



MASSACHUSETTS WILDLIFE

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**Carbon and Conservation,
Wild Edibles, Wood Thrush,
Eagle Scout Habitat Project**

MASSACHUSETTS WILDLIFE

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FEATURES

CARBON AND CONSERVATION ON MASSWILDLIFE FOREST LANDS 2

— John Scanlon, Brian Hawthorne

MassWildlife conducts habitat restoration and management for both game and non-game species of conservation need while increasing net annual carbon storage on state wildlife lands, which helps mitigate climate change.

INTO THE OUTSIDE FOR WILD EDIBLES 14

— Arianna Alessandra Collins

A wild-edible plant, nut, and fungi enthusiast gets involved with her local sportmen's club and finds that barriers between hunters and non-hunters quickly fade over a good meal.

IN SEARCH OF WOOD THRUSH 22

— Melanie Klein

Search for wood thrush in stands of mature forest in western Massachusetts and learn how predators affect the nesting success of this declining songbird at suburban and rural sites.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT: MILL BROOK BOGS WMA 28

— Henry Ashley

Detailed planning and hard work paid off for this new Eagle Scout and the pollinators and other wildlife that benefited from his habitat improvement project.

Faces of Conservation 34

On the Cover: Legacy trees, like this black oak in Grafton, take time to grow. They are typically large, old, sturdy, full-crowned trees that provide abundant food and cover for wildlife. The total habitat lifespan of such trees can range from 400–700 years, including time as a snag and downed decaying log. Therefore, habitat biologists and foresters recognize and retain legacy trees for the many benefits they provide to wildlife and people. Photo by Troy Gipps/MassWildlife.

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Photo © Henry Ashley



UPDATE: New England Cottontail Conservation

New England Cottontail (NEC) conservation efforts were featured in the article *Hugging Baby Trees*, which appeared in the No. 1, 2015, issue of *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine. It described how landowners like Jim Kelly are contributing by creating young forest patches. From 2011 through 2015, 13 private landowners in the southern Berkshires chose to manage habitat with projects ranging in size from 5 to 40 acres and totaling 225 acres. Through 2019, 32 young forest habitat patches have been created on private land in the southern Berkshires, bringing our total to 450 acres or about half way to our goal of 1,000 acres for that region. We are continuing to partner with private landowners interested in helping this uncommon cottontail by funding habitat management projects on private and municipal lands. If you are interested in managing your land to create young forest patches, contact MassWildlife Habitat Biologist Marianne Piché at marianne.piche@mass.gov and visit newenglandcottontail.org for more information about regional conservation efforts.

The Search

MassWildlife searches annually for NEC by collecting pellets and sending them out for DNA analysis. We do this because native and non-native rabbits cannot be distinguished from one another by appearance. In 2019, NEC were also documented at two locations near Jim's property in Sheffield: one in New Marlborough and one in Sandisfield in a 10-year-old young forest habitat patch created to benefit American Woodcock. NEC has also been found in Monterey, Tolland, and Granville since 2011. Because NEC do not travel far, targeting habitat management efforts within a few miles of where they occur is most beneficial.



Photo by Bill Byrne/MassWildlife

Listing Status

From 2006 until 2015 the NEC was a candidate for federal Endangered Species Act protection. However, in September of 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made a decision not to list it due, in part, to ongoing commitments made by conservation partners to implement the Conservation Strategy for the NEC and reach habitat and population goals by 2030.

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Few sounds in the woods of New England are as iconic as a “drumming” ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*). Grouse are a fixture of northern forests across all of North America. In Massachusetts, grouse will utilize a variety of forested habitat, but thick, dense, regenerating young forest is critically important to provide ample food and cover from predators. These habitats are rare across southern New England. MassWildlife foresters and biologists are focusing their efforts to increase young forest habitat to benefit grouse and numerous other species that rely on these dense, brushy habitats. Photo by Bill Byrne/MassWildlife



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