5th ANNUAL SOUTHEAST QUAIL STUDY GROUP

Sept. 27-30, 1999 Bost Extension Center Mississippi State University



Hosted by: Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, MSU Extension

&

Forest & Wildlife Research Center Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Mississippi State University

Table of Contents:

Item:	Page #
Meeting Agenda	iii
Steering Committee Report	1
Agricultural Policy Committee Report	9
Funding Committee Report: (No Report Submitted)	
Habitat Implementation Committee Report	12
Publicity, Information and Education Committee Report	14
Research Committee Report (No Report Submitted)	
Forest Management Committee Report	17
State reports - Farmbill Success Stories	18
Research Reports	19
Survival of Pen-Raised, F1 Wild, and Relocated Wild Bobwhite	19
Regional Bobwhite Population Performance/Predator Monitoring Study	23
Ames Plantation Landscape Composition/Population Performance Study	y 、 26
Long Term Population Dynamics on Pinelands Plantation	29
SEQSG Bylaws Discussion	33
Southeast Regional Bobwhite Management Plan	42
Longleaf CPA Initiative	45
Georgia Quail Initiative	53

Table of Contents:

۰.

٩.

Virginia Bobwhite Initiative update	55
WMI Farmbill Strategies	63
Farmbill Legislative Strategies (No Report Submitted)	
Committee Issues and Plans that Need Floor Attention	69

Meeting Agenda:

Monday, 27 September:

5:30 PM Buses and vans depart for mixer at Mossy Oak Outdoor Outlet, West Point, MS

6:00 PM - Mixer - Mossy Oak Outdoor Outlet, West Point, MS

Tuesday, 28 September:

8:00 - 8:30 Welcome and introductory comments

Dr. Bob Karr, Interim Director, MSU, Forest & Wildlife Research Center

Mr. Randy Spencer, Wildlife Division, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Mr. Rocky Evans, Executive Director, Quail Unlimited

8:30-10:00am Committee Reports (12 minutes each)

Mr. Breck Carmichael, Chair, Steering Committee

Mr. Reggie Thackston, Chair, Agricultural Policy Committee.

Mr. Rock Evans, Chair, Funding Committee

Mr. Jeff Sole, Chair, Habitat Implementation Committee

Mr. Dean Stewart, Chair, Publicity, Information, and Education Committee

Dr. Bill Palmer, Chair, Research Committee

Dr. Allan Houston, Chair, Forest Management Committee

10:00 - 10:30am Break

 10:30 - 12:00am State reports - Farmbill Success Stories Alabama, Mr. Stan Stewart Arkansas, Mr. Rick Chastain Delaware, Mr. William Whitman Florida, Mr. Shane Fuller Georgia, Mr. Mark Whitney Kentucky, Mr. Jeff Sole Louisiana, Mr. Mike Olinde Maryland, Mr. Joe Shugars Mississippi, Dr. Wes Burger Missouri, Dr. Tom Dailey North Carolina, Mr. Matt Flint Oklahoma, Mr. Steve DeMaso South Carolina, Mr. Breck Carmichael Tennessee, Mr. Mark Gudlin Texas, Dr. Markus Peterson Virginia, Mr. Steve Capel

12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch provided, Bost Conference Room

1:00 - 2:30pm Research reports (20 minutes each)

Mr. Mike Fies, Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries - Survival of pen-raised, F1 wild, and relocated wild bobwhite.

Dr. Bill Palmer, Tall Timbers Research Station - Regional bobwhite population performance/predator monitoring study.

Dr. Allen Houston, Ames Plantation - Ames Plantation landscape composition/population performance study.

Dr. Wes Burger - Long term population dynamics on Pinelands Plantation .

2:30-3:00pm Break

3:00 - 5:00pm Committee working groups.

5:15 - 5:30pm Board buses for travel to Plymouth Bluff

6:00-8:00pm Dinner, Plymouth Bluff - hosted by American Cyanamid

Wednesday, 29 September:

8:00 - 9:30am SEQSG Bylaws discussion - Steering Committee

- 9:30-10:00am Southeast Regional Bobwhite Management Plan, Dr. Ralph Dimmick, University of Tennessee
- 10:00-10:30am Break

10:30-11:00am	L	Longleaf CPA Initiative, Mr. Lewis Justice, Gerogia NRCS State Biologis				
11:00-11:30am	1 C	Georgia Quail Initiative, Mr. Reggie Thackston, Georgia DNR				
11:30-12:00am		Virginia Bobwhite Initiative update, Mr Steve Capel, Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries				
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch p	rovided, Bost Conference Room				
1:00-1:30pm	Board b	uses and travel to Black Prariie WMA				
1:30-4:00pm	Field trip - Black Prairie WMA, Mr. Ricky Flynt and Mr. Bobby Watkins, American Cyanamid					
4:00-6:00pm	Sporting	; Clays, Social				
6:00-8:00pm	Quail Dinner, Hosted by Mississippi State Council and Oktibbehha County Quail Unlimited chapters.					
<u>Thursday, 30 S</u>	eptembe	<u>r</u> :				
8:00-9:00am	WMI Fa	rmbill Strategies, S. Capel, B. Carmichael, M. Gudlin, and D. Long				
9:00-9:30am	Farmbill	legislative strategies, Mr. James Cummins				
9:30-10:30am	Commit	tee working groups - prepare actions items				
10:30-1045am	E	3reak				
10:45-11:45am	n (Committee issues and plans that need floor attention				
11:45am	0	Closing remarks				

Steering Committee Report SEQSG Meeting, September 28, 1999 by Breck Carmichael

Let me also welcome you, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to the 5th Annual SEQSG meeting. I'm going to give a brief report, but before I do that, because this is somewhat of a landmark occasion being our 5th anniversary, I'd like to take a few minutes to reflect back over our previous 4 meetings.

The SEQSG first met, I guess you could say we had a marriage, back in August of 1995 in South Carolina at the Webb Wildlife Center. The thing that sticks out most in my mind about that meeting was a general mood or feeling that we didn't really know what direction we wanted to go in, but that it was time to quit bemoaning the decline of the bobwhite and try to do something about it as a group; a "Do Something Even If It's Wrong" attitude so-to-speak. I didn't have any idea that it would work, but I decided to put the group, there were about 70 folks there, through a facilitated process to identify all the issues people thought were important relative to quail, and then try to reach consensus on a priority listing of those issues - what are the most important things we need to work on?

Well, it worked better than I could have hoped, because of people's willingness to participate, listen and discuss, and because we had some excellent facilitators who probably didn't know a bobwhite from a blue jay, but they kept us focused. From that came our working committees and the SEQSG was off on our honeymoon. One year later we had our 2nd meeting, in the "mecca" of bobwhite research and management - the Redhills Region of Thomasville, GA and Tallahassee, FL. This was my first visit to this area and I remember having a sense of almost literally being able to feel the presence of Herbert Stoddard on the grounds of Tall Timbers and the surrounding plantations that we visited. I also recall the opening comments of Dr. Alan Egbert, Director of the Florida Game and Fish Commission, and at the time president of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He told us the SEQSG had the full support of the state directors, which was and still is critical to our success. Dr. Egbert also told us that with that support came high expectations. The honeymoon was over. The following year we had our 3rd meeting, hosted by the great State of Virginia - 700 miles north and 180 degrees from Tallahassee. The theme for that meeting was "Quail in the Real World" and how appropriate that was. I remember a fescue pasture of about 100 acres right across from the motel, and we saw plenty of examples of industrial pine forests - all the things most of us struggle with in trying to manage bobwhite in the real world. I also remember my disappointment when I realized that an invited speaker representing the "Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)," in spite of my having talked to him on several occasions, did not recognize who the SEQSG was. He apparently thought he was speaking at a QU banquet (no offense, Rocky!) Working with timber industry, specifically the SFI and the American Forest and Paper Association is an area where we hoped to gain some ground that year, and we did not.

Last year our 4th meeting was held at another historic site in the history of bobwhite, the Ames Plantation in Grand Junction, TN - home of the "National Bird Dog Museum" and the "Field Trial Hall of Fame." Again, you could feel the history and nostalgia of all the great field trial dogs and dog handlers that had passed through the Ames Plantation. During that meeting it was gratifying to see that every state in the Southeast was targeting at least some portion of their Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program funds to bobwhite habitat restoration. This demonstrates a solidarity of effort, which is exactly why the SEQSG was formed.

That brings us current to today, our 5th meeting. I know Dave Godwin, Wes Burger, Dean Stewart and the rest of the folks here in Mississippi have done a tremendous amount of work preparing for this meeting, and I am looking forward to the next 3 days. So, what does the future hold? Well, all marriages go through rocky times, and maybe we're at that point. I'm not sure. North Carolina will host our Year 2000 meeting, and today I would like to issue several challenges to our working committees. Within the next year, I challenge the Research Committee to compile a priority list of specific topics that need to be studied in regards the bobwhite, and make these priorities known throughout the wildlife research community. I challenge the Forest Management Committee to aggressively pursue dialogue with timber

-2-

industry, through the SFI, and whatever other avenues may be available, to seek considerations for quail habitat on our region's commercial and private forestlands. Likewise, I challenge the Ag Policy and Habitat Implementation Committees to aggressively pursue habitat considerations for bobwhite in Farm Bill programs. The lack of continued funding for WHIP, and the recent requirement to include introduced grasses in the CRP permanent wildlife habitat practice are steps in the wrong direction and must be countered. I challenge the PR/Info/Education Committee to regularly upgrade our Internet web site, and seek new and current information to place on it. The web is a powerful tool that we need to take full advantage of. I challenge all the committees to identify projects that need funding, relay these needs to the Funding Committee, and I challenge the Funding Committee to again, aggressively pursue sources of funds to accomplish these projects. There are any number of foundations and grant opportunities out there, but somebody has got to take the initiative to go after them. I guarantee the bobwhite is a charismatic enough species to get some major support through these groups. QU cannot, and should not be expected to meet all the funding needs. Finally, I challenge every member of the SEQSG, if you are not actively involved in one of our working committees , get involved.

John Roseberry and William Klimstra, in their excellent book *Population Ecology of the Bobwhite* said the following:

"We can safely make two predictions concerning future quail populations; (1) there will continue to be alternating periods of relative abundance and scarcity, and (2) the long-term *average* density will continue to decline unless there are fundamental changes in the way we use the land.

Lest we sound too pessimistic, the bobwhite is not an endangered species, and likely will not become one in the foreseeable future. The fact remains, however, that this popular and important member of the natural community is clearly in trouble over much of its range. Perhaps it is time, indeed past time, to come to grips with some basic questions regarding the bobwhite's future. We must decide, first of all, whether it is in our best interest to attempt to ensure their continued existence; and, if not, are we morally obligated to do so simply because they are fellow creatures with whom we share the plant? These are philosophical questions to be sure, but if the answer to either is yes, then we quickly come face to face with more practical considerations: Who will be accountable for such a commitment, and how will it be accomplished? I would submit that if bobwhite is to make a come-back, the people in this room must make that commitment and we must figure out how to accomplish it. Now the Steering Committee report:

Southeast Quail Study Group Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, March 4-5, 1999 - Covington, GA by Breck Carmichael and Terry Sharpe

The Southeast Quail Study Group (SEQSG) Steering Committee met on March 4 and 5, 1999 at the Georgia Future Farmers of America Camp near Covington, GA. Present were: Breck Carmichael, Terry Sharpe, Mark Gudlin, Ralph Dimmick, Rocky Evans, Lenny Brennan and Bert Shiflet. Also attending were Dave Godwin and Wes Burger representing Mississippi, the host

state for the 1999 SEQSG meeting.

Dues were first required for membership in the SEQSG beginning with the 1998 annual meeting. There are currently 103 paid members. It was agreed to maintain a membership list and a mailing list. SEQSG members must have an interest in bobwhite quail and pay dues of \$10 annually. Names will remain on the membership list for one year after dues lapse, at which time notifications will be sent prior to dropping from the list.

A mailing list will also be maintained, which will be comprised of the membership list plus others who need to be kept informed of SEQSG activities (i.e., agency directors, university department heads, WMI, NRCS, etc.).

Considerable discussion was held concerning draft SEQSG bylaws. Bylaws will be sent to general membership requesting written comments prior to the 1999 annual meeting. Bylaws will be voted upon by the general membership at the 1999 meeting with a simple majority needed for approval.

The ad hoc member of the Steering Committee, who is the person representing the state fish and wildlife agency hosting the annual meeting, will serve as Treasurer for that year. Funds remaining in the treasury after payment of all expenses will be transferred to the incoming ad hoc member following the annual meeting.

The SEQSG will establish an Audit Committee, made-up of the current ad hoc Steering Committee member, the incoming ad hoc Steering Committee member and one regular Steering Committee member other than the chair. The accounting records should be audited by this group annually.

The Steering Committee agreed that position statements, resolutions or other actions of the SEQSG be submitted through the various working committees for vote by the Steering Committee.

