



DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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**WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT****FACT SHEET**

Observing the birds and animals that visit your property is a fascinating hobby and one of the most satisfying benefits of owning forest land. The wildlife species present on your property will vary depending on your location, property size, land use, habitat types, time of year, vegetation, access to sources of food and water, and whether or not there are natural areas linking your property and adjoining habitat on other parcels.

The following suggestions describe simple ways to increase the number and types of animals that will visit your property by supplying their basic requirements for food, water and shelter.

FOOD SOURCES:

- Plant native oaks. Acorns are a nutritious food that is a favorite with many species (170 birds, 105 mammals, and 58 amphibian and reptile species utilize oak woodland habitats).
- Plant a variety of nut and berry - producing plants to attract the greatest variety of species. Choices include blackberries, cherries, apples, and grapes, as well as native nut and berry-producing trees and shrubs including toyon, coffeeberry, manzanita, madrone, dogwood, and blue elderberry.
- Favorite plants to attract hummingbirds include fuchsias, columbines, red, blue, and purple penstemons and sages, scarlet bugler, flowering current, western spice bush, bottlebrush, and mimosa trees.
- Favorite plants to attract butterflies include *Buddleia*, lantana, cosmos, red sage, bleeding hearts, sticky monkeyflower, paintbrush, yarrow, milkweed, ceanothus, wild buckwheat, and Dutchman's pipe.
- Group plantings to maximize the edges where plantings end and lawns, fields, ponds, or woodlands begin (meandering plantings produce more edges than straight lines).
- Provide supplemental food. Favorite foods for birds include unshelled sunflower seeds and bird seed mixes (to attract a variety of birds, primarily sparrows and other seed eaters), cracked corn (for ground-feeding birds, such as juncos, quail and turkeys), suet cakes (draws woodpeckers and chickadees), and nectar or sugared water (a favorite of hummingbirds.)

WATER IS MAGNETIC: The presence of water draws animals like a magnet! Water sources you can add to your property can range from installing small misters or bird baths to developing artificial streams or ponds.



Note that if you construct a fish pond, you should expect it to attract local cats, raccoons, and fish-eating birds. Depredation by cats and raccoons can be limited by building your pond with steep sides that drop at least three feet to the bottom. Netting can be used to discourage birds from fishing in smaller ponds.

Streamside vegetation is important for fish, wildlife, and water quality. Maintain trees and shrubs providing shade on the water. Plant native species to help fill open areas.

WILDLIFE SHELTER: Retain dying limbs, dead or dying trees, and downed logs if they do not pose a safety hazard. *This does not apply in areas where a falling limb or tree would be likely to hit people or buildings!* Dying branches and trees provide a food source for insect-eating birds like woodpeckers, and shelter for cavity-nesting species, including bluebirds, hawks and owls. Fallen logs and branches provide habitat used by small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians such as salamanders. Some other suggestions for creating or improving wildlife habitat:

- Plant shrubs, a hedge, or vines along a fence or wall. These are most effective if placed near food or water supplies.
- Build a brush pile.
- Leave some grassy areas that are not mowed or disked.
- Add bird houses in quiet areas sheltered from the wind. If you are trying to attract a specific species (such as barn owls or blue birds) research what the dimensions of the box and entry hole should be, and how high off the ground to place the box.

REMEMBER FIRE SAFETY: New plants and wildlife structures should be planned and located to conform with fire safety needs in the zones around the home and along access roads.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

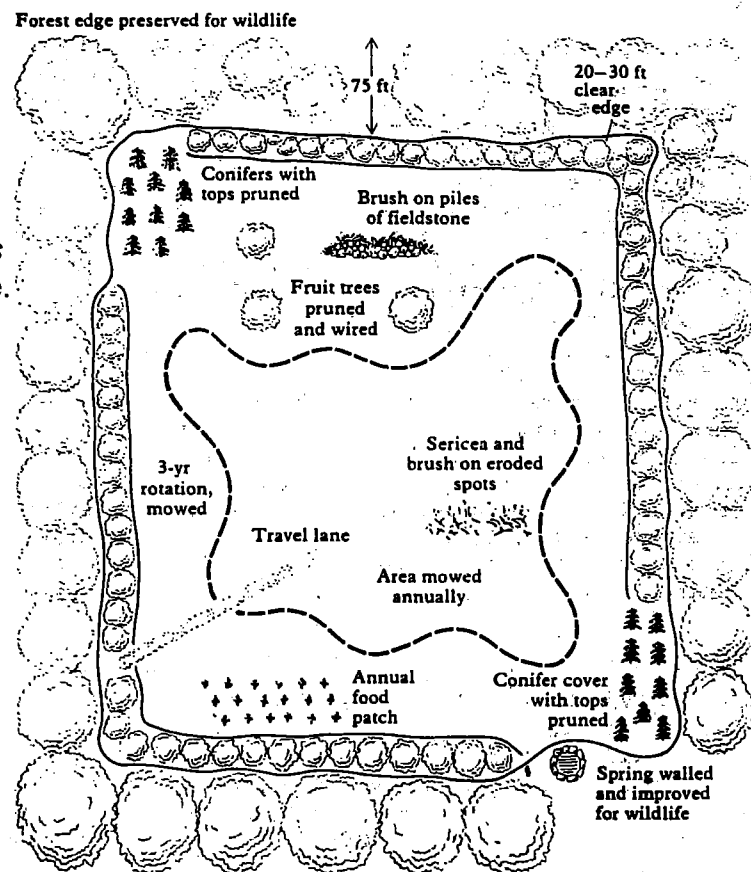
Fasio, James R., 1987. *The Woodland Steward A Practical Guide to the Management of Small Private Forests*. Woodland Press. Moscow, ID. 211 pp.

