





# Young Forest Initiative

## Wildlife Needs Young Forest Habitat

*John Coleman*



# State/Federal Agencies Recognize Need for Young Forest Structure

## Increase in Early-Successional Habitat Warranted:

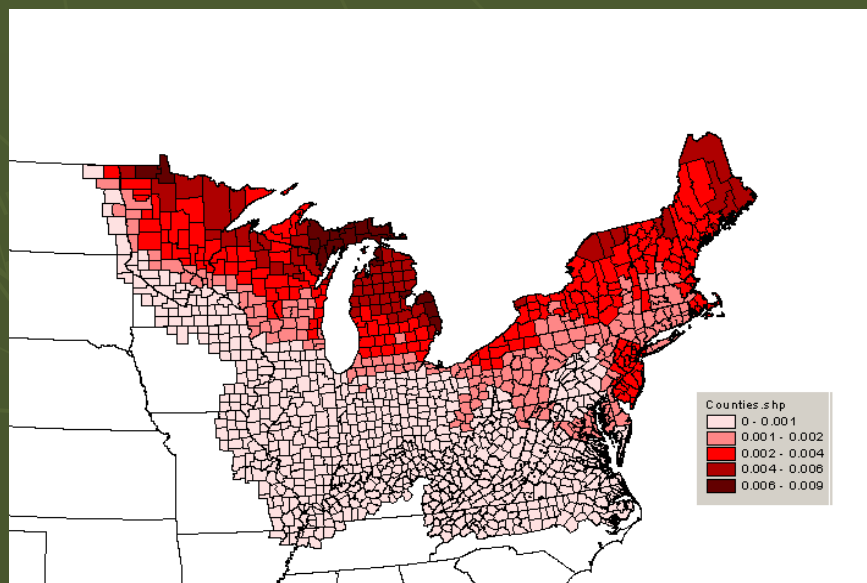
- ▶ Northern BCR 28 (VA, MD, WV, PA, & NY) **State Wildlife Action Plans** list **87 species** of “Greatest Conservation Need” that **require shrubland habitats** for survival.
- ▶ USFWS has named the Am. Woodcock as a national focus species.
- ▶ Partners In Flight and North American Bird Conservation Initiative ranked woodcock as a highest (global) priority species in need of conservation action.



