

Q: Why can't we just let nature take its course to enhance wildlife?

A: As long as humans make an effort to suppress natural disturbances such as fire, floods, disease and pest outbreaks, we are no longer dealing with a natural forest system. These disturbances are needed to create grasslands, shrublands and young forest habitats across the landscape. Many wildlife "species of greatest conservation need" rely on these disappearing habitats. The number of wildlife species present in a given area most always mirrors plant biodiversity, both species and structural diversity. In absence of natural disturbances, active management must be substituted to maintain the region's unique biodiversity.

Q: Does clear-cutting destroy the environment?

A: Although feared and often misunderstood, clear-cutting is a legitimate silvicultural tool for hardwood forests. It is an efficient way to create even-aged forest regeneration and the most practical way to generate early successional forest habitat in the absence of natural disturbances. Many wildlife species depend on these young forest habitats and others need a variety of young, intermediate and mature forests to meet their requirements. Be sure to preserve wildlife trees such as snag trees and maintain a vegetative buffer in surrounding riparian zones.



Bald Eagle

Many Sources of Assistance are Available.

For specific information and advice regarding the CWCS, contact your regional NYS DEC wildlife biologist

Reg. 8 - Jenny Landry
585-226-5491
jalandry@

Reg. 8 - Amy Mahar
585-226-5337
ammahar@

Reg. 9 - Vacant

All email addresses above end with: gw.dec.state.ny.us

For a free on-site visit from a MFO volunteer, visit www.cornellmfo.info or call your Cornell Cooperative Extension County Office.

NY Master Forest Owner Program



For a wide variety of forestry and wildlife information visit www.ForestConnect.info.

For a variety of forest information, go to www.nyfoa.org. Please consider joining the New York Forest Owners Association.



The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) was completed by the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources (DFWMR) of NYSDEC in September of 2005 to address the wildlife species of greatest need conservation in the state. The CWCS utilizes the best available data on the status of fish and wildlife species to define a vision and establish a strategy for state wildlife conservation and funding. The CWCS is a collaborative effort among agencies, organizations and individuals with an interest in New York's wildlife. For information, go to:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30483.html>



Allegheny Watershed Region*

www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/alleghenyt.txt

Over 65% of the Allegheny watershed region is covered in forest, of which 80% is privately owned. Consequently, the health and prosperity of the watershed's wildlife populations depend on how well these owners protect and enhance the habitat on which the hundreds of species of insects, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds and mammals depend. The good news is that most forest wildlife species are thriving, but unfortunately many are not. These species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) have been identified in the NY Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). 86 of these species call the Allegheny watershed their home.

A major goal of the CWCS is to inform forest owners of the need for management practices that will enhance forest biodiversity and thereby keep these SGCN from becoming rare or endangered. **So much of the critical habitats for these species exists on private lands that landowner cooperation will be the ultimate deciding factor on whether species declines can be halted.** The plan further lists the threats to these species and management strategies that will improve their habitat. Fortunately, for forest owners and wildlife alike, many species will benefit from sustainable forest practices, including sawtimber production, when implemented in accordance with NYS best management practices (BMPs).

***Counties:** Allegheny, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua

New York's forests are now predominantly even-aged northern hardwoods. Public reluctance to practice forestry, coupled with the absence of natural disturbances, may result in a forested landscape with relatively little structural and vegetative species diversity. It is important that forest owners and managers consider the wildlife benefits that both early and late successional forest management and restoration provides. These habitat attributes include the development of coarse woody debris, standing dead wood, structural variability, and multiple successional stages across the forested landscape. Contact a forester to develop a plan that meets your ownership objectives and incorporates habitat for SGCN.

Threats to the SGCN in the watershed:

- pesticide contamination
- habitat loss and fragmentation
- degraded water quality (Chautauqua Lake)
- invasive species
- disease
- inappropriate silvicultural and ag practices
- human-wildlife interactions (collection, poaching, recreation, vehicle collisions, public misconception of predators)

- Landscape condition tends to be better in the Allegheny and French Creek sub-watersheds, with conditions declining in the Chautauqua Lake sub-watershed around the highly developed shore
- Extensive forest cover (67%) and relatively low human populations are predominantly responsible for the relatively high water quality throughout most of the basin.
- The Allegheny watershed contains the largest amount of unglaciated land in NY State.
- Of the 86 SGCN in the basin, the populations of 29 species are decreasing, 5 increasing, 6 are stable and 46 are of unknown status.

Management Suggestions for Woodland and Forested Habitats:

Northern Hardwoods (*maple, beech, birch*)

- Clear-cutting creates dense shrub, herbaceous ground cover layers, soft mast, slash and low exposed perches that support more wildlife than untreated sawtimber stands. Leave some wildlife trees (high exposed perches, cavity trees, coniferous overstory inclusion, snag trees).
- A shelterwood system leads to a partial overstory, partial early successional forest and promotes regeneration.
- Both clear-cutting and shelterwood techniques lead to an increase in raptor (birds of prey) hunting areas.
- Silvicultural selection and thinning techniques have little impact on wildlife, if done correctly.

Swamp Hardwoods (*elm, red & silver maple*)

- Home to salamanders, frogs, turtles and snakes.
- Swamp hardwoods are usually of low economic value so wildlife management is often the primary reason for timber harvest.
- Clear-cutting with reserved patches and wildlife, den, nest and cavity trees is the most common and effective silvicultural regeneration technique.

Floodplain Forests (*silver, red & sugar maple, sycamore, green & white ash, Eastern cottonwood, boxelder*)

- Found along rivers and large streams.
- Tree and understory species vary depending on previous land uses and flooding regimes.
- Provides ecosystem service of dissipation of flood waters that in turn reduces downstream flooding & siltation.
- Conversion to agricultural uses, development, recreation over use, dumping, and excessive logging degrade quality and overall acreage.
- Flood control devices and measures such as dams, levees, dikes and dredging should be kept to a minimum to allow function of flood plain.
- Provides travel corridors for wildlife.

- Threatened by invasive species, such as garlic mustard, honeysuckle, multiflora rose, Japanese stilt grass, & Japanese knotweed.
- Maintain a full tree canopy throughout the floodplain forest, limit grazing, control deer herds, and includes an upland buffer of natural areas on the uphill side of the floodplain.

Eastern Hemlock

- Occurs with a broad array of associate tree species and provides a conifer component.
- Valuable for den and cavity using wildlife.
- Shelterwood method most effective for regeneration.

Allegheny Hardwoods (*red and sugar maple, black cherry, white ash*)

- Associated tree species vary by geographic region but often include hemlock, oaks, birch, and hickories. Such diversity contributes to overall wildlife diversity.
- Regeneration can be problematic due to deer browsing and interfering understory plants.
- Appropriate silviculture techniques for regeneration must take into consideration the shade tolerance of desired tree species.

Allegheny Watershed Region



Sub-Watersheds:

- **French Creek**
6% of the basin's total area
- **Chautauqua Lake**
40% of the basin's total area
- **Allegheny River**
54% of the basin's total area