



# What do Woodland Owners Think of Bird Conservation?

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WOODS, WILDLIFE AND WARBLERS: WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS  
TO PROTECT THE WOODS OF VERMONT

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# Roadmap

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What is Woods, Wildlife and Warblers?

Southern Vermont Landowner Survey

- Main benefits of owning woods
- Main barriers of active management with birds in mind

How the Woods, Wildlife and Warblers program helps landowners through their journeys to stewardship through minimizing barriers

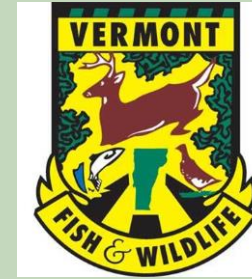
- Connect, meet, prepare, and act

How barriers shift along the landowner journey to stewardship



Woods, Wildlife and Warblers works to give Vermont landowners the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to better care for their woods.

# Engaging Landowners Through a Powerful Partnership



Network of early adopters and engaged landowners

Local credibility and trust

Community

Understanding of landowners

Marketing strategy

Tracking results and outcomes

Forestry recommendations

Forester training

Trusted messengers

Wildlife expertise

Face-to-face meetings with landowners

Access to financial assistance



# Why “Wildlife and Warblers”?

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1. Critical habitat

2. Landowner desires



# Fall 2016 Landowner Survey

- 7,946 southern Vermont woodland owners
- 50% enrolled in UVA, 50% not enrolled in UVA
- The survey questions focused on:
  - General ownership
  - Knowledge and attitudes towards forest bird and wildlife management
  - Actions towards forest bird and wildlife management
  - Barriers to forest bird and wildlife management
  - Barriers to and benefits of Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Property Tax Program
  - Demographics
- 480 survey respondents (owning 46,608 acres)

**WOODS WILDLIFE AND WARBLERS**

**Family Woodland Owners Bird & Wildlife Management Survey**

**General Ownership Questions**

1. Thinking about all the parcels you own, how many wooded acres do you own? \_\_\_\_\_ acres

2. How many years has your wooded land been in your family? \_\_\_\_\_ years

3. What landowner programs do you participate in?  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Financial Assistance (Cost-share)  YES  NO  NOT SURE  
Conservation Easement or Land Donation  YES  NO  NOT SURE

4. How important for your family, if at all, are the following?

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
Bird watching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing bird and wildlife habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeding birds and wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hunting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photographing birds and wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tracking birds and wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watching wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Forest Bird and Wildlife Habitat Management on my land**

A woodland is simply wooded areas on your property. These areas do not need to be actively maintained or harvested in order to be woodlands, just defined by the presence or absence of trees.

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

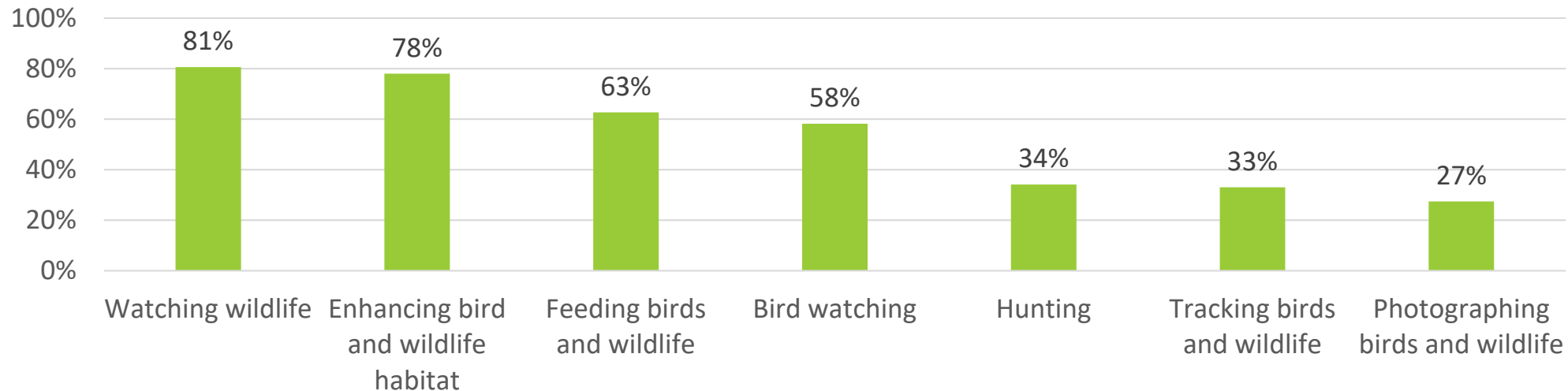
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	INDIFFERENT	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	I DON'T KNOW
I know what actions to take to increase bird and wildlife habitat on my woodland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to cut some trees to improve bird and wildlife habitat on my woodland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I leave my wooded land alone because that is the best thing to do for bird and wildlife habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Future plans for my property conflict with including bird and wildlife habitat in my current woodland management practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**WOODS WILDLIFE AND WARBLERS**

