

WILDLIFE NEEDS OUR HELP!



Division of
Fish and Wildlife

NYSDEC's Young Forest Initiative

Why do we need to manage our forests?

Some of our most cherished birds are declining in numbers and abundance. American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Golden-winged Warbler, and many migratory songbirds that depend on young forests for nesting and raising their young are becoming rare. Unfortunately, their populations are declining due in part to loss of habitat, in particular, the early-successional woodland habitat we call young forest. Young forest is also important for many wildlife species like deer, bear, turkeys, turtles and pollinators.



The American Woodcock has declined 68% since 1966.

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What is young forest?

Young forest is generally 0-10 years old and has a dense understory of tree seedlings, saplings, woody vines, shrubs and herbaceous vegetation. Historically, young forest was created by natural disturbances such as fire or flooding, insect outbreaks, changes to the landscape by beavers and activities such as logging and farmland abandonment. These naturally occurring events and human actions have not kept pace to produce enough young forest habitat to meet the needs of the species named above. Although 63% of New York State's landscape is forested, it is shifting to predominantly mature trees which block out the sun and prevent the growth of critical vegetation. That's why we need to actively manage our land to maintain young forests throughout New York's landscape.



Golden-winged Warbler

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How will we help?

Through DEC's Young Forest Initiative, we will restore young forest habitat on DEC Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) by creating patches of young forest through timber cuts that meet target species' needs. We will manage 10% of the 120,000 forested acres on WMAs as young forest. DEC has a long history of habitat management on WMAs, and these actions will build on current efforts.



Dense shrubs and young trees grow after cuts.

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Benefits include:

- An increase in young forest habitat for at-risk wildlife
- Strong healthy forests and trees
- Abundant food and cover for the young of mature forest birds and mammals
- More opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, such as hunting and bird watching



Wood turtle basking in young forest

© William Hoffman

FOR MORE INFORMATION

and to see how you can help, go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/104218.html> or contact: yfwildlife@dec.ny.gov