

NBGI & NBGIF's

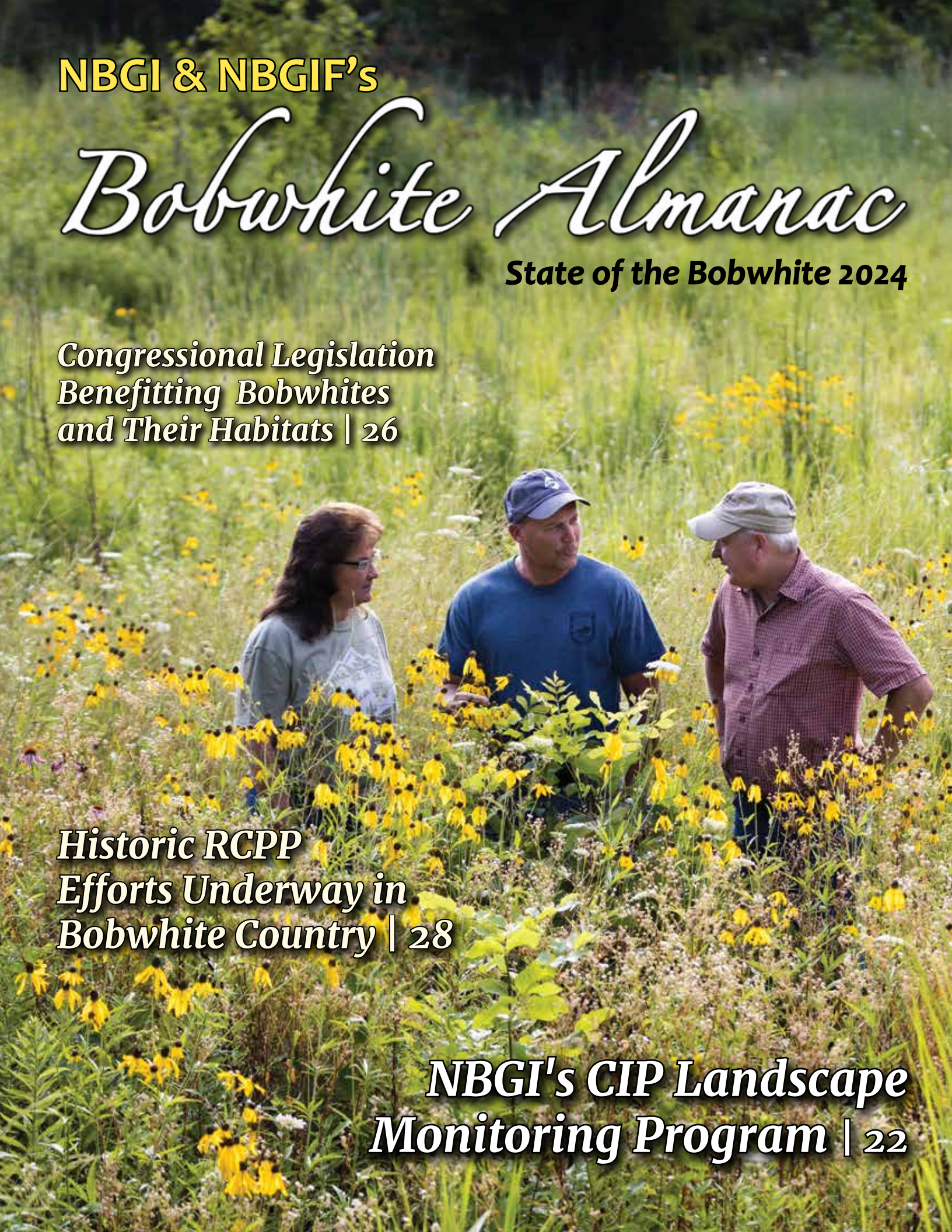
Bobwhite Almanac

State of the Bobwhite 2024

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Meet The National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation Team



Aaron P. Jeffries
NBGIF Chair
Deputy Director,
MO Dept. of Conservation
(voting member)



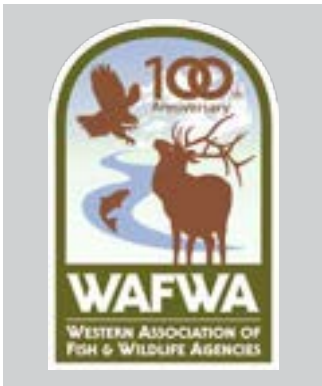
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NBGI & NBGIF's

Bobwhite Almanac

State of the Bobwhite 2024



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NBGI & NBGIF'S BOBWHITE ALMANAC/STATE OF THE BOBWHITE REPORT is an annual publication of the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative and Foundation (NBGI and NBGIF) to provide a range-wide snapshot of population, hunting, and conservation status of the northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) as well as a sampling of various efforts underway to reverse the bobwhite decline. This report is made possible by the financial support of participating state agencies, the Office of Conservation Investment, U.S. Department of Agriculture Regional Conservation Program (2944-A-1582, 2945-A-1686), Clemson University, Park Cities Quail, Tall Timbers Research Station, Roundstone Native Seed and Wildlife Drones.

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NBGI is an initiative by and for the Technical Committee—25 state wildlife management agencies, along with numerous conservation groups, research institutions, and federal partners—to restore and maintain wild bobwhite quail, associated species, and their native habitats through science-based research and management to support healthy wildlife, soil, air, and water for the benefit of society. NBGI is headquartered at Clemson University College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences.



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NEAFWA—Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
WAFWA—Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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The President's Post

We stand on the precipice of a pivotal moment in conservation history. Once common species of wildlife are experiencing widespread declines, threatened and endangered species lists are exploding, and water quality and supply are prominent public concerns. These symptoms signal, yet again, the ramifications of human exploitation of the land and our precious natural resources. At long last, federal funding invested towards conservation has flowed at levels never previously seen.

What will we do with this multi-generational opportunity? Our profession and partnership have experienced considerable turnover, and with it, lost significant institutional knowledge. Perhaps most importantly, we lost a strong grasp of direct land management pioneered by our predecessors. Fixing what is broken cannot be solved with only computational models, it will require land management through fire, cow, axe, and plow. Yet, the intelligent combination of our traditional land management and advanced technological assets positions us perfectly in seizing this moment. Those components represent a historic and current strength.

Over our three-decade history of the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative (NBGI), our mixture of land management and research-driven approaches has been a hallmark of our partnership. Our laser focus on managing habitat to deliver restoration of northern bobwhite and associated wildlife while providing critical societal benefits, allows us to embrace both today and tomorrow. As a result, a foundational tenet guiding the creation of the Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP) is blending scientific rigor with practical field application. This approach to conservation de-



John Morgan
President
National Bobwhite and
Grassland Initiative
Foundation

livery is exactly what this moment requires.

Today, trust in government and science is exceptionally low. Rebuilding public confidence requires demonstrating success to irrefutable extents. The CIP approach brings localized conservation delivery at scales that matter. The strategy minimizes risk of failure while standardized monitoring helps to rebuild public trust for government and science. Bobwhites are perfectly suited for this role. When habitat and environmental conditions align, population responses can be prompt and dramatic. Their notable call and explosive covey rise are easily recognized and remembered. Our work can generate the obvious outcomes the public craves supported by robust scientific evidence our profession demands.

With billions of public dollars now available, getting funding on the ground will be problematic. Extensive administrative steps within government create bottlenecks and disincentivizes the private sector. Our American history has clearly shown the power of public and private partnerships to build infrastructure. NBGI's Habitat Management Service Center (HMSC) was developed at the perfect time to ignite that proven model. Using the CIP approach with the HMSC delivery mechanism is our blueprint for success.

