

IDENTIFICATION OF FOREST ANIMAL DAMAGE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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ABSTRACT

Many species of wildlife adversely affect conifer regeneration in the Pacific Northwest by damaging seeds or trees. Most damage is associated with feeding activities; other damage occurs from rubbing, trampling, pulling out, burrowing, knocking down, burying, and other causes.

The greatest impact by wildlife to plantation establishment generally occurs during the first 3 to 5 years after reforestation. Deer mice, shrews, juncos, thrushes, and other small animals destroy or injure seed; pocket gophers, mountain beavers, hares, rabbits, deer, elk, and others feed on and injure or destroy seedlings. Too often, serious damage also occurs shortly after precommercial thinning (by mountain beavers), to pole size trees (by porcupines and squirrels) and to larger trees (by bear).

Actual observation of animals causing damage is rare; rather, types of feeding injuries commonly identify the animal species causing damage. Other sign such as tracks and droppings aid in the identification. Literature (See SELECTED REFERENCES) and Animal Damage Control specialists (for example, State Supervisors, USDA-APHIS-ADC) are available to help identify wildlife injuries to seed, trees, or wooden structures. PROPER IDENTIFICATION IS IMPERATIVE IN ORDER TO PRESCRIBE PROPER ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL METHODS.

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