

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Wildlife Habitat



Conserving Wildlife

Conserving wildlife involves creating and maintaining the habitat needs of the wildlife you hope to attract. Creating habitat requires planning so that the preferred food, cover, water and other needs of wildlife species are provided.

Conservation practices that create or improve wildlife and aquatic habitat benefit other resources as well. Practices like planting trees and native plants help wildlife and also reduce soil erosion, and improve water and air quality.

Upland

Creating habitat for upland species primarily involves planting trees, shrubs, grasses and other vegetation that provide cover and food. The type of food and cover provided will help determine the species and quantity of wildlife attracted.

Monarch butterflies for example, require milkweed in their larval stage and nectar producing plants for their adult stage. Bluebirds prefer open areas adjacent to woods while cedar waxwings are attracted to berry producing shrubs.

After desired vegetative cover is established, periodic maintenance is needed to regenerate growth and reduce unwanted or invasive plants. Prescribed burning and other management practices will maintain and improve the quality of native vegetation.

Forests & Woodlands

Michigan once had a more diverse variety of forest habitats than it does today. These ranged from dense forests with a

closed canopy of tall trees to more open woodlands with a greater variety of ground cover. These different forest habitats supported unique wildlife communities.

Utilizing a forest management plan and EQIP conservation practices, landowners can restore or improve the forest habitat best suited to their needs and land capabilities. EQIP conservation practices can be used to improve any type of forest habitat.



Native plants benefit a variety of wildlife from pollinators to birds to small and large mammals.

Aquatic Habitat

Protecting aquatic habitat extends from the entire watershed to the stream bottom. Reducing the amount of silt along with pesticides and fertilizers reaching streams and rivers is essential for quality habitat. This involves cover crops, filter strips and other practices to keep soil and water in place as much as possible.

EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides conservation financial assistance for working lands. Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources.

EQIP assistance is available for all types of agricultural operations, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and private non-industrial forest land.

At the stream's edge, fencing to keep livestock from damaging the streambank and establishing vegetation to hold streambanks in place are important conservation practices. Placing tree branches or other structures in the stream channel may improve aquatic habitat in some locations.



Placing trees or other structures in a stream can be beneficial for some aquatic species.

Other Considerations

The USDA Conservation Reserve Program also provides financial assistance for establishing wildlife habitat. Landowners should compare both programs before they apply.

Non-profit conservation and sportsmen's organizations may offer additional financial assistance. Landowners are not obligated to allow public hunting or fishing as a result of receiving USDA conservation assistance.

When & Where to Apply

Applications for NRCS conservation programs are accepted on a continuous basis at local fields offices. Producers who already receive email correspondence from USDA can also apply online utilizing the Conservation Client Gateway.

Common EQIP Practices for Wildlife

- Conservation Cover
- Critical Area Planting
- Filter Strip
- Field Border
- Forest Management Plan
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan
- Grassed Waterway
- Brush Management
- Pollinator Habitat Plan
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Riparian Herbaceous cover
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment
- Forest Trails and Landings
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- Streambank & Shoreline Protection
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Early Successional Habitat Development
- Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Woody Residue Treatment



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