# Importance of Wildlife to Landowners

For both UVA and Non-UVA respondents, wildlife watching ranked as the most important wildlife-related activity followed by enhancing bird and wildlife habitat.

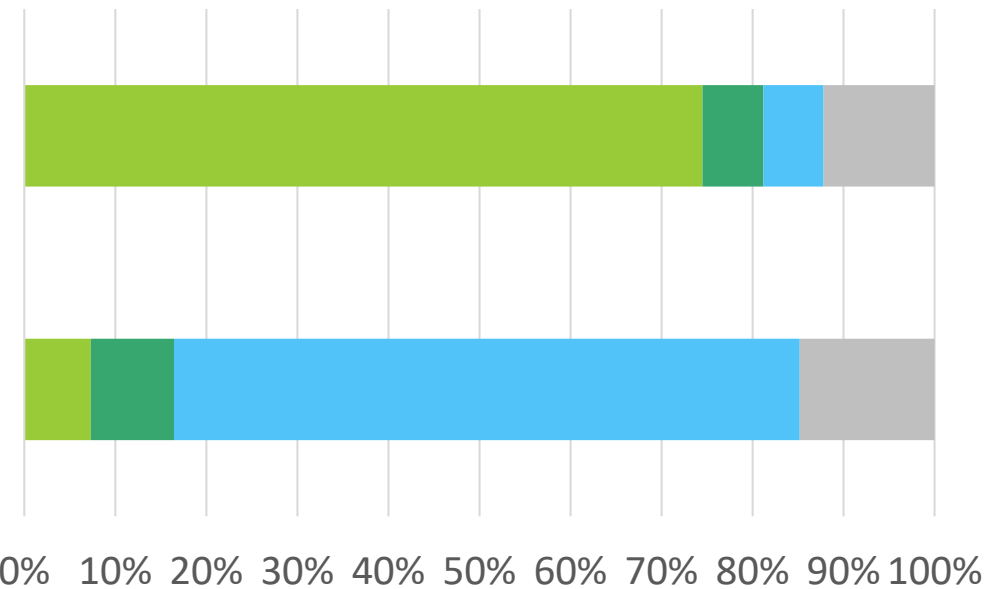
Percent of Respondents Who Reported Activity as Important or Very Important to Family



# Management Attitudes of Landowners

Future plans for my property conflict with including bird and wildlife habitat in my current woodland management practices.

I am willing to cut some trees to improve bird and wildlife habitat on my woodland.



■ Disagree or Strongly Disagree   ■ Indifferent   ■ Strongly Agree   ■ Don't Know







# Forest Bird and Wildlife Habitat Management Actions

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## Enrolled in UVA program:

- In the last 5 years:
  - 89% have consulted a forester in the past 5 years
  - 49% have created a management plan that focuses on bird and wildlife habitat

## Not enrolled in Vermont's UVA program:

- In the last 5 years:
  - 33% have consulted a forester or other natural resources professional
  - 12% have created a forest management plan with a focus on habitat
- 44% are *considering* creating a forest management plan with a focus on bird and wildlife habitat in the next 5 years.



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# Barriers to Forest Bird and Wildlife Habitat Management

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## Top UVA Challenges:

- I am unsure about the activities I should do (38% Strongly Agree or Agree)
- I have concern about doing the wrong thing and harming my land (37% Strongly Agree or Agree)

## Top non-UVA Challenges:

- I am unsure about the activities I should do (54% Strongly Agree or Agree)
- I have concern about doing the wrong thing and harming my land (51% Strongly Agree or Agree)
- It is difficult to find the right professional to provide help (39%)





DATE

Dear [FIRST NAME],

In case you missed us last spring, there is still time to learn about your woods from a local woodland professional or knowledgeable neighbor.

Your woods provide food, water, and shelter for a huge variety of wildlife. With help from a professional, you can enhance wildlife habitat in your woods while still accomplishing other goals you may have for your land.

Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers is excited to offer you the opportunity for a visit— at no cost or obligation — with a local woodland professional or knowledgeable neighbor who can help you accomplish your goals for your woods while creating or enhancing wildlife habitat.

During this free visit, the local expert or peer will walk your property and provide recommendations that are specific to you and your woods.

To request a visit, complete and return the enclosed postcard or contact Silvia Cassano at [info@vtwoodsandwildlife.org](mailto:info@vtwoodsandwildlife.org) or 802-747-7900. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Jim Shallow  
State Director  
Audubon Vermont

Kathleen Wanner  
Executive Director  
Vermont Woodlands Association



### JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS!

Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers has already engaged with over 550 of your friends and neighbors and over 50 of them have taken advantage of a free visit from an expert or knowledgeable neighbor.



American Forest Foundation Sponsored

**Vermont woodland owners, are you interested in enhancing wildlife habitat on YOUR land? Register for our free webinar today!**

Sign Up



American Forest Foundation Sponsored

Attention, Vermont Landowners! Do you know how to attract native wildlife to your land? We can help!



Want to see a scarlet tanager ...

Learn More

Customized for Verm...



Top 14 W Attract B

Customized



You and 37 others

12 Comments 9 Shares



Like



Comment



Share

- exploring strategies you can use on your own; and
- maintaining your woods into the future.

