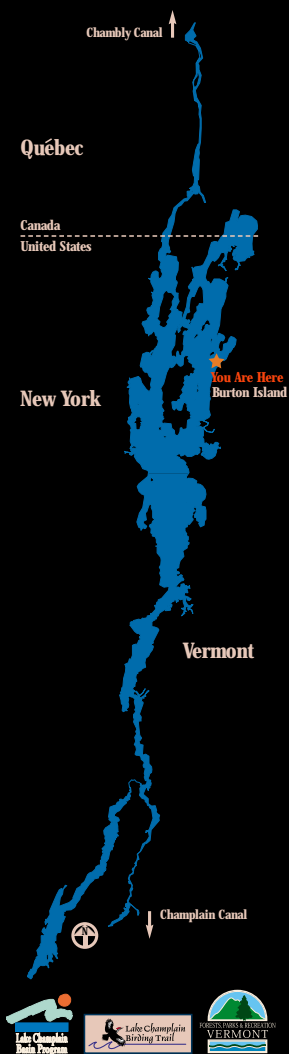


# Home is Where the Habitat is



Every bird needs habitat—food, water, cover, and a nest site—to survive and reproduce. A Wood Duck, for example, finds food in open water and its cover and nest site on the wooded shoreline. Wood Ducks often nest in boxes fastened to trees. Have you seen these boxes elsewhere?

As you watch, think about what the bird is doing. Is it looking for food? Is it making a nest? Look for birds in places where two habitats meet, such as where woodland meets field or wetland meets open water. These transition areas satisfy many habitat needs and are rich in bird species.

You can see two habitats from here: open water and shoreline.



Open water provides a safe haven for migrating waterfowl as they rest and refuel. In deeper water, Common Mergansers, and other ducks dive for aquatic plants and animals. In the shallows, dabbling Mallards and Black Ducks ply the lake bottom for food. Ospreys find fish close enough to the surface to nab in their feet-first plunges. (Courtesy of the USFWS, credit J.&K. Hollingsworth.)



Along the shoreline Greater Yellowlegs survey shallow waters, while robin-sized Spotted Sandpipers keep to the water's edge, probing the mudflats and beaches for invertebrates. (Courtesy of Jeff Nadler.)



Long-legged waders like the Great Blue Heron wait like a statue in foot-deep water for frogs and fish to pass by. (Courtesy of Jeff Nadler.)