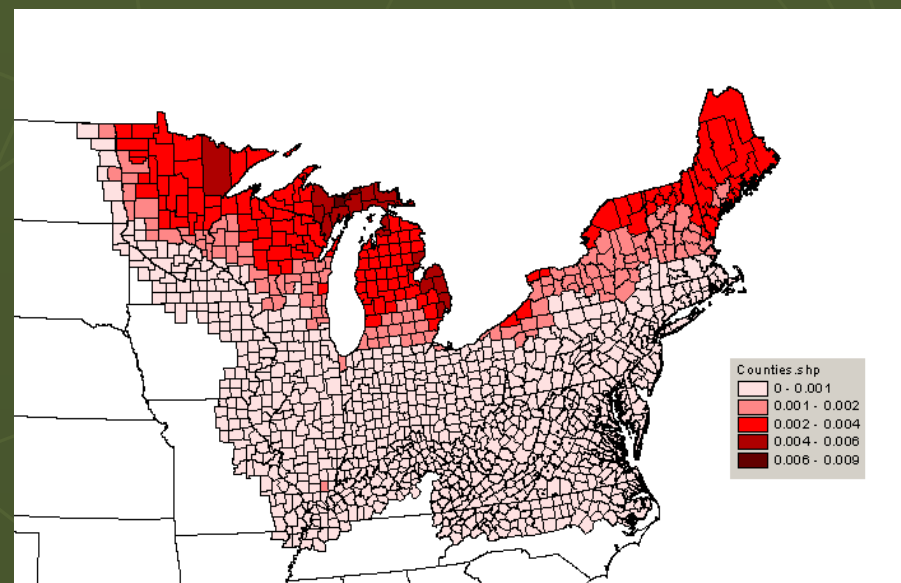


# Changes in American Woodcock Abundance

1970's



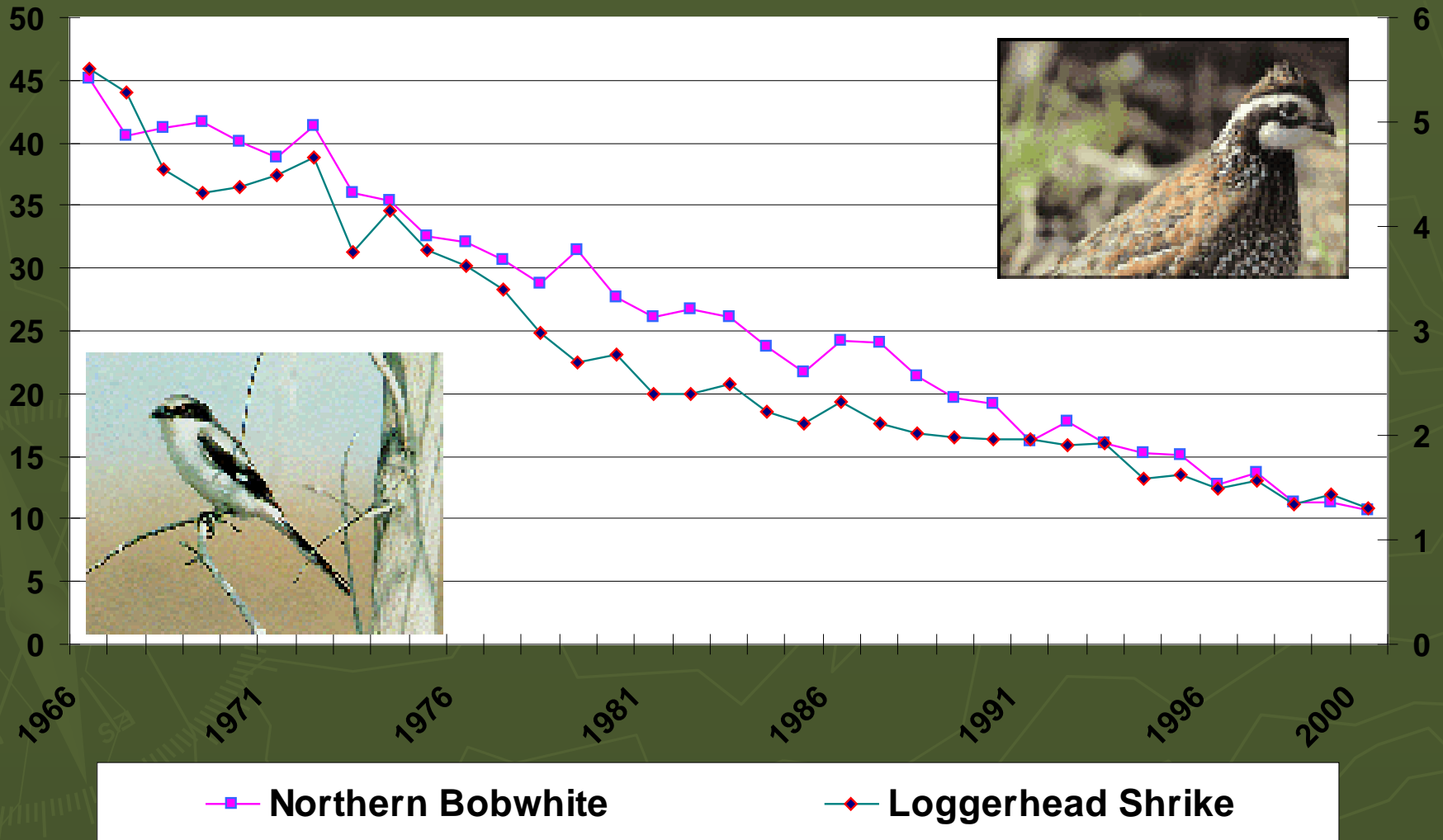
2000's



Unpublished Singing Ground  
Survey Data

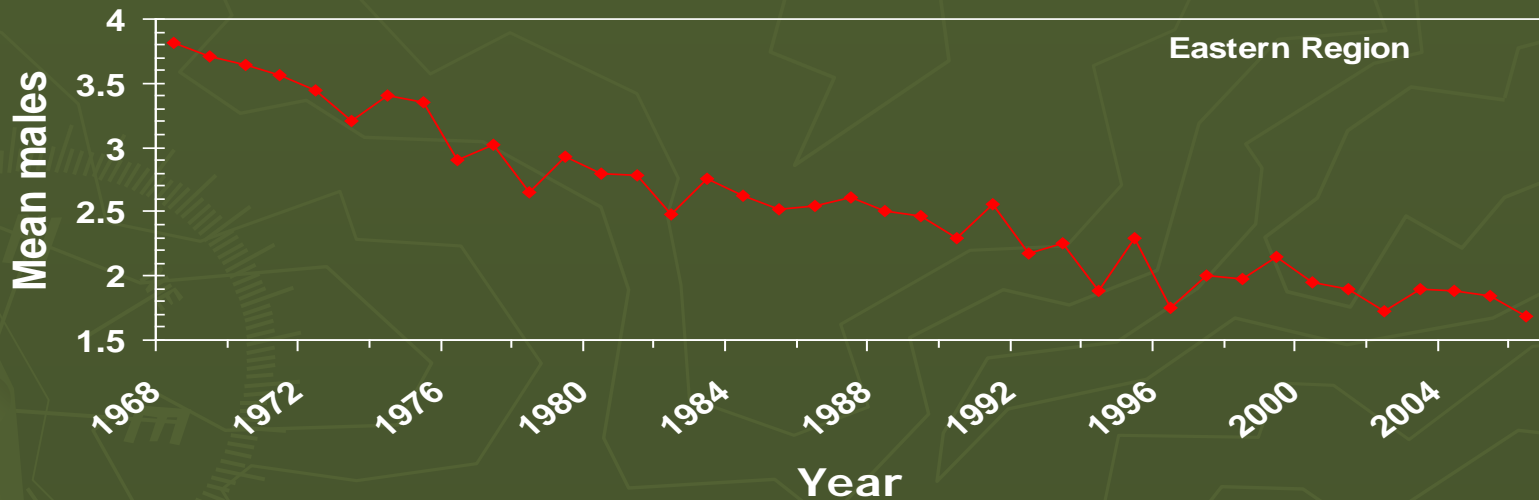
John Sauer, USGS

# FWS Region 4 BBS Indices for Bobwhite Quail and Loggerhead Shrike, 1966-2000



# Number of Woodcock Heard on the Singing Ground Survey 1968-2006

(56% decline)



