

The Importance of Private Forests to Birds

Amber Roth
Michigan Technological University



Afternoon Session about Private Forests

Friday Afternoon Track 1 - The Importance of Private Forests

Moderator: Yoyi Steele, WDNR wildlife biologist/planner and WBCI IBA/Southern Forests Coordinator

1:00-1:40 p.m. – Value of privately-owned forests: Southern Forests example – Yoyi Steele

1:45-2:25 p.m. – What we know about private forest landowners – Tricia Knoot

2:30-3:10 p.m. – Management options for forest landowners: A Wisconsin perspective – Mike Mossman

3:10-3:30 p.m. – Break

3:30-4:10 p.m. – Work with private forest landowners (The Young Forest Initiative – Callie Bertsch; My Wisconsin Woods – Steve Swenson)

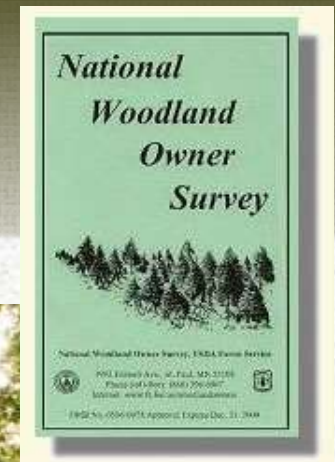
4:15-5:00 p.m. – Landowner stories (Active management/timber production – Steve Thaler, Chippewa Falls; Preservation/restoration – Jon Schultz, Arcadia; Urban birdscaping – Steve Betchkal, Eau Claire)

Overview:

- *What are private forests and who owns them?*
- *Importance of private forests*
- *Management opportunities for private forest owners*
- *Power of partnerships*
- *Private lands and full-lifecycle conservation for migrants*
- *My story as a landowner*

Private forest owners:

- *Own ≥ 1 acre of forest land*
- *Families*
- *Individuals*
- *Corporations*
- *Other private groups that own forest land*



Forest land: Land at least 10% stocked by forest trees of any size, including land that formerly had such tree cover and that will be naturally or artificially regenerated.

forestsprings.com

Family forest owners:

- *Families*
- *Individuals*
- *Trusts*
- *Estates*
- *Family partnerships*
- *Other unincorporated groups*