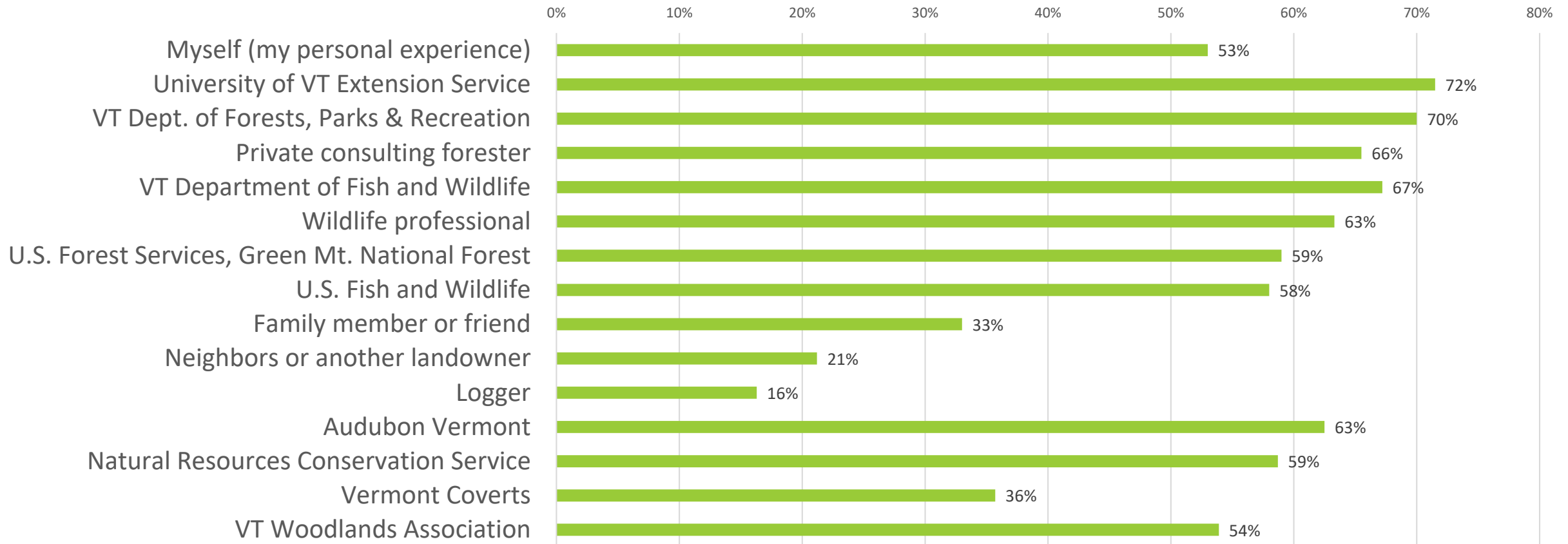


Phone

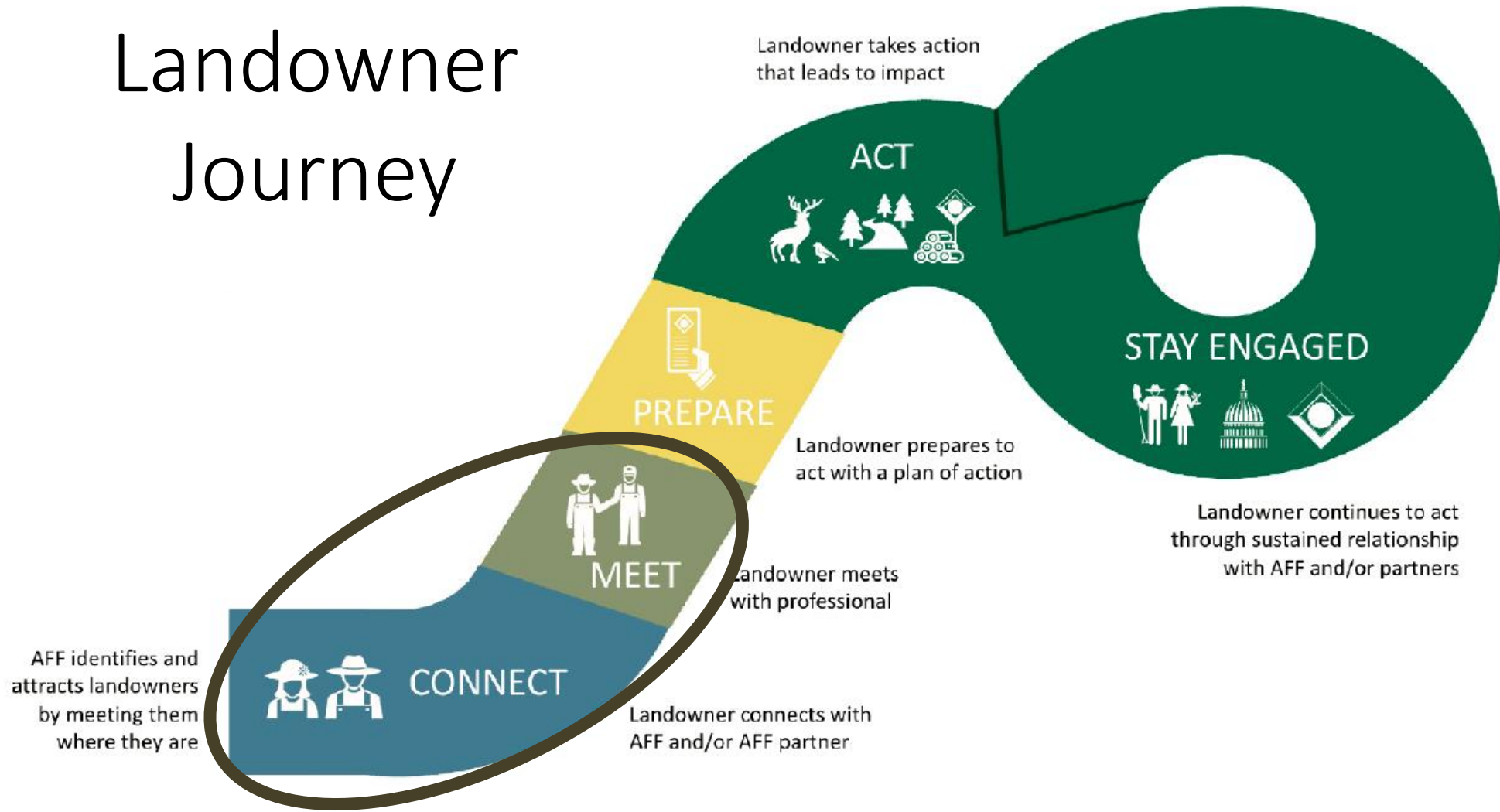
Keep me informed with periodic emails. My email address and information will never be shared with any other parties.

# Building Trust with Landowners

Percent of Respondents who Trust or Highly Trust Source



# Landowner Journey



VT – Site Visit Sheet

Some items below will have been answered in the pre-screen. Please confirm responses.

Landowner:		Site visit by:	
Total acres:	Forested acres:	Visit date:	
Parcel address:			
Is parcel primary residence? Y ___ N ___		Year land acquired:	
Mailing address:			
Phone:			
Email:			
<b>FUTURE GOALS:</b>			
Landowner interests/goals:			
What does the landowner want the property to be like in 50 years?			
<b>PAST WORK:</b>			
Management history:			
<b>LANDOWNER INTERESTS:</b>			
Wildlife Y ___ N ___	Forest Health Y ___ N ___		
Recreation (hiking, etc.) Y ___ N ___	Hunting Y ___ N ___		
Invasives Y ___ N ___	Cost-share Y ___ N ___		
Familiar with Tree Farm? Y ___ N ___	Interested in learning more? Y ___ N ___		
Interested in Audubon? Y ___ N ___	Interested in learning more? Y ___ N ___		
<b>FOREST CONDITIONS:</b>			
On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the worst and 5 being the best) how ___ , Why?			