Payne, Neil and F. Copes, 1988. *Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Improvement Handbook*. USDA Forest Service. 433 pp.

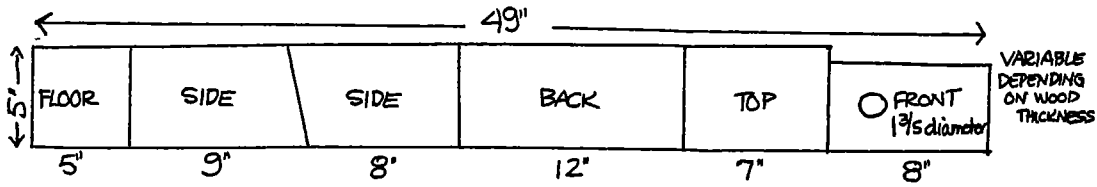
For info on the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat program see www.nwf.org/habitats.

National Audubon Society has lots of information on bird habitat and identification on line at education.audubon.org.

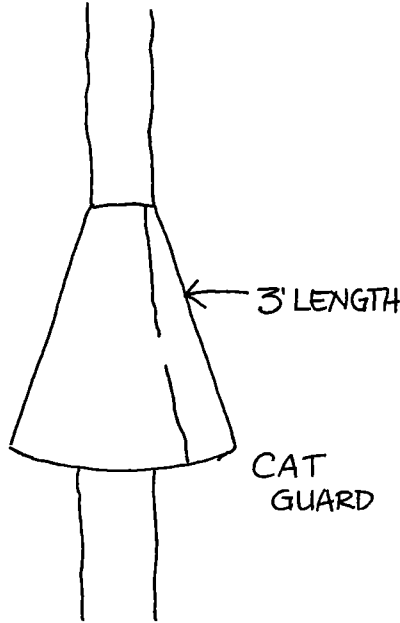
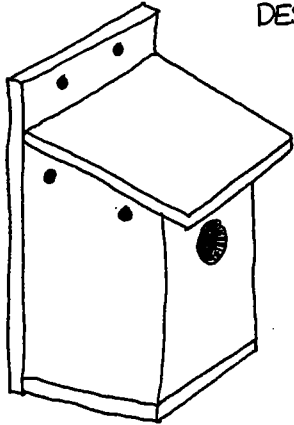
Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is another great source of on-line information on birds. Find them at www.allaboutbirds.org.



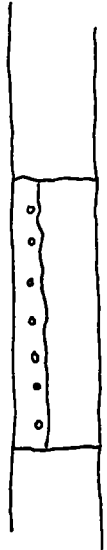
HOMES FOR CAVITY NESTERS



DESIGN FOR A BLUEBIRD HOUSE
(SEE CHART FOR DIMENSIONS FOR OTHER SPECIES)



40"
LENGTH
PREDATOR
GUARD



Species	Diameter of Entrance (inches)	Depth of Cavity (inches)	Floor of Cavity (inches)	Entrance Above Floor (inches)	Height Above Ground (feet)
Barn Owl	6	12-15	8 x 8	9-12	12-20
Black-capped Chickadee	1 1/8	8-10	4 x 4	6-8	6-15
Bluebird	1 3/8	8	5 x 5	6	5-10
Carolina Wren	1 1/2	6-8	4 x 4	1-6	6-10
Crested Flycatcher	2	8-10	6 x 6	6-8	8-20
Downy Woodpecker	1 1/4	9-12	4 x 4	6-8	6-20
Flicker	2 1/2	16-18	7 x 7	14-16	6-20
Hairy Woodpecker	1 1/2	12-15	6 x 6	9-12	12-20
House Wren	1 1/4	6-8	4 x 4	1-6	6-10
Kestrel	3	12-15	8 x 8	9-12	10-30
Nuthatch	1 1/4	8-10	4 x 4	6-8	12-20
Purple Martin	2 1/2	6	6 x 6	1	15-20
Red-headed woodpecker	2	12-15	6 x 6	9-12	12-20
Screech Owl	3	12-15	8 x 8	9-12	10-30
Tree Swallow	1 1/2	6	5 x 5	1-5	10-15
Tufted Titmouse	1 1/4	8-10	4 x 4	6-8	6-16
Wood Duck	3 x 4 (oval)	10-24	10 x 18	12-16	10-20