So, who is better prepared to deliver meaningful conservation than our partnership? The pressure is on us to make this moment a milestone in our legacy. Bold and aggressive actions are required to seize the opportunity. As Teddy Roosevelt stated "the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood". Ladies and gentlemen, the arena is open, join us in the fight for conservation!

Director's Charge

The challenge of delivering billions of dollars of unprecedented conservation funding is nearly paralyzing segments of our industry. Administrative complexity impedes efficient delivery and effective, impactful conservation on the ground. Other sectors of our society have developed ways through public-private partnerships to be more effective and efficient. Traditional infrastructure such as financial institutions, transportation, military, space exploration, and others are examples of how these public-private partnerships have utilized public funding and private dedication and innovation to get the job done. Why not the same approach for conservation? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Office of Conservation Investment (OCI) is establishing a new mechanism, the Collaborative Conservation Initiative (CCI) program, which will provide an opportunity for NBGI to create public-private partnerships.

Anticipated to be launched in early 2025, the CCI offers the potential to streamline conservation delivery on NBGI CIP focal areas and landscapes. Under the CCI model, multiple states, dedicating a portion of their PR allocation, participate under one agreement with FWS. The FWS will pool the individual state allocations and create a single sub-award to NBGI/Clemson to deliver the project. Deliverables include the traditional partner coordination, outreach and education, collaborative monitoring and data analyses, but perhaps most importantly, it can include up to \$250,000 in Habitat Management Service Center (HMSC) options.

States will direct the NBGI to invest those HMSC funds towards the creation of public-private partnerships delivering conservation to state designated CIP areas. This process will create economic efficiencies, reduce administrative burdens, and stimulate private industry growth and development. Ultimately, these investments can elevate habi-



Jef Hodges
Director
*National Bobwhite and
Grassland Initiative*

tat restoration and management activities to generate the consistent bird responses states hoped to achieve.

Administrative efficiency and private sector support are further incentivized by match benefits. Clemson University continues to waive a portion of their overhead costs to help support the NBGI mission. Match shortfalls will be met by a new third-party “match bank” under development by the NBGI Foundation. With these potent incentives in place, the NBGI stands ready to enable the states to deliver conservation in ways never offered previously!

Other benefits of using the CCI and HMSC are:

- Investments in grassland conservation with no impact to spending authority.
- Private sector project management

services.

- Opportunities for manpower beyond government caps.
- No financial and accomplishment reporting requirements.
- State control of who, how, and where management dollars are spent on either public or private lands.
- Freeing up state dollars to be used for other needs or priorities.

The President's Post advises, “Bold and aggressive actions are required to seize the opportunity.” It's time to unleash the full power of the NBGI partnership by utilizing the CCI to implement and manage CIP areas. With data backlogs now being analyzed by NBGI Science Coordinator Dr. Jared Elmore, the full vision of the CIP and adaptive management framework can now be realized. Through the HMSC, implementing and managing habitat has never been easier. Can we count on you to take the leap forward through the CCI?

Quail Tracks

Brief but Important Snapshots of Quail Activity in NBGI's Partner States

DELAWARE | The Delaware DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) continues quail focused habitat management in New Castle County and has expanded management activities in all 3 counties statewide. Fall covey surveys estimate the Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area population at 69 coveys. Quail have expanded to the Eagles Nest Wildlife Area with 3 coveys detected on the Seven Hawkes Tract and 2 coveys detected on the Collins Burrows Tract. DFW habitat biologists in New Castle County will be creating 60 acres of new early successional habitat in the next year. They have also established relationships with local partners to assist in the creation of up to 90 acres of early successional habitat on nearby privately-owned tracts to benefit quail. This work will be essential to connecting viable habitats with known populations throughout state.

Singing males were detected on the Buckaloo Tract of the Ted Harvey Conservation Area in Kent County. Kent County habitat management staff continue to manage and maintain roughly 500 acres of early successional habitat established in the last 3 years, utilizing prescribed fire and fallow disking. An additional 65 acres have been identified in critical areas of the Milford Neck Wildlife Area and work to restore these areas to early successional habitat will begin the coming year. Hedgerow habitat is also being managed and improved through thinning and supplemental planting.

No surveys were conducted in Sussex County and the Division received no verified reports of wild quail. Sussex County has also seen at least 300 acres of quail habitat created on the Marshy Hope Wildlife Area in a joint project with the Delaware Forest Service.

The DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife also hosted a Quail Habitat Workshop at the Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area. Guests included representatives from other state agencies, state and regional NGO chapters, local constituents, private conservation organizations, surrounding state wildlife agency representatives, surrounding University representatives, and members of the state's Advisory Council on Wildlife and Freshwater Fish. The purpose of the event was to make connections with managers and stakeholders in the area, share techniques and experiences for those

involved to utilize in their own management, and highlight the importance of habitat management for northern bobwhite in the region.

GEORGIA | Georgia continues to see good reproduction and overwinter survival. Hurricane Helene caused immense destruction across east Georgia, and it will take years for our forests to recover. Reports following the hurricane indicate that bobwhites did not appear to suffer significant mortality. This is similar to what we saw following Hurricane Michael in 2018.

The Bobwhite Quail Initiative released its new 10-year plan, Gaining Ground for Bobwhites 2024-2033. As part of the release, Meet and Greets were held across the state with the assistance of Quail Forever to provide information to the public about the new plan which can be seen at <https://georgiawildlife.com/bobwhite-quail>.

The GADNR Private Lands Program announced their 2024 Wildlife Steward of the Year recipient, Bob Rolader. A luncheon and field tour of his property are planned for early 2025.

IOWA | The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is collaborating with Iowa State University (Dr. Adam Janke and graduate student Riggs Wilson) on a quail project to better understand how NRCS programs benefit bobwhite. The research is focused on investigating the occurrence and landscape associations of northern bobwhites in Iowa as part of a larger research project focused on looking at the effects of habitat management practices implemented under the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) program. Riggs found bobwhite detections from the in-person and ARU surveys corresponded well (89.2%) and that 95.7% of detections occurred during the time period from 50-minutes before sunrise to 15-minutes before sunrise. Wind speed and cloud coverage were associated with reduced detection of bobwhites. At our high occupancy sites, detection probability approached 1 after 4 survey days. He also deployed ARUs across 35 southern Iowa counties at



81 sites during fall 2022-23 to survey for bobwhite occupancy with the specific goals of understanding the nature of bobwhite distribution in Iowa and the influence of landscape structure and composition on bobwhite occurrence. Overall occupancy probability across the study area in southern Iowa was 0.40 (95% CrI: 0.31, 0.50). Total percentage of grass landcover had a significant positive effect on occupancy at both the landscape scale and local scale. Percentage of forest landcover had a significant negative effect at the landscape-scale. Total woody landcover, which included forests, had a significant negative effect on occupancy at the local-scale. Percentage of idle grass (i.e., grass not disturbed with practices such as mowing for hay or grazing) had a significant positive effect on occupancy at the local scale. The percentage of crop had a quadratic effect at both scales with maximum occupancy occurring at intermediate levels of crop land. The relatively high overall occupancy probability for bobwhites in southern Iowa shows the potential this area has for bobwhite conservation efforts.



ILLINOIS | The Illinois Department of Natural Resources reports positive trends in quail populations heading into the 2024-25 hunting season. A mild 2023-24 winter carried many birds into the breeding season, and favorable spring rains and cooler than normal July and August temperatures, set quail up for good production.

Burning Star State Fish and Wildlife Area – Illinois’ CIP Focal Area- will open to upland hunting for the first time this hunting season. Hunting is by lottery permit only, which will greatly limit hunting pressure. Quail populations at the site have been trending down over the past several years, likely due to declines in habitat quality at the site. Work is underway to reverse these trends and to increase management efforts to control exotic invasive species and introduce more disturbance to reset succession across many of the grassland units.



