SPRUCE GROUSE
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION REGION 14

Introduction

The Spruce grouse (*Falcipennis canadensis*) is either rare or uncommon in BCR14. It requires large stands of dense coniferous forest for food and shelter. It occurs more frequently in the northern part of BCR 14 and is found in high elevation spruce/fir and lowland spruce/fir along floodplains and bogs. It is listed as a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" in the Wildlife Action Plans of at least one of the states in BCR 14.

Habitat Needs

This is a bird that relies on dense stands of coniferous forest exclusively. These stands contain small openings and contain a dense softwood understory.

The territory size ranges from three acres to twenty acres.

Habitat Management Practices

The habitat management objective for this species would be to establish or maintain large all-age blocks of spruce/fir around lowland bogs or in riparian area and in high elevation situations (up to 4500 feet in BCR 14).

When assessing properties for habitat potential, look for soils such as Raynham, Ridgebury, Stissing or Walpole at low elevations and Bemis, Cabot, Lyman, Lyme Monarda, Moosilauke, Pillsbury or Ricker in the high elevations. There are other soils that also fit in these categories in northern BCR 14.

Recommended Silvicultural Practices include:

In lowland spruce/fir situations use the group selection method, keeping the groups size less than two acres.

High elevation - in general, cutting operations above 3000 feet should be discouraged. If cutting is deemed necessary then the following guidelines should be followed. (see "Good Forestry in the Granite State" pages 167 to 169 for details):

Direct management so that it maintains or increases the softwood component
Maintain a structure that contains at least 60 percent of the harvest area in trees with diameters of four inches or more.
Leave ten percent of the area uncut.
Allow no more than 30 percent of the cut area to be in a size class of less than four inches.

Plan to extend rotation ages by thirty percent or more with corresponding extended entry times

Operate only when erosion control can be maximized. This may result in operations that only take place on frozen ground and use current methods to minimize soils compaction as well as erosion.