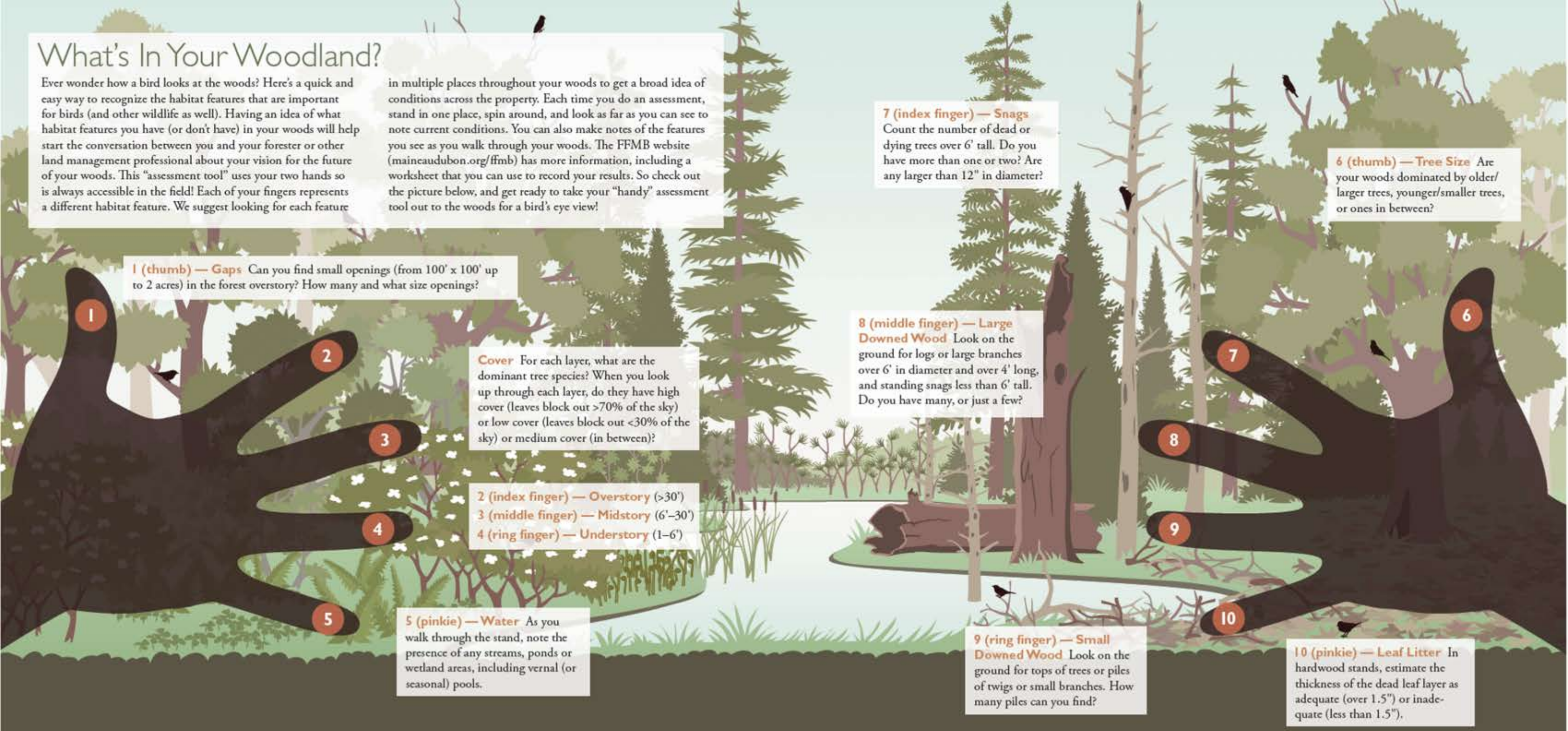


What's In Your Woodland?

Ever wonder how a bird looks at the woods? Here's a quick and easy way to recognize the habitat features that are important for birds (and other wildlife as well). Having an idea of what habitat features you have (or don't have) in your woods will help start the conversation between you and your forester or other land management professional about your vision for the future of your woods. This "assessment tool" uses your two hands so is always accessible in the field! Each of your fingers represents a different habitat feature. We suggest looking for each feature

in multiple places throughout your woods to get a broad idea of conditions across the property. Each time you do an assessment, stand in one place, spin around, and look as far as you can see to note current conditions. You can also make notes of the features you see as you walk through your woods. The FFMB website (maineaudubon.org/ffmb) has more information, including a worksheet that you can use to record your results. So check out the picture below, and get ready to take your "handy" assessment tool out to the woods for a bird's eye view!



1 (thumb) — Gaps Can you find small openings (from 100' x 100' up to 2 acres) in the forest overstory? How many and what size openings?

Cover For each layer, what are the dominant tree species? When you look up through each layer, do they have high cover (leaves block out >70% of the sky) or low cover (leaves block out <30% of the sky) or medium cover (in between)?

2 (index finger) — Overstory (>30')
3 (middle finger) — Midstory (6'-30')
4 (ring finger) — Understory (1-6')

5 (pinkie) — Water As you walk through the stand, note the presence of any streams, ponds or wetland areas, including vernal (or seasonal) pools.

7 (index finger) — Snags Count the number of dead or dying trees over 6' tall. Do you have more than one or two? Are any larger than 12" in diameter?

8 (middle finger) — Large Downed Wood Look on the ground for logs or large branches over 6' in diameter and over 4' long, and standing snags less than 6' tall. Do you have many, or just a few?

9 (ring finger) — Small Downed Wood Look on the ground for tops of trees or piles of twigs or small branches. How many piles can you find?

6 (thumb) — Tree Size Are your woods dominated by older/larger trees, younger/smaller trees, or ones in between?

10 (pinkie) — Leaf Litter In hardwood stands, estimate the thickness of the dead leaf layer as adequate (over 1.5") or inadequate (less than 1.5").

Ask Your Forester..

- to do a more in-depth assessment of the habitat features in your woods. Your forester can use this information to develop a plan of management activities that will:
- Create a mix of the three vegetation layers over space and time in order to promote habitat for priority bird species (and other wildlife), and healthy forest growth.
- Create small gaps (less than two acres) in the canopy, strategically placed near the edges of larger forest blocks.

- Retain as many standing snags and cavity trees as possible, where safe to do so. The bigger the snag the better!
- Leave some broken tree tops, limbs and large fallen logs on the ground, including after timber harvests.
- Keep trees with big healthy crowns to promote thick leaf litter on the ground.
- Maintain high canopy cover in buffer areas around water bodies, preferably going beyond minimum state standards.

- Identify invasive plants, and apply appropriate control measures, including washing equipment to reduce the spread of invasive species.
- Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality by limiting soil compaction and erosion from roads and trails, including those used for timber harvesting and other heavy equipment.
- Encourage native tree and shrub species desirable for wildlife, including those that will thrive in a changing climate.

- Work with loggers who are familiar with FFMB techniques, and understand the way you want your woods to look after harvest activities.