KANSAS | This year the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks partnered with the University of Georgia to begin a project evaluating how landscape diversity is impacting quail density and distributions. This project focuses on the interplay between crop production intensity (e.g.,

field sizes), landscape diversity (e.g., crop diversity and conservation practices), and bobwhite population abundance and trajectories. This will combine both radio-colored birds to collect fine scale demographic and habitat selection information with broader point count sampling across the state. This combined approach will help inform how conservation practices can be best used to conserve quail across a variety of landscapes. This project will also include a human dimension component to identify the interest and economic tradeoffs of implementing conservation practices. The results of this project will be incorporated into a decision support tool that will allow managers to target resources to the most beneficial practices, within the appropriate landscapes, with the knowledge of what practices landowners are willing and able to adopt.



KENTUCKY | The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) reports a 55% decline in the bobwhite population since 1960, with 2024 numbers falling 65% short of the 1981 restoration goal. Despite this, mild weather in 2023-24 contributed to a 6% statewide increase. Hunters recorded an average of 0.17 birds per hour, a 41% drop from the 5-year average, with covey detections down by 15%. KDFWR continues implementing projects based on the results of the 10-Year Quail Plan, including the Bluegrass Army Depot’s native grass restoration and Green River CREP’s conservation focus. Efforts also include prescribed fire training, private land conservation, and increased engagement through the Kentucky Bobwhite Battalion Facebook group.

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MISSISSIPPI | The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) was pleased to host the annual meeting of the NBGI Technical Committee July 29 – August 2 in Tupelo. It was a busy year for Mississippi’s *Fire on the Forty Initiative* delivering technical guidance and cost-share for prescribed burning and related management practices. This was due to increased scope and funding available for the initiative over the next several years. MDWFP and NBGI cooperated on one of the first rounds of applications for Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects. This would be another significant mechanism to enhance quail habitat on private lands. Wildlife Management Areas continue implementing multiple early successional habitat management projects, and Mississippi’s new Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund is being utilized to supplement a wide array of public land conservation projects. MDWFP and Mississippi State University are concluding a cooperative research project on scale of quail population response, and additional quail research project proposals are being developed. We continue to be enthused about the increasing opportunities to positively affect habitat and management in the Magnolia State.



MISSOURI | The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has been working on three habitat initiatives that will positively impact northern bobwhite populations in the state. The Quail Habitat, Grasslands, and Turkey Habitat initiatives were all brought forward as areas of emphasis for habitat management. Each of these initiatives were designed to bolster habitat management efforts. In addition to these habitat efforts, MDC along with partners at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Missouri Prairie Foundation, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, The Nature Conservancy, and Drake University were awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful Challenge grant to restore, reconstruct, and/or manage an estimated 7,000 acres of remnant and reconstructed prairie and savanna annually (28,000 acres total over the 4-year project) within state wildlife action plan-prioritized grassland landscapes in northwestern (includes portion of Iowa Grand River Grasslands Priority Geography) and southwestern Missouri using habitat strike teams, and with long-term easement protection on about 185 acres of remnant prairie. Partners will integrate student internships (2-4 students/year, 8-16 total) and training for students, young professionals, and landowners (15/year, 60 total) to demonstrate how to restore and steward native grasslands.

Missouri was also fortunate to benefit from a Regional

Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) with the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative and Ohio. This program is designed to help landowners implement various practices including field borders, riparian herbaceous cover, wildlife habitat, native pasture and hay plantings, and upland wildlife habitat management, as well as supporting habitat management practices such as weed treatment prescribed burns. All of these efforts should benefit bobwhite in Missouri.

Partners with the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation have reported seeing more birds this year as well. Especially more young birds late in the season than they have in over a decade. One 80-year-old landowner flushed a large covey from a buffer with both young and adult birds in the group. He was so excited to see his hard work pay off!



PENNSYLVANIA | March of 2024 was the first time wild bobwhite could be seen and heard in Pennsylvania after nearly thirty years of extirpation. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has been working with partners at Letterkenny Army Depot and Quail Forever to manage bobwhite habitat at Letterkenny since 2017. Since then, there has been over 2,700 acres managed through various management techniques including the reintroduction of prescribed fire to the site. When habitat reached quantity and quality standards, bobwhite translocation began.

A total of 87 bobwhite were translocated in 2024, the first of three translocation years. Bobwhite were sourced from three sites throughout the bobwhite range. Tall Timbers translocated 50 bobwhite from Florida, Fort Barfoot and Virginia DWR translocated 22 bobwhite from Virginia, and Fort Knox translocated 15 bobwhite from Kentucky. There were no mortalities during transportation due to expedited transport by car or plane, minimal handling, and overall reduced hold time between 8 and 16 hours.

Spring whistle counts indicated good survival of translocated bobwhite. The observation of several broods over the summer and fall covey call surveys indicate reproductive success in this first year. Fine scale survival and reproduction information is planned for future years through vhf telemetry. The reintroduction enters its second year of translocations in 2025 with a focus on building from the first year’s successes and making improvements as needed.



SOUTH CAROLINA | Work has progressed on all of South Carolina’s quail focal areas. Overall, covey counts indicated no significant change from the prior year. McBee Wildlife Management Area reported its highest covey count of 44 coveys in the 2024 survey. Small burn blocks and thinning continues to be the primary management on the quail focal areas and these concepts continue to gain traction among other public and private properties as the success and visual appearance of these properties improve.

A nest predation study was also completed on the McBee WMA this summer. It was a replicate of a dummy nest survival study done in 2020 to assess nest survival in different habitats (old field vs pine stand). Three years ago, following the completion of the 2020 study, fire-application changed from a 3-year rotation to a 2-year rotation and thinning was completed on the pine stand. The 2024 replicate of the study assessed how these habitat improvements have affected nest survival. Overall dummy nest survival increased from 31% in 2020 to 63% in 2024. Most notably from the study was the increase in survival from 3% (2020) to 50% (2024) in the pine stand.

More public lands are making improvements to upland habitat for quail and other species. Most recently, a red cockaded woodpecker was reported on the Indian Creek Quail Focal Area which has not had an RCW on site in decades. More property capable of being managed for quail have been added to the Wildlife Management Area program. Of significance is Quail Forever’s property Bobwhite Hills and SCDNR’s Coosawhatchie WMA/HP.

Cost-share programs for quail management has reached its highest level of support since 2016 with over 7,000 acres of early succession vegetation management signed up during the 2024 fiscal year. Interest in the program has also increased with more Farm Bill Biologists and private lands specialists covering the state. Requests for Quail Initiative funding have remained above one million dollars in South Carolina for the third year in a row. The Quail Management Seminar and Quail Workshop remain a popular attraction among private landowners and managers, various state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. Landowners who have begun making habitat improvements are reporting increased quail sightings and broods.



TENNESSEE | Bobwhite conservation continues across Tennessee. Counts have continued to increase at Bridgestone Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA, one of Tennessee’s 4 anchor areas. Recovery has progressed enough to offer limited hunting through our first quota hunts. Over

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1,000 hunters applied for 4 hunt parties. Crews continue to improve conditions across the WMA. Bobwhites have recently been tracked over a mile through the woods to a savanna restoration that was a closed canopy loblolly pine forest just 3 years ago.

Work continues across the state as well, with Wolf River WMA, our CIP anchor area, managing over 50% of its open acres annually through state budgets and the NBI Habitat Management Service Center. Accelerated woody encroachment and invasive grasses continue to be a challenge particularly in west Tennessee but mulching and aerial spraying contractors have helped staff get ahead of it. Recent drought conditions allowed staff to work in areas that might mire up equipment in wet years.

Quail Forever, with assistance from TWRA, hosted the first Tennessee Bobwhite Heritage Festival in Jackson, TN. The event connected landowners and hunters with natural resource professionals working on the ground for bobwhites to raise awareness. This event had something for the whole family, with equipment demos, speakers, bird dog demonstrations, a kids area, and food trucks.



