Sustainable forestry can go hand in hand with good stewardship. Stewardship involves managing your forest so that populations of native species of plants and wildlife persist for future generations. Birds and other wildlife are integral components of healthy forest ecosystems. Forests provide resources (food, shelter, water) for wildlife species. These species of wildlife in turn benefit the forest through seed dispersal, control of forest pests, decomposing organic matter, and many other ecological functions that help maintain a healthy forest community. Simply put, healthy forests are more productive than unhealthy ones. Practicing sustainable forestry to benefit wildlife and plant species is a win-win situation for landowners and stewards of forested habitats.
How can I best manage my forest lot to benefit bird species? What should I do next to implement sustainable forestry on my property?

There is no one prescription that can be applied to all properties to create the best results for birds and other wildlife. The right fit for your property will depend on your goals (including wildlife, aesthetics, and economics) and a multitude of site-specific factors, including forest type and composition, soil type, ecologically sensitive areas, elevation, the surrounding landscape, and wildlife community composition.

Consult with professional foresters and ecologists to inventory your forested property and help you develop a long-term sustainable management plan that allows for timber harvest and creation or enhancement of wildlife habitats. When developing this plan take into consideration the following:

- Forest and soil types, water regimens, community structure (flora and fauna), overall forest health, economic interests, and aesthetics are all important factors. Use different silvicultural techniques to create habitat types that you desire for your property;
- Ensure protection of sensitive habitat areas like seeps, vernal pools, riparian zones, cliffs, caves, and talus areas;
- Protect standing dead trees (snags), tree cavities, and food-producing vines and shrubs that provide resources for birds and other wildlife; and
- Maintain canopy cover over and along cold-water streams.

A great place to start is by contacting your local Service Forester with the PA Bureau of Forestry. See the additional resources to the left for contact information.