Data from: Kelley, J.R., Jr., and R.D. Rau. 2006. American woodcock population status2006. USFWS



# Decline in Breeding Male Woodcock Population



Figure 1. Appalachian Mountains Bird Conservation Region

## Change in Singing Male Woodcock from 1970 to 2005

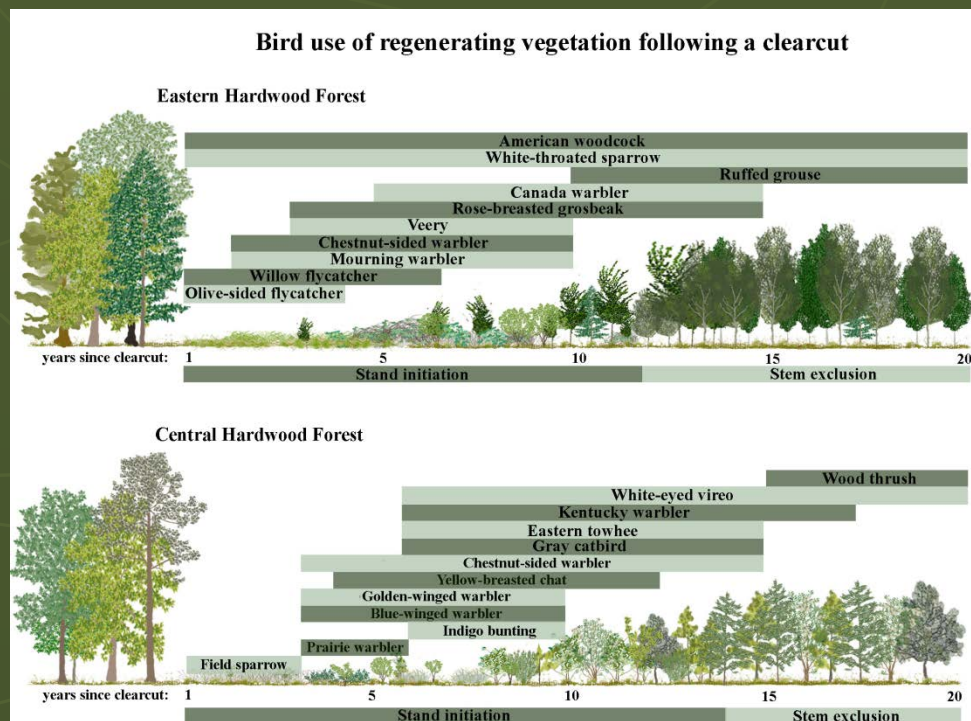
### State (Portion in BCR 28)