familyforest.org

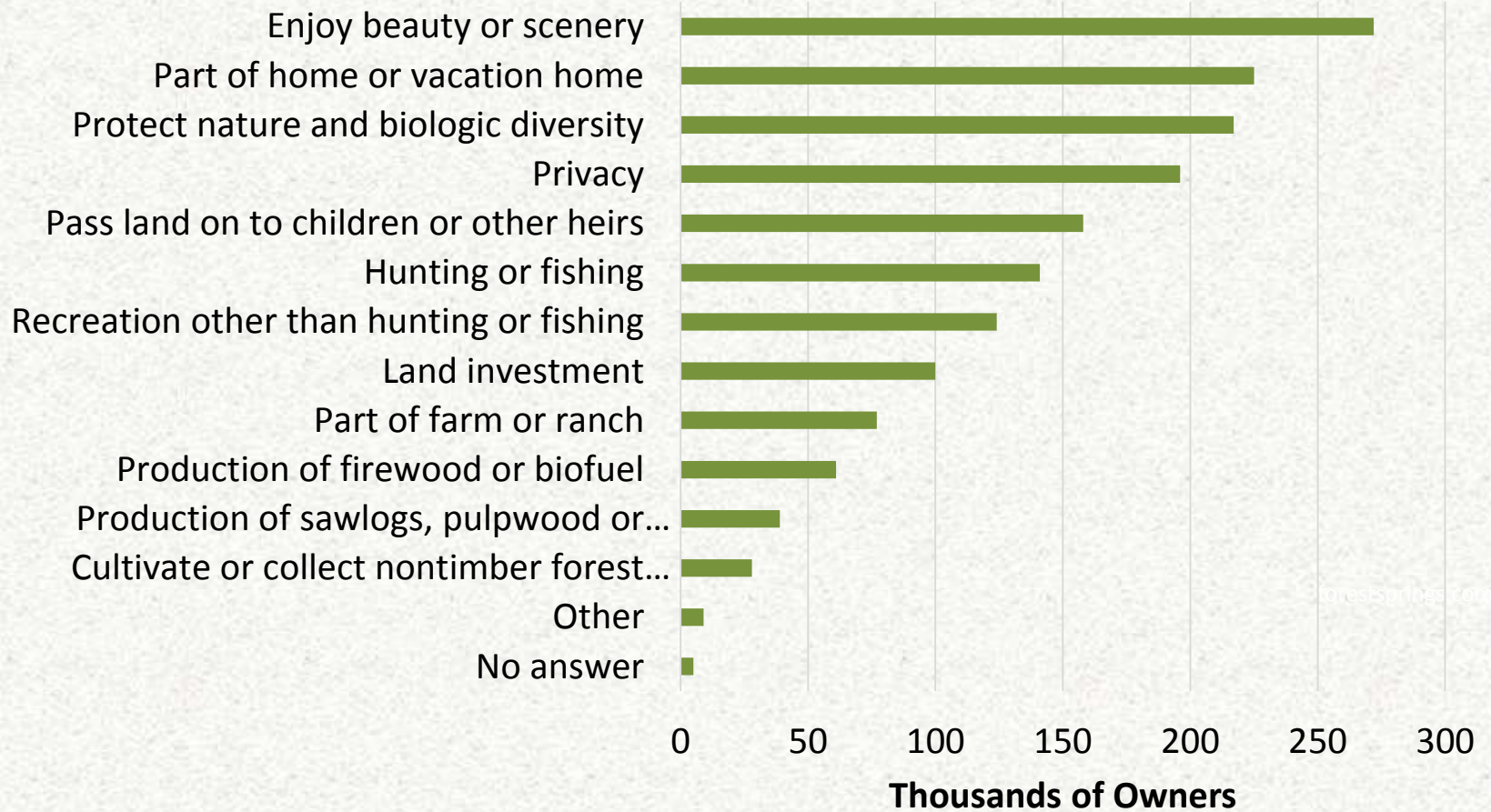
Typical family forest owner in Wisconsin:

- **Age: 55-64 (27%)**
- **Occupation: retired (40%)**
- **Highest level of education: College degree (43%)**
- **Sex: Male (77%)**
- **Race: White (94% +)**
- **Income: \$50-100K (35%)**
- **Acreage: 10-49 ac (29%)**