TEXAS | In partnership with Texas State University and their team of social scientists, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is funding a multi-year study to investigate the factors that improve committed collaboration for wildlife habitat in Texas, including bobwhites. This research will assess the drivers of landowner participation in conservation programs and identify potential barriers which prevent enrollment and adoption. The project will simultaneously investigate the drivers of “persistence,” or an assessment of the retention of conservation benefits after program participation ends and how to encourage long-term land stewardship. With a diverse network of habitat programs available in Texas it is imperative that TPWD and our partners understand landowner motivations, resources, and limitations to improve conservation outcomes. Despite the flush of conservation money in recent years and potential new sources down the road, there continues to be a need to ensure we are maximizing our economic and biological return on investment. The best way to do this is to show that our programs meet the needs of not only our species of concern, but those of our private landowners and manager as well. This research kicked off fall, 2024, and is expected to continue through fall, 2027.



VIRGINIA | Flippo-Gentry remains the focus area for much of the department’s quail restoration efforts on their own lands. The long-term management plan focuses on increased and heavier timber thinning, establishment of longleaf pine, increased use of prescribed fire, and the incorporation of 4-5 acre fields managed as quail and turkey brood-rearing and winter-feeding areas. With the first phase of forestry nearing completion, the stage is finally set to begin managing the openings intensely for quail on that section of the Wildlife Management Area with the rest to follow as the forestry phases are completed. Thanks to some generous private grants and an award from the National Wild Turkey superfund, we will be able to rapidly put high quality quail habitat on the ground. In the interim we have been exploring the use of ARUs to better monitor quail populations, monitor songbird populations, and explore the effects of our quail management on those populations through a joint project with the Cooperative Unit at Virginia Tech.

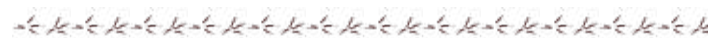
On the land management side, our team of private lands biologists is back to full strength and ready to deliver quail habitat to Virginia landowners. Over the 15 years of the program, they’ve been responsible for more than 6,500 site visits and have created more than 3,500 management plans. Private lands wildlife biologists also continued



to promote “Beyond the Bonfire: A Primer on Prescribed Fire for Virginia’s Private Landowners.” This 51-page booklet provides guidance to Virginia landowners interested in managing their lands for wildlife with prescribed fire. It is available in hard copy or [online](#) via VADWR’s website.

Finally, Virginia was proud to play a small part in the Pennsylvania Game Commissions efforts

to return quail to their state on Letterkenny Army Depot. During March of 2024, VADWR staff (including several of our private lands biologists), Pennsylvania Game Commission staff and staff from Virginia’s Fort Barfoot, trapped 26 wild quail on Fort Barfoot over an 8-day period. Twenty-two of these quail were fitted with radio transmitters and taken directly to Pennsylvania’s quail focal area for immediate release. Early results are encouraging and translocation efforts will continue this winter.



WEST VIRGINIA | The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) continues to address the need for early successional habitat management statewide. Although most efforts focus on creating young forest for grouse, turkey, and songbirds, efforts also include attempts to enhance habitat for bobwhite. Habitat management for bobwhite continues on Tomblin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and also now includes other areas across the state. In 2022, administration directed the WVDNR to initiate a bobwhite quail release program on select state managed WMAs and state forests. Forty-two thousand birds were released in 2022 and 2023 combined. For the upcoming 2024-25 season, 27,000 quail will be released to provide opportunities for wildlife watching, dog training, and hunting.



2024 NBGI Fire Bird Conservation Awards



NBGI's 2024 National Fire Bird Conservation Awards continued to illustrate the various ways entities, groups, and individuals can contribute on many levels to the landscape-scale revival of wild bobwhite quail. The term "fire bird" was first coined by naturalist Herbert Stoddard, who researched the species in the early 20th century. The award's title is a reminder of the importance of fire required on much of the landscape to create and maintain the habitat that bobwhites, other grassland/shrub land birds, pollinators, and many other organisms require.

Recipients are chosen by the respective state's quail coordinator and are announced at the annual meeting of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee. Award photos by Jef Hodges.

Arkansas

Clint Harris is one of the most well respected practitioners of prescribed fire and restoration ecology in Arkansas and has been an invaluable champion of grassland ecosystems for nearly 20 years. His professional conservation career was launched in 2005, when he joined The Nature Conservancy's Arkansas chapter as a prescribed fire specialist. In this role, Clint was also supporting ecological monitoring by conducting plant community monitoring with many partners – including AGFC, ANHC, USFS, USFWS, and many NGOs. Clint has paved the way to new techniques and philosophies for restoration of blackland prairie, sand barrens and pine flatwoods in the South Arkansas Gulf Coastal Plain, always willing to share both his successes and mistakes with colleagues and partners to forward conservation science. Clint built a restoration program to move landscapes towards desired habitat conditions more quickly, reducing costs and risks. It was clear that moving into growing season burning, under the right



Lisa Potter presents the Fire Bird Award to Clint Johnson, who is accepting on behalf of Clint Harris.



conditions, could reduce woodies and accelerate desired future condition goals. Clint shifted TNC's seasonal burn crew towards the summer season to better reflect natural fire regimes, changing both the operational structure and burning style.

One of the backbones of TNC Arkansas' prescribed fire program, he has mentored dozens of young fire professionals who have gone on to hold leadership roles across the country, expanding Clint's positive impact. When working with partner agencies, Clint looks beyond agency logos and competing interests to find common ground in the passion for natural resources that brought all to the table. Though his dad jokes often fall flat, Clint's positivity and kind heart bring out the best in people, both on and off the job.

Clint is a NWCG RxB2 certified burn boss, an FAA qualified drone pilot, Certified Wildlife Biologist, and Registered Forester in Arkansas. To date, Clint has participated in, or lead – more than 537,000 acres of prescribed fire across the southeastern United States.

Delaware

Though the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) is primarily for the support of wild turkey, this group realizes that what is good for turkeys is good for quail. **Charles Spray** is the Delaware State Chapter President of the NWTf and has been a partner with the Delaware Division



Lisa Potter presents the Fire Bird Award to Sean O'Connor, who is accepting on behalf of Charles Spray.

of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) for the last 15 years. In his mission to improve habitat for wild turkeys in the state of Delaware, Charles has funded numerous projects focused on our Quail Focal Area that have led to critical benefits for northern bobwhite in the state. Without their generous donations DFW would not have been able to create this habitat on the focal area. The funding included seed for over 300 acres of warm season grasses and early successional habitat, over 50 acres of trees and shrubs for the creation and restoration of fencerow habitat, four fire suppression tanks, firefighting hand tools and prescribed fire PPE that have been critical to our prescribed fire program. Furthermore, they provided funding for two offset disks that have been essential to both the prescribed fire program and other habitat restoration projects. This funding has provided numerous benefits to quail and turkeys and has been crucial in reaching our focal area goal of 1 bird per acre and expanding northern bobwhite to the entire Delaware Bay Coastline.

Georgia

As the manager of Whitehall plantation in Bleckley County Georgia, **Jason Armstrong** has been responsible for the maintenance of essentially a stand-alone quail population for the last 20 years. Unlike the plantations in the Red Hills region or the Albany region, Jason's quail population is isolated, yet thrives from the management set forth by



Lisa Potter presents the Fire Bird Award to Dallas Ingram, who is accepting on behalf of Jason Armstrong.