Working Committee chairs will be appointed by the Steering Committee, serve 3-year renewable terms, and be reviewed annually. These committee chairs select the number and make-up of each committee.

The objectives of the SEQSG were amended to add identifying factors responsible for population declines of Southeast bobwhite quail and <u>other associated early successional wildlife species</u>. An objective was added to perpetuate the tradition and sport of wild bobwhite quail hunting in the <u>Southeast</u>.

Implementation of the objectives was outlined in 7 items within the by-laws, corresponding to duties of the working committees and other provisions.

It was agreed that one additional voting member should be added to the Steering Committee, who shall serve at-large for a two-year term.

-5-

Elections will be held each year at the annual meeting to elect Steering Committee members on a staggered term. In odd years, a chair-elect (which must be employed by a state fish and wildlife agency), a representative from academia and an at-large member will be elected. In even years, a private land manager and a representative from a non-governmental organization doing quail research are elected. The Executive Vice-President of Quail Unlimited or his designee serves in perpetuity. The chair-elect serves two years, then two years as chair, then two years as past-chair.

A three-member Nominating and Elections Committee shall be selected by the Chair of the Steering Committee, and shall prepare a slate of two candidates for each of the positions to be elected that year.

In the event of dissolution of the SEQSG, any funds in the treasury shall be donated to a nonprofit organization or project dedicated to bobwhite quail as directed by the Steering Committee.

It was suggested that Reggie Thackston receive the SEQSG annual recognition award and the Steering Committee concurred. Carmichael agreed to handle procuring the award.

Details of the 1999 annual meeting were discussed. Dates were set for September 27-30, 1999 in Starkville, MS on the campus of MS State University. A registration fee of \$45 (\$10 of which is annual dues) was agreed upon. Arrangements will be similar to previous years with evening socials and a field trip. More time will be allotted for working committee meetings (a full ¹/₂ day). A meeting announcement will go out by July 1, 1999.

Dave Godwin will coordinate, Dean Stewart will handle logistics and Wes Burger will handle the program.

Topics suggested for inclusion in the program were: the regional predator study, farm bill case studies from each state, success stories, SE quail management plan draft, review of the past 5

-6-

years of the SEQSG, Longleaf Alliance progress/Longleaf CPA, Georgia Quail Initiative, predator avian recruitment team, and Pinelands Stewards Project update.

Ralph Dimmick pledged to have draft of the SE Quail Management Plan ready for the meeting. Partners In Flight (Chuck Hunter) will be contacted to assist by providing population goals for early successional nongame birds.

North Carolina will be the host state for the 2000 SEQSG meeting. Potential sites are somewhere in the mountains or in Wilson County near one of Pete Bromley's study sites.

Reports from working committees were discussed. Some items that need to be addressed were identified as follows:

Ag Policy - Field Borders and center-pivot corners in CRP

Forest Management - Establish contact with Sustainable Forestry Initiative - suggested that a group visit to SFI office in Washington be considered when next farm bill meeting is held there.

<u>PR-Information-Education</u> - Outfit SEQSG Web Site with a counter to record visits <u>Research</u> - Add predator monitoring to the 7-9 quail nesting ecology studies that are ongoing in the SE, utilizing QU grant funds.

The group authorized the Chair to provide correspondence to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorsing the "Teaming With Wildlife" concept contained in various pieces of pending federal legislation.

Ag Policy Committee will be asked to contact appropriate Congressional delegations for support on an annual \$100 million appropriation for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). It was suggested that each state inform their delegation as to how many WHIP applications were received versus those able to be funded. Group agreed to apply for a National Administrative Grant on behalf of SE state agencies for native grassland restoration on public lands. Dave Howell with QU will coordinate.

Agricultural Policy Committee Report

by Reggie Thackston

1998-99 Annual Report

Committee Purpose: The Southeast Quail Study Group Agricultural Policy Committee charge is to monitor agriculture policy with respect to potential impacts on northern bobwhite quail habitat. In coordination with the SEQSG Steering Committee, the Agricultural Committee will draft position statements and provide recommendations relative to the formulation and implementation of agriculture programs and provisions. Additionally, the committee will work with appropriate state and federal agencies and private conservation organizations to facilitate information transfer.

Committee Members: Reggie Thackston - Chairperson - Georgia DNR; Stan Stewart - Alabama Game and Fish Div.; Chuck McKelvy - Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm.; Jeffery Sole and Steve Beam - Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildl. Res.; Dave Godwin - Mississippi Wildl., Fish, & Parks; James Cummins - Miss Fish and Wildlife Foundation; David Hoover and Phil Rockers Missouri Dept. Of Wild.; Denton Baumbarger and Terry Sharpe - North Carolina Wildl. Res. Comm.; Bert Shiflet - Okeetee Club, South Carolina; Steve DeMaso and John Hendrix -Oklahoma Dept. of Wildl. Cons.; Rocky Evans (South Carolina) and Dave Howell (Indiana) -Quail Unlimited; Breck Carmichael - South Carolina DNR; Sam Stokes Jr. - South Carolina DNR; Mark Whitney - Georgia DNR; Mark Gudlin - Tennessee Wildl. Res. Agen.; Steve Capel and Patty Moore - Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fish; Ron Helinski - Wildlife Management Institute, Washington DC ; Don McKenzie - Wildlife Management Institute, Arkansas and Chester McConnell Wildlife Management Institute (retired), Tennessee; Ed Hackett - NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute, Mississippi; Alan Dyck NRCS Virginia; Jeff Thurmond -NRCS Mississippi,;James McAfee - Tennessee, John Cole - Illinois DNR..

Committee Activities 1998 -1999: During the past year the committee provided input into the legislative and regulatory processes involving the development and implementation of the

-9-

conservation programs and provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill. Listed below are the primary activities that the committee participated in (see attachments):

* Reggie Thackston attended a meeting in January 1999, Management of Migratory Landbirds, in Biloxi, Mississippi and a presentation was made on the value of Farm Bill programs to birds. The SESQG was discussed and emphasis was placed on the need for colabrative efforts in working to improve and implement Farm Bill Conservation programs, particularly as they relate to early successional habitats.

* Parks Shackleford, FSA Associate Administrator For Programs, was contacted twice by phone regarding the inclusion of field borders and center pivot corners into Continuous CRP and about a requirement to remove refuse from CRP CP11 stands after thinning.

* Ag Policy Committee Members reviewed and provided input into the development of brochure on Buffers For Bobwhites.

The following letters were mailed or supported by the SEQSG Ag Policy Committee:

* Senator Slade Gorton regarding General Provisions Section 332 of the FY 1999 Interior Appropriations Bill, US Forest Service budget that would have required removal of all merchantable timber from proposed prescribed burning sites prior to burning. The SEQSG opposed this provision.

* Mr. William Hughey, NRCS National Agricultural Engineer, providing input on NRCS Conservation Practice Standards.

* Senator Thad Cochran, urging his support for adding \$500 million to conservation programs in the FY 2000 Agriculture Approviations Bill. Additional funding for WHIP was emphasized.

Plans For Coming Year: Coordinate information exchange between southeastern states concerning strategies for involvement in the Farm Bill implementation process. Continue periodic meetings of the S.E. Forestry/Wildlife Working Group.

Habitat Implementation Committee Report by Jeffery Sole

The Habitat Implementation Committee members this year included Judy Barnes (SC), Larry Campbell (FL), Mark Gudlin (TN), Ed Hackett (NRCS), Craig Harper (UT-Knox), Larry Heggemann (MO), Dave Howell (QU), Pat Keyser (WESTVACO), Fred Kimmel (LA), Patty Moore (VA), Gary Sharp (WV), Terry Sharpe (NC), Stan Stewart (AL), Bill Whitman (DE) and myself.

This committee has a very broadly defined charge of: "determining what it takes to get landowners interested in managing wildlife habitat in general, and more specifically, in developing ways to get landowners to restore bobwhite quail habitat at the landscape level."

During the past year the committee primarily worked on 5 items:

1). Production of an article and reprints for use with landowners regarding incorporation of NWSG's into prescribed livestock grazing and haying operations. This publication documents the economic and wildlife benefits to be gained by using NWSG's in livestock operations. This publication has been worked on by Jimmy May and myself of KDFWR's staff and is in a draft form, nearing completion. Hopefully it will be published and available for folks in reprint form sometime soon. Reviews of the draft are welcomed. Some are available at this meeting.

2). We worked with NRCS Plant Materials Centers, Agricultural Experiment Stations, and the Extension service to conduct a literature review of work that has been done on NWSG cultivars from sites in the southeast. Mark Gudlin (TWRA), Robin Mayberry (UT-Martin student) Craig Harper (UT-Knoxville) and Ed Hackett (NRCS-Wildlife Habitat Management Institute) worked on this project. <u>A bibliography resulting from this effort will soon be available. Once this is finished, we plan to put the bibliography on the SEQLSG web site.</u> Draft copies are available at this meeting.

-12-

3). A letter was written to Mr. James Jones, Director of the Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs, USEPA, regarding recommended changes to the Plateau label. These changes would eliminate the 4 oz. restriction currently on Plateau for use in CRP and label Plateau for use in Hayland/Pasture situations. A copy is available for anyone who would like to see it.

4). We were assigned the task of promoting the "Buffers for Bobwhites" efforts in cooperation with the Southeast Conservation Buffer Campaign and NRCS. Mark Gudlin lead the effort for this project and provided reviews and input into the pamphlet development. This publication has been produced and is available from NRCS. Thanks to somebody for carrying the ball on this one. Copies of this brochure are available at this meeting.

5). HIC members (Dave Howell and Jeff Sole) also coordinated an effort to order more of the Fescue Killing and Pine Management reprints. The Fescue reprints are available at this meeting. The Pine Mgt. Reprints will be available in 2-3 weeks.

Minutes from 5th Annual SEQSG PR/INFO/EDU Committee

by Dean Stewart

Committee members present: Rick Chastain, Arkansas; Ralph Dimmick, Tennessee; Vicki Heidy, Missouri; Greg Moore, Delaware; Sarah Palmisano, Mississippi; Marc Puckett, Virginia; Dean Stewart, Mississippi.

Meeting Substance:

1. Chair (Stewart) asked all present to identify themselves.

2. History of committee was briefly reviewed for new members.

3. Minutes from PR/INFO/EDU committee 1998 were reviewed.

4. Accomplishments and new business:

a. Marc Puckett reviewed accomplishments relative to the SEQSG newsletter. Two newsletters were published in the Quail Unlimited magazine. Contributions from study group members are still low. Some who are members of the SEQSG but not QU were mailed copies. We currently have two pages for the newsletter and include an average of 4-5 news items per issue. The newsletter reaches 50,000 QU members. Copies of the newsletter are available. Committee and SEQSG members, and students were encouraged to submit articles. Deadlines currently are November 15 and May 15 to Marc. He in turn must provide copy to QU by November 20 and May 20. Marc may be contacted by E-mail at mpuckett@DGIF.state.va.us or mail at Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, HC 6 Box 46, Farmville, VA 23901. Phone is 804-392-9645.

b. Dean Stewart reviewed the website status. The website address remains www.ext.msstate.edu/special/sequail. Modifications were made to the website in August, 1999 but there are a number of historical meeting and committee items missing or out-of-date. To this point Dean and Dr. John Gieseman, computer specialist with MSU Extension Service have been maintaining the site. Special funds are needed to hire a student worker to maintain the site. Dean will develop a proposal to submit to Rocky Evans, Funding committee chair, in the amount needed to maintain the site (\$5,000 annually).

c. A mail list was developed and sent to current SEQSG members.

d. Video efforts were discussed. Three have been completed. These include the Mississippi habitat, North Carolina Ag-production, and 4 part Tennessee youth videos. The Virginia project is currently on hold. Missouri Dept. of Conservation (Dave Hoover) may have a project developing.

e. Greg Moore reported on the efforts of he and Bill Whitman to obtain funding for the development of short TV-PSA's on the bobwhite. The objective with the PSA's is to increase public awareness of management opportunities. Potential topics included Bobwhite and other grassland species status, Prescribed fire as a management tool, Bobwhite and the farmbill/contacts, You can have birds if you have good habitat, Two southern traditions, Nascar and BWQ hunting-1 is doing well and 1 is in trouble (potential celebrity selected for this spot based on his interest in bobwhite and name recognition status with Nascar), and Bobwhite are in trouble-here is who can help you bring them back. Bill and Greg requested federal aid, but currently there is a moratorium on grant-in-aid funds. This source of funds can be explored again. It was suggested to explore Farm Bill programs such as EQIP again, and pursue at the national level. It was suggested to contact Gene Whitaker. It was further suggested that the PSA's could be funded through a private foundation and possibly be shot in conjunction with the QU Celebrity Hunts. A subcommittee including Greg Moore, Bill Whitman, Rocky Evans, Breck Carmichael, Steve Capel, and Marc Puckett was charged with developing the PSA's.

f. Arkansas is developing fact sheets on warm-season native grasses and cool-season/ exotics through the AR. Extension Service.

g. Ralph Dimmick proposed that we include more proactive efforts (PR) for the new SEQSG Plan. It was discussed that we should determine what the current and future bobwhite issues would be and actively address them on the front end. This could be accomplished by placing a person full-time in D.C. to stay abreast of issues by searching databases, attending congressional hearings, develop a clearing house of information, lobbying, watch dogging, tracking legislation pertinent to SEQSG needs. The Ag policy committee discussed a similar

-15-

effort and it was determined that both committees should work together to accomplish this goal through SEAFWA and IAFWA.

