



Northern Goshawks are designed to maneuver and hunt in thick woodland cover. They scan for prey from lofty perches and then ambush unsuspecting prey using a combination of stealth, speed, and agility.

Goshawks are fascinating deep-forest birds of prey, that are elusive and majestic. They have stunning red eyes and ghost-grey plumage. They are large-bodied hawks with broad wings and is the largest of the three accipiters found in Minnesota.

They are Dependent on large patches of mature and older forests for nesting and foraging. The Goshawk have large home ranges. Within Minnesota, Northern Goshawks are found year-round in the north-central and northeastern portions of the state.

Goshawk habitat has declined regionally due to fragmented land ownership and the fragmentation of historically large contiguous forest stands. A study in northern Minnesota found an average net loss of 26% of upland mature/old forest habitat within eight Northern Goshawk territories between 1996 and 2006.

Goshawk - Phantom of the Forest

Essential Woodland Habitat

Given the concerns about habitat availability and the likely effect on nest success, the Northern Goshawk was designated a species of special concern in Minnesota in 2013. Forestry issues in northern portions of our state directly effect the well being of Goshawk populations.



Woodland habitat

The Northern Goshawk needs larger tracts of mature and older upland forest. Preferred cover types for foraging include aspen, paper birch, red pine, and white pine forests greater than 50 years old and spruce, balsam fir, and jack pine forests greater than 25 years old. Forests used by Northern Goshawks for nesting and foraging are similar and tend to have closed canopies, substantial shrub cover, large amounts of snags and woody debris, open flight paths between the understory and shrub layers, and a high canopy.

How can forests be managed to accommodate suitable Goshawk habitat?

Maintaining contiguous forested areas with high amounts of canopy closure is necessary to provide adequate resources for Northern Goshawks. Managing for forested stands with high species and structural diversity is important. Forested landscapes should be managed for a variety of forest types, age classes, and patch sizes to support abundant prey populations. Managing for larger patches of mature forest within these landscapes provides the forest structure suitable for goshawk nesting and foraging.



Your local SWCD can help landowners with forest stewardship plans.

A Forest Stewardship Plan 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 acres of land.



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