Metric	MD	OH	PA	VA	WV	Total
# Singing Males in 1970	2,518	17,540	71,497	13,068	31,120	135,743
# Singing Males in 2005	1,099	8,741	42,030	4,284	13,898	70,052
Change	-1,419	-8,799	-29,467	-8,784	-17,222	-65,691
% Change	-56	-50	-41	-67	-55	<b>-48</b>

# SWAPs Identify Need for Young Forest Structure

States within “Young Forest Initiatives” list 75 species that require young forest and shrubland habitats as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. (57 birds, 7 reptiles/amphibians, and 11 mammals in deciduous and coniferous forest types)

*Examples of avian species preferences*



After a clearcut, the stage of regeneration affects how long the forest is suitable habitat for different species of birds. Herbaceous plants, shrubs, vines and saplings grow rapidly in the stand initiation period following the harvest. Many early successional species prefer this period because of the dense woody understory that provides cover and nesting substrate. Once the saplings grow to young trees and form a closed canopy, the woody understory decreases. Some early successional birds prefer the dense cover in this period of stand initiation. (Oliver & Larson; Thompson et al. 1996; DeGraaf & Yamasaki 2003)

# Consequences of the Debate Over Forest Management Methods

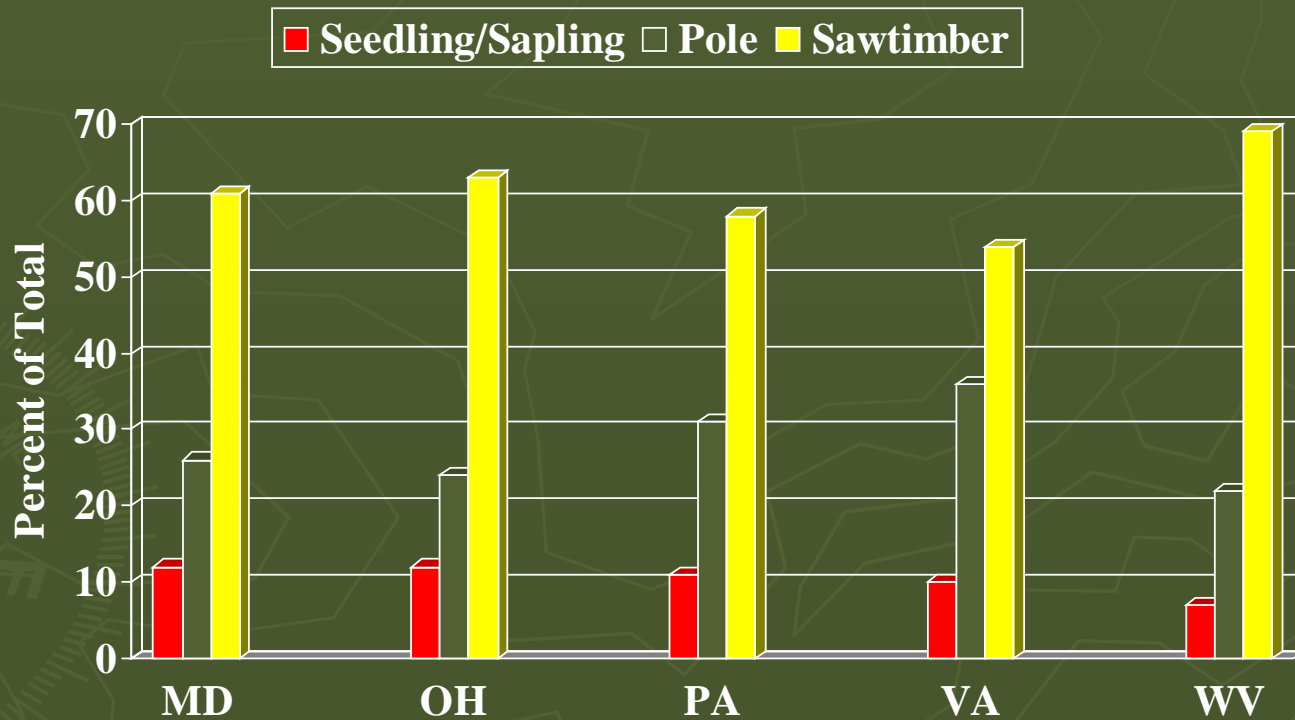
Shrublands and early successional habitats becoming rarer

- ▶ Species are declining because of the loss of young forest habitats



# Forest Structure

## Current Stand Size Distribution



Note: Virginia's data reflects a dramatically pine shorter rotation in the east.

