

December 2025

# 12 Months of Wildlife Management

From Joe Roy, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist



*Frost Seeding*

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## Evaluate Success

After a year of habitat management, take some time to evaluate how things worked for you this year. Did you allocate enough time for certain tasks? Did you discover new tasks? Do you need additional equipment? Or additional help? These are great things to think about in the winter months, and you can use this info to help you prepare for your habitat management goals next year.

## Field Management

Consider retaining any standing vegetation that is still on site. These standing grasses and leafy plants provide good thermal cover and seeds for overwintering birds and small mammals.

## Frost Seeding

If you have prepped a seedbed, or areas you want additional plant diversity or biomass, you can still broadcast seed early in the month if the ground has yet to freeze. Remember, if you are broadcast seeding, add at least 10% more seed to an area than the label recommends.

## Timber Harvest



Planning a timber harvest for hard ground conditions in December can help you meet your habitat goals while limiting soil disturbance.

December is also a good time for timber stand improvement activities.

As we enter December, we can look back on all the progress we have made on our property over the past year. At the same time, we have probably also created a whole new to-do list of things we didn't quite get to, or new things we want to address. Well, I have to warn you, if this is your first year working on management, the new to-do list will be an annual creation. There is always something more or new to do, and that is okay. Take a moment this month to truly appreciate what you have accomplished before planning for more. If you have stuck with me through this series, you probably have a lot to be proud of and enjoy on your property! December is a dormant month for our plants, and some wildlife, like our bears, have entered their winter torpor, which is a hibernation-like state. Many critters are seeking winter habitat as they focus on their shelter needs, and others have gone south or to the coast for the winter. Others, like snow buntings and northern shrikes, are arriving in Maine for the winter.

## Nest Boxes

If you have posts that need to be reset to accommodate nest boxes, getting those in the ground before frozen conditions is key. After it freezes up and we get snow and ice, check up on your next boxes and make sure the entrances are still open so overwintering wildlife can use them.



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*This newsletter article was originally written for our partner Small Woodland Owners of Maine.*

## Hunting

Managing your deer herd is an important part of habitat management. If you aren't tagged out, consider extending your deer season into December with muzzleloader season.



## Hunter Orange

With muzzleloader season in full swing during the start of the month, remember to keep your blaze orange on while out and about. One article must be a solid-colored hunter orange hat; the other must cover a major portion of the torso, such as a jacket, vest, coat or poncho and must be a minimum of 50% hunter orange in color (camouflage orange patterns of at least 50% orange are legal).