



Featured Species Habitat Management Guidance for Woodcock

Latin Name: *Scolopax minor*

Scope: Statewide

Rationale - *why we value the species and the problem for the species:*

The American woodcock is listed as a SGCN (Michigan DNR 2015) and as an Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture focal species. It is a valued game bird with a strong contingent of stakeholders who support management. In 2010, 36,400 hunters spent 212,800 days pursuing woodcock (Frawley 2012). Michigan is situated in the middle of the central woodcock region and is a top woodcock production state. Since the late 1960s, woodcock numbers have declined by 2 to 3% each year (Cooper et al. 2008).

Habitat Need - *the cause & effect relationship between habitat and species and its primary limiting habitat need:*

Feeding, nesting, and brood-rearing habitat primarily associated with young aspen stands having stem densities ranging from 6.1 to 17.8 thousand stems/acre (15 to 44 thousand stems/hectare; Straw et al. 1994).

Habitat Objectives - *the treatment or management to address the primary limiting habitat need:*

- 1) The habitat objective is no net loss of the aspen cover type in Michigan by 2017 and an increase in aspen by 2022;
- 2) Emphasize habitat on private lands;
- 3) Ideally, aspen stands greater than 20 acres associated with alder, riparian zones, or forested wetlands, under a 40-year rotation with staggered harvests of 25% every 10 years (Kelley et al. 2008).

Priority Geographic Areas – *the specific geographic areas where we should focus management for the species:*

The political townships within the 11 American woodcock management units as identified by the DNR, USFS, & USFWS workgroup; and the 39 Regional State Forest Management Plans Management Areas (14 WUP, 6 EUP, and 19 NLP) and 19 WLD Project Areas, which identify woodcock as a featured species.

Priority Landscapes – *the landscape, setting, or cover-type where we should focus management within the areas above:*

Maintain or expand existing aspen stands; encourage aspen component in mixed forest stands.

Population Goal - *the goal for the species, its habitat, or a stakeholder's actions:*

Return woodcock densities on suitable habitats to what existed in the early 1970s. It is understood that some habitat has been irrevocably lost due to conversion or development, thus the goal is density not numbers.

Evaluation Method - *the monitoring method to measure progress towards the goal above:*

- 1) Assess changes in aspen cover-type as measured by the Forest Inventory Analysis every five years beginning in 2017;
- 2) Annually assess population densities via the Michigan portion of national singing ground surveys.

Incidental Species – *other species which may benefit from management for this species:*

Golden-winged warbler; ruffed grouse; moose; turkey; bear; and elk.

References - *citation for documents referenced in this guidance:*

- Cooper, T.R., K. Parker, and R.D. Rau. 2008. American woodcock population status. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD
- Frawley, B. J., 2012. 2010 Small Game Harvest Survey - Wildlife Division Report No. 3542 Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Kelley, J.R., S. J. Williamson, and T.R. Cooper eds. 2008. American Woodcock Conservation Plan: a summary of and recommendations for woodcock conservation in North America. Compiled by the Woodcock Task Force, Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C., USA. 162 pp.
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). 2015. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) online list of Frequently Asked Questions on the 2009 Revision of the State Endangered Species List. < http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12141-213610--,00.html >. Accessed 9 Sept. 2015.
- Straw, J. A., Fr., D. G. Krementz, M.W. Olinde, and G. F. Sepik. 1994. American woodcock. Pages 97-114 in T. C. Tacha and C. E. Braun, editors. Migratory shore and upland game bird management in North America. Revised and updated edition. International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Washington, D.C., USA.