



In Minnesota, many of our properties and the surrounding landscapes have the ability to support a host of bird species. The number and variety of birds your property can sustain is highly influenced by the types of vegetation, shrub, and tree cover.

As land use has changed over time due to development, important natural areas and habitat have been lost or encroached upon. Thankfully conservation-minded landowners can make a huge difference to protect the lands and waters that native birds depend on.

Privately owned land covers more than 75 percent of the state. These lands include prairies, deciduous woodlands, and coniferous forests. That kind of variety in native habitat welcomes a vast array of birds. As of October 2020, there are 446 species included in the official list of native birds to Minnesota.

Individual landowner care of private land is an integral part of maintaining and improving our state's unique habitat biodiversity and the essential habitat requirements for birds.

Private land management for birdwatching

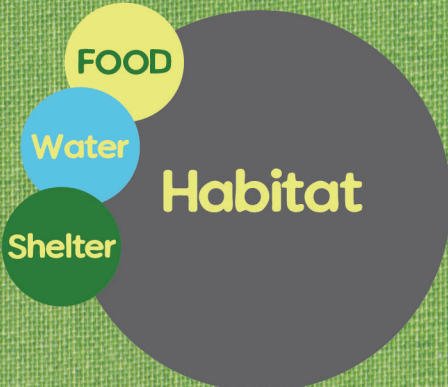
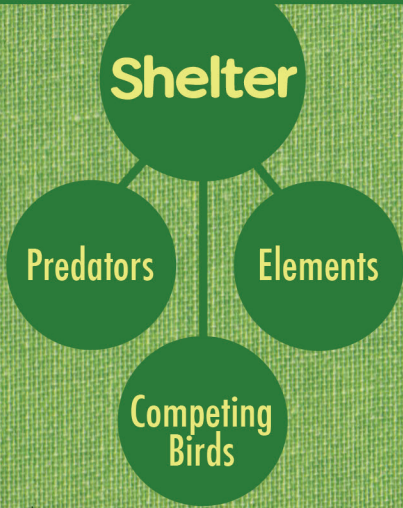
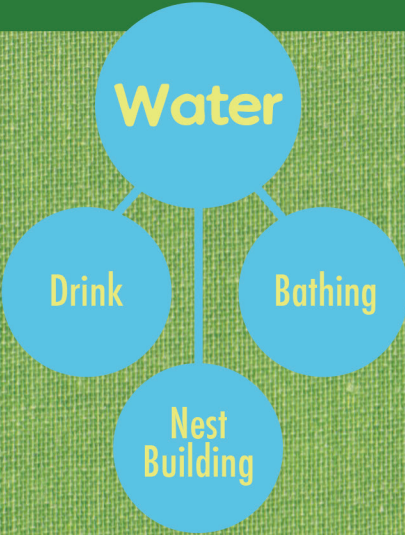
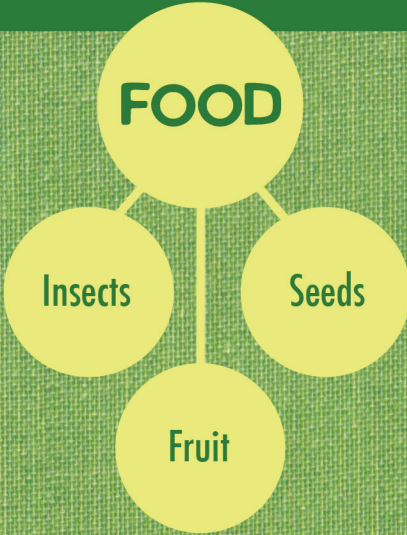
Your land, a haven for feathered friends

With a little bit of direction, and a few intentional conservation practices, you can set your property on a trajectory to welcome birds of all kinds.



What do birds need?

Like all creatures, birds have three basic needs. (Food, Water, and Shelter.) If landowners can provide a habitat that includes these essentials, they have a great chance to attract a wide variety of birds. Furthermore, The more varied the plants and features of your habitat, the more bird species will use it. Plants, animals, and insects are connected. They often depend on each other to survive. Sometimes you need to accommodate for one to attract the other.



Creating a bird habitat on your property

The strength of a local bird community depends on the availability of the habitat they need to nest, forage and breed. Forests are one of the most important assets for birds and many bird populations are struggling due to the fragmentation and degradation of our woodlands. As a private landowner in northern Minnesota you can give many bird species what they really need, a thriving habitat.



Forage and cover

Multi-Story Habitat

Birds use diverse woodland growth from the forest floor to the canopy as habitat. Different species will rely on different parts of your property, so ensuring the health of all layers of the forest will help draw a diverse community of birds. Over-story trees, groundcover, bushes and under-story trees are all important



Brush, logs, and natural debris

Be sure to leave some deadwood "snags" and brush piles on your property. Many bird species use dead trees and logs for cover and a place to roost. In addition, rotting wood and natural debris is an excellent place to find one of their favorite foods, insects.

If you plant it, they will come!

Berry, seed and nut trees are loved by birds. Native trees like oak, hackberry, dogwood, and maple are bird-friendly trees and chokecherry, wild plum, and serviceberry shrubs provide fruit and seeds. Native plant species are also better at support thriving insect communities. You can get native plant seedlings at your local soil and water conservation district yearly plant sale.



Transition Zones on your property

Edge habitat is where forest/trees transition into open space. Abrupt changes in forest cover can be a dangerous spot for some birds. Predators have an advantage where forest cover opens abruptly. You can minimize risks for birds. Create transition zones by planting trees sparsely on the forest edge and by allowing thickets of shrubs to grow. You can also selectively cut trees to soften the edge of a transition. Transition zones are also a great spot to place a few nest boxes.

Forming a plan . . .

Conservation management plans

A management plan can help you get the most out of your property and maximize the potential benefits for a variety of bird species. Your local SWCD can help you develop a property management plan.

For woodland properties, a Forest Stewardship Plan written by a certified plan writer, such as your local SWCD, the DNR or a private forest planner, qualifies landowners to apply for local or state tax-relief and incentive programs. To qualify for one of these programs, a landowner must generally have at least 20 qualifying acres of land.

The DNR's Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners finalize their own goals and prepare a voluntary management plan for their woodland. This Woodland Stewardship Plan, when written by a certified writer, is a non-binding, written document that lists your land's potential, what you want to accomplish, and specific actions you can take to accomplish those goals within a given time-frame.

Want to establish the perfect bird-friendly habitat? Contact us to start on a Conservation Management Plan

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