- other species that require substantial areas of much younger or older growth have shown declines due to the lack of suitable habitat.

Due to this fact, IWF encourages a statewide forest management strategy that will increase the percent of forest in the <19 and >100 years old age classes. For example, IWF specifically encourages that the Division of Forestry manage the forests under their control to create more early successional habitat to support those species that depend upon it like the ruffed grouse, an important native gamebird which has been nearly extirpated from Indiana due to habitat loss.

Statewide timber management in Indiana is being carried out by a number of entities that include private landowners, state and federal agencies, land trusts, and many others. The collective work of these entities will determine the composition of Indiana's forests. The age, structure, and composition of our forests translate into habitat characteristics, ultimately affecting the types of wildlife that will persist in Indiana. With so many stakeholders at the table, IWF feels strongly that the only way to practice the sound, science-based management of our forests as a whole state—is to engage in civil conversations that promote cooperative understanding and lead to common-sense conservation resolutions.

Wildlife does not consider state or county lines as they hunt, nest or migrate. As the stewards of the wildlife of this great state we must not only tie future planning efforts to our own State Wildlife Action Plan, but should also work in concert with surrounding states and the wildlife we communally support.

As one of our most precious and important natural resources, it is imperative that forests are effectively managed to provide quality habitat for our wildlife and to sustain the resource for

future generations. Recognizing this need, the Indiana Wildlife Federation wholly supports and encourages active management, including the sustainable use of sound timber harvesting practices, within Indiana forests.

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