

Attracting Wildlife With Dead Trees

“Dead trees provide vital habitat for more than 1,000 species of wildlife nationwide. They also count as cover and places for wildlife to raise young in the requirements for Certified Wildlife Habitat designation.

Snags - The name for dead trees that are left upright to decompose naturally.

Logs - When a snag (or part of a snag) falls on the ground, it becomes a log—also very useful for wildlife habitat.

By some estimates, the removal of dead material from forests can mean a loss of habitat for up to one-fifth of the animals in the ecosystem.

Dead Wood Good? How Dead Trees Help Wildlife

Wildlife species use nearly every part of a dead tree in every stage of its decay for things such as:

- **A Place to Live**—Many animals, including birds, bats, squirrels and raccoons make nests in hollow cavities and crevices in standing deadwood.
- **A Food Source**—By attracting insects, mosses, lichens and fungi, deadwood becomes a gourmet restaurant for wildlife looking for a snack.
- **A "Crow's Nest"**—Higher branches of snags serve as excellent look-outs from which wildlife such as raptors spot potential prey.
- **A Hiding Place**—The nooks and crannies of deadwood are put to good use by squirrels and other wildlife looking to store food.
- **A Soil Refresher**—Mosses, lichens and fungi all grow on snags and aid in the return of vital nutrients to the soil through the nitrogen cycle. Decaying logs on the forest floor also act as ‘nurse logs’ for new seedlings.”

Snags in Your Landscape

“Try to incorporate one or more snags into your landscape keeping old and damaged trees when possible. Retain trees and tall shrubs near the planned snag to protect it from wind and provide a healthier environment for wildlife. In urban areas, tall snags are best located away from high activity areas, where they won’t pose a hazard if they fall. Trees that lean away or are downhill from structures and other areas of human activity present little or no risk.”

Approval of Dead / Dying/ Dangerous Tree Removal

Under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, the town-appointed, 7-member Ipswich Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over all work within 100’ of a wetland, 150’ of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC, defined as elevation 10’ in certain coastal areas), and 200’ of a river or perennial stream. Removal of vegetation, **including dead trees and shrubs** requires approval by the Commission. If you have any questions, please call the Conservation Office at 978-356-6661 for an appointment with the Conservation Agent, or visit our website at www.ipswichma.gov.



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Table 1: Minimum Tree Diameters for Cavity-Using Species

<p>6- 8" Downy woodpecker* Black-capped chickadee* Boreal chickadee* Tufted titmouse House wren Winter wren Eastern bluebird</p> <p>6-12" Northern saw-whet owl Hairy woodpecker* Yellow-bellied sapsucker* Red-breasted nuthatch* White-breasted nuthatch Brown creeper Chimney swift Southern flying squirrel Northern flying squirrel Ermine</p> <p>12-18" Eastern screech-owl Three-toed woodpecker* Black-backed woodpecker* Northern flicker* Great crested flycatcher Northern long-eared bat Indiana myotis</p>	<p>> 18" Wood duck Common goldeneye Hooded merganser Common merganser Turkey vulture Barred owl Pileated woodpecker* Silver-haired bat Gray squirrel Red squirrel Porcupine American marten (pine marten) Fisher Long-tailed weasel</p> <p>> 24" Little brown bat Big brown bat Gray fox Black bear Raccoon</p> <p>* = <i>primary cavity excavators</i></p>
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References

"Garden for Wildlife: Making Wildlife Habitat at Home." National Wildlife Federation.

<http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Gardening-Tips/Attracting-Wildlife-With-Dead-Trees.aspx>.

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"Snags - The Wildlife Tree: The Importance of Snags in Your Neighborhood". Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/snags/>.