# Age class distribution GWNF

From table of past activities (Sept 2010) in Forest Plan revision

## Stand Age Acres Percent

0-10	10,304	1%
11-20	22,754	2%
21-30	31,379	3%
31-40	32,512	3%
41-50	22,236	2%
51-60	3,212	0%
61-70	5,579	1%
71-80	29,893	3%
81-90	99,426	9%
91-100	214,981	20%
101-110	229,501	22%
111-120	113,435	11%
121-130	76,982	7%
131-150+	157,024	15%
Total	1,049,218	100%

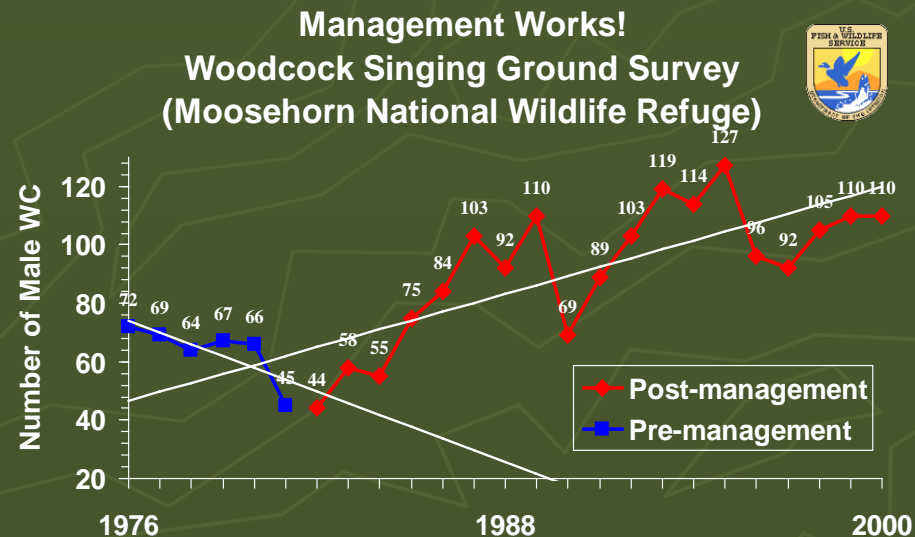
# 1978-81 Early Successional Management Study

## Birds that Increased

- ▶ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- ▶ Northern Flicker
- ▶ Eastern Wood Peewee
- ▶ Common Raven
- ▶ American Robin
- ▶ Northern Parula
- ▶ Nashville Warbler
- ▶ Black-throated Blue Warbler
- ▶ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- ▶ Black and White Warbler
- ▶ American Redstart
- ▶ Mourning Warbler
- ▶ Common yellowthroat
- ▶ White-throated Sparrow
- ▶ Dark-eyed Junco

## Birds that Decreased

- ▶ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- ▶ Cape May Warbler



Hardwood cutovers on flatlands  
= woodcock nest & brood habitat  
(& quail habitat)



# Excellent Roosting Field





# Log Landings = Singing Grounds



# IDEAL Woodcock Habitat

10,000 stems/acre



# Conversion of cool season grasses



# Close up of planting rape, clovers and WSGs



# Field Border



# Field Border Thicket



# Young Forest Initiatives

## Supports SFI Biological Diversity Standard

(including old growth, habitats of T&E species, Forest of Exceptional Conservation Value, and Activities to limit invasive plants and Animals)

- ▶ WMI developed & published voluntary BMPs that promote methods to optimize management for early successional species
  - BMPs that allow ESH goals to be attained where appropriate and in context of other biodiversity-related elements

# Technical Assistance Available

Experienced habitat biologists will provide:

- ▶ Consultations with SFI Program Participants
- ▶ Assessments of forestlands for ESH opportunities  
(propriety stays propriety)
- ▶ Workshops & best management plan training
- ▶ Demonstration areas where BMP application can be viewed
- ▶ Opportunity for web-based communications  
([www.timberdoodle.org](http://www.timberdoodle.org))



We welcome the opportunity to discuss management options to benefit young forest wildlife in decline.

## Contact Information:

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# End of a Great Day