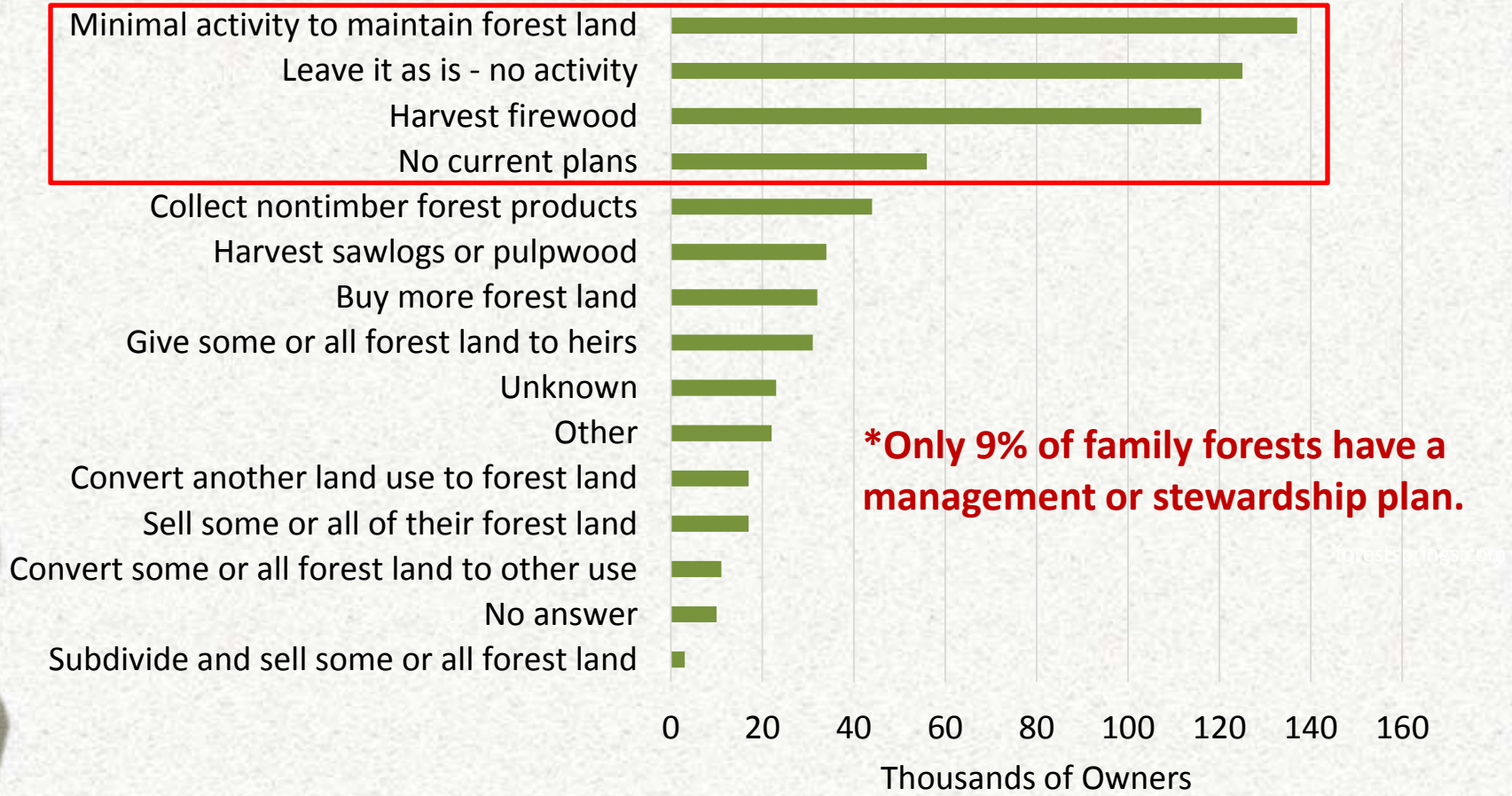
Michigan DNR

Reasons for owning a family forest in Wisconsin:



