

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry

Woodland Wildlife

Woodlands are a remarkable resource because they are capable of being managed for multiple uses. The primary goal of management may be the production of high quality timber to meet the expected increase in demand for wood products. But at the same time the well-managed woodland can also provide soil and water conservation benefits, opportunities for environmental study, photography or painting, a place to find berries or mushrooms and, of course, homes for wildlife. Woodland animals provide recreation for the hunter and for others who enjoy watching wildlife in their natural habitat.

The joining of two different types of cover, such as where a woods meets a field, provides the greatest variety of plants. This in turn produces the greatest variety and number of wildlife species, particularly songbirds. This joining of two cover types is called an "edge."

The edge, where a woods meets a field, can provide loose cover such as grass, annual weeds shrubs and briars. However, mowing or pasturing this area will destroy the benefit to wildlife. A row or two of crops left next to the woods, in addition to brush and weed cover, also makes game more available to the hunter. This type of edge is essential for quail and rabbits as well as many species of birds.

Open idle fields provide excellent wildlife cover and food sources. Delay mowing these areas until after August 1 to protect nesting birds and young wildlife.

Protection from grazing is not only necessary for good timber production, but is also essential for wildlife management. Livestock eat and kill small trees, brush and grasses that provide food and cover for wildlife. Grazed woodlots resemble parks where food and cover are lacking. Without this food and cover, many species of birds and mammals disappear.

Openings made during timber harvests are beneficial in several ways. Young tree regeneration and berry vines offer browse for deer and rabbits. The insects that are attracted to the opening serve as a necessary source of protein for the growth of young birds. The tops of felled trees provide excellent cover and nesting areas for quail, rabbits and songbirds.

Natural woodland springs and seeps may be developed to create permanent wildlife watering pools. A pool two to five feet in width and two feet deep will provide a water source almost year round. Each site is different and some ingenuity may be necessary to create these pools. Care should be taken not to excavate back into the spring source, which could result in loss of spring flow.

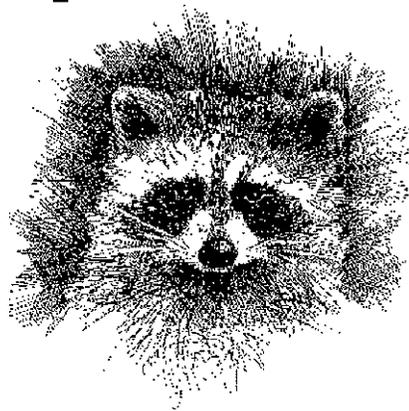
Similar to the above is to excavate small pools in intermittent creek beds. These pools should be dug

out by hand in natural low spots.

Annual maintenance may be necessary to clean these pools of accumulated debris.

Doing timber stand improvement (TSI) work provides a good opportunity to practice woodland wildlife management

techniques as well. Hollow den trees provide shelter and protection from predators. Each acre of woodland should have two to six small- to medium-sized den and cavity trees. Oak and sugar maple make excellent den trees due to their hard wood and long life span. Where they are lacking, make artificial homes such as squirrel den boxes. Trees killed during TSI operations serve as snags and food sources for woodpeckers and



later as nesting sites for many species of birds and mammals.

Grapevines are an important woodland habitat component. In addition to providing an important food source, grapevines provide attachment sites for nests of songbirds and leaf nests of squirrels.



Ravelings from the vines are also used by many songbirds for making or lining their nests. Leave three to four grapevines per acre in low value trees, but remove grapevines from trees intended for high-value timber. Good locations to leave grapevines are in den trees, cavity trees, snags, along woodland edges, and other areas of low timber production potential.

Riparian zones are those woodland areas that border permanent or semi-permanent water courses. Because water is a basic element for survival, many forms of wildlife tend to be attracted to these zones to nest, feed and rear their young. Caution should be taken not to destroy the values of riparian habitat. Riparian zones should maintain a nearly continuous tree canopy in a 50-foot strip along each side of the watercourse.

Diversity is the key to abundant and varied wildlife populations. Each species of wildlife has its own unique habitat needs. A property that has a variety of habitats, including open fields, bushy areas and young and mature forests can meet many wildlife needs. Most properties have the potential to offer at least two habitat types.

For more detailed information contact your district wildlife biologist, or the Division of Fish and Wildlife office at:

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<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2716.htm>



Indiana Division of Forestry, Woodland Wildlife.doc, 5-99