4

йн нэ нь нь

X

Forest Management Committee Report

by Allan Houston

The first meeting of The Forest Management Committee was held at Ames Plantation during September, 1998. Because of scheduling problems the meeting was unfortunately short, but the group decided that a first order of business would be to develop a Mission Statement. During the course of 1998-99 a Mission Statement was developed:

The Mission of the SEQSG Forestry Committee will be to monitor forestry programs, practices and policies and to actively promote the development and implementation of silvicultural systems and forest management practices that will provide and maintain habitat for bobwhite quail and associated wildlife species.

The Forest Management Committee met with about a dozen in attendance during the SEQSG meetings at Starkville. During that meeting primary concern was raised regarding pine establishment methods that combined increasingly severe chemical treatments with rapidly growing genetically-improved stock. It was noted that the land was stripped of herbaceous competitive vegetation followed by aggressively-growing pine trees which captured the site prior to the formation of substantial early successional habitat.

The Committee's consensus was that the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) might provide access to a owner/landbase sensitive to the plight of early successional wildlife. During the coming year this committee will seek access to the SFI process and initiate dialog to provide input to SFI guidelines.

Additionally, the Committee regarded the exploration of partnerships with established organizations, such as Partners-in-Flight, as a viable means to develop additional input into state and federal, as well as private owner/landbase considerations.

State Reports - Farm Bill Success Stories.

e.

Each state was given a few minutes to share success stories relating to the implementation of Farm Bill programs as they relate to bobwhite quail and wildlife habitat. Reports are omitted here for brevity. See Meeting Agenda for individuals invited to present a Success Story.

۲

Ň

RESEARCH REPORTS:

SURVIVAL OF PEN-RAISED, F1 PROGENY, AND WILD-RELOCATED BOBWHITE QUAIL USING TWO RELEASE METHODS

by Michael L. Fies,

Objective:

Determine survival rates of wild relocated bobwhite quail, first generation (F1) progeny of captive wild quail, and standard pen-raised quail using the Anchor Covey Release System® and a habitat release system.

Methods:

Three different types of bobwhite quail were released on the Amelia Wildlife Management Area on 25 October 1998 and 23 March 1999. These types included 1) "standard" pen-raised quail; 2) F1 progeny of wild bobwhites: and 3) wild relocated quail. Standard pen-raised quail were obtained from a privately owned game bird propagation facility and were typical of the birds commonly purchased and released on shooting preserves and field trial courses. F1 progeny of wild quail were obtained by hatching eggs and raising chicks from wild bobwhites captured during the spring of 1998. F1 birds were raised at the same game bird facility used for the standard pen-raised birds. Techniques designed to promote wild behavior were used when raising both types of birds.

Wild relocated quail were captured on the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge (N=85) and Kiptopeake State Park (N=19) during September-October 1998 and February-March 1999. Only quail weighing more than 140 grams were used for relocation. These quail were held in a large holding pen until their eventual release.

Quail were released in groups of 20 birds at 14 sites during the fall and spring. Two different release methods were used. A small teepee-like unit with a feeder and waterer, sold as the Anchor Covey Release System® (manufactured by Quality Wildlife Services Inc., Waynesboro, GA), was used at half of the release sites. The other half of the release sites were areas with good natural escape cover adjacent to planted partridge pea without the Anchor Covey Release System unit.

Half of all pen-raised and F1 quail were equipped with radio transmitters 3 days prior to release to allow birds to become accustomed to the unit. Radio transmitters were attached to all of the wildrelocated quail on the same day. Sex, age, weight, and general condition of all birds were determined when the radios were attached.

Radioed quail were monitored daily to determine survival. Radios contained a 1-hour mortality sensor that signaled when a bird was dead. Dead birds were located immediately and all remains were collected for later analyses. Radios were examined to look for tooth marks and beak impressions on the rubber shrink tubing. A combination of evidence left at the kill site, condition of the remains, and marks on the transmitter were used to determine cause of death.

Results:

During each release, 280 quail (160 with radios) were liberated at 14 sites (20 birds/site) (Table 1). This total included 120 standard pen-raised birds (60 with radios), 120 F1 quail (60 with radios), and 40 wild-relocated quail (40 with radios). The combined total number of birds released during the fall and spring was 560 (320 with radios).

Mortality of standard pen-raised and F1 quail was very high immediately following the fall and spring releases. During the fall release, all of the standard pen-raised quail with radios were dead within 9 days after release. The F1 birds survived only slightly better; all F1 birds were dead 41 days after the fall release. Following the spring release, all standard pen-raised quail died within 19 days. All but 1 of the F1 birds released during the spring was dead within 27 days after release. The average number of days survived by standard pen-raised birds and F1 birds for both releases was 2.7 and 4.7 days respectively (Table 2). There was no significant difference between survival rates of pen-raised and F1 birds released using the Anchor Covey Release System and the habitat release method.

Survival of wild-relocated birds was significantly higher than for pen-raised and F1 birds. During the fall, 6 of the 40 (15.0%) wild birds released were still alive 150 days after release. Mortality of wild-relocated birds was higher in the spring; only 1 of 40 (2.5%) survived more than 150 days after release. The average number of days survived by wild-relocated birds released during the fall and spring was 38.1 days. Although the data suggests that survival of wild-relocated birds was enhanced

by the Anchor Covey Release System (Table 2), we found no evidence that these birds utilized the feeders or frequented the area around the unit.

The primary cause of mortality for pen-raised and F1 quail was mammalian predation (55.8% and 48.4% of total mortality, respectively). Foxes were the mammalian predator believed to be responsible for most of these mortality events. The primary cause of mortality for wild-relocated birds was avian predation (46.1% of total mortality). Birds released using the Anchor Covey System died more frequently from avian predation than those released at habitat sites (39.5% vs. 31.5% of total mortality). Call birds used at these sites may have attracted avian predators.

Discussion:

Mortality rates for standard pen-raised and F1 quail were higher and occurred more quickly than expected. Habitat quality at the release sites was excellent. Although predator populations in the area were never censused, their numbers were believed to have been at average levels. In fact, efforts to trap foxes prior to the spring release were largely unsuccessful. After 2 weeks of intensive trapping by experienced trappers, only 4 foxes and 1 bobcat were removed from the area. Pen-raised and F1 quail died from predation because they seemed reluctant to fly and were too slow to escape attack from mammalian and avian predators.

Mortality of wild-relocated quail was also higher than expected. Most likely, birds were stressed by being held in the holding facility, sometimes for several weeks or longer prior to the scheduled release date. Optimally, wild-relocated birds should be transported and released within 24 hours of their capture. The design of this study, however, required release methods to be consistent among all bird types and all birds to be released on the same dates.

In summary, we found that pen-raised and F1 quail survived poorly after release. Survival of released quail was not enhanced by the Anchor Covey Release System. Predation was the primary cause of mortality for all birds. Pen-raised and F1 quail were more susceptible to mammalian predation than wild-relocated birds. Future efforts to release pen-raised quail in areas similar to those found at Amelia WMA should be discouraged.

Table 1. Number of coveys, quail, and radioed quail released during October 1998 and March 1999 on Amelia Wildlife Management Area by bird type.

	ACR		Habitat		Total	
Bird Type*	Coveys	Quail (Radios)	Coveys	Quail (Radios)	Coveys	Quail (Radios)
PR	3	60 (30)	3	60 (30)	6	120 (60)
F1	3	60 (30)	3	60 (30)	6	120 (60)
WR	1	20 (20)	1	20 (20)	2	40 (40)
Total	7	140 (80)	7	140 (80)	14	280 (160)

* PR = standard pen-raised quail, F1 = F1 progeny of wild quail, WR = wild-relocated quail

Table 2. Average number of days survived by bird type and release method for radioed quail released during October 1998 and March 1999 on Amelia Wildlife Management Area.

Bird Type	ACR	Habitat	Total
PR	2.4	3.0	2.7
F1	3.2	.6.1	4.7
WR	50.0	26.3	38.1
Total	14.6	10.0	12.3

* PR = standard pen-raised quail, F1 = F1 progeny of wild quail, WR = wild-relocated quail

Regional Bobwhite Population Performance/ Predator Monitoring Study by Bill Palmer

On a regional scale, habitat loss adequately explains declines of northern bobwhite quail bobwhite (Brennan 1991). Continued intensification of land use is expected. Therefore, bobwhite habitat management in the Southeast will likely be targeted at the local scale, mostly on private lands.

Research demonstrates quail populations increase following habitat management (Puckett et al. 1995). However, habitat management programs often fail to produce an expected increase in bobwhite density. Changes in density through time at the local scale are poorly explained by variation in weather or habitat. Therefore, hypotheses other than habitat availability (Guthery 1997) are needed to explain variation of bobwhite densities at the local scale in the Southeast.

Researchers have dutifully measured the vegetative component of habitat, however, we have failed to put in context the predators of bobwhite. This is a surprising oversight when one considers the definition of habitat, the expenditures to measure quail demographics, and the ecological niche of bobwhite.

An alternative hypothesis that may explain local densities of bobwhite is predation. Collectively, research demonstrates that nest predators reduce nesting success, recruitment, and spring and fall populations of gamebirds and that predator management can result in higher fall populations of gamebirds (Marcstrom et al. 1988, Reynolds et al. 1988, Tapper et al. 1996, Cote and Sutherland 1997). Nest depredation is the most frequent cause of nest failure for galliforms, including bobwhite (Stoddard 1931, others). In specific instances, bobwhite nest losses to predators can be severe (up to 80%) (Burger et al. 1995, Puckett et al. 1995). Significant correlations among survival and reproductive parameters (Palmer, unpublished data) suggest demographic collapse may have a common cause. However, no research has been conducted to determine relationships among predator abundances and bobwhite reproductive success, survival, and recruitment. Ultimately, there is a pressing need to conduct research that goes beyond

-23-

consideration of individual predation <u>events</u> to address predation as a <u>process</u> that influences bobwhite populations.

Research:

The SEQSG in cooperation with Quail Unlimited, Inc. have begun a research project to determine if relationships exist between predator abundances and quail survival and recruitment. The following hypotheses are being investigated:

1). Components of reproduction, survival and fall densities of bobwhite are independent of predator abundances.

2). Relationships (in #1) operate independently of habitat quantity.

3). Predator abundances are independent of landscape habitat features.

In this study, predator populations will be measured and/or indexed at 6 to 9 study locations per year. Measures of predator density will focus on mid-sized mammalian predators and avian predators. Other predator communities may be measured with other sources of funds. Over the course of the 4-year cooperative research, relationships between habitat, predator densities and bobwhite recruitment and populations will be determined from a minimum of 25 study site/years. Study sites must have an active habitat management program and GIS, be at least 800 ha (2000 acres) in size, and have on-going research monitoring at least 50 radio-tagged quail during the breeding season.

Outcomes:

This study is the first to determine if abundances of predators are related to quail survival and reproduction. In addition to study objectives, other outcomes may include data to develop indices of predator abundance that could be used to develop "economic thresholds" similar to those used in Integrated Pest Management. This outcome would be very significant because it would be the first time managers would have a basis for deciding on the value of predator management.

Literature Cited:

Brennan, L.A. 1991. How can we reverse the northern bobwhite population decline. Wildlife Society Bulletin 19:544-555.

-24-

- Burger, L. W., M. R. Ryan, T. V. Dailey, and E. C. Kurzejeski. 1995. Reproductive strategies, success, and mating systems of northern bobwhite in Missouri. Journal of Wildlife Management 59(3):417-426.
- Cote, I. M., and W. J. Sutherland. 1997. The effectiveness of removing predators to protect bird populations. Conservation Biology. 11:395-405.
- Guthery, F. S. 1997. A philosophy of habitat management for northern bobwhites. Journal of Wildlife Management 61:291-301.
- Marcstrom, V., R. E. Kenward and E. Engren. 1988. The impact of predation on boreal tetraonids during vole cycles: an experimental study. J. Animal Ecology 57:859-872.
- Puckett, K. M., W. E. Palmer, P. T. Bromley, and J. R. Anderson, Jr. 1995. Bobwhite nesting ecology and modern agriculture: a management experiment. Proceedings Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies 49:498-504.
- Reynolds, J. C., P. Angelstam and S. Redpath. 1988. Predators, their ecology and impact on gamebird populations. Pages 72-97 in Ecology and Management of Gamebirds, P. J. Hudson and M. W. Rands, eds. BSP Professional Books, London.
- Stoddard, H. L. 1931. The bobwhite quail its habits preservation and increase. Charles Schribner's Sons, New York. 559pp.
- Tapper, S.C., G. R. Potts, and M. H. Brockless. 1996. The effect of an experimental reduction in predation pressure on the breeding success and population density of grey partridge. J. Applied Ecology 33:965-978

Ames Plantation Quail Research Program Landscape Composition and Factors of Population Performance by Allan Houston

The Southeastern Quail Study Group has identified the development of an accurate, and reasonably inexpensive "call census" technique as a high priority research item. Ames Plantation was involved in testing this method in Tennessee during September, 1998 and September, 1999, resulting in an estimate of 1 bird per 1.54 acres on the Morning Field Trial Course in both years.