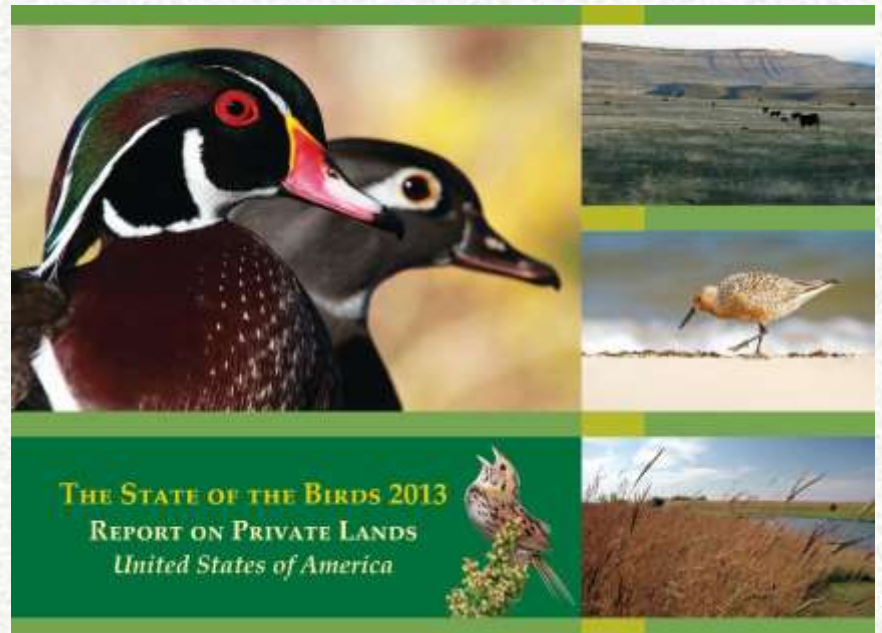
National Woodland Owners Survey 2006

Owner future intentions for their family forest in Wisconsin:



National Woodland Owners Survey 2006

*How important
are private
forests for birds?*



Eastern forests by the numbers:

- *84% in private ownership*
- *83% of the distribution of 36 obligate eastern forest breeding species is on private lands*



Laurie Smaglick Johnson

Suites of species with high reliance on private forest lands (>90% distribution)

- ***Young forest specialists:*** *Brown Thrasher and Indigo Bunting*
- ***Forest generalists:*** *Eastern Bluebird and Yellow-billed Cuckoo*



Laurie Smaglick Johnson

Population trends for eastern forest obligates found in Wisconsin, 1968-2012:

13 declining

- ✓ American Woodcock
- ✓ Eastern Whip-poor-will
- ✓ Eastern Wood-Pewee
- ✓ Acadian Flycatcher
- ✓ Brown Thrasher
- ✓ Golden-winged Warbler
- ✓ Prairie Warbler
- ✓ Cerulean Warbler
- ✓ Prothonotary Warbler
- ✓ Kentucky Warbler
- ✓ Eastern Towhee
- ✓ Field Sparrow
- ✓ Wood Thrush

5 increasing

- ✓ Yellow-throated Vireo
- ✓ Yellow-throated Warbler
- ✓ Pine Warbler
- ✓ Louisiana Waterthrush
- ✓ Hooded Warbler

3 no change

- ✓ Blue-winged Warbler
- ✓ Worm-eating Warbler
- ✓ Scarlet Tanager



Important features for declining species:

- *Large blocks of continuous forest for breeding birds*
- *Working forests can reduce and buffer development*
- *Age-class diversity*
- *Small forest patches in agricultural and urban landscapes for migrants*



Active forest management = working forests

- *Retain large forest patches*
 - *Landowner forest cooperatives*
- *Mimic natural disturbances*
 - *Retain scattered dead & live trees, down wood*
- *Have a Plan*
 - *Management plan*
 - *Estate succession plan*



Private-public partnerships can:

- *pool limited resources in a strategic way, especially important in an era of agency budget cuts.*
- *meet goals for measurable landscape-scale or population-scale change across all ownerships.*
- *create more forest management options and opportunities for private landowners.*



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Private lands management incentives and assistance that benefit forest birds

- ***Natural Resources Conservation Service:*** *Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program*
- ***US Fish & Wildlife Service:*** *Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program*
- ***Wisconsin DNR cost-share:*** *Landowner Incentive Program, Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program, Forest Legacy Program*
- ***Wisconsin DNR property tax-incentives:*** *Managed Forest Law, Forest Crop Law*
- ***US Forest Service:*** *stewardship agreements*

Power of Private-Public Partnerships: Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership



Another way to get started...