Jason and his team. Whitehall plantation is a total of 8,000 acres but is working lands for a major sod operation. Jason manages about 4,000 acres of scattered uplands through prescribed burning, seasonal disking, heavy forest thinning amongst other habitat management practices. The budget for this working landscape is not endless, so Jason also must make use of his federal and state partnerships. Jason has been working with the BQI program in Georgia for over a decade and through this partnership has been able to expand the acreage they can make an impact on, adding about 500 acres of new quail habitat in the last few years alone. Jason has always been an excellent partner when it comes to outreach efforts. For the last 5 years he has donated a youth quail hunt to GADNR which has allowed us to expose 10 new kids to wild quail hunting, free of charge, who may have never had the opportunity to do so. In addition to that Jason is an excellent mentor and is always willing to assist new hunters with guidance for their bird dogs as well as other landowners for their management. Jason has partnered with DNR to monitor their quail populations, participating in both fall and spring survey efforts. GADNR is pleased to have Whitehall plantation, and Jason, as a private partner and has designated them and their quail plantation as a private focal area, one of very few in the central part of the state.

Iowa

Lake Sugema Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 3,915-acre public wildlife area in southeast Iowa's Van Buren County. Despite historically good quail populations, the area was experiencing steep declines in the late 1990's and early 2000's. This issue was not only occurring at Lake Sugema's, but across most of the landscape in southern Iowa. At Lake Sugema, more than half of the farmable acres on the WMA at the time of acquisition were in CRP. Most of the grasses were rank with lots of litter buildup, which made the grasslands unsuitable for bobwhite quail. The area consisted of aging woody cover, the woodland areas lacked any management and was losing the brushy edge. The WMA lacked any consistency in any type of controlled burning to knock back succession.

In early 2000, the Sugema team began to develop a comprehensive management plan to address the lack of quality habitat that would benefit bobwhite quail and a wide variety of other grassland birds that are found on the area. The plan consisted of dividing the grasslands into 57 burn units totaling more than 1,800 acres, of which at least 1/3 are burned each year. The results of this proactive prescribed fire program provided a variety



Lisa Potter presents the Fire Bird Award to Todd Bogenschutz, who is accepting on behalf of the Lake Sugema team.

of quail friendly weeds such as ragweed. The team utilized crop leasing to leave 20% of the crop as food sources in strategic areas on the WMA. Efforts to increase the native forb component of the grassland areas at the expense of less desirable grasses further enhanced quail habitat. The team also focused on full-scale conversion of several cool season grasslands into diverse native grasslands with quail friendly grasses and forbs. Strip spraying and/or strip disking to disturb the cool season grasses and increase the weedy forb component to provide quality brooding and escape cover for young chicks was also implemented. The problem of aging woody cover was partially addressed by using edge feathering to provide areas for escape from predators and an additional component of covey headquarters. The team further addressed the woodland habitat component by developing a comprehensive forest wildlife stewardship plan, which included objectives to manage the woodland acres to provide more edge. Fall covey call counts were implemented in 2003 that would help give us a more objective measure of populations on the WMA.

Unit staff have kept detailed records of quail and/or coveys sighted during routine operations on the area. The first fall covey call count in 2003 documented five coveys on the wildlife area. The ten year average from 2013-23 has averaged 20 coveys on the wildlife area from a low of 1 in 2021 to a high of 28 in 2016.



Has this long-term effort worked? For the most part “yes”, but we always employ an adaptive approach to what we do and how we do it to maintain the variety of habitats we have created at Lake Sugema. The winter of 2020 dealt a dramatic blow to quail in southeast Iowa; a severe ice storm followed by sub-zero temperatures for several days. A majority of the quail on and around the WMA perished in that storm. It was a wakeup call to the importance of high quality winter cover. Fortunately, the groundwork was there from over twenty years of extensive habitat work at Lake Sugema. It has only taken a few years for the bobwhite quail population at the WMA to rebound from that storm.

The Lake Sugema WMA is part of the Lake Sugema – Lacey Keosauqua Bird Conservation Area encompassing 47,573 acres with several Species of Greatest Conservation Need and working on becoming a Globally Important Bird Conservation Area.

The Sugema Wildlife Unit located in SE Iowa is led by Unit Biologist Jeff Glaw, along with Natural Resource Technician II Keith Wilcox and Natural Resource Technician I’s Darwin Emmons, and Kyle Syfert. Credit should be given to Chuck Steffen, longtime Sugema wildlife biologist, who developed the original management plan for this effort.

Mississippi

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks would like to nominate **Brad Holder** (Regional WMA Biologist), **Kevin Owens** (Assistant WMA Biologist), **Mark Yarborough** (WMA Manager), and **Jessie Critcher** (Regional WMA Biologist) the management staff for Charles Ray Nix Wildlife Management Area, for a 2024 NBGI Fire Bird Conservation Award. Charles Ray Nix WMA (4,000 acres) near Sardis, Mississippi was a relatively new Wildlife Management Area in 2006 when MDWFP designated it as an emphasis area for quail habitat management. During their time managing this WMA for quail, Brad, Kevin, Mark, and Jessie have always been very open to implementing different approaches and adapting management plans to maintain quail habitat. There are certainly many other MDWFP staff and partners that assist in getting the job done, but the WMA staff are always proactively coordinating the necessary workforce to get it done. Their ability to leverage resources has been outstanding. Soils on this WMA are very fertile, and managing early successional habitat can be challenging. Despite numerous challenges, the WMA staff have maintained a positive outlook and commitment to maintaining quail habitat for almost 20 years.



Brad Holder, Rick Hamrick and Mark Yarborough with the Fire Bird Award for the Charles Ray Nix WMA staff.

The WMA averages more than 1,000 acres of prescribed burning each year, throughout the year. They were one of the earliest adopters in the WMA system of extending the burning season beyond winter and spring into summer and fall – not just to increase available burn days to meet acreage goals but also to vary burn season for specific habitat management objectives. They have prioritized requests for federal aid and secured external grant funds to conduct mechanical and herbicide applications for brush management and invasive species control. They also make time each fall to cut paths through old field habitats to increase hunting access and success. Through their hard work and dedication, the quail population has increased from where it started. Since starting covey call count surveys, the numbers of calling coveys detected increased from seven in 2008 to consistently around 20 coveys in recent years (as many as 30 during the “new ground effect” years). Several quail hunters have expressed their gratitude for just having a place to try, even if they do not harvest any birds. Today, although more is always desired, there is one more area for quail hunters to pursue wild quail thanks to the efforts of the Charles Ray Nix WMA staff. We appreciate their dedication and efforts and respectfully submit this nomination to recognize it with an NBGI Fire Bird Conservation Award.

Missouri

Emily Sinnott conducted bobwhite quail brood research for the University of Missouri from 2017-19 on the heels of the SW Missouri Quail study. Her research involved attaching backpack transmitters to 14-day old chicks, which has only been done in a few places around the country.





Beth Emmrich and Lisa Potter present the Fire Bird Award to Emily Sinnott (center).

Broods were tracked for survival and habitat selection preferences. Emily successfully published multiple scientific journal articles based on her work. These publications have indicated grasslands are more productive for bobwhite broods than areas managed with traditional practices like grass strips, shrub strips and food plots. This has helped guide the recent push for grassland restoration in Missouri.

After completing her brood research, Emily accepted a position with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Within her new role she analyzed the data from the five-year SW Missouri Quail study. This data also indicated the superior nature of grasslands for both nesting and adult survival. The results of this study were published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* in June of 2023. This study has been used by not only Missouri, but also by neighboring states as a guide to better manage public lands for bobwhite quail. Emily's work on bobwhites has been an asset to the state of Missouri and the Midwest.

South Carolina

Dr. Bright Williamson and **Keith Williamson** are pivotal landowners in SC Bobwhite Initiative's mission to restore wild quail in South Carolina. For many years these brothers have worked with the SCDNR, Clemson Extension, and NRCS staff to improve the quality of quail and shrubland bird habitat on their properties. For their continued dedication to restoring wild quail habitat and quail hunting culture to South Carolina Dr. Bright and Keith Williamson are being nominated for the 2024 NBGI Fire Bird Conservation Award.



