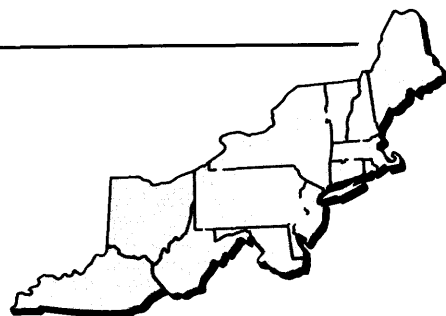


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Northeastern Forest Experiment Station



FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, 6816 MARKET STREET, UPPER DARBY, PA. 19082

A PREVIEW OF DELAWARE'S TIMBER RESOURCE

Abstract—The recently completed forest survey of Delaware indicated little change in the total forest area since the 1957 estimate. Softwood volume and the acreage of softwood types decreased considerably. Hardwoods now comprise two-thirds of the volume and three-fourths of the forest area. Total average annual growth exceeded removals, but softwood removals exceeded average annual growth by 50 percent.

A resurvey of the timber resources of Delaware was completed late in 1971. A statistical-analytical report containing data gathered on the inventory and an analysis of the trends and the current situation is being prepared for publication.

This interim release of some of the pertinent findings is intended to provide a glimpse at the forest-area and timber-volume totals and to point out some of the more important changes that have occurred since the initial forest survey was completed in 1956.

The total forest area has remained rather constant during this 15-year period. The 1972 total of 392,000 acres is almost the same as the 1957 figure.

However, there were several notable changes in the total acreage. The proportion of commercial forest land declined slightly. Thirty percent of the land area of Delaware is now classified as commercial forest. Major changes occurred in the forest types that comprise the commercial forest base. The softwood types occupy only one-half the area they did in 1957.

Most of the area formerly classified as softwood is now in the oak-hickory and oak-pine forest types.

Timber-volume data reveal that the First State now has the highest average volume per acre of any state east of the Mississippi River. The average volumes are 1,530 cubic feet and 3,343 board feet per acre.

Notable changes have occurred in the species composition of this volume. Two-thirds of the 588 million cubic feet of growing stock are in hardwood species. In 1957 softwood species made up nearly one-half of the total growing-stock volume.

Remeasured plot data indicate that the ratio between average annual growth and average annual removals of all species is 3 to 2—18.3 million cubic feet of growth to 12.6 million cubic feet removed. But average annual removals of softwoods were 50 percent greater than the average annual growth, while average annual removals of hardwoods were less than 30 percent of the average annual hardwood growth.

Table 1.—*Land area of Delaware, by major classes of land and counties, 1972*
[In thousands of acres]

Land class	County			Total
	Kent	New Castle	Sussex	
Forest land:				
Commercial	93.1	55.7	235.6	384.4
Noncommercial	1.5	1.1	4.8	7.4
Total	94.6	56.8	240.4	391.8
Nonforest land	285.6	223.5	367.6	876.7
Total area	380.2	280.3	608.0	1,268.5

Table 2.—*Area of commercial forest land, by forest types, Delaware, 1972*

Forest type	Thousand acres	Percent
Loblolly-Virginia pine	99.2	25.8
Oak-pine	56.6	14.7
Oak-hickory	147.2	38.3
Oak-gum-red maple	69.8	18.2
Other types	11.6	3.0
Total	384.4	100.0

Table 3.—*Net volume of growing stock and sawtimber on commercial forest land, by species, Delaware, 1972*

Species	Growing-stock volume		Sawtimber volume	
	<i>Million cubic feet</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Million board feet</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Loblolly pine	157.9	26.9	370.6	29.0
Virginia pine	25.6	4.4	46.1	3.6
Other softwoods	.8	.1	1.3	—
Total softwoods	184.3	31.4	418.0	32.6
White oaks	72.7	12.4	155.9	12.1
Red oaks	69.5	11.8	162.8	12.7
Hickory	22.0	3.7	48.0	3.7
Soft maples	72.9	12.4	138.8	10.8
Beech	15.8	2.7	48.9	3.8
Blackgum	17.2	2.9	42.0	3.3
Sweetgum	83.2	14.2	137.7	10.7
Yellow-poplar	32.3	5.5	100.2	7.8
Other hardwoods	17.7	3.0	31.4	2.5
Total hardwoods	403.3	68.6	865.7	67.4
Total, all species	587.6	100.0	1,283.7	100.0

Table 4.—Average annual net growth and removals of growing stock, by species, Delaware, 1957-71

[In thousand cubic feet]

Species	Average annual	
	Growth	Removals
Loblolly pine	4,293	6,941
Virginia pine	1,572	1,776
Other softwoods	35	183
Total softwoods	5,900	8,900
Select oaks ^a	2,132	477
Other oaks	4,573	1,672
Hickory	352	136
Soft maples	1,401	244
Blackgum	263	320
Sweetgum	2,389	391
Yellow-poplar	1,156	295
Other hardwoods	134	165
Total hardwoods	12,400	3,700
All species	18,300	12,600

^a Includes white oak, swamp white oak, swamp chestnut oak, and northern red oak.

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