

# Preserving Wildlife Habitat on Your Land: What You Can

## Wildlife Benefits

- Natural pest control
  - ◇ Bats can eat more than **500** pesky insects per hour! Hawks and owls take care of unwanted rodents.
- Healthy wildlife population = healthy environment for people.
  - ◇ Our declining fish populations are like “canaries in a coal mine.” They are warning us that our watersheds are not as healthy as they could be. Clean water for fish means clean water for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

## Wildlife Needs

Small farms and ranches can provide habitat for many of these needs:

**Food** – Animals need food year-round. Crops and plants provide forage, berries, nuts, and fruits. Plants with fruits that dry on the stem and are slow to fall are important winter foods. Plants attract animals that are prey for others in the food chain.

**Water** – Wildlife species need water to drink, to bathe in, and as a source of food. Streams, ponds, birdbaths, and watering tanks can provide water.

**Cover** – Wildlife need places to nest, rest, escape from predators, and take shelter from harsh weather. Brush piles, fence rows, rock piles, and dense shrubs provide cover. Many wildlife species use different habitats to meet their needs. For small animals, these habitats must be close together. For example, quail and rabbits need forage and shrubs within a few hundred feet of each other. Other wildlife can travel greater distances between needed cover and habitat types.

Improving your property for wildlife will depend on the conditions in your area. Become familiar with the local wildlife and their habitats. You can get advice from the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District.