Michael Hook, Andy Krieg and Lisa Potter with the Fire Bird Awards for Bright Williamson and Keith Williamson.

Dr. Bright has had several CRP and CSP contracts, and both brothers have had several EQIP contracts over the years. Their use of these farm bill programs has allowed local biologist to show surrounding landowners the benefits of using these programs to better the land. In addition, Mr. Keith has hosted a Clemson Extension Wild Quail Seminar and a portion of the Clemson Extension Quail Management Webinar on his property. The brothers have also allowed UGA with the help of SCDNR and Quail Forever to monitor their properties (with ARUs and in-person) to study the effectiveness of the EQIP practices.

The Williamsons have been earlier adopters of a variety of conservation practices and continue to keep what's best for the land front of mind. They are advocates for the financial and cultural benefits of managing your land for wild quail. They attend Quail Forever Chapter meetings and other local events to speak to other landowners about what they could be doing to better their land for quail and other shrubland species. So again, I'd like to nominate Bright and Keith Williamson to be the 2024 NBGI Fire Bird Award Winner.

Virginia

The Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service State Biologist, **Jeff Jones**, has been a key partner with our quail recovery and private lands team now since 2012. We could not have kept this partnership going for this length of time without Jeff. He fit right in with our team from the beginning. He helped us host the 2013 NBTC meeting. He has helped hire, onboard and train every private lands biologist we have hired since that time. There are many





Lisa Potter presents the Fire Bird Award to Jay Howell, who is accepting on behalf of Jeff Jones.

logistical steps that require a great deal of effort each time a new PLB is hired. Jeff has a very busy job with NRCS, but he always finds time to help our private lands team. His liaison between all partners including our Department of Wildlife Resources, Quail Forever, and the Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech with his NRCS senior staff has been the key to maintaining good working relations over what is now going on fifteen years. Jeff has also been a key player in the adoption of the Working Lands for Wildlife Program going all the way back to its inception and the original thinking that went into Virginia's WLFW efforts. Jeff always has a positive attitude. His professionalism is evident in everything he does. We could not have asked for a better partner than Jeff in our private lands efforts.

Director's Award

Every team has an unsung hero who often serves behind the scenes, remains largely unnoticed, but is absolutely pivotal to the team's success. This year's Director's Fire Bird award recipient personifies this truth. No stranger to this group, this individual does the little things required to make an operation successful. The organization, the details, and the get it done spirit keeps the partnership constantly moving forward.

Her work dates back more than a decade. First engaging with this new "thing" at the University of Tennessee. Her work helping to administer our grants and contracts with multiple states was invaluable to our growing initiative. State to state agreements are just plain hard! Her perse-

verance was obvious from the start. Over time her role in the NBGI continued to grow, and she ultimately was hired as our accountant at the University of Tennessee. As audit findings, retirements, and an eroding relationship at the university coalesced, she dug in deeper. Constantly looking for new approaches and confident in the partnership's vision. We would find a way! She was integral in our search for a new home and transition to Clemson University. There she operated across numerous internal silos, supported our grant and contracting efforts, and facilitated our procurement with efficiency levels we had never seen.

Additionally, she's a lady of many talents. She's helped design logos, websites, support social media, and is quite technologically savvy. As our staff diminished, she shouldered many of these responsibilities without being asked. She just knows what needs to be done, and gets it there. She also loves to bring people together and coordinates social times for the team and the partnership. Perhaps her best attribute is the passion for what the NBGI is about. No one in this initiative has more passion for the cause! Her connection to bobwhite are from her youth in Illinois where she fondly remembers their calls on the farm. Those calls are gone, and that's just not acceptable!

So, without further ado, please join me in recognizing **Penny Barnhart** for her exceptional dedication to bobwhite and grassland restoration and as the recipient of the 2024 Director's Fire Bird Award.



John Morgan presents the Director's Fire Bird Award to Penny Barnhart.



NBGI Technical Committee Awards

Chuck Kowaleski Leadership Award

Each year, the NBGI Technical Committee (NBGI TC) presents an award highlighting exceptional leadership towards national progress for the restoration of bobwhites within the NBGI TC organization. The award was named the Chuck Kowaleski Leadership Award in 2020 in memoriam of 19-year NBGI TC veteran Chuck Kowaleski.



Michael Hook and Lisa Potter present the 2024 NBTC Chuck Kowaleski Award to Andrew Ward (center).

Andrew Ward became the quail biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission in June 2021. He enthusiastically took on the job despite the notoriety of being the only state quail biologist without wild quail in their state. With this distinction, he had two priorities, working with staff at Letterkenny Army Depot to improve quail habitat and convincing partners to send quail to Pennsylvania.

The NBGI TC was a natural place to go for help accomplishing both priorities. Andrew jumped in early, playing a pivotal role in the Ad-hoc Translocation Committee. The Ad-hoc committee identified the importance of an independent review of translocation efforts and sites. The goals of the review are to assess the potential for translocations success and provide feedback on translocation plans and habitat quality. Andrew organized and helped lead an NBGI site review of Letterkenny Army Depot in February of 2022. While largely positive and very helpful, the review also recommended pushing off translocation a little longer. Following the review Andrew developed a plan to address concerns that were identified. He also recognized the importance of transparency in the review process. Therefore, he sent out the review findings to po-

tential source states and discussed them at the 2022 NBGI TC annual meeting.

Andrew took on a much larger leadership role with the Technical Committee in 2023. He served in the lead role for planning, organizing and running the 2023 annual meeting and was elected to serve as the NEAFWA Representative for the Steering Committee. A highlight of the 2023 meeting for many was another site review of Letterkenny Army Depot. Andrew planned a tour designed to receive feedback from the entire Technical Committee on the translocation plans and habitat management of the Depot.

Andrew's commitment to transparency and responsiveness to critique increased the credibility of Pennsylvania's translocation efforts. They also resulted in the commitment of three states to provide bobwhite beginning in 2024.

With commitments secured, Andrew began the hard work of coordinating translocation logistics. He worked closely with Tall Timbers Research Station, state coordinators in Virginia and Kentucky and staff at Fort Barfoot and Fort Knox. Andrew developed a plan to test source populations for diseases, bait and trap bobwhites while having minimal negative impact to local quail populations and hunters.

In February and March of 2024 Andrew traveled to Fort Barfoot in Virginia and Fort Knox in Kentucky to prep trapping sites, the NBGI TC Steering Committee winter meeting and then back to Fort Barfoot and Fort Knox to trap bobwhite for a week at each location. The grueling road trip paid off on Monday March 4th, 2024. Seven bobwhites were caught at Fort Barfoot and sent north to be released at Letterkenny Army Depot the next morning. Eighty more bobwhites arrived by the end of March and for the first summer in over twenty years the whistle of a wild bobwhite was heard in Pennsylvania!

Many people played an important role in restoring bobwhite to Pennsylvania. However, Andrew's leadership, positive attitude and ability to collaborate with so many people were essential to bringing bobwhite back and will be important to ensuring they stay!



Hall of Fame Award

The NBGI TC Hall of Fame Award recognizes outstanding, lifetime contributions to the NBGI TC vision. Recipients exemplify a history of service, leadership, and accomplishment within the NBGI TC, and their impact to the group lives beyond their tenure of service.

Dr. William E. Palmer

Few leaders in bobwhite conservation have had a longer or more enduring impact than this nominee. Our understanding of northern bobwhite ecology and management have been advanced by his research and professionalism. Perhaps more importantly, his unique skill of conveying complex scientific results to practitioners and laypeople is largely unmatched.