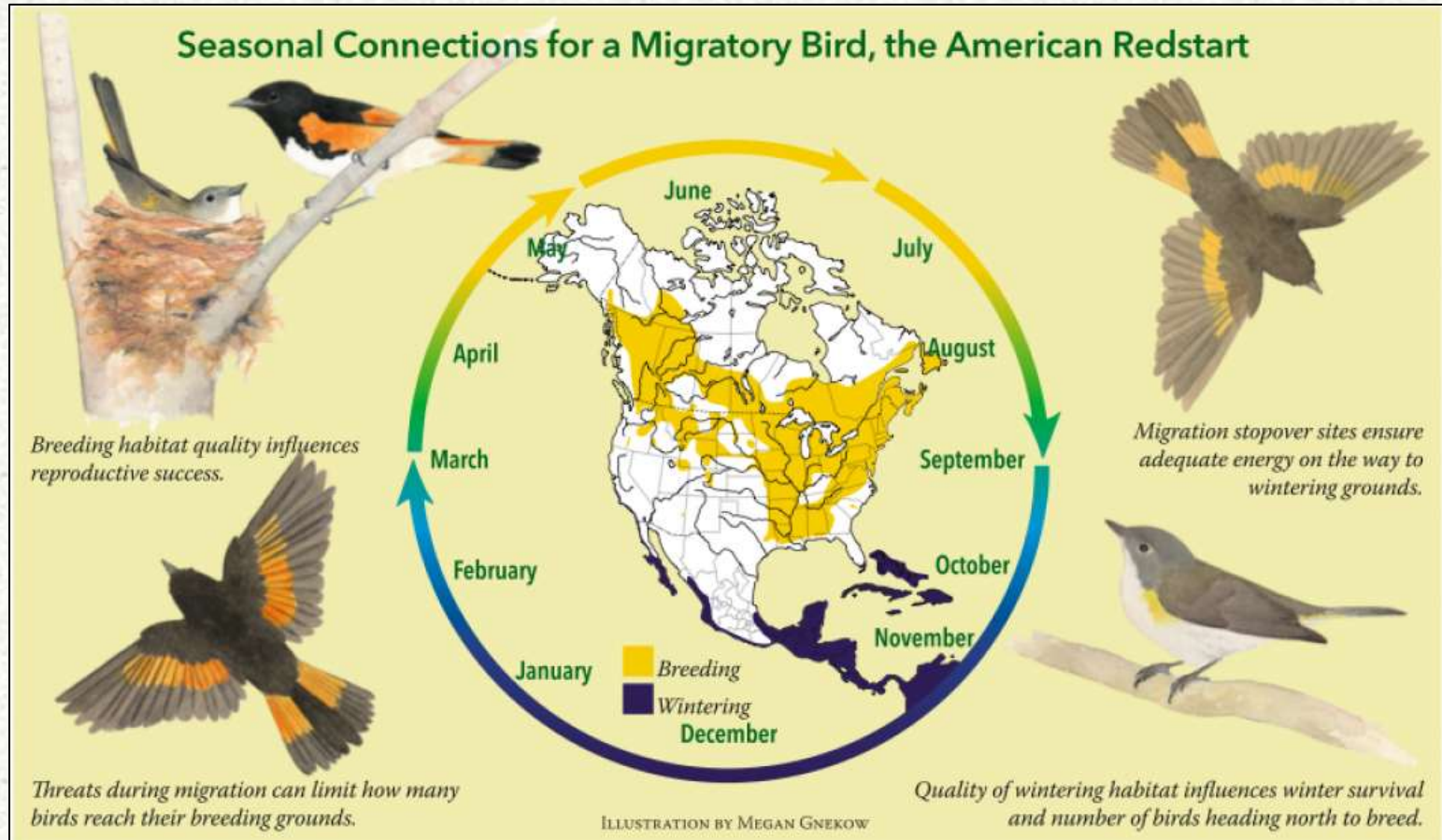
Attend a Wisconsin Coverts Workshop



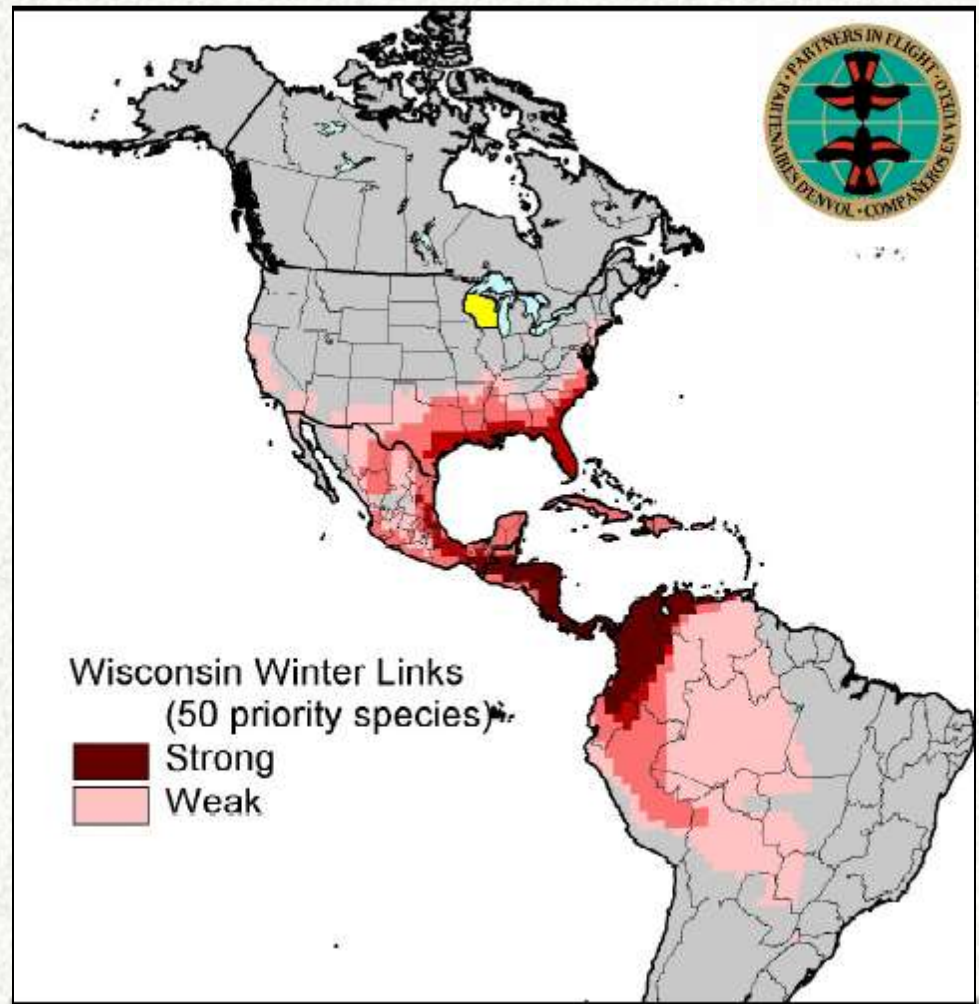
WI Coverts Project

August 13-16 at Kemp Natural Resources Station
Applications due June 15

Full-lifecycle conservation for migratory birds involves private lands at all stages



*Where do
Wisconsin's breeding
birds spend the
winter?*



From: Making Connections for Bird Conservation.

Partners in Flight website: <http://www.partnersinflight.org/pubs/ts/04-Connections>

