

# Enhancing Wildlife Habitats

## A Practical Guide to Forest Landowners



Enhancing Wildlife Habitats: A Practical Guide for Forest Landowners

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- to identify, plan, and recommend programs that should be supported on a multi-state or regional basis

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# Preface

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Some 70% of all the woodland in the northeastern U.S. belongs to private, non-industrial landowners. It follows, therefore, that the majority of the region's terrestrial wildlife depends upon these private owners to provide quality habitats: the combination of food, water, and shelter they need to reproduce and thrive. Our nation's wildlife is a precious public resource; and enhancing and maintaining high-quality habitat on these lands are, therefore, important to all of us.

If you are such a landowner, you are to be commended for your desire to enhance the wildlife habitat on your land. If, as we hope, you put the principles you learn into practice, then all of society will owe you a vote of thanks.

The recommendations in this book were developed by incorporating the scientific literature on the subject with the broad-based experience of the authors and reviewers. Most of the examples in the text are from New England, but the principles and practices should be applicable throughout the Appalachian and northern hardwood regions of the United States.

The book is meant to be exactly what the title states: a practical guide. If we are successful, after completing each chapter you will enter your woodlot with new insights, new ideas, and greater enthusiasm. And when you've finished the final chapter, you will possess the foundation of a new and well-focused plan for enhancing wildlife habitat in your forest.

Each chapter builds carefully on the previous chapter. The first two chapters, "Basic Forest Wildlife Ecology" and "Understanding Wildlife Habitats," provide fundamental ecological and management principles. The remaining chapters describe specific habitat-enhancement techniques that incorporate these principles and the life-cycle needs of the wildlife species in question. Throughout the text you will encounter key terms in ***bold italics***. These bold, italicized words and terms are defined in the glossary for future reference.

Included at the end of each chapter are field exercises. These exercises are an integral part of the book and are designed to help you develop first-draft habitat maps and enhancement plans for your forest. We strongly encourage you to work through them. If the topic of habitat enhancement interests you enough to read the text, you should find the exercises to be both enjoyable and rewarding.

Finally, we offer one caution: this guide is *not* intended to take the place of professional forestry and wildlife assistance in developing a habitat-enhancement plan. It should, however, help to make you a more knowledgeable landowner whose goals, objectives, and needs are clear. This, in turn, will enable you to make the most efficient use possible of the time you do have, on your land, with these professionals.