

## How Housing in Vermont Causes Deforestation in Animal Habitats

Animals in Vermont are constantly being forced out of their homes to make areas for houses. However, the real effect on animal habitats from deforestation is a topic that must be addressed. As deforestation from construction remains an ongoing issue, our local communities should become more conscientious of the effect on wildlife in Vermont. Earth Day can spread awareness about habitats at risk and start making towns in Vermont more beautiful and more green.

Since 2000, Vermont's population has increased by about 15,000 people. Over the years, forests have been destroyed to build houses. According to the Earth Observing System, "as city population increases, more area is needed to build infrastructure upon." This area happens to be natural forest habitats. Also, byjus.com explains that "a huge explosion in the population of a city can result in the deforestation of the surrounding area for the construction of homes." In 2021, single family units in Vermont increased, and the effects of deforestation in places such as Kwiniaska Ridge are visible to locals, as they witness disturbed wildlife roaming their properties.

Vermont wildlife, including birds, foxes, and deer, all live in lush forests. However, because of the growing need for areas to build, animal habitats are disappearing, leaving wildlife with no home, shelter, or food. Vermont Fish and Wildlife explains that habitat blocks, areas of natural habitats undisturbed by development, provide home and protection for various species. This same article says "habitat loss is a loss of biological diversity and degradation of ecosystem

services.” This shows Vermonters and Vermont construction companies should be thoughtful of forests because they contain an entire ecosystem that directly benefits and affects us. Vermont is an immensely beautiful state, and its scenery should be protected, not harmed.

Restoration of Vermont’s forests and abandoned towns will take money and effort. According to HomeGuide, building a house costs about \$155,310 - \$416,250, but renovating a house costs about \$100,000 - \$200,000. This shows that communities just as beautiful and more sustainable can be achieved with less money by renovating or rebuilding. Locals can be inspired by Earth Day to donate to home projects that give back. Organizations like Audubon Vermont, a nonprofit, can preserve the homes of birds in forests. Earth Day is a day to gather together to create a greener landscape, cleaner air, diverse wildlife, and a better state. We can all, animals and people, call Vermont home.

As various animals lose their homes due to local development, Vermonters should strive to be aware of ecosystems and this environmental crisis, helping in small ways that make a big difference in the beautiful state of Vermont. By taking action, we can sustain and protect diverse animal habitats and their beautiful inhabitants.