Private lands on wintering grounds

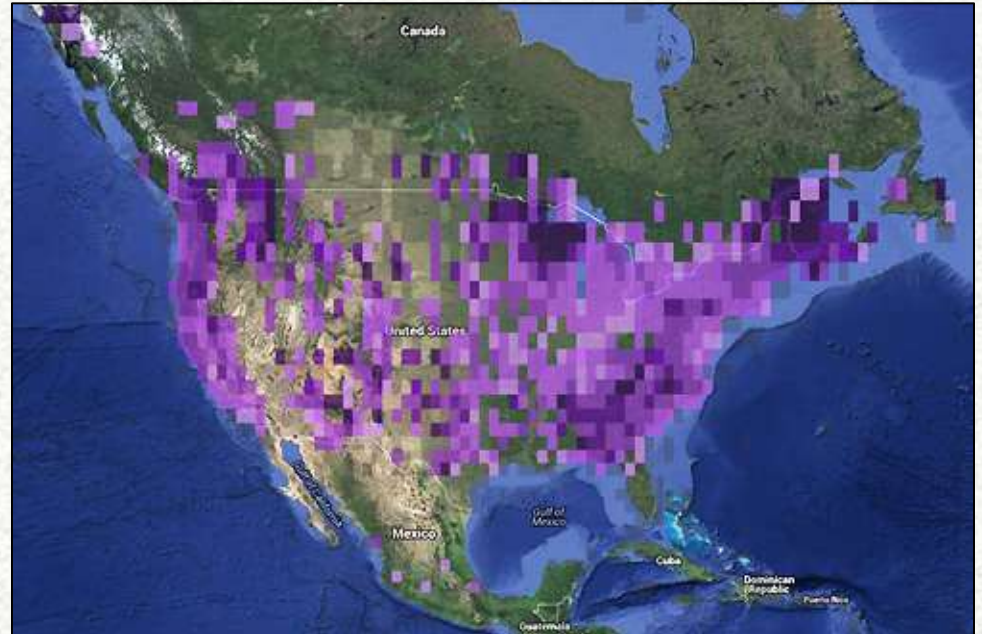
*First private reserve for
Golden-winged Warbler
at Reserva El Jaguar,
Nicaragua*



Private lands on wintering grounds



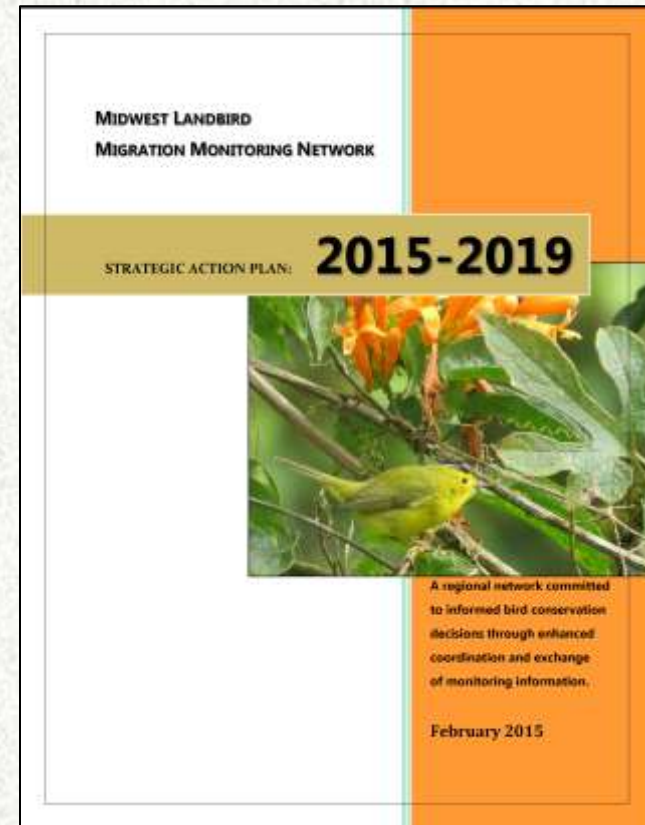
***GBBC 2015
Pine Siskins (10.5%
of checklists):
Attracted to
feeders with nyjer
thistle seed***



Private lands for migrating birds

Midwest Landbird Migration Monitoring Network Strategic Action Plan

Now available online!



Private lands for migrating birds

*Wisconsin is critically
important for
migrating boreal
forest birds.*



Figure courtesy of Anna Peterson

Private lands – this means you!

You don't need extensive forest land to help forest birds.

Case study: my backyard

- *78 species in the last 5 years*
- *76% migratory (85% forest birds)*



Private lands, private forests are important!

- *You don't need to own forest land to help forest birds.*
- *Private forests are important to more than just forest birds.*
- *Everyone has a role to play to conserve forest birds!*