## Considerations for Birds and Wildlife on Your Woodland

What have you already done to support birds on your land? What do you plan to do and when? Use this checklist to organize your next steps in providing birds and other wildlife what they need to thrive in your woodlot. To learn more, consult our fact sheet, consider working with a professional to implement these practices on the ground, or visit our website at vtwoodsandwildlife.org.

TASK	ALREADY DONE?	WILL DO?	IF YES, WHEN?
Read informational materials on enhancing habitat for birds and wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Inventory and map your land for important habitat features	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Leave dead and dying wood standing and other woody material on the forest floor for food and shelter	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Maintain native trees and shrubs that produce fruits, seeds, or nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Avoid breaking up forest patches by limiting roads and trails	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Consult a forester or other natural resources professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Remove invasive plants because they don't support local wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Create piles of brush and branches for wildlife shelter	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Create a forest management plan that includes activities to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Maintain a variety of tree and shrub species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Manage for a variety of tree ages and sizes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Thin your woods or conduct a harvest to enhance bird and wildlife habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Minimize harvesting and other disruptive activities during bird breeding season (May to mid-July)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Create a small forest opening of small trees, bushes and grasses for nesting and food sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Restore and maintain areas along streams and creeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Avoid drastic changes (sharp edges) between wooded and non-wooded habitats	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		




## Managing Your Woodlot with Birds and Wildlife in Mind

Want to learn about the health and productivity of your land? Birds can help! Birds are great indicators of your land's health because they are especially sensitive to change and stress in and around their homes. For that reason, birds will also be one of the first to indicate that your actions are truly increasing the health of your woods and its inhabitants. A healthy bird population points to healthy woods, so managing your land with birds in mind does not just benefit birds. Active maintenance of bird habitat will make your woods healthier, more resilient, and more productive. Not to mention, healthier woods also provide homes for a wider variety of wildlife such as black bears, bobcats, and eastern red-backed salamanders. An added bonus of a healthy bird population is free insect damage control, which means less investment in insecticides and bug zappers for you!

Vermont and northern New England forests are home to some of the highest concentration of bird species breeding in the continental United States—meaning this region provides rich, essential habitat for all local wildlife species. As a result, small Vermont landowners are essential to bird and wildlife conservation. You can play an active role by beginning to maintain your woodland with birds in mind. With careful planning, you can have productive working woodlands that provide habitat for many of the bird and wildlife species that call Vermont home. A forester or wildlife biologist can help you determine which actions are most suitable for the unique conditions on your land.

Here are some actions you might take on your land and why they are important:

- Inventory and map your land for important habitat features.** Learn which resources already exist on your land! Take your mapping even further by looking at the landscape beyond your property lines to understand how your land fits into the big picture. Google Earth and Google Maps are great sources of free, aerial imagery. MyLandPlan.org also provides the tools you need to not only map and journal about your woodlot but, you can also set goals, communicate with natural resource professionals and find additional support.

### Scarlet Tanager

Slim, bright red bird with jet black wings and tail

**SONG** Like a robin with a sore throat; call an abrupt *chick-burr*

**FOOD** Insects

**FUN FACT** The female scarlet tanager sings a song similar to the male's song, but softer, shorter, and less harsh. She sings in answer to the male's song and while she is gathering nesting material.

**HABITAT**  nesting/foraging forest structures  >80% canopy cover



nest shape/ placement



### Northern Hardwood

**COMMON TREE SPECIES**

American Beech	White Ash
Yellow Birch	Paper Birch
Sugar Maple	Aspen spp.

