

Ten Great Habitats for Fish and Wildlife

To improve your land for fish and wildlife, think first of the food, water, cover and space needs of the wildlife you want to attract throughout the year. Then begin to establish plants, water sources, and other practices that fit those needs. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical help for landowners in planning for wildlife habitat on privately owned lands, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture offers financial help for most conservation practices that also enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Here are ten of the top habitats for wildlife:

- 1. Restored wetland.** If you had to choose a single habitat or practice, this is probably the one used by the most species.
- 2. Windbreak/shelterbelt.** Rows of trees and shrubs offer prime shelter and food in the winter.
- 3. Riparian buffer.** Habitat value is enhanced by being next to water, and vegetation along streams improves water quality for fish and wildlife.
- 4. Diverse grass planting.** Blocks of native grasses and forbs intermingled with forage land and crop fields can offer grassland birds nesting and cold weather cover, and protection from predators.
- 5. Managed timber.** Plant lower densities, thin or burn, or leave open spaces or borders of grasses, and legumes. Leave trees along streams for fish habitat.
- 6. Habitat connection corridors.** Large blocks of grasslands, wetlands or woodlands are most useful when connected by corridors of grasses and trees that protect wildlife on the move.
- 7. Managed grazing land.** Planned rotational grazing can protect stream sides for fish, create diverse habitat for wildlife, open up dense vegetation canopies, and provide nesting habitat and cover.
- 8. Farm pond.** Offers water for wildlife and habitat for fish, waterfowl, frogs and other species. Plant the surrounding area to trees, shrubs and grasses.
- 9. Edge plantings.** "Edge" cover, a strip planted between a crop field and forest, meets several wildlife needs at once.
- 10. Clean water.** Conservation practices that protect upland soils and stream sides also produce cleaner water for wildlife, fish, livestock and people.

For more information, stop at our office at 4505 George Blvd. or visit the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute's website at www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov or the NRCS home web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov

Did you know....

The 35 million acres of habitat created on private lands by the USDA Conservation Reserve Program is as large as the entire National Wildlife Refuge system and state owned wildlife areas combined, excluding Alaska.

For photo: *More than a third of all native bird species use wetlands.*