



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

RED TREE VOLES AND YOUNG FORESTS

Red tree voles are generally associated with older forests and complex canopy structures, but new research in the northern coastal region of Oregon is helping us better understand how red tree voles are using and nesting in younger forests, and how these forests are contributing to the habitat they need to survive. The information will improve habitat and species conservation and management decision-making.

KEY COLLABORATORS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO)
- The National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc. (NCASI)
- Oregon State University
- Private and Public Landowners
- U.S. Geological Survey

PROJECT TIMELINE

2019:
PROJECT START



ONGOING

SPECIES FAST FACTS



Red tree voles are small mammals that weigh around 30 grams, which equals 12 pennies.



They nest in forest canopies, often using and altering nests created by other canopy-dwelling species, such as woodrats, Humboldt flying squirrels, and birds.



Traditionally, they have been most often found in Douglas fir stands that are more than 80 years old, and especially in stands that are more than 200 years old.



They feed almost exclusively on Douglas fir needles.



Habitat loss and high severity fire have contributed to an estimated 18 percent red tree vole habitat loss in the north coastal region of Oregon since 1994.



The staff of the National Alliance of Forest Owners agree the red tree vole is the cutest of all WCI species, no offense meant to the Louisiana pigtoe.



PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Researchers have been surveying forest stands adjacent to older stands, and placed cameras above some nests to collect additional information. They regularly found red tree vole nests in younger forests, including 20- to 40-year-old managed forests within 1.4 kilometers of older forest (80+ years old).

WHAT'S NEXT?

A more comprehensive look at how young forests provide habitat for red tree voles is needed to add breadth and depth to our understanding of forest age and red tree vole habitat. It's clear individual young forest stands are providing habitat, but it is not clear if this is sustained for multiple generations or if connectivity is facilitated among patches of older forest. While the original project is complete, additional funding made possible through the WCI is supporting a demographics study, which began in 2023.

CONSERVATION SUCCESS STARTS WITH KEEPING FORESTS INTACT

We all have a hand in ensuring conservation of wildlife. When we purchase wood and forest products, we support the sustainable cycle of growing, harvesting and replanting that keeps our forests as forests. Thousands of species call working forests home, and many species thrive in actively managed working forests.



This project is made possible by the Wildlife Conservation Initiative (WCI), a collaborative partnership between NAFO, the USFWS, NCASI, and other stakeholders to conserve fish and wildlife species in private working forests. The WCI was founded on the recognition that private working forests are an important conservation tool. NAFO members own and manage more than 43 million acres of private working forests in 32 states — the scale needed to achieve meaningful conservation success. Through the WCI, the proactive and voluntary conservation efforts of government and private working forest owners are delivering positive outcomes for wildlife across the United States.

WildlifeConservationInitiative.org

NAFO
National Alliance
of Forest Owners