**BIRDER'S DOZEN**

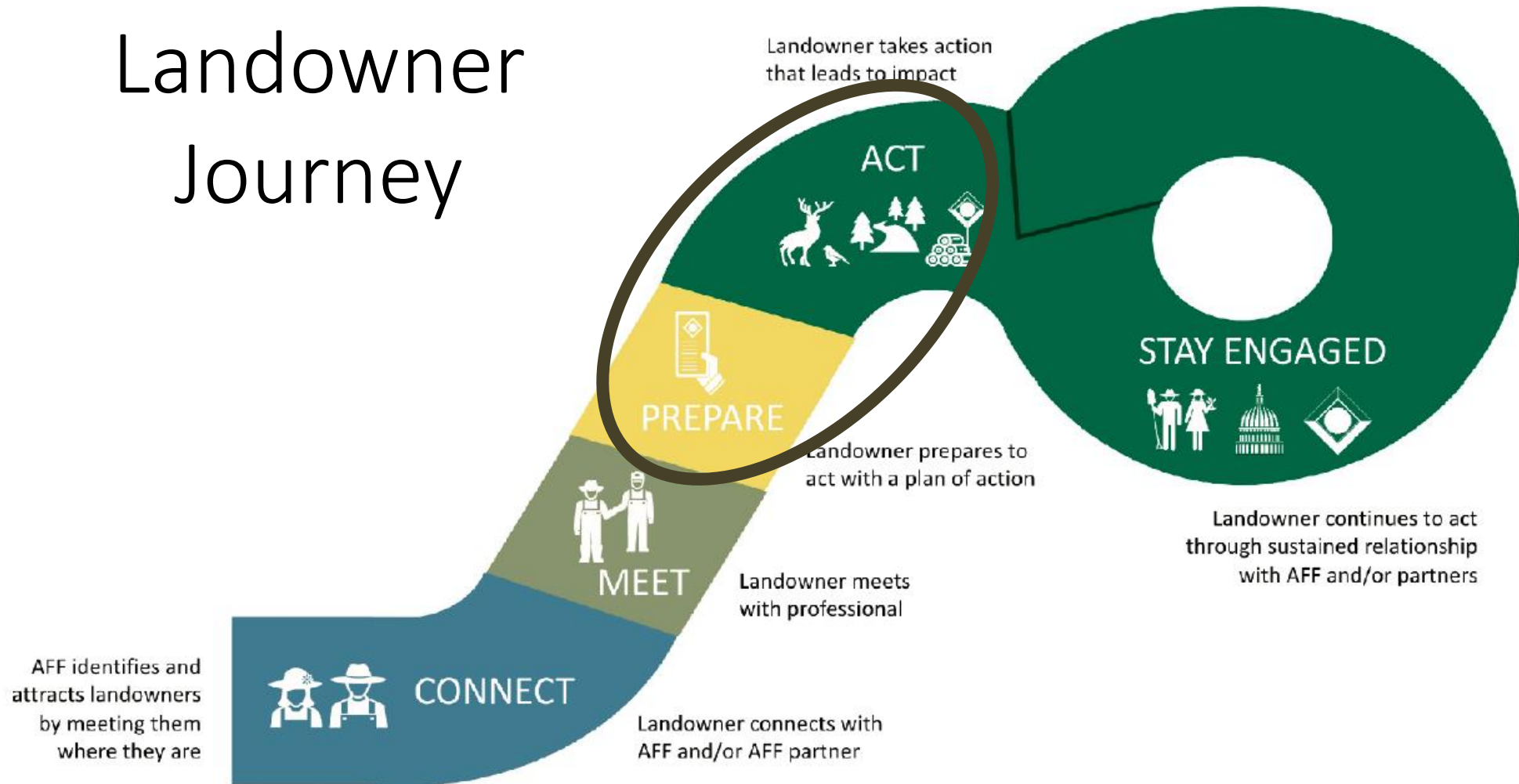
American Woodcock	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Veery
	Wood Thrush
	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

**OTHER WILDLIFE THAT SHARES HABITAT**

Barred Owl	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Broad-winged Hawk	Black Bear
Northern Goshawk	Fisher
Pileated Woodpecker	Mink
	Porcupine



# Landowner Journey



# Barriers to Forest Bird and Wildlife Habitat Management

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Top challenges SHIFT from *knowledge* to *time and money* as landowners become more engaged.



# Overcoming Barriers to Forest Bird and Wildlife Habitat Management

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## Landowners:

- Connect with and build a personal relationship with a professional to begin their journeys
- Understand opportunities to make management activities more affordable
- Are empowered and feel that *they can* improve habitat on their land
- Understand time requirements for this work
- See management for birds/wildlife as a priority



# Key Takeaways

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- There is substantial opportunity for landowners to make a difference for bird habitat.
- Landowner interactions should lead with the benefits, address the barriers along the journey.
- Vermont woodland owners are **driven** by birds and other wildlife (main “benefit”).
- Woodland owners face a **changing set of challenges**.
  - Knowledge and access to the right professionals → time and money
- Provide connections and informational resources
- Establish personal relationships, provide a simple next step, look for opportunities to *understand* and minimize barriers



# Thank You



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