

## Habitat

Habitat is a wild animal's "support system." All of an animal's life requirements must be met within this system; those requirements are food, water, shelter and space to raise young.

**Food-** Wildlife get energy by eating plants or other animals. If your property has plants that produce nuts, seeds, fruit and flowering plants you can feed a variety of wild animals. Some of these animals can then become food for other animals.

**Water-** Water is often a limiting factor in habitats; supplemental water sources can change ordinary habitat into excellent habitat. This water can come in the form of ponds, birdbaths, irrigation ditches or natural landscape fixtures.

**Shelter-** Animals need shelter to raise young, to hide from predators, to avoid harsh weather, to feed, to play and to rest safely. Leaving trees and shrubs in their natural form, building rock or brush piles and leaving leaf litter all provide great sources of natural shelter.

**Space-** Space requirements for each species differ greatly and can often be quite large. Your property can serve as part of an animal's home range and through joint efforts with neighbors and parks you can provide corridors of space that animals can use to move from one property to the next.



An old stump creates great habitat for small mammals, birds, amphibians and insects.  
Photo by Adam Sant

### The Mission of Thurston Conservation District

To conserve, sustain and protect our natural resources for the people of Thurston County through: rural and urban partnerships, volunteerism, cooperation, education, and technical and financial assistance.

To create healthy, functioning ecosystems in Thurston County through advocacy, education and technical assistance efforts; thereby empowering every citizen of Thurston County to be a steward of the environment.



### Additional Resources-

Thurston Conservation District- contact for more information about creating wildlife habitat on your property

Landscaping for Wildlife in the PNW by Russel Link

Home Owner's Guide to Frogs- [http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/Documents/Homeowners\\_Guide\\_Frogs.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/Documents/Homeowners_Guide_Frogs.pdf)

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## Landscaping for Wildlife



An old stump and added native vegetation adds great wildlife habitat. Photo by Adam Sant

**Consider this fact:** A typical neighborhood in Washington has more than 25 species of birds and mammals

## Thurston Conservation District

Local Solutions to Local  
Problems

# Why landscape for wildlife?

**Wildlife survival**— Well-known species that we once took for granted are becoming more and more uncommon. Landowners with property have an opportunity to help preserve and maintain wildlife species, even if they simply act as corridors or as part of an animals home range..

**Educational opportunity**— There are so many fascinating things to learn about nature and wildlife and there really is no more convenient place than your own backyard. Natures lessons range from following birds migratory patterns, observing the interrelationships between plants and wildlife, and identifying wildlife tracks. These activities adds richness to your role as a wildlife steward, are a great way for families to come together and its just plain fun.

**Community involvement**- Projects in neighborhoods and communities bring people together, working toward a common goal that is enjoyable for everyone involved. Additionally by involving people in wildlife related activities you will be building greater environmental awareness in your own community.

**Its healthy!** Landscaping for wildlife provides psychological value for everyone involved by adding a peaceful, natural environment to escape noisy, crowded spaces.



The beginning stages of a brush pile for wildlife shelter. Photo by Adam Sant

# Who you might see

**Mammals**- These are furry, four-legged animals such as squirrels, chipmunk, raccoons, opossum, skunk, mice and some bats and we often see. They have all adjusted well to urban settings.



A Townsend Chipmunk  
Photo by Dr. Lloyd Glenn  
Ingles © California Academy of Sciences



A pair of house finches.  
© 2007 George W. Hartwell

**Birds**- Birds will be the most visible wildlife in your yard. You will get to enjoy hearing their calls and songs, seeing their beautiful plumage and watching daytime activities. Nearly 300 bird species live in the Pacific Northwest, many of which could live in your backyard.



A Rough Skinned Newt Photo  
by Joshua Puhn

**Reptiles and Amphibians**- Roughly 25 amphibian species and 25 reptile species are native to the Pacific Northwest. It is difficult to maintain reptiles and amphibians in most yards due to their strict habitat requirements, but if you live near undeveloped areas your property may become part of their home range.

**If they don't come**- Its probably not your fault, location is key. Being near a park, green-belt or other natural area increases your chances of success. Don't be discouraged and realize that maintaining a natural landscape is important to the wildlife that are present.

# A few ideas

- Leave leaf litter under trees and shrubs, which provide moisture, cover and organisms that amphibians can eat.
- Retain or add stumps, root wads, logs, rock piles and other woody debris that can provide habitat for amphibians, small mammals, insects and birds. Strategically placed these features can be used as corridors across exposed areas.
- Use native plants, they require less maintenance and will provide a food source for wildlife.



Rufous hummingbird© hummingbird photo gallery  
Landscape photos by Erica Guttman  
Warblers in a dish rock by Steve Caldwell

- Add a water feature such as a bird bath, dipping pools, or a wildlife pond.
- Don't mow your lawn or do rotational mowings. This minimizes the disturbance to wildlife and adds a variety of habitat options.
- Add perches, nest boxes, roosts, or dust baths for birds.