In December 1998, cooperating with the Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Department, a walkflush census of bobwhite quail was conducted on the Morning Field Trial Course. For the first time at Ames, portions of the census were repeated and radio collared birds monitored to allow construction of models with confidence levels. Using these standards it was estimated that a 33% population increase had occurred since a similar measure in 1997.

Researchers analyzing Geographic Information Systems data in late 1998 noted that 52% of the 5000-acre field trial courses were composed of mature forests with highly structured canopies and open under-stories, an amount of forested land excess to the bobwhite's needs, yet presenting excellent foraging habitat for Coopers hawks. A planned change in this composition to 25% forests, presents a unique opportunity to examine bobwhite populations and related wildlife species as they respond to landscape-scale forest conversion to native grassland habitats. The study involves a comprehensive cooperative effort between Ames Plantation, The University of Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station's Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Department, the Tall Timbers Research Station of Tallahassee, Florida, Mississippi State University, Quail Unlimited, the University of Memphis, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

At the time of this report, some 300 acres of heavily depleted, burned-over upland hardwood stands on the field trial courses were essentially clear-cut during the spring, summer, and fall of 1999. Two additional tracts of pine, 60 acres on the afternoon course and 70 acres on the

-26-

morning course, were thinned to a residual basal area of ~35 square feet per acre. To accommodate research objectives, harvest and thinning activities were confined to the northern one-half of the afternoon course and the southern one-half of the morning course. On most of the clearcut acreage, stumps were sheared at ground level, piled together with other residual woody material and burned. These areas were "rough disked," harrowed, and over-seeded with wheat to reduce erosion and to provide spring and summer cover and feed. An 80-acre hardwood tract that was harvested, brush piled and burned in late 1998 was treated with herbicides during late summer, 1999, to control hardwood encroachment. Specialized equipment, consisting of skidder and pull-behind "boom buster"spray rig and an all-terrain vehicle equipped with tank and "wand" sprayer were utilized to control hardwood regeneration on this area.

Japangrass continued to be a problem in 1999, with nearly 500 acres requiring treatment. Even with excellent chemical control achieved in fields, the weed remains populous in occasional sundappled woodlands where spraying is difficult. The drought of 1999 was severe at Ames and Japangrass appeared to have suffered from its effects. Even so, likely, some control measures will need to be applied in the spring of 2000.

At the time of the Mississippi State Meeting: (1) more than 270 quail have been radio collared and monitored; (2) 192 of these birds have been lost as follows-- 132; predation (raptor, 59; mammal, 20); (3) nests found in 1999, 35; nests hatched, 19; nests lost to predation, 12; chicks per brood, 11.1; chicks caught and tagged for subsequent study, 94.

Based on observations in four different field trials, all-age dogs consistently located an average of 5% of the radio collared coveys located within 400 meters of the center line of the field trial course.

A study of early spring occurrence of mycotoxins in overwintered soybean feed patches has provided several important clues to possible sublethal infestation levels which may chronically interfere with early spring reproductive vitality and efficiency. A follow-up study has been

-27-

initiated to examine the combined effects of B2 alfatoxin and T-2 *fusarium* as inhibitors of soybean protein digestibility on a captive quail population.

A study to examine Coopers hawk ecology on Ames Plantation has been initiated. The study will utilize telemetry to examine year-round population density and habitat utilization, including interaction of Coopers hawk populations with Red Tailed hawks and their reaction to reductions in the forested components of the landscape.

4

Long Term Population Dynamics on Pinelands Plantation

by Wes Burger

Survival:

In this presentation, we provide an overview of 7 years of population parameter estimates for Pineland Plantation in Southwest Georgia. During 1992-1997, we estimated seasonal and annual survival and cause-specific mortality of 813 radiomarked northern bobwhite (Colinus virginianus). Additionally, we determined causes and temporal patterns of mortality. Annual survival (0.201) did not differ between sexes and was higher than that reported for other populations throughout the southeast. Yearly variation in annual survival was primarily associated with variation in overwinter mortality. Seasonal survival did not differ between sexes and mortality was equitably distributed throughout the year with fall-spring survival (0.472) similar to spring-fall survival (0.438). Mammalian (0.353) and avian (0.269) predators were the primary sources of mortality. Mean harvest rate on this area was low (0.051). Both overwinter and breeding season survival were higher on our study area than that reported for other populations throughout the Southeast. More importantly, relative to other studies, the seasonal timing of mortality was redistributed from predominantly prebreeding mortality to an equitable distribution between overwinter and breeding seasons. This may have the net effect of increasing breeding population size and total reproductive output. Unlike regional trends, bobwhite populations on this area have remained stable.

Reproductive Ecology:

During the breeding seasons of 1992-1997, we determined nesting rate, reproductive success, nest survival, renesting rate, and double-clutching rate of 644 radio-marked bobwhite. Three-hundred, thirty-five female and 309 male bobwhite incubated 302 nests. For those birds alive 1 April (females n = 335, males n = 309), 52.3% of females and 15.8% of males incubated ≥ 1 nest and 32.0% of females and 6.7% of males hatched ≥ 1 nest. Sixty-nine percent of females (n = 72) and 24% of males (n = 59) surviving until 1 September successfully hatched ≥ 1 nest.

-29-

Nesting females (n = 171) alive 1 April incubated a mean 1.4 nests (SE = 0.04), whereas, nesting females that survived the nesting period (n = 64) incubated a mean of 1.67 nests (SE = 0.04). Of birds that failed on an initial nesting attempt, 37.6% of females (n = 38) incubated ≥ 1 renest. Of those females that were successful on their initial nesting attempt, 34.6% attempted second nests. Female first nests represented 56.6%, female renests 13.6%, female double-clutch attempts 10.6%, and male-incubated nests 19.2% of all nests located (n = 302). Overall survival of incubated nests was 50.1% (SE = 0.03) and varied among nest types (P = 0.03) and among years for female-incubated first nests (P = 0.03) and male-incubated nests (P < 0.001). Mean productivity for this population was 5.1 chicks/female in the spring population. Production (chicks/female) was correlated with fall-spring survival (P = 0.018), first nest success (P = 0.047), nest success of double-clutches (P = 0.012), and length of the nesting season (P = 0.006). Seemingly, the factors that most influence bobwhite production on this intensively managed area are those that relate to overwinter/early spring predation regimes, early nest success, and opportunity for multiple nesting attempts (season length).

Brood Survival:

From 1995-1997, we determined 21-day survival for 855 chicks in 71 broods. Biparental care was observed in 15.5% of broods; whereas single females or males attended 76% and 8.5% of broods, respectively. We observed strong intrabrood dependence in survival (P < 0.001). When entire brood losses were treated as mortalities, chick survival did not differ (P = 0.105) among broods with female care (S = 0.2819, SE = 0.05073), male care (S = 0.2963, SE = 0.15861), and biparental care (S = 0.5597, SE = 0.12098). However, chicks in broods with biparental care (S = 0.065) than chicks in broods with uniparental (male or female) care, primarily due to lower incidence of complete brood loss (P = 0.002). Chick survival pooled over years and parental care types was 0.3263 (SE = 0.0457). When entire brood losses were excluded, chick survival did not differ (P = 0.9779) among broods raised by females (S = 0.555, SE = 0.07412), males (S = 0.516, SE = 0.18034), or both (S = 0.560, SE = 0.12098). Excluding complete brood losses, chick survival did not differ (P = 0.8755) between broods raised with biparental care and uniparental care, thus the rate of individual chick attrition was
similar between parental care types. Chick survival, excluding entire brood losses, pooled over years and parental care types was 0.554 (SE = 0.05907). The primary survival advantage of biparental care is insurance against catastrophic brood loss or loss of attending parent during the critical first 2 weeks following hatch. Uniparental care is common in bobwhite because biparental care is not essential. However, when breeding opportunities for males are limited, the gain in fitness associated with increased survival of chicks in biparental broods may offset the opportunity costs of forgone additional reproductive opportunities. Additionally, provision of parental care may increase male access to females in the event of a catastrophic brood loss. Environmental variation in resource availability and predator pressures and seasonally varying reproductive opportunities for males for males may maintain both uniparental and biparental strategies in the population.

Population Modeling:

We used QUAILSIM population modeling software (Weinstein and Burger 1998) to predict population trends under mean demographic parameters and conduct population sensitivity analyses. We assumed a initial sex ratio of 48% females in the spring breeding population. Furthermore, we assumed survival of chicks from male and female incubated nests were equal. We evaluated relative influence of each population parameter on finite rate of growth (N_{t+1}/N_t) by individually manipulating single parameters at +/-10 and 20% of the mean while holding all other parameters constant at mean values calculated from the 6 years of population parameter data. Because we felt the brood survival estimates including entire brood losses reported in Burger were unrealistic and did not account for brood adoption and switching, we used the brood survival estimates calculated by excluding entire brood losses (Burger et al. in prep b). Finite rates of increase for mean parameter values was 1.04%. The relative influence of individual parameters can be evaluated using elasticities. The elasticity is the proportional change in the finite rate of growth divided by the proportional change in the parameter value. Presumably, parameters with greater elasticities exert a great influence on population trends. For simplicity, in this report we simply directly report and interpret proportional change in the finite rate of growth for a fixed proportional change (+20%) in parameter values. Ranking the finite rates of

-31-

increase for a +20% change in parameter value it is apparent that this population is most sensitive to variation in fall-spring survival, chick survival, overall nest success, female nesting rate, and female first nest success, in that order. For example, a 20% increase in adult overwinter survival results in an approximately 20% change increase in the following spring population size. In comparison, a 20% increase in breeding season survival results in only a 4% increase in the following spring breeding population. A 20% increase in all chick survival resulted in a 16% increase in spring populations. When nest success of all nests were varied simultaneously, a 20% increase in overall nest success resulted in a 15% increase in subsequent breeding population size. Variation in female first nest success was much more influential than variation in success of other nest types, accounting for about 10% of the 15% increase in population growth. This is expected because female first nests account for about 56% of all nest production and largely determine subsequent reproductive strategies of females. Variation in all other parameters had relatively less influence on population trajectories.

An additional utility of population modeling is to identify critical levels of certain parameters. Figures given during the presentation illustrated predicted 5-year population trends at 5 levels of each population parameter $(-0.10\bar{x}, -0.20\bar{x}, \bar{x}, +0.10\bar{x}, \text{and } +0.20\bar{x})$. From these predictions certain inferences relevant to management may be drawn. For example, given that other parameters are held constant at mean values, what would be the population effect of a 10% increase in nest success. Alternatively, what is the effect of increasing harvest rate. Assuming that harvest is 100% additive, and thus a doubling of harvest rate (5% - 10%) would result in a 5% decrease in overwinter survival, this change in harvest rate sustained over 5-years could result in a 40% reduction in population level, again, assuming other parameters are held constant at mean values. Some general conclusions that can be drawn from these analyses include: overwinter survival of at least 44%, female nesting rate of \geq 49%, chick survival of \geq 58%, and female first nest success of \geq 44% is required for positive population growth.

-32-

Southeast Quail Study Group Bylaws Discussion

by Breck Carmichael

The Steering Committee developed draft bylaws to govern the operation of the study group. These were sent to the membership prior to the meeting with a request for comments and suggestions. After discussion at the meeting, a few changes in wording were implemented and the bylaws shown below were adopted by majority vote.

SOUTHEAST QUAIL STUDY GROUP BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. NAME, AREA, AND AFFILIATION

Section 1. <u>Name</u> - The name of this organization shall be the <u>SOUTHEAST QUAIL STUDY GROUP</u>

(hereinafter referred to as the Group or SEQSG).

Section 2. <u>Area</u> - The Group shall have membership from the 16 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia), that are members of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and have populations of wild Northern Bobwhite quail (<u>Colinus virginianus</u>) and other states within the historic range of the Northern Bobwhite.

