

HABITAT FEATURES: WHICH ANIMALS USE THEM AND WHY

Illustrator: Jada Fitch



1. Legacy Trees

Many forest animals prefer large, full-canopy trees for feeding, nesting, and resting. Large trees also store more carbon and produce plenty of seeds and leaf litter.

Chimney Swift, Flying Squirrel, Pileated Woodpecker, Owl Species

2. Cavity Trees & Snags

Woodpeckers make nesting cavities in dead and dying trees. Many other animals use the cavities afterwards. Dead trees are full of insects - an important food source for many animals.

Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Chimney Swift, Porcupine, Raccoon, American Marten, Bats, Flying Squirrel, Wood Duck

3. Downed Wood

Logs and branches on the ground provide perching, hiding, and drumming places for birds. Dead wood is a source of insects for animals to eat, holds soil in place, and adds nutrients to soil as it breaks down.

Canada Warbler, Veery, Wood Thrush, Salamanders, American Marten, Ruffed Grouse, Red-backed Vole, Deer Mouse, Snakes

4. Leaf Litter

A rich layer of moist deciduous leaf litter is home to many insects that provide food for animals. Decomposing leaves also recycle nutrients back to forest soils. Many animals use leaf litter for dens, nests, camouflage, and cover.

American Woodcock, Mourning Warbler, Ovenbird

5. Forest Complexity

A variety of canopy layers, from the shortest understory to the tallest super-canopy tree, provides many places to nest, material for nest building, cover to hide from predators, as well as food (fruit, buds, insects, etc.) for forest animals.

Overstory - Scarlet Tanager, Midstory - Wood Thrush, Understory - Canada Warbler

6. Canopy Gaps

Small openings in the canopy create good conditions for regeneration. The shrubby growth in these gaps is home to many insects, and several bird species like to feed in these openings, or nest in the dense regeneration they create.

Chestnut-sided Warbler, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Olive-Sided Flycatcher, Bats

7. Riparian & Wetland Forests

Forests along streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes host a large number of animals. More than 80% of New Brunswick's wildlife species use these areas at some point in their lives. These forests also provide travel corridors for moving wildlife.

Seasonal ponds (vernal pools) provide important habitat for amphibians and other wildlife as well.

American Woodcock, Canada Warbler, Northern Parula, Veery, Olive-Sided Flycatcher, Rusty Blackbird, Amphibians

8. Native Biodiversity

Introduced plants reduce native biodiversity and can reduce the availability of food sources that birds, especially migrants, rely on. Nonnative pests invading our forests and new diseases can kill tree species that are important to wildlife. Removing these species where possible and planting native species can help provide high quality habitat.

HABITAT FEATURES: WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Leave a Legacy

- When cutting trees, leave at least 6 – 8 trees per acre (15-20 per hectare) to live out their full lifespan - they can be a source of seeds and will become useful snags after they die
- Keep the largest, tallest trees (over 30 cm diameter at breast height, DBH), trees with cavities, trees that provide seeds or berries for wildlife, and those that are climate resilient and/or long-lived (red maple, red oak, white pine, red spruce, yellow birch) or unusual in your forest

2. Snags

Where SAFE to do so:

- Keep snags (standing dead trees) and decaying trees – especially those with large dead limbs or broken tops
- Aim to have at least 6 snags per acre (14 per hectare), with at least one >50 cm DBH and three > 30 cm DBH

3. Downed Wood

- A “messy” forest can provide more food, nest sites, and shelter for wildlife
- Leave tops and low-value logs after a harvest, and avoid crushing downed logs
- In moist areas (without risk of fire), create piles of fine branches where animals can find food and shelter

4. Leaf Litter

- Leaf litter (leaves, twigs and bark) provides important food and shelter for insects that birds and other animals eat
- Keep healthy hardwood trees with full canopies to provide a source of leaf litter



5. Forest Complexity

- Keep a variety of trees of different heights (at least 3 age/height classes is best)
- Keep a mix of hardwoods and softwoods (deciduous and coniferous) for more habitat structure

6. Canopy Gaps

- Small gaps in the canopy can help seedlings, shrubs, and other plants to grow, attracting wildlife that prefer young forests
- Create small gaps of different sizes (0.25-2 acres; 0.1-0.8 hectares) - if possible, limit total gap area to <20% of a stand area in any 20-year period

7. Riparian & Wetland Forests

- Do not cut trees within 30 m of watercourses and wetlands, as required in New Brunswick, or apply for a watercourse and wetland alteration permit
- If harvesting in this buffer area (according to a permit), keep as much canopy cover as possible and avoid rutting from machinery to prevent erosion
- Avoid harvesting around seasonal ponds and in forested wetlands

8. Invasive Species

- Learn to identify invasive plants and insects that can reduce forest health, such as glossy buckthorn, Japanese knotweed, emerald ash borer, and hemlock woolly adelgid
- Try not to spread invasive species - they often spread by moving firewood and machinery between sites, and by people, bikes and pets on trails
- Wash equipment before changing sites
- Contact the New Brunswick Invasive Species Council with questions or sightings

Photos (Left to right): Forest - Kate Turner, Eastern Wood-Pewee - Brad Carlson, Little Brown Myotis - William Weber, Wood Turtle - Jason Ondreicka, Wood Thrush - Fyn Kynd, Canada Warbler - Ken James



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