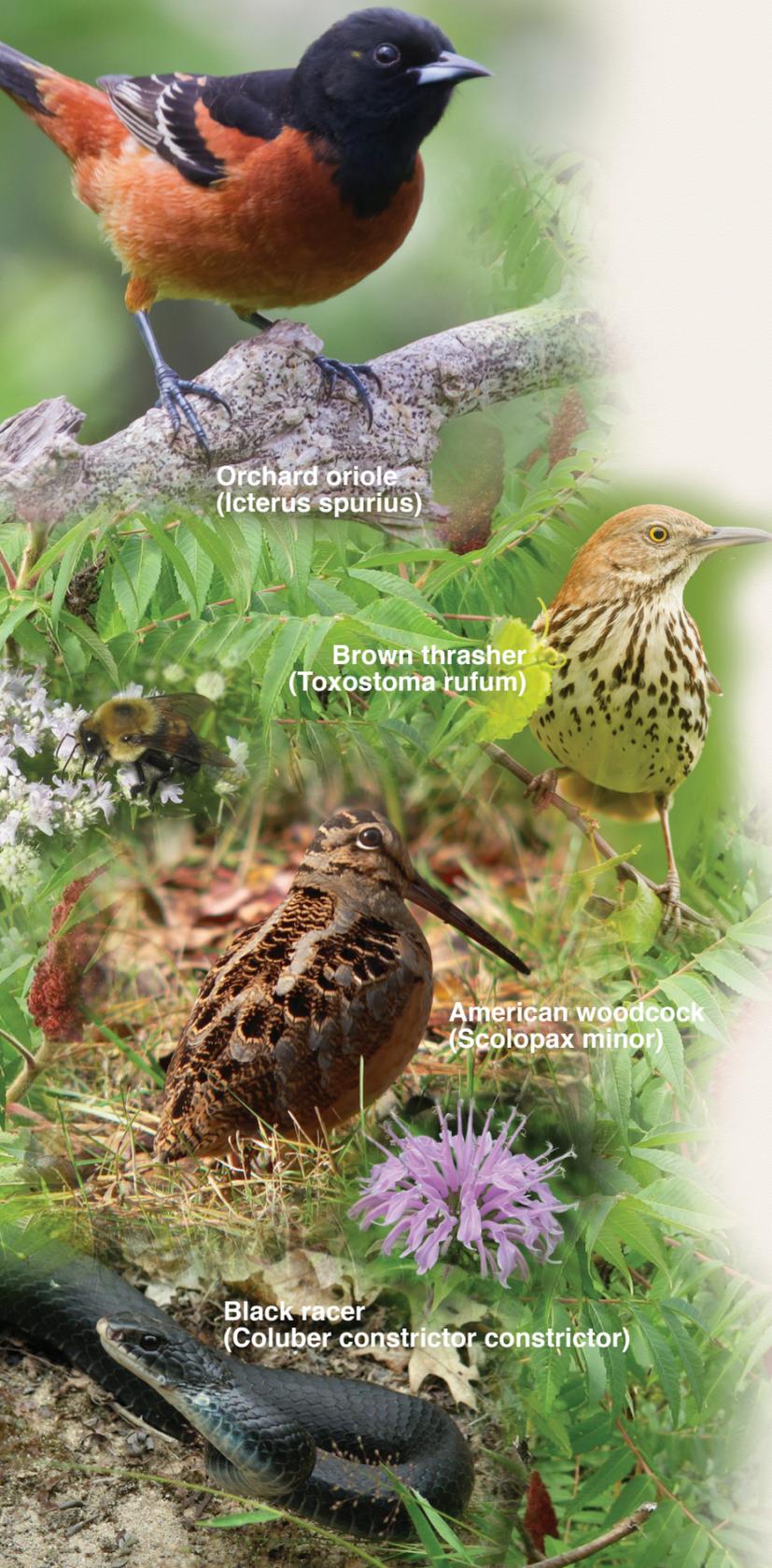




St. Michaels Farm Preserve: Scrub-Shrub Habitat Mosaic

This land was permanently preserved by D&R Greenway Land Trust in partnership with State, County and local public partners and private citizens in 2010.



Orchard oriole
(*Icterus spurius*)

Brown thrasher
(*Toxostoma rufum*)

American woodcock
(*Scolopax minor*)

Black racer
(*Coluber constrictor constrictor*)

What is Scrub-Shrub?

Scrub-shrub is a habitat type characterized by dense, low, multi-stemmed shrubs and trees in early stages of growth, often interspersed with meadow. Once common, this habitat historically resulted when mature forest was disturbed by wind, fire, flooding, farming or timber harvesting. Due to changing agricultural and forestry practices, fire suppression, excessive mowing, and public perception of unmaintained areas, this habitat type is now rare. Today scrub-shrub mainly exists in utility rights-of-way and abandoned farm fields succeeding to forest. With less habitat available, the species that rely upon scrub-shrub are declining.

Wildlife found in a Scrub-Shrub Mosaic

The structure and rich diversity of a scrub-shrub mosaic provides shelter, food, and breeding habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Birds that depend on scrub-shrub include American woodcock, brown thrasher, gray catbird, wood warblers, indigo bunting, orchard oriole, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Numerous microhabitats support a wide range of invertebrates - critical for plant pollination and as a food source - and terrestrial reptiles such as eastern box turtle, black racer, and garter snake. Interspersed meadow areas provide host plants for butterflies, nesting grounds for bees, and feeding grounds for numerous animals. Rabbits, meadow voles and jumping mice proliferate here and, in turn, provide food for predators such as Coopers hawk, great horned owl, red fox, and coyote.

Good Land Stewardship

With the help of volunteers, D&R Greenway has planted native shrubs, wildflowers and grasses to create habitat for scrub-shrub-dependent species. Aronia, bayberry, staghorn sumac, silky dogwood, and winterberry shrubs provide structure for nesting and shelter, and produce nutritious berries for food. Milkweed, bergamot, mountain mint, partridge pea, brown-eyed susan, switchgrass, indian grass, and little bluestem provide nectar for our vulnerable bees, butterflies, moths, and other insect pollinators as well as seed for birds and mammals.

To maintain this mosaic, periodic "disturbance" is required to keep these habitats from succeeding to forest. Meadows are mowed once a year, and scrub-shrub areas are cut every two to three years.

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One Preservation Place, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
609-924-4646
www.drgreenway.org

Photo credits: Indigo bunting – Lee Hunter, Orchard oriole – Dan Pancamo, Gray catbird – Chris Bosak



Indigo bunting
(*Passerina cyanea*)

Black aronia (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

Gray catbird
(*Dumetella carolinensis*)

Staghorn sumac
(*Rhus typhina*)

Meadow vole
(*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)

Red fox
(*Vulpes vulpes*)

Eastern box turtle
(*Terrapene carolina carolina*)