




Habitat Transcript









February 2020, 7:43 minutes





Theme: *Habitat requirements for different animals are diverse and ever-changing. Most Lake States vertebrate species require or prefer at least one forest type for part of their lifecycle. Wildlife need habitats for food, water, shelter, breeding, raising young, and other uses. Habitat needs change with the seasons, too. And, habitats change as forest succession and disturbance occurs. With every change, there are “winners and losers”. Any habitat is good for somebody, even a parking lot!*

Main Points

- Any and all environmental conditions will favor some species and discriminate against others.
- Forests constantly change - forest succession & disturbance - which means habitat conditions also change. With the change of habitat conditions, there are wildlife “winners” and “losers”.
- Snags and fallen trees are important habitat elements.
- Animals often find their needs in different habitats, and those needs change with the season.
- Winter food shortages mean; 1) tough it out, 2) migrate, or 3) a form of dormancy.

VIDEO	AUDIO
TEASE	Hiya! Welcome back to another episode of “BeLEAF It or Not!” Take a look at where I am. This is terrific wildlife habitat! What?! You might say? In a parking lot? Are you kidding? Well, stay tuned and we’ll talk more, in this episode, about - habitat.
OPEN	
	<p>B: Well, jeepers Georgia, let’s talk a little about that word “habitat”. And what it means. G: Of course, it includes, probably what, food . . . and water . . . B: Yeah, and animals need shelter from weather and predators, if you’re a small animal. Yeah, and did you know that wildlife meet all of their needs from different kinds of habitat.</p>
	<p>B: Say, Georgia, did you know, that across the Great Lakes states, there’s almost 600 different species of just vertebrate wildlife? G: Wow, that’s a lot. But wait . . . what IS a vertebrate? B: Oh! Good question! G: Well, it’s anything with a backbone or a spinal column, if you will. And that could be mammals, and fish, and birds, and amphibians . . . B: Or reptiles. G: Yeah. B: And then, there’s all the Invertebrates, too. You know, things like insects, and slugs, and spiders, and black flies, and ticks. Really cool invertebrates. G: Gross. B: Gross? Really? G: Let’s get back to that other thing. You were talking about how parking lots make great habitat. What are you talking about? B: We should answer that question, shouldn’t we? G: OK. B: OK.</p>

	<p>B: Well, if you're a ring-billed gull, this is great habitat if you're looking for leftover burgers and French fries on the parking lot. Or, if you're migrating, north or south, this is a super-duper place to hang-out, safe from predators. Gulls are really cool!</p> <p>G: Really?</p> <p>B: Really. Gulls.</p>
	<p>B: Oh! What the heck? Aaah. Berry! With a little bit of fish overtone.</p>
	<p>G: So, this is pretty different from a parking lot.</p> <p>B: You know, you may have noticed that there are things growing here. Grasses and other plants.</p> <p>G: And you can reach the soil a lot easier here than you can in a parking lot, with all that pavement.</p> <p>B: Yeah, that's true. And, even in the winter, maybe even especially in the winter, underneath, some of these snowed-over plants, there's a whole ecology down here called "subnivean" ecology. And, it consists of small mammals, like mice and voles, and maybe some moles.</p> <p>G: Wait . . . voles? With a "v"?</p> <p>B: Yeah. With a "v". You may not have heard about them before.</p>
	<p>G: Yeah, there's a lot to talk about when we're talking about FOREST habitat. You could say that there are forests, and then there are forests.</p> <p>B: Wait a minute. Can you explain that a little bit Georgia?</p> <p>G: Sure!</p>
	<p>G: The landscape has many sets of habitat conditions, from open meadows to deep woodlands. There are also wetlands, ponds, vernal pools, lakes, and many other habitat types.</p> <p>B: In a forest, the size of trees and the number of trees matter. The species of trees will make a difference, along the presence, or the absence, of shrubs and young trees.</p> <p>G: Older trees with holes and cavities are good for small mammals and many species of birds. We call these standing dead trees "snags". And, they are valuable pieces in the habitat puzzle.</p> <p>B: And after the big trees eventually fall over, they provide shelter for animals that live on the ground, such as salamanders and small mammals, or drumming logs for Ruffed Grouse.</p>
	<p>G: And of course, forest never stay the same. They're constantly changing over time. This is a really important concept that foresters and biologists call "succession".</p>
	<p>B: Succession is the predictable change in the forest over time. A piece of bare ground will soon be growing grasses and weeds. Then shrubs and small trees. Then a middle-aged forest. And eventually, an old forest.</p>
	<p>G: There is an aspen forest right behind me, on my left. And it's thousands of little trees per acre. And that's great habitat for things like Woodcock and Golden-winged Warblers.</p> <p>B: Yeah, lots of animals, and birds, and other things. And as the aspen grows up, what you see over on this side, the trees are bigger, there's fewer of them per acre, and other animals will live here, like certain hawks and maybe an Ovenbird or two, might occupy this site.</p>

	<p>G: Now, any one animal may need different forest types. So, having those different types of forest spread across the landscape will really help to accommodate lots of different species. Ruffed Grouse is a great example. So, male Ruffed Grouse you may hear out in the woods doing their drumming to attract mates.</p> <p>B: Where are the ladies?</p>
	<p>G: Now, habitat isn't the only thing that can limit the number of species that can be in an area. See these holes? These are made by Pileated Woodpeckers. And so, this is great habitat for Pileated Woodpeckers, but . . .</p> <p>B: . . . But only so many of them will be here because they're territorial, Georgia. Which means they don't play well with others. So, even though there might be lots of great trees for more Pileated Woodpeckers, the ones that are here will kick out the ones that try to invade.</p>
	<p>B: Now, the lack of food sources in the winter means that every species has to do one of three things in order to survive.</p> <p>G: Yeah, they can just tough it out, like deer or bobcats.</p> <p>B: Yeah, or they can migrate like geese or monarch butterflies or hummingbirds.</p> <p>G: They go a long way.</p> <p>B: Yeah, they can.</p> <p>G: Or, they just take a long nap, like chipmunks hibernate or frogs and toads actually just freeze with the weather.</p>
	<p>B: It's amazing all the ways in which animals derive their needs from different habitats, over time, in different seasons. Almost too many ways to even count.</p> <p>G: It's really incredible stuff and lots of people get really into the idea of learning about all these different kinds of habitats and animals.</p> <p>B: Sure! And, you can do that in any forest or next to a pond or a marsh or backyard or a schoolyard, too, for that matter</p> <p>G: Or even a parking lot.</p> <p>B: Yeah, even a parking lot. Very good. So, there's a lot of good stories to tell about forests. So, join us for more of them in the next episode of . . .</p> <p>B&G: "BeLEAF It or Not!"</p>
<p>OUTRO</p>	
<p>CREDITS</p>	<p>Great Lakes Digital Video Michigan State University Extension Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association, 2018 Society of American Foresters, Foresters Fund Hartwick Pines State Park</p>