Section 3. Criteria for Affiliation

Members shall consist of dues-paying wildlife professionals (*minimum B.S. degree in Wildlife or* related science, or employed in full-time capacity in quail management position by a state or federal agency, recognized conservation group, or private company) from member states. Other

individuals may associate with the SEQSG and be included on the mailing list by payment of annual dues if they have an interest in the conservation and welfare of wild bobwhite quail.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Objectives

- Identify factors responsible for population declines of bobwhites and other associated early successional wildlife species.
- b. Identify gaps in knowledge about bobwhite population dynamics, ecology, habitat management and the socioeconomics of quail hunting and habitat enhancement.
- c. Develop and implement solutions to specific bobwhite population, habitat and management problems.
- d. Prioritize regional research and management efforts.
- e. Provide sound, scientifically based information to stakeholders, administrators, and policy makers.
- f. Perpetuate the tradition of the sport of wild bobwhite quail hunting.

Section 2. Implementation - To achieve these objectives, the Group proposes to:

- Provide opportunities for better liaison among individual members, sportsmen, agencies, and organizations focused on problems related to the management of bobwhites.
- b. Provide an annual meeting of the Group as a forum for the exchange of ideas and actions to achieve objectives.
- c. Recognize and commend outstanding professional achievements in and contributions to bobwhite quail management.
- d. Encourage interaction between professionals through participation in Group committees.
- e. Promote and conduct coordinated research activities of regional and national significance.
- f. Provide information to policy makers to influence land use policy for the benefit of bobwhites.
- g. Utilize newsletters, web pages, magazine articles, and other media to disseminate information.

ARTICLE III. GROUP YEAR

Section 1. <u>Operating Year</u>. The Group operating year shall run from the close of one year's annual meeting to the close of the following year's annual meeting.

Section 2. Fiscal Year. The Group fiscal year shall run concurrent with the calendar year.

ARTICLE IV. VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Voting Members shall consist of those who have paid dues for the current year. Only Group voting members may hold office, vote on official matters affecting the Group, and officially represent the Group on business matters.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES, ELECTIONS AND OFFICERS

Section 1. <u>Steering Committee</u>. The Steering Committee shall be comprised of seven (7) persons of Voting Member status. Three members will be from state wildlife agencies, 1 member will be from academia, 1 member will be from a non-profit non-governmental research entity or a federal agency, and 1 member from a private entity. The term of each of these 6 positions shall be 2 years, and be filled by election by the voting membership on a staggered schedule to help maintain continuum of experience on this Committee. The seventh position shall be held in perpetuity by the Executive Vice President of Quail Unlimited, Inc. (or his designee).

The chairmanship of the Steering Committee shall consist of the 3 state wildlife agency positions, in the form of a Chair (who will head the Committee), Chair-Elect, and Past Chair. Upon conclusion of their respective 2 year terms, the Chair will assume the Past Chair position, and will be succeeded by the Chair-Elect. If the Chair-Elect should resign or be unable to serve for any reason, when the term ends both the Chair and Chair-Elect positions would be filled by election by the voting membership. The Chair-Elect of the Steering Committee will also serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Steering Committee.

In order to be enacted, all matters upon which the Steering Committee votes must pass on a majority of votes. If a member is not able to attend a meeting in which issues will be voted upon, he/she will be afforded the opportunity to vote by absentee ballot within a reasonable period of time before which the matter must be resolved.

Section 2. <u>SEAFWA SEQSG Technical Committee</u>. The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) SEQSG Technical Committee shall be composed of the Steering Committee and the Chairs of the Standing Committees, and at least one representative from each SEAFWA state. The purpose of the SEAFWA Technical Committee is to serve as a liaison between the SEQSG and the Directors of the Southeast state fish and wildlife agencies. The Chair of the Steering Committee will also serve as the Chair of the SEAFWA SEQSG Technical Committee.

Section 3. <u>Nominating and Elections Committee</u>. The 3-member Nominating and Elections Committee shall be selected by the Steering Committee, and shall prepare a slate of 2 candidates for each of the positions to be elected that year.

- CLAUSE A All nominees must be Voting Members
- CLAUSE B Prior approval shall be obtained from said candidates.
- CLAUSE C Nomination slate shall be submitted to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting.
- CLAUSE D Additional nominees may be added to the Nominating and Elections Committee's slate upon the signed support of 6 or more members, provided prior approval has been obtained from each nominee.

Section 4. <u>Balloting</u>. Written ballots shall be received from the members by the Secretary-Treasurer and shall be counted by the Nominating and Elections Committee. For ballot counting purposes, the Steering Committee Chair shall appoint a replacement for any member of the Nominating and Elections Committee who has been nominated for an office.

- CLAUSE A Members in arrears shall forfeit their rights to vote during the period of delinquency.
- CLAUSE B A signed absentee ballot may be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer by a member prior to the scheduled time for counting ballots.
- CLAUSE C The candidate receiving the largest number of votes on the written ballot shall be declared elected. No one may hold more than 1 elective position simultaneously.
- CLAUSE D If, as a result of extenuating circumstances, the annual business meeting is not held prior to October 30, elections will proceed immediately and elected officers will assume their duties effective December 1.

Section 5. <u>Officers</u> - Officers of the Group shall consist of the Steering Committee, and Chairs of Standing Committees in the Group.

2

Section 6. Standing and Ad hoc Committees. Standing committees shall consist of:

- a. Agricultural Policy
- b. Forest Management
- c. Funding
- d. Habitat Implementation
- e. Publicity, Information and Education
- f. Research

Each Standing Committee shall be headed by a Chair, to be appointed by the Steering Committee. Committee Chairs will serve 3 year renewable terms, which shall be reviewed annually by the Steering Committee. Chair vacancies can be filled by appointment of the Steering Committee. Each Standing Committee Chair will select persons from the membership to form the committee.

Ad hoc committees may be initiated to investigate specific problem areas and make recommendations to the Steering Committee. *Ad hoc* committees and a Committee Chair will be selected by the Steering Committee after reviewing requests for committee action submitted by the membership.

Section 6. <u>Resignation</u>. Any Steering Committee member, Standing Committee or Ad hoc Committee Chair may resign at any time by giving notice to the Steering Committee Chair. Voting members may resign at any time by giving notice to the Secretary-Treasurer, or will be considered to have resigned if annual dues are not paid within one year after the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. <u>Annual Meetings</u>. A meeting of the Group shall be held annually. The host state will be determined by the Steering Committee after reviewing requests from member states.

- CLAUSE A TIMING AND PURPOSE The Group annual meeting shall be held in August - October. The purpose shall be for conducting business, electing officers, and receiving reports from committees and member states.
- CLAUSE B MEETING NOTICE The dates for the annual meeting shall be determined by the Steering Committee, and the membership informed of these dates at least 4 months prior to the annual meeting.
- CLAUSE C QUORUM A quorum for conducting business at the annual meeting of the Group shall consist of at least 50 percent of the voting members, or at least 40 voting members, whichever is less.
- CLAUSE D MEETING RULES During sessions in which matters will be voted on, order of business and parliamentary procedures shall follow Robert's Rules of Orders, latest revision.
- CLAUSE E BYLAWS SEQSG Bylaws shall be available for inspection during every meeting. If these bylaws are revised, the new revision must be approved by the Group before becoming effective.
- CLAUSE F ANNUAL MEETING TREASURER The quail program coordinator from the host state wildlife agency will serve as the Annual Meeting Treasurer, and will coordinate with the Group Secretary-Treasurer concerning the meeting's finances.

Section 2. <u>Steering Committee Meetings</u>. The Steering Committee shall meet at least once annually, in January - March, as coordinated by the Chair. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed. A member of the host state for the upcoming annual meeting will be invited to attend the Steering Committee meetings.

Section 3. <u>SEAFWA Meeting</u>. A short (typically 2 hour) meeting of the SEAFWA SEQSG Technical Committee will be held during the annual SEAFWA conference. The purpose of this meeting is general discussion of issues and dissemination of information. Voting on Group matters may take place only if there is a quorum of the voting membership present.

Section 4. <u>Standing and *Ad hoc* Committee Meetings</u>. These committees will always meet at the annual meeting, and will provide a report to the membership before the conclusion of the meeting. Meetings of these committees may also be held at any other time as needed.

ARTICLE VII. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

Section 1. <u>Dues</u>. An annual fee of \$10 will be charged to all who desire to be members of the Group or be included on the mailing list. The \$10 will be included in the registration at the annual meeting, or can be sent in separately within 3 months following the annual meeting. This fee will be used to cover printing or mailing costs, and associated expenditures approved by the Steering Committee.

Section 2. <u>Finance</u>. The funds of the Group shall be under the supervision of the Steering Committee and shall be handled by the Secretary-Treasurer. The financial records of the Group shall be periodically examined by the Audit Committee.

CLAUSE A - AUDIT COMMITTEE - This committee shall consist of a chairman and at least 2 additional members. The chairman will be appointed by the Steering Committee Chair and can be anyone except the Steering Committee Chair or the Secretary-Treasurer. The Audit Committee shall review the financial records and support documents of the Secretary-Treasurer and Annual Meeting Treasurer at least annually. The committee shall also review these records and documents prior to any change in the office of the Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 3. Reports and Files.

- CLAUSE A STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR The Steering Committee Chair will be responsible for maintaining historical records, meeting minutes, annual meeting summary reports, and other important papers.
- CLAUSE B SECRETARY-TREASURER The Secretary-Treasurer will provide records and reports as necessary to maintain the tax-exempt status of the Group, and will record minutes of Steering Committee meetings.
- CLAUSE C ANNUAL MEETING TREASURER The Annual Meeting Treasurer will be responsible for submitting an annual meeting financial report to the Secretary-Treasurer within 45 days after the conclusion of the annual meeting. He/she will also be responsible for compiling and presenting an Annual Meeting Summary Report to the Steering Committee Chair within 6 months after the conclusion of the annual meeting.
- CLAUSE D STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS Each Standing Committee Chair shall submit an annual report of committee activities in printed format to the Annual Meeting Treasurer within 30 days following the conclusion of the annual meeting. This report will be given verbally to the Group at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. RESOLUTIONS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Resolutions of the Group, if submitted to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting, may be proposed at the annual meeting and passed by a majority of quorum votes. Resolutions not submitted to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting may not be brought forward for a vote, except by the approval of 2/3rds of a quorum.

A resolution passed by the Group must be referred to the SEAFWA SEQSG Technical Committee for consideration. The SEAFWA SEQSG Technical Committee may then recommend the resolution to the SEAFWA Directors for possible adoption. Other public statements or letters on behalf of the Group may be issued with prior approval of the Steering Committee.

Only Group officers or a designee of the Steering Committee Chair will officially represent the Group on business matters.

ARTICLE IX. AWARDS

Awards may be given annually, at the discretion of the Steering Committee, to individuals or groups that have made outstanding contributions to the knowledge and management of the bobwhite quail in the Southeast.

Nominations shall be presented to the Steering Committee Chair in writing within 30 days prior to the annual meeting. The Steering Committee is not limited to these nominations in selecting the recipient.

The award shall consist of a plaque or appropriate substitute which shall be presented at the annual meeting, if possible, for the recipient to retain permanently.

ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION

The Group may be dissolved upon 3/4 majority vote of the voting membership. Upon dissolution, the Steering Committee may donate any financial assets of the Group to a non-profit management -41- or research organization dedicated to the preservation of wild Northern Bobwhite quail.

Southeast Regional Bobwhite Management Plan A Progress Report

by Ralph Dimmick

Goal:

The goal of this plan is to develop strategies and encourage interstate/interagency cooperation to solve region-wide problems responsible for the decline and suppression of recovery in populations of northern bobwhites (Colinus virginianus) in the southeastern U.S. The plan will seek to identify models and mechanisms for achieving this cooperation. It will also define responsibilities and administrative pathways for carrying out suggested activities.

Problems/Issues:

A review of 4 state bobwhite recovery plans yielded 22 significant problems or issues that must be resolved to achieve recovery bobwhite populations in the southeastern region. These problems were summarized under the following five categories:

- 1. Agricultural issues
- 2.Forestry issues
- 3. Program administration issues
- 4. Research issues
- 5. Education issues

Strategies for Management:

Bobwhites have been managed traditionally at the local or state level. Until fairly recently. Funding for bobwhite management originated largely at the state or private level. Because bobwhites are nonmigratory birds with small home ranges, it is likely that habitat management and harvest regulation will continue to be conducted by individual state departments of natural resources. However, the emergence of federal programs for funding conservation efforts calls for cooperation among states, private entities, and federal conservation organizations to insure that these funding programs provide benefits for bobwhites. The following strategies should help accomplish that:

1. Encourage all state departments of natural resources in the range of bobwhites to develop a bobwhite management plan or initiative specific to its own circumstance. These plans should include:

(a) An inventory of bobwhite habitat on public and private lands within its

boundaries

(b) An annual inventory of the status and/or trends of its bobwhite population

(c) An inventory of current levels of access to bobwhite hunting and participation

2. Identify and promote wildlife habitat management practices suitable for incorporating into the Farm plan and other programs that subsidize conservation efforts on private lands. The coordinators of this effort in each state would comprise a regional committee sponsored by and providing recommendations to the Southeast Quail Study Group. The Group would provide liaison with the Directors of the Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Agriculture Policy Committee and the Habitat Implementation Committee of the Southeast Quail Study Group should identify effective models of these regional groups and communicate this information to other interested agencies.