Since the early years of the Southeast Quail Study Group, he has been involved with the Science/Research Committee. In early 2000's, he made a trip to Washington, DC to help elucidate the need and urgency of bobwhite restoration to congressional staffers. He served as co-author of the original NBCI, and in 2011, took the lead in revising the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative. Using a mix of science, expert opinion, and policy, the resulting document provided a spatially explicit plan identifying opportunities and challenges for habitat improvements and setting population target goals. NBCI 2.0 strengthened the bobwhite conservation movement nationally and increased funding support for bobwhite habitat.

He was a foundational leader in the creation of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project (UERP). The landmark project prioritized upland habitat restoration and management on Florida's enormous land base of public lands. Today, many of those sites hold robust bobwhite populations supporting accessible bobwhite hunting opportunities for the public.

As the long-time Director of Game Bird Research at Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, and ultimately its President/CEO, he has successfully developed a research program to expand our knowledge of bobwhites. He has pursued landscape-scale research projects, analyzed long-term datasets, and tested innovative techniques for researching bobwhite. Always a pioneer, he committed Tall Timbers as the very first non-profit member of the NBGI upon release of the new business plan.

His mentorship of dozens of graduate students, technicians, and interns, some of whom are present today, is a



2024 NBTC Hall of Fame Award winner Bill Palmer with James Martin and Lisa Potter.

testament to his commitment to developing the next generation of quail conservation leaders. He always inspired his students and staff to develop research that was practical, applicable to the real world, and scientifically valid.

To this day, he actively works with landowners to provide management advice and to improve their hunting operations. Over his career, he has directly and indirectly established or restored hundreds of thousands of acres of quail habitat.

In addition to being an effective scientist and advisor, he is an avid quail hunter, an impressive shot, a skilled bird dog trainer, and has a weakness for fancy double barrel guns. His passion for the sport of quail hunting complements his desire to better understand the ecology and management of bobwhite.

The enormity of these contributions across four decades have left an indelible mark on the NBGI movement. Through his leadership, science, policy and passion, he continues to be the voice for our voiceless icon – the northern bobwhite. Without further ado, it is our privilege and honor to induct Dr. Bill Palmer into the NBGI Hall of Fame.





Mark McConnell and Lisa Potter present the 2024 NBTC Hall of Fame Award to Wes Burger (center).

Dr. Loren (Wes) Burger

Few professionals have focused more effort towards applied, cutting-edge science for northern bobwhite restoration in working agricultural landscapes than this professor. Publishing more than 240 publications, he pioneered efforts aimed at blending conservation programs and practices into profitable and sustainable farming operations. He has a long research background in understanding the bobwhite breeding system, energetics, and habitat use in farmland landscapes. Importantly, he championed investments in wildlife monitoring to demonstrate conservation outcomes as a cornerstone of farm bill programs.

Over his decade plus tenure with the Technical Committee, he was a mainstay on the Science Subcommittee and represented one of just a handful of fully engaged faculty members. He was actively engaged in the production of both versions of the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and was a thoughtful leader in many of the NBCI's central tenets. His ability to crossover complex scientific analyses to real world, on-the-ground conservation was an exceptionally rare talent. That attribute gained him tremendous respect and trust from the partnership's coordinators and practitioners who were fortunate to know and work alongside him.

The pinnacle of his achievement with the Technical Committee was his leadership with multi-state, federally funded projects that linked directly to NBTC goals. His work on the Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds (CP-33)

monitoring program changed the trajectory of national bobwhite restoration. He led the design and implementation of a 14-state coordinated effort to measure the conservation benefits of field borders for northern bobwhite and wintering songbirds. Through his leadership, he brought over 6-years of funding for the state wildlife agency partners to deliver this monitoring program on 1,200 different fields. Additionally, he led the implementation of a historic NRCS investment for coalescing science to integrate bobwhite restoration in working landscapes. Twenty-six projects across the bobwhite range were funded and compiled in a practitioner-friendly conservation delivery book entitled "Managing Working Lands for Northern Bobwhite". He served as lead editor.

His leadership on these two landmark multi-state endeavors proved the power of regional and national collaboration. These accomplishments blazed the way to the future. For more than a decade, the Technical Committee debated and toiled over coordinated monitoring. CP-33 proved it could be done. Just a few short years later, the Coordinated Implementation Program was completed creating a national coordinated and standardized monitoring program for the future. Its creation would have been highly unlikely without the success of the CP-33 program.

As his talents transitioned to administration at Mississippi State University, he continued to work on efforts that benefitted bobwhite conservation. He participated on high-level "think tanks", was a contributing author in the Private Lands Special Issue featured in the Wildlife Society Bulletin, and has served on the boards of multiple conservation organizations that impact hundreds of thousands of acres of quail habitat. Subsequently, he was a speaker and panelist for a national symposium at the 2020 North American Conference titled "Wildlife Conservation of Private Lands: A National Discussion". At no surprise to anyone, he championed the importance of monitoring conservation outcomes from private lands conservation actions.

As an avid outdoorsman, family man, and a true conservation titan, who better to admit into the NBGI's Hall of Fame? Without further ado, it's our privilege and honor to induct Dr. Wes Burger as a member of the 2024 Class of the NBGI's Hall of Fame.



Hall of Fame Award (continued)

Mark Gudlin

This awardee has been a key player in bobwhite recovery efforts going back over three decades. This person was one of the original “Gang of Six” back in 1995 when over 60 quail biologists gathered in the low country of South Carolina to form what became the Southeast Quail Study Group. Our nominee joined Reggie Thackston, Breck Carmichael, Terry Sharpe, Nick Wiley, and Jeff Sole to form that Gang of Six that some over the years lovingly called the “Quail Mafia.” Always a leader in our group, this person chaired numerous NBTC sub-committees, and then also chaired the SEQSG through some critical years as the first ever national quail recovery plan was developed. This person, along with Ralph Dimmick and Don McKenzie, coordinated and edited the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative which was finalized in March of 2002. He also coordinated the printing of 750 copies of that important document through the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. This person also co-wrote the NBCI Chapter for Bird Conservation Region 24: Central Hardwoods along with Dr. Tom Dailey and the Habitat Management Chapter for Agricultural Lands with Terry Sharpe and Dave Howell. We can see this pattern year after year of this nominee always being willing to do some heavy lifting on behalf of bobwhites (pun intended as he was known as a real weightlifter in his college days).

What our nominee had done up to that point would have been enough for Hall of Fame induction, but he did not stop there. Our nominee led the charge within his state agency to develop twenty-five farm bill specialists and pioneered cooperative positions with NRCS devoted strictly to securing wildlife benefits from NRCS programs. He also helped write a grant proposal that ultimately led to funding the first full-time NBCI Coordinator’s position. And TWRA went on to secure additional grants to fund the NBCI revision in 2005. In 2002, at the SEQSG meeting in Waynesboro, Georgia, our nominee was presented the SEQSG Individual Award for his leadership up to that point. Our nominee served with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency beginning in 1983 in varying roles including wildlife conservation officer, and as the Assistant Chief of Wildlife, Habitat Management Section from 1999 – 2015, Chief of Wildlife and Forestry from 2015 – 2018

and from 2018 until his retirement as the Habitat Program Manager. During all these years with the TWRA he was a strong proponent of bobwhite quail conservation doing all he could to foster TWRA’s habitat efforts, and support quail centric farm bill programs nationally while serving on several Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies committees. In 2022, our nominee was presented a lifetime achievement award from the Tennessee Chapter of The Wildlife Society. If you have not figured it out yet, we are privileged and honored this evening to induct Mr. Mark Gudlin into the NBGI Hall of Fame Class of 2024.



