

What Happens to the Wildlife?

A mountain pine beetle epidemic is killing mature pine trees across the West. Beetles, the size of a grain of rice, bore under the bark and lay eggs, interrupting the flow of nutrients which kills the tree. The beetles also carry a blue stain fungus which contributes to the death of the tree. Trees with red needles are dead. This epidemic was triggered by drought, warmer winters and aging forests.



American elk

Loss of mature forests decrease hiding and protective cover for elk, but will create new open areas for more grass and forage plants.



American marten

Martens depend on thick mature forests for hunting. They will likely decline for at least 50 years. As mature forests return, marten populations will follow.



Pine squirrel

The pine squirrel will most likely experience the greatest decline, because they depend on pine seeds for winter survival. They may be absent from some areas until mature forests are re-established.



Northern goshawk

Goshawks often feed on pine squirrels in lodgepole forests. Without these resources, they will feed on other prey and spend more time in spruce-fir forests.



Snowshoe hare

Initially, hares may gradually decline with the loss of forested areas. As young trees become established, and grow above the snowline, the hare population may quickly grow and recover.



BE SAFETY AWARE
The Forest is Changing

WATCH OUT!

- Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid dense patches of dead trees; they can fall without warning.
- Stay out of the forest when there are strong winds that could blow down trees. If you are already in the forest when the winds kick up, head to a clearing out of reach of any potential falling trees.
- Place tents and park vehicles in areas where they will not be hit if trees fall.
- When driving in remote areas of the forest, park close to a main road, rather than on a spur or one-way section. If trees fall across the road you may be trapped.
- Do not rely only on cell phones for safety as there is no coverage in many areas of the national forest.

Your Safety is Your Responsibility!