3. Identify sources of funding for habitat management. The Conservation Reserve Program of the Farm Plan, the Forestry Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, CARA, and others are current or potential sources of funds for funding bobwhite habitat initiatives. It Would be advisable to have an individual sponsored by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Directors to monitor congressional actions in this arena, and provide timely information the Southeast Quail Study Group. The Agricultural Policy, Forest Management, and Funding Committees should work closely with this individual.

4. Identify opportunities for collaboration with other groups seeking to enhance grassland and forest management for wildlife species sharing habitat similarities with bobwhites, e.g., the Longleaf Pine Alliance, Partners in Flight, etc. SEQSG should seek close ties with these groups. SEQSG should select an individual who will provide liaison with these groups, seek opportunities for cooperation, and keep SEQSG informed of these opportunities. This person, and a small staff if necessary, could

be appointed and jointly funded by the directors of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

5. Provide solutions to management problems through regional research programs. We recommend that this strategy be supervised by the SEQSG through its Research Committee. We further recommend that (1) the Directors of the Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies provide a set amount of funds from each state each year earmarked for regional research projects, and (2) the Directors appoint one individual from each state agency to serve on a Research Project Evaluation subcommittee. Its function would be to approve or reject research projects submitted by the Research Committee of SEQSG.

6. Coordinate and intensify outreach and educational efforts to inform the general public about the needs of quail, appropriate management methods, activities of the wildlife departs, and issues requiring public support or opposition. These efforts should be coordinated by the Public Relations-Information-Education Committee of the SEQSG.

Longleaf CPA Initiative

by Louis Justice

The longleaf pine ecosystem once occupied almost 90 million acres from east Texas to south Virginia. At present there are less that 3 million acres remaining. What can we do about this decline of one of the most endangered ecosystems within the U.S.? Well a group of concerned professionals proposed to the Farm Service Agency a Conservation Priority Area for longleaf pine at the national level. Guess what, we got it. Much can be said for those persons and groups that caused this real opportunity to happen, those consist of: NRCS, FSA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, SE Forestry and Wildlife Work Group, state forestry, state game and fish agencies, Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, SE Quail Working Group, Longleaf Alliance, and other great folks. All I can say is thank you for your help. Appendix 1-Information sent to the National FSA Office to support the National CPA for Longleaf Pine (note that not all recommendations were used in the final CPA Notice from FSA).

Next, now that we have a National CPA for Longleaf Pine in 9 SE states, maybe bobwhite quail numbers can improve. Moreover, no longer is HEL (highly erodible land) a sole requirement, but any land that have a cropping history along with the area being able to support longleaf pine can be offered for CRP and get a high score. Also, the wildlife professionals now have a tool to improve early successional vegetation in those plans that make it into the CRP program under the longleaf pine CPA. This is most likely our moment to do something about quail and other wildlife in the SE, can we now used this special time, I hope so. The following is out there for a chance to improve habitat for wildlife: Fl 3,960,000; Al 4,322,702; TX 297,865; VA. 93,119; MS. 2,235,047; LA. 1,410,139; (NC, GA, SC) 13,349479 acres, available for signup within the Longleaf Pine CPA.

Georgia had most of the acres offered in the 18th signup, somewhere around 75%. All our partners involved in the CPA, made this come about by joining together to make things happen, we had 11 longleaf pine workshops, all state and federal agencies sent out fact sheets, news releases, and along with a lot of personal interaction that resulted in a sign up in Ga. of 74,398 acres. In addition, Ga. had

a state CPA for longleaf for the past two years so many people were aware of the chance to improve their score (EBI) during a CRP sign up. The state CPA will be dropped for the 20 th sign up, which is from Jan. 18-Feb.11, 2000. Results of other states in the CPA for the 18 th signup are as follows: AL. 13,480; FL 5,968; LA. 178; MS. 270; NC. 1,407; SC. 6,450; TX. 0; and VA. 3 acres. Thank you for your time. (Appendix 2 - CRP Guidance for the National Longleaf Pine CPA Practice in Georgia.)

<u>Appendix</u> 1-Response to Section AD@ (CPA=s With A Primary Purpose Of Wildlife) Exhibit 1 FSA Notice CRP-269

1. The wildlife habitat to be created, enhanced, and maintained involves the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem (LPE) which has been determined to be one of the most critical and threatened ecosystems in decline in North America (Means and Grow 1985, Nos 1989, & Stout and Marion 1993.) The original LPE encompassed some 90 million acres in the South (Frost 1993). This LPE includes the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia (see appendix 1). In 1994, it was estimated that LPE only encompassed some 3.178 million acres, which accounts for only 3.4 percent of the original Longleaf pine forest (Landers, Van Lead, and Boyer). For example, according to the 1989 Forest Survey, LPE acreage in Georgia has been reduced to approximately 520 thousand acres, of which only 65,400 acres were identified in the seedling/sapling age (1-5 inches in diameter), and a similar decline in other southeastern states has occurred (see appendix 2). These major reductions in ecosystem and forest type can be attributed to agriculture, urban development, and silvicultural management variation (Frost 1993, Landers, Van Lead, and Boyer 1995). Attached are lists of some wildlife (including plants) species that are of special concern within the proposed CPA (see appendix 3). No known species are anticipated to be negatively impacted by the incorporation of this CPA within CRP. Furthermore, the resources of concern as determined in each of these southeastern states will benefit from establishing this conservation standard to address objectives that maximize environmental benefits. This practice will allow 50 percent or more of the FSA cropland in the CPA area to become eligible for CRP.

-46-

2. CRP practices which will create, enhance, or maintain the LPE include CP-3A (Hardwood Planting), CP-4D (Permanent Wildlife Habitat), and CP-11 (Vegetative Cover-Trees Already Established). Benefits of these practices, if properly installed, will include improved distribution and quality of desirable food, cover, and nesting habitats. It is important to note that prescribed burning is a critical practice essential for the establishment and maintenance of the LPE (Herman 1993). Due to plant communities being established under the CPA, there is a likelihood for long-term benefits beyond the CRP contract period. This view is further supported by the fact that Longleaf pine normally managed on a longer rotation than other pine species. Therefore, the LPE practice will consist of the following:

To receive the CPA points the a person must establish the area to longleaf pine or thin an existing CRP stand that is in longleaf pine (CP-11) percent or more of the offered acreage must be planted to longleaf pine. Prescribed burning is an essential practice in the establishment and management of the LPE. Cost-share for prescribed burning will need to be included in this practice. (Prescribed burning is considered a recurring practice usually on a three year cycle.) However, if an offer occurs in an area of a state where burning is not allowed due to a state or local regulation, then a waiver could be granted by NRCS or FSA.Longleaf pine CPA will use CP-3A, CP-4D, and CP-11 as outlined in the 16th CRP sign-up for establishment and management of the Longleaf pine cover.

3. Out of concern over the decline of the LPE, most federal, state and many private natural resource organizations have recognized the establishment and maintenance of the LPE as one of the primary management practices to promote on private lands within the Longleaf pine historical range. The potential economic impact of increasing the LPE in the Longleaf pine historical range is great. The LPE involves one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world that includes 36 species of mammals, 86 species of birds, 34 species of amphibians, 38 species of reptiles, 4,500 species of anthropods, and over 1,200 species of plants.

Currently there are nine species of animals and 87 species of plants within the LPE that are of special concern. The continued decline of these species would pose an ecological, as well as economic loss, to the citizens as a whole, particularly the private landowners within the LPE.

Currently, there are two species of animals within the LPE, that are on the federal Endangered Species List. Should additional species be added in the future, it would result in an economic liability for forest landowners. Also, bobwhite quail populations, which are strongly associated with the LPE, have declined by more than 62 percent from 1966 to 1993 (Peterjohn, Sauer, and Link. 1994). This decline mirrors a 60 percent drop in quail hunter numbers since 1975 and had resulted in an estimated economic loss of more than \$300 million dollars per year (estimated based on 1991 National Hunting and Fishing Survey).

Designation of the LPE in the Southeast as a CPA could result in substantial increases in revenue from both consumptive and non-consumptive users of wildlife. Increased game species population would result in increased hunter numbers and the potential for increased hunting lease fees. Increased populations of nongame wildlife would create a market for the growing demand for wildlife viewing opportunities and rural regional ecotourism. The goal for this CPA is to restore LPE and the many important wildlife species that depend upon this ecosystem within the Southeast. Wildlife objectives are to return southeastern bird populations of longleaf pine ecosystems to pre-1975 levels and to better secure many rare and endangered plants and animals associated with this ecosystem. The habitat objective is to restore 1.2 million acres on private non-industrial lands to include any areas with suitable site conditions within the entire historical range of the LPE.

4. Yes, due to the intensity and extensiveness of management on agricultural lands.

5. If these practices are implemented, the projected impacts will result in significantly increased and improved wildlife habitat and species within the LPE. Bobwhite quail and nongame bird numbers will increase towards pre-1975 population levels, assuming other factors contributing to declines are also being addressed through other CRP and habitat management initiatives already underway. Many rare species will not have to be federally listed, and presently listed species will come closer to recovery, and would be considered for delisting.

6. The goal is pre-1975 longleaf pine levels with management.

7. In addition to the established Habitat Evaluation System used by NRCS that provides benchmark conditions and monitoring of habitat conditions over time, bobwhite quail call counts, brood counts, and hunter population responses will provide trend data. In addition, nest production studies will be initiated to better understand results of specific practices and allow for fine-tuning restoration and maintenance recommendations.

The following organizations have pledged their support to this proposal and they along with other supporting groups not listed may provide follow-up letters pledging their endorsement. The following organizations have given verbal support to the CPA: *The Wildlife Society, Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Southeast Section of The Wildlife Society Farm Wildlife Committee, Southeast Quail Study Group, Longleaf Pine Alliance, Quail Unlimited, The Gopher Tortoise Council, and Partners In Flight.*

Literature Cited:

Landers, JJ. Larry, D.H. Van Lear, and W.D. Boyer 295, Journal of Forestry, Col. 93, No. 11.

Herman, S.M. 1993, Proceedings of the Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference, No. 18, the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem: Ecology, Restoration, and management. 418 pp.

Peterjohn, B.A., J.R.Sauer, and W.A. Link. 1994. The 1992 and 1993 summary of the North American Breeding Bird Survey; Bird. Survey. Bird Populations 2:46-61.

Appendix 2 - To All Offices.

From: CRP Team (LAJ)

Subject: CRP 18th Sign-up Guidance for National Longleaf Pine CPA and EBI Factors

Please distribute to field offices that do not receive electronic mail.

CRP Guidance for the National Longleaf Pine CPA Practice for Georgia

- National Longleaf Pine CPA (LLP) primary purpose is wildlife (restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem or plant community), and prescribed burning is required to establish this practice (LLP). NRCS determines if the offer is suitable for LLP restoration.
- 2. LLP occurs on a wide, variety of soils in its original range from wet to very, dry conditions. Therefore, a list of soils for quick reference is being provided. However, due to the limitation of the information on the Soil 5, a site visit will be required on sites that do not have a listed soils, before a determination is final.

A Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) forester or a knowledgeable person may help determine, if the site is suitable for LLP restoration.

The following will be used for determining eligibility for the LLP:

A. If a site is within the LLP map provided in the "How to Book", then the site is eligible. (Cropping history is met). Note: Only soils 3w or drier will be eligible unless the District Conservationist concludes that wetter soil can be used.

B. If a site is on the edge of the LLP map, then a site visit will be needed to determine eligibility. NRCS with the assistance of GFC or a knowledgeable person will determine eligibility. NRCS will forward the soils information to the state office to be included in the state soils list (cropping history is met). **Note:** Soils suitable for the LLP are those that have surface textured sandy, sandy loam, sandy-clay loam, and soils developed from sandstone, shale, and dolomite within the range of the LLP.

AND A DOMESTIC

C. If the site is eligible, then prescribe burning will be an essential practice in establishing the (LLP). If the person wishes not to carry out prescribe burning, then the person will be ineligible for the CPA (LLP). **Note:** If a person offering land for (LLP) that is in an area that does not allow prescribe burning due to state or local regulations or other reason, then the person must receive a waiver from NRCS and agree to an alternative method of maintaining the understory vegetation, such as light disking, herbicides, or both. Prescribe burning must be used on sites that do not receive a waiver. A prescribe burning plan must included in the CPO and developed by Georgia Forestry Commission, a trained NRCS employee or other qualified person that meet NRCS prescribe burning standard (338). Maintenance will be included in the Conservation Plan of Operation (CPO). The \$5.00 per acre maintenance allowance from FSA each year can be used for this activity.

- D. If site is eligible, then removal or control of herbaceous vegetation will be necessary during site preparation. Note: Longleaf pine is very, intolerant of competition from dense, herbaceous vegetation and woody vegetation. Annual vegetation can be controlled by band spraying or other methods to aid in planting and growth. Fescue, bahia, bermuda, or other domesticated perennial grasses and kudzu must be removed from the entire offer to be eligible for the LLP. If the person wishes not to remove and/or control, the above vegetation before planting the trees, then the site is not suitable for LLP and is ineligible. This is the most important factor in establishment and management of the LLP. Methods of removal and /or control of "weeds" will be included in the CPO.
- 3. If A, B, C, and D above are met, then the offer is eligible for LLP.

- NRCS will use practice 643 (Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats) for LLP. This was handed out at training.
- 5. Offers that receive the CPA points for the LLP must meet the requirements outlined in N6 of the EBI.

. X.

Georgia Quail Initiative

by Reggie Thackston

Georgia was once considered the bobwhite quail capital of the world. However, the state's quail population has declined by more than 70 percent since the early 1960s, primarily due to loss of quality early succession habitat. To address this concern, the Bobwhite Quail Initiative is being implemented by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD). Key members of Georgia's General Assembly worked with the Department of Natural Resources and other supporters throughout the past year to develop and fund the new Bobwhite Quail Initiative (BQI).

BQI is primarily directed at providing nesting and brood rearing habitat, factors most commonly limiting quail populations across Georgia's landscape. However, these practices should also improve habitats for certain early succession songbird species that also are in serious decline. BQI program practices should reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. Other beneficial aspects may include economic enhancement to local communities from recreational opportunities associated with improved quail hunting and wildlife viewing.

This pilot project is being conducted in three focus areas comprised of 14 counties in the Upper Coastal Plain of Georgia. Focus areas were chosen based on the following considerations: 1) a prevalence of row crop agriculture; 2) soils that are conducive to quail habitat management; and 3) a sample size and distribution that accurately represents Georgia's farm landscape. Within the focus areas Wildlife Resources Division biologists will provide landowners with detailed technical assistance on quail habitat management, and qualifying landowners will receive incentive payments for the establishment and maintenance of certain types of early succession habitat. Within and around agricultural fields financial incentives will be provided for the creation of field borders, hedgerows and field corners that are established to meet the program guidelines. BQI also cost shares the burning of thinned pine plantations adjacent to agricultural fields. The process for landowner participation in BQI is similar to that for federal Farm Bill Programs. Sign-ups are announced and habitat plans are competitively ranked for funding. Landowners conducting multiple habitat practices receive higher scores and increased chances for funding. It is important to note that upon request, habitat management plans are provided to all landowners, regardless of their participation in the BQI program. To be eligible for BQI incentive payments, the cooperator's property must be in one of the three main focus areas, must include commercial row crop agriculture, and must be at least 50 contiguous acres. Commercial shooting preserves are not eligible for incentives. Incentives will not be paid for previously established habitat.

Research and monitoring are other important BQI components. Researchers with the University of Georgia, D.B. Warnell School of Forest Resources, are measuring the impacts of BQI habitat practices on quail and songbird populations on sample farms distributed across the focus areas. Several agencies will work cooperatively in this new program, including: the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Georgia Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Quail Unlimited and others. Success of BQI may ultimately lead to the restoration of the bobwhite quail, the state's game bird.

Virginia Quail Plan 3 Year Update by Steve Capel

The ambitious Virginia Bobwhite Quail Plan has been implemented for just over three years. This report covers some of the accomplishments of the first three years. Note that, for many of the habitat development measures, there have been three drought summers in a row, which have dramatically impacted the quality of the habitat plantings and their contribution to quail habitat. For the sake of organization, this update is organized following the strategies addressing the various problems (bold headings) outlined in the original plan.

Overuse of Cool Season Forages

- Forty five (45) Native Warm Season Grass (NWSG) Demonstration Areas of sufficient size (usually 10 acres or greater) to permit commercial having or grazing have been established in 38 different counties
- Six (6) native warm season grass drills have either been retrofitted to accommodate NWSG or DGIF has provided funds for the attachment when an SWCD purchased a new drill.
- Tall fescue has been controlled on considerable WMA acreage. Chemical has been purchased that is adequate to spray most of the remaining acreage in fescue.
- Ten (10) NWSG workshops have been held to date at different locations across the Commonwealth, from Accomac Co. to Tazewell Co., Charlotte Co. to Shenandoah Co., attended by over 600 landowners and personnel of various agricultural agencies.
- Over 120 agricultural meetings ranging from NRCS State Technical Committee to Best Management Practices (BMP) Development Committee, Forage and Grassland Council and others have been attended to insure that NWSG is considered and that alternatives to tall fescue are considered. Examples of the accomplishments from these efforts: NRCS is in the process of revising planting specifications for almost all practices to remove tall fescue and offer NWSG alternatives; the new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will only permit NWSG to be utilized. This program will involve over 40,000 acres of plantings

-55-

across Virginia. Note: Items that have not been implemented or only partially implemented were a result of less manpower or funds being allocated than were proposed in the Quail Plan.

- Contract cooperative research--Not Funded
- Three (3) workshops to train personnel of other agencies in benefits and proper establishment/use of NWSG have been conducted; 3 more are planned for the year 2000.
- Supplemental Cost Share to encourage landowners to select a NWSG option in the BMP program has been offered for 3 years. Approximately 1,100 acres have been so established. Not Funded FY 2000
- Three (3) NWSG drills have been acquired including one donated by a QU Chapter.

Lack of Prescribed Fire Use

- Acquire fire plow, dozer & transport, hire crew leader-not funded
- Cost Share prescribed burning to reduce difficulty of landowners getting prescribed burning completed. No contract was established the first year. The second year, 251 acres were burned under C/S contract. The third year 729 acres were prescribed burned under C/S contract.
- Work to review existing laws and regulations pertaining to burning liability. The 1998
 Virginia Legislature enacted a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Law. DOF has since implemented training and approximately 300 have been certified to date.
- Twelve (12) Prescribed Burn Workshops (Mason Neck to Mecklenburg Co.; Bath Co. to King & Queen Co.) have been held in cooperation with DOF to provide interested landowners (300) with information on the biological and legal aspects of prescribed burning and fire behavior.
- Prescribed Burn Demonstration Areas were combined with the Pine Management Demo Areas, as they go hand in hand.
- Nine (9) Prescribed Burn Trailers have been fully equipped (spray rigs, backpack sprayers, drip torches, weather kits, smoke signs, hand tools, etc). Two per Region East and 1 per Region West.
- Develop educational materials on prescribed burning-Remains To Be Done.

Plantation Pines Managed At Too High Densities

- Conduct Pine Thinning Economic Study with DOF-Not Funded
- Twenty (20) Pine Thinning Demonstration Areas have been developed in 16 counties in the "loblolly range."
- Four (4) Pine Thinning and Management Workshops have been conducted in the loblolly range.
- A full color booklet, <u>Managing Pines For Profit and Wildlife</u>, has been developed. No video has been developed to date.
- Provide Supplemental Cost Share for pre-commercial thinning-Not Funded

Clean Farming Supports Few Quail

- Importance of undisturbed field borders and idle land has been explained in over 30 workshops, 139 presentations and 62 articles.
- Over 1,000 acres of field borders have been established through BMP Cost Share (Not Funded FY 2000), and another 55 miles of shrub borders have been developed through a subsidized Field Border Bundle program developed in cooperation with DOF.
- Over 1,500 acres of idle land in 3-5 acre parcels have been idled through the Wildlife Option BMP program (Not Funded FY 2000).
- Not carried out-SIP Not Funded
- Landowner Recognition accomplished via beautiful metal "driveway" Quail Cooperator signs and Quail Cooperator bumper stickers.

USDA Programs Seldom Consider Wildlife

- Create Agricultural Liaison Biologist-Not Funded
- Wildlife Option BMP program initiated to offer a wildlife-friendly option in certain farm programs. Through participation in over 200 contacts and meetings, numerous strides have been made incorporating wildlife considerations into farm programs. For decades, various USDA programs have mandated mowing/clipping cover in the heart of nesting season. Nesting Season (4/1 to 8/15) disturbance is prohibited in virtually all programs. NWSG specifications are routinely available. Over 80% of Wildlife Enhancement Incentives Program (WHIP) acreage is

devoted to Early Succession Wildlife and habitat improvements. And this is just a partial list. Without the additional manpower requested in the plan, we have not been able to have significant impact on certain major programs such as CRP, EQIP and others.

- Over 60 contacts and meetings at the National level have helped formulate wildlife-friendly proposals, options and rule and regulation changes to benefit early succession wildlife habitats.
- This strategy has been rolled into several others in this problem area due to less manpower than anticipated in the plan. Some major achievements have occurred (as noted in 5.2 and 5.3) nevertheless.

Utility Rights-Of-Way Not Managed For Wildlife

- Most utilities in Virginia have been contacted. A Right-Of-Way Workshop was held at VSU with over 60 attending representing many Virginia-based utilities. Among the presentations was Richard Johnstone, recognized for his innovative vegetation management techniques implemented on Delmarva Power's rights-of-way.
- We have been working with several utilities (Delmarva Power, VA Power, AEP, Mecklenburg REC, BARC REC, Southside REC, Central Virginia RTEC and others) to integrate wildlife considerations in their rights-of-way management. Four VDOT ROW areas have been planted experimentally to wildlife habitat plantings.
- Develop MOUs with utilities-Accomplished only with AEP to date due to limited manpower.
- Use signs, public announcements to recognize accomplishments-Not Funded

Habitat Demonstration Areas Lacking

- Thirty (30) comprehensive Quail Habitat Demonstration Areas have been developed in 23 counties, featuring various quail habitat management techniques such as strip disking, cutback edges, prescribed burning, field borders of warm season grasses, shrubs or grass-legume mixes, brood habitat plots, and pine thinnings.
- Nine (9) Demonstration Nurseries have been set up on eastern and Piedmont Wildlife Management Areas and several State Forests featuring the plants that are most frequently recommended in quail habitat management.
- Guides describing the quail habitat practices being demonstrated have been created for three of the Demonstration Areas, and others are in the process of being developed.

• Nine (9) Quail Habitat Demonstration Areas have been developed on eastern and Piedmont WMAs and State Forests featuring practices similar to those on private lands outlined in 7.1.

Knowledge of Good Quail Habitat Is Lacking

- Seven (7) Quail Workshops have been held at different locations across Virginia to inform landowners of the biology and habitat needs of quail at the different times of year.
- We have only been able to conduct quail habitat training for NRCS personnel in an "in-service" setting. However, many foresters, Cooperative Extension and other agency personnel have attended our workshops.
- Time and manpower have not permitted us to develop an overall quail video for Virginia. As a substitute, we have been using an exceptional video produced by Mississippi and MSU.
- We are in the process of developing a comprehensive Virginia Quail Management Booklet, <u>Beyond The Food Patch: A Guide To Providing Bobwhite Quail Habitat.</u> The 674 pages of text have been written by former DGIF biologist Irv Kenyon. Roughly half of the photos have been shot, and illustrations are being created. We expect a press run in April or May. This should be a bible for quail management for Virginia landowners.
- A special issue of Virginia Wildlife was created to highlight bobwhite quail plight and efforts to restore quail populations in March 1997. We have not yet created a "Report To Stakeholders."
- We have expanded Technical Assistance to Virginia landowners interested in improving quail habitat. To date we have worked with 1535 landowners on specific quail management activities and some programmatic efforts such as the Early Succession Wildlife efforts of WHIP. This effort has been limited by manpower at a much lower level than recommended in the Quail Plan.
- A Mentor Program has not been developed due to lack of manpower to devote to the effort.
- The Habitat Appraisal Guide will be a part of the "Beyond The Food Patch" publication.

Improve Our Knowledge of Quail Populations

 We have significantly increased the number of quail call-count routes to improve sample sizes and thus accuracy of our survey. Volunteers (mostly QU members) are running a significant portion of these new routes.

- The Quail Hunter Survey (hunting effort and success) is dependent on an adequate sample of quail hunters. As the number of quail have declined, so have the number of quail hunters. It is taking an increasing effort to maintain a reasonable sample size for this survey.
- The Rural Mail Carrier Survey is continuing. It supplies us with the most accurate predictor of fall populations, and is our most statistically sound survey of quail populations.
- A GIS System to quantify the availability of quail habitat statewide has been developed in part. We have not acquired commercial software to make this more widely available, as yet.
- A research project was recently completed that investigated the feasibility of using satellite imagery to identify quail habitat on a landscape scale and at a useful farm scale. The abovementioned software will make this data available to biologists working on habitat plans for interested landowners.
- We are monitoring the impacts of the intensified habitat management in the target counties by concentrating the additional call count routes in those counties. To date, with only three years' sample, the data are inconclusive.

Understanding the Impacts of Predation

- Impacts of nest predation and brood survival were evaluated during a study, which commenced just prior to the initiation of the Quail Plan. Data from that study indicate that virtually all of the nest loss is due to predation, by an astounding array of predators (some, such as woodchucks, not previously considered to be quail nest predators). Nest success through the three years of the study was 33%, which is on the low side of tolerable and capable of sustaining populations. Quail brood survival was disappointingly low. Over 1/3 of the broods lost the accompanying adult to predation within 10 days. It appears that the broods did not have even mediocre quality brood habitat available. Additional data from this study are still being analyzed.
- A thorough evaluation characterizing the predation signs of both adult, radioed birds and predated
 nests resulted in the most comprehensive data on precise identification of quail predators. A
 publication was developed (to be included in the proceedings of Quail IV) which will permit
 future quail researchers to accurately identify the specific predator responsible for a predation act.
- A comprehensive, four year study evaluating the relative contributions to quail populations of habitat improvement and mid-sized mammal predator reductions during the quail nesting season

on quail populations is in its third year. This is a cooperative study involving DGIF, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina State University and Tall Timbers Research Station.

- A multi-state research effort to evaluate the effects of hunter harvest on quail populations is not yet underway. It may not be feasible for Virginia to participate in this effort in any event.
- A Quail Population Model was developed in conjunction with Mississippi State University using data from the Quail Nesting Study. It will permit biologists to simulate the effects of varying levels of adult mortality, nest success, brood survival and other population variables on a population. This should permit us to target the areas most likely to achieve a response to our habitat work.

Lack of Knowledge of Pesticide Impacts on Quail Populations

- Update quail pesticide exposure to compare to data from mid-1980's study--Not Funded
- Conduct research to determine direct and indirect effects of pesticides on adult survival, reproductive success and chick survival—Not Funded

Lack of Knowledge of Impacts of Releasing Pen-reared Quail on Wild Quail

- Develop system for continuous monitoring of disease in pen-reared birds--Not Funded. May be initiated this year IF funds permit.
- Implement recommendation of Field Trial Committee that would require a 5% sample of live birds to be released at field trial events on state-owned WMAs to be submitted for disease testing 5-10 days prior to the event—Not Funded/Implemented.
- Test exposure rates of wild quail to diseases commonly associated with pen-reared birds on WMAs with extensive field trial activity--Not Funded.

Quail Plan Score Card

(7/1/96 - 6/30/99)

Landowner Cooperators	1470
Demonstration Areas	98
Workshops/ Attendees	40 /2236
Habitat Cost Shared (AC)	3250
Quail Presentations/Articles	135/60

The Quail Plan became operational July 1, 1996. Since then, a great number of activities have occurred. Some of the more significant accomplishments are summarized in the table above.

WMI Farm Bill Strategies

by Steve Capel and Breck Carmichael

Steve Capel, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Breck Carmichael, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, discussed the update of the "How Much Is Enough" (HMIE) document that was prepared during deliberations on the 1996 Farm Bill. Mark Gudlin, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and David Long, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission were also co-authors on the southeastern section of HMIE. David Long has taken the lead in updating the document in preparation for the 2002 Farm Bill debate. As in 1996, the Wildlife Management Institute is coordinating the project nationally.

The primary focus of the update of HMIE is to evaluate habitat goals established for the 1996 Farm Bill, determine to what extent those goals have been reached, and suggest strategies for the 2002 Farm Bill to continue to address those goals. Due to the short amount of time since programs authorized under the '96 Farm Bill have been in place, little progress towards the HMIE goals can be demonstrated. However most state biologists surveyed indicated some progress in all areas, with miles of riparian fencing and changes in the CRP Environmental Benefits Index to diversify pine plantations being notable.

Capel and Carmichael outlined suggestions submitted by state biologists to improve farm bill programs. These were still in draft form at the time of the meeting, but are listed below.

* Wildlife Habitat" improvement should become a serious objective of federal farm policy. Fully implement a new and stronger USDA policy regarding wildlife habitat conservation to assure wildlife considerations are an integral part of natural resource conservation planning. Incorporate wildlife conservation as a priority into all planning decisions at all levels throughout USDA.

* Billions upon billions of dollars are provided to farmers for various disaster payments, commodity loan payments, cost-shares, etc. without any conservation requirements or strings attached. Recommend developing a "Farm Stewardship Compliance" amendment to the 2002 Farm Bill that would require all farmers receiving any federal dollars to develop and implement a

-63-

conservation plan which would include soil, water, and fish & wildlife conservation best management practices. This addition to the next Farm Bill would move farm conservation and environmental protection in a direction that could revolutionize environmental protection and improvement across the landscape of America. All citizens of this nation would benefit. With approximately two-thirds of the farm producers receiving various federal payments, this amendment in short order could fix many of the environmental problems occurring on our farms and ranches.

* Provide adequate personnel to deliver the programs—both at the NRCS/FSA level and state wildlife agency levels. Without enough personnel, wildlife/fishery oriented benefits will often take a back seat, especially with EQIP. Provide technical assistance money to state wildlife agencies for assisting landowners with Farm Bill programs. NRCS has identified a 70 percent shortfall of wildlife biologists based on projected workloads. This lack of biological technical expertise has been a major factor is the lack of fish and wildlife benefits realized from the 96 Farm Bill.

* Require state fish and wildlife agency involvement with conservation plan development to ensure fish and wildlife habitat are integrated into all programs across the board and the greatest environmental benefits for the dollars spent achieved. This could be achieved by providing State fish and wildlife agencies TA money to provide this missing technical expertise at the field office level.

* Increase WHIP funding to \$200 million annually.

* Increase the WRP acreage cap from 975,000 acres to 2 million acres.

* Increase CRP cap from 36.4 million acres to 45 million acres.

* Fund EQIP to provide \$300 million per year and elevate and integrate wildlife habitat needs into program ranking providing a minimum of 25 percentage points in all ranking factors, to include both Conservation Priority Areas and Statewide Resource Concerns.

-64-

* Provide higher incentive payments in the Continuous CRP to result in greater enrollment of high payoff environmental practices.

* Include filter strips and center pivot irrigation corners in the Continuous CRP sign-up and add wildlife field borders in the Continuous CRP as a stand-alone practice.

* Require specific, wildlife friendly maintenance practices to be written into the plans, scheduled and followed.

* Encourage USDA to place emphasis on establishing early successional cover (buffer strips, riparian buffers, portions of CRP fields, etc.) through natural succession versus planting where practical. Use of early successional vegetation would be conducive to establishing prime habitat. This would SAVE TAXPAYERS, USDA, AND LANDOWNERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN COVER ESTABLISHMENT COSTS.

* Raise the CRP 51% rule to 75-90%.

* Develop a reporting mechanism to be utilized by NRCS that will quantify achievements of the Farm Bill objectives.

* Develop a monitoring protocol for Farm Bill programs to ensure practice standards are being met and required, wildlife friendly maintenance treatments are being accomplished.

* Programs still allow and utilize exotic plant species detrimental to wildlife for some practices, such as KY31 Tall Fescue. Restrict use of these types of planting materials.

* Wildlife habitat considerations should be included in all conservation cost-share programs.
 Wildlife is currently given very little consideration in many states in the EQIP and the Continuous CRP.

* Require "Resource Management Systems" on all cost-share conservation plans (which would include some minimum level of wildlife habitat).

* Provide added incentive for buffer practices that are wildlife friendly.

* Provide greater flexibility in CRP pine thinning criteria for states that need this flexibility. Some states desire to plant at 450 trees per acre and thin to 175 trees per acre to provide greater wildlife benefits from the practices.

* Add cost-share in CPGLP and EQIP to convert poor cool season pastures to native warm season grasses to help drought-proof livestock operations.

* Encourage, but do not rely on natives solely.

* Increase publicity, and information & educaton on the benefits of all the conservation programs.

* The recognition by NRCS that simply making a wildlife practice available is not the same as making wildlife a co-equal with soil and water. As long as grasses such as bermuda, tall fescue and bahia can be used, they will continue to be used because they are cheap/easy to establish and people are familiar with them.

* Include CP4 "Wildlife Habitat" in the Continuous CRP, and permit volunteer, natural revegetation where appropriate in both CRP and Continuous CRP.

* Because the availability of oak and other hardwood seedlings is often limited and can require several years of waiting to get proper species planted, less desirable species for the site end up getting planted. Develop a plan to fix this problem.

* Under the CRP, state forestry agencies are in charge of tree planting recommendations and loblolly pine continue to be planted when either pines or hardwoods are suited to the site. Require a biologist from State Fish and Wildlife agencies assist in the development of tree planting plans.

-66-
More emphasis by all USDA and other partners on encouraging landowners to plant hardwoods to increase wildlife benefits of contracts.

* A national database needs to be established that could be queried by program to determine the status of the various programs by practice. Having this data readily available would allow timely assessment of the impact of farm bill programs and identify problem areas or states that are not considering wildlife habitat in the programs.

* Increase use of wildlife friendly maintenance practices in CRP (e.g. disking, burning, select herbicide applications) rather than near-exclusive use of mowing or no maintenance at all. If wildlife is co-equal, maintenance practices that are detrimental to wildlife habitat should not be condoned.

* Unilateral exclusion (except when deemed required to address a specific objective) of covers that are detrimental to wildlife habitat (e.g., tall fescue, bermudagrass, etc.)

* Consider certain incentive payments (as opposed to cost-share) for specific practices that would be beneficial. (Example, financial incentives to leave native cover standing in agriculture field borders – not just providing limited cost-share for maintenance of these areas).

* Identify farmland which has a history of repetitive disaster payments that should not be farmed and offer an opportunity to enroll these lands in a permanent conservation easement program to protect and restore appropriate resources. This would make good ecological sense along with sound fiscal sense for taxpayers. Incorporate this into the CRP and the WRP or expand the Floodplain Risk Reduction and EWP programs to address this problem.

* If multi-year set-asides again become a part of federal farm policy, ensure sound cover requirements are part of the program that will provide premium wildlife habitat. This would also apply if a short-term "CRP" were considered.

-67-

* Emergency use of CRP lands should be based on approved scientific standards such as the "Palmer Drought Severity Index". This would effectively reduce politically motivated use of lands that have been retired for conservation purposes.

* Current CRP contracts that are less likely to be returned to production agriculture should not be renewed such as on contracts on HEL when the landowner does not agree to thin pines and create openings. Many acres of monoculture pine with high erosion rates are being re-enrolled into the program, when without thinning and openings, they provide very marginal wildlife benefits. Over 2 million acres in the southeast states were established to monoculture pine plantations with NO wildlife considerations, and mostly at the expense of more valuable wildlife habitats.

Committee Issues and Plans That Need Floor Attention

After much discussion, the following resolution was passed by majority vote. The resolution was then sent to the SEQSG Technical Committee with a recommendation that it be submitted to the Directors of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. (Editor's note: the resolution was subsequently adopted by the Directors at their Fall business meeting, November 9, 1999.)

RESOLUTION

POSITION OF THE SOUTHEAST QUAIL STUDY GROUP (SEQSG) ON ISSUES RELATED TO PREDATOR MANAGEMENT AND RELATED RESEARCH IN THE CONTEXT OF NORTHERN BOBWHITE MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS there is tremendous interest and controversy related to issues involving the management (herein defined as the deliberate reduction in number of other wild and domestic animals that kill and consume Northern Bobwhites) of predators to increase wild Northern Bobwhite populations; and

WHEREAS the SEQSG does not presently have a consensus or position regarding predation or predator management; and

WHEREAS predator management for increasing wild Northern Bobwhite populations is a complex topic; and

WHEREAS there are significant predator management issues related to science and research, as well as moral and ethical values, in the context of Northern Bobwhite management; and

WHEREAS many people have strong emotional responses (both positive and negative) towards predator management as a Northern Bobwhite management tool, and such emotional responses often overwhelm the limited scientific information on this topic; and

-69-

WHEREAS land use and land ownership patterns (especially public vs. private lands) have a huge bearing on many issues related to predator management for Northern Bobwhites, as well as many opportunities to practice predator management, or to conduct research on this topic; and

WHEREAS it is recognized that predator management is currently being used as a Northern Bobwhite management technique on many private lands; and

WHEREAS predation is a part of the natural ecosystem in which Northern Bobwhite quail have evolved, and the role of predation in the evolution of bobwhite behavior is responsible for some of the sporting qualities which make the bobwhite attractive as a game bird; and

WHEREAS over the past century, the impact of humans on the quantity and quality of Northern Bobwhite habitat along with changing predator communities may have resulted in changes as to the impact of predation on bobwhite populations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following statements represent the position of the SEQSG with respect to predation and predator management in the context of Northern Bobwhite management:

1. Good habitat management is the keystone concept in any successful bobwhite management program. Predator management, if used, should be considered a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, habitat management.

2. There is a pressing need to conduct high-quality scientific investigations that will identify the current role of predation on bobwhite populations and ecology.

3. If it is found, through research, that predator management (e.g. predator population reductions) may have a beneficial effect on bobwhite populations, it is recognized that this method will likely only be successful at a local scale.

4. If predator management is to be conducted for increasing populations of wild Northern Bobwhites, then it must be conducted in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Submitted to the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Directors by the Southeast Quail Study Group Technical Committee, and adopted 09 November 1999.