2024 NBTC Hall of Fame Award winner Mark Gudlin with Lisa Potter.



2024 NBGI Group Achievement Award

This award was given to the Quail 9 Planning Team in recognition for service and teamwork that led to the gathering of over 300 conservation professionals in Springfield, Missouri and over 58 published papers in the Quail 9 National Quail Symposium Proceedings.

- **Chair – Dave Hoover**, Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- **Beth Emmerich**, Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- **Casey Bergthold**, Quail Forever/ Pheasants Forever, Inc.
- **Frank Loncarich**, Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- **Frank Thompson**, U.S. Forest Service
- **Jef Hodges**, National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative
- **Kyle Hedges**, Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- **Lisa Potter**, Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- **Penny Barnhart**, National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative



Lisa Potter, Jef Hodges, Frank Loncarich, Beth Emmerich and Penny Barnhart.

Chairman Recognition Award

The Chairman Recognition Award is given to an outgoing chairman at the end of their 6-year commitment to the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Technical Committee. Their 6-year commitment includes 2 years as chair-elect, 2 years as chair, and 2 years as past-chair. John Morgan's award was presented this year due to an in-person meeting not being held during Covid, thus missing the opportunity to be recognized for his service.



Michael Hook presents the 2018-2024 Chair Recognition to Lisa Potter.



Michael Hook presents the 2014-2020 Chair Recognition to John Morgan.



NBGI's CIP Landscape Monitoring Program



Photo by Ronald Weber

Jared A. Elmore | NBGI Science Coordinator
Research Assistant Professor, Forestry and
Environmental Conservation, Clemson
University

Allison Dawn and Percival Marshall | PhD
Graduate Research Associates, Forestry
and Environmental Conservation, Clemson
University

CIP Background

The National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative's (NBGI) Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP) is a range-wide restoration roadmap for northern bobwhite that utilizes a Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) process which contains research and monitoring, biological planning and conservation design, and conservation delivery. Under the initial design, three focal tiers were proposed to test range-wide bobwhite restoration across different spatial scales: focal area, focal landscape, and focal region. While the focal area tier (i.e., a contiguous targeted area that increases and sustains managed bobwhite populations at huntable densities) has been ongoing for >10 years, the landscape tier (i.e., spatially defined landscape comprised predomi-



nantly of high priority ranking for bobwhite according to NBGI's Biologist Ranking Index) has only now come to fruition due to recent awards funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Regional Conservation Partnership Program (USDA RCPP).

With continued declines of grassland birds, the landscape tier is as important to address now as ever, especially considering the importance of private lands conservation and habitat connectivity to bird populations and metapopulations. Development of protocols for the landscape tier began in late 2022 to early 2023 and accelerated with the notification in late 2024 of RCPP awards for landscape studies in Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio. A CIP landscape tier draft was critically reviewed at the 2024 NBGI technical committee annual meeting in Tupelo, MS, was revised accordingly in late 2024, and will rollout in early 2025. The proposed methods of the CIP landscape are slated to be tested and vetted using the aforementioned RCPP awards, and expanded to additional states with state interest and funding availability.

Delivery

Conservation of birds and native landscapes at the landscape scale is critically tied to private lands conservation, which in turn is directly linked to the delivery of conservation practices by on-the-ground personnel to private landowners. Since the 1985 Food and Securities Act, billions of public dollars are expended annually for conservation practices with little to no assessment regarding success of the delivery of these programs, how they generate conservation outcomes, or how they may change landowner behaviors beyond the contract lifespan. One of the CIP landscape's primary goals is to address these issues by evaluating conservation delivery programs at this spatial scale. This should allow for adaptive management of delivery programs driven by learning from current efforts, planning for more effective delivery strategies, and implementing effective grassland landcover to increase the abundance of bobwhite and other grassland and early successional songbirds.

Monitoring conservation delivery programs can be very challenging, in part due to the variety of different partners assisting with delivering technical assistance and difficulty assessing landowner perspectives. A plethora of federal and state agencies, as well as non-profit and private

consultants, often target landowners for conservation delivery, but there is often little communication across these entities. In addition, very little is known about landowners' perspectives and willingness, both pre- and post-conservation delivery contacts or contracts. The CIP landscape aims to collect data on both of these challenges using standardized reporting and surveys in target counties. Progress will be tracked throughout the life of the project on landowner recruitment rates (i.e., contacts resulting in contracts), completion rates (i.e., projects initiated and finished), technical assistance hours, outreach efforts, landowner demographics, and other important metrics. Following the RCPP project, a post-survey will evaluate landowner satisfaction and the likelihood of continuing good management practices. Results from these studies will be incorporated into delivery programs of the target landscapes, with the goal of improving the effectiveness of conservation delivery to private landowners.

Birds

Birds provide a variety of ecosystem services such as pest control, pollination, seed dispersal, waste disposal, and landscape transformations, while also providing diverse, quick breeding, and easily monitored study species for scientific studies. The presence and abundance of bobwhite and early successional or grassland species provide critical information on the quality of habitat and success of restoration effort as they are more sensitive to landscape level changes than some other taxa. With massive declines in grassland bird populations, it is critical to research bird populations and conservation delivery efforts to ensure the longevity of our ecosystems as a whole.



Photo by Ronald Weber





Photo by Jared Elmore

As such, our goal within the CIP landscape is to monitor bird presence, abundance, diversity, and land use. Specifically, the CIP landscape will leverage historical data records, citizen science data, contemporary field data, and novel data collection techniques to quantify shifting patterns in bobwhite, grassland, and early successional songbird species. These data, in conjunction with landcover and conservation delivery data should allow us to construct models to both gauge the effectiveness of current conservation initiatives and provide future scenarios depending on different management choices to best plot conservation effort moving forward. Effective habitat management should yield increased abundance and density of target species within CIP landscapes as conservation delivery takes place. Additionally, an increase in occupancy of rare, threatened, or endangered species will demonstrate increased quality of the managed properties and enhanced species richness.

Monitoring will be conducted at two tiers to address individual states' needs and resource availability. The lower tier monitoring approach will focus on available citizen science datasets, including eBird, breeding bird survey, and short landowner surveys which include audio recordings taken via the Merlin app in 5-minute intervals within 3-hours post-sunrise. These types of data should lend well to developing occupancy models, though will not likely provide abundance estimates. This tier represents CIP landscapes with lower financial and personnel support, while the higher tier requires more resources. The higher tier will allow for better population analyses through density or abundance estimates and improved land-use metrics. This tier will combine Auditory Recording Unit (ARU) collected data with point counts and previously mentioned lower tier data to develop integrated population models that better estimate bird use across the landscape. ARUs will be deployed at a density of 200 units per CIP landscape and will remain in the field for long stretches of time (15-60 days) while recording 60-minute periods daily in a 3-hour window post-sunrise. Point counts will follow a similar 5-minute survey protocol, similar



Photo by Jared Elmore

to the CIP focal area, conducted on target species for each state. This higher tier will provide increased accuracy and quality of data and will allow us to compare against data at the lower tier to optimize both approaches over time. These results will feed into future predictive modeling to help map more effective and efficient delivery of management practices moving forward.

Landcover

At the landscape scale, bobwhite and other grassland or early successional songbird habitat can be thought of as a mosaic, where a single tile represents a landcover type (e.g., grassland, shrubland, forest, etc.). While it is certainly important to monitor changes within a single tile over time, we must also understand patterns that emerge across the entire mosaic. As we zoom out to consider the full picture, multiple tiles (e.g. croplands, trees, or grassland) are interconnected and provide the basis for bird population movement through quality, quantity, and connectivity. This is important as birds, especially bobwhite which have short dispersal distances relative to migratory songbirds, not only need quantity and quality of diverse landcover types, but also require well-established corridors to maneuver between them.

As conservation delivery of management practices that promote these types of landcover occurs in CIP landscapes, our objectives are to monitor landcover composition, health, and connectivity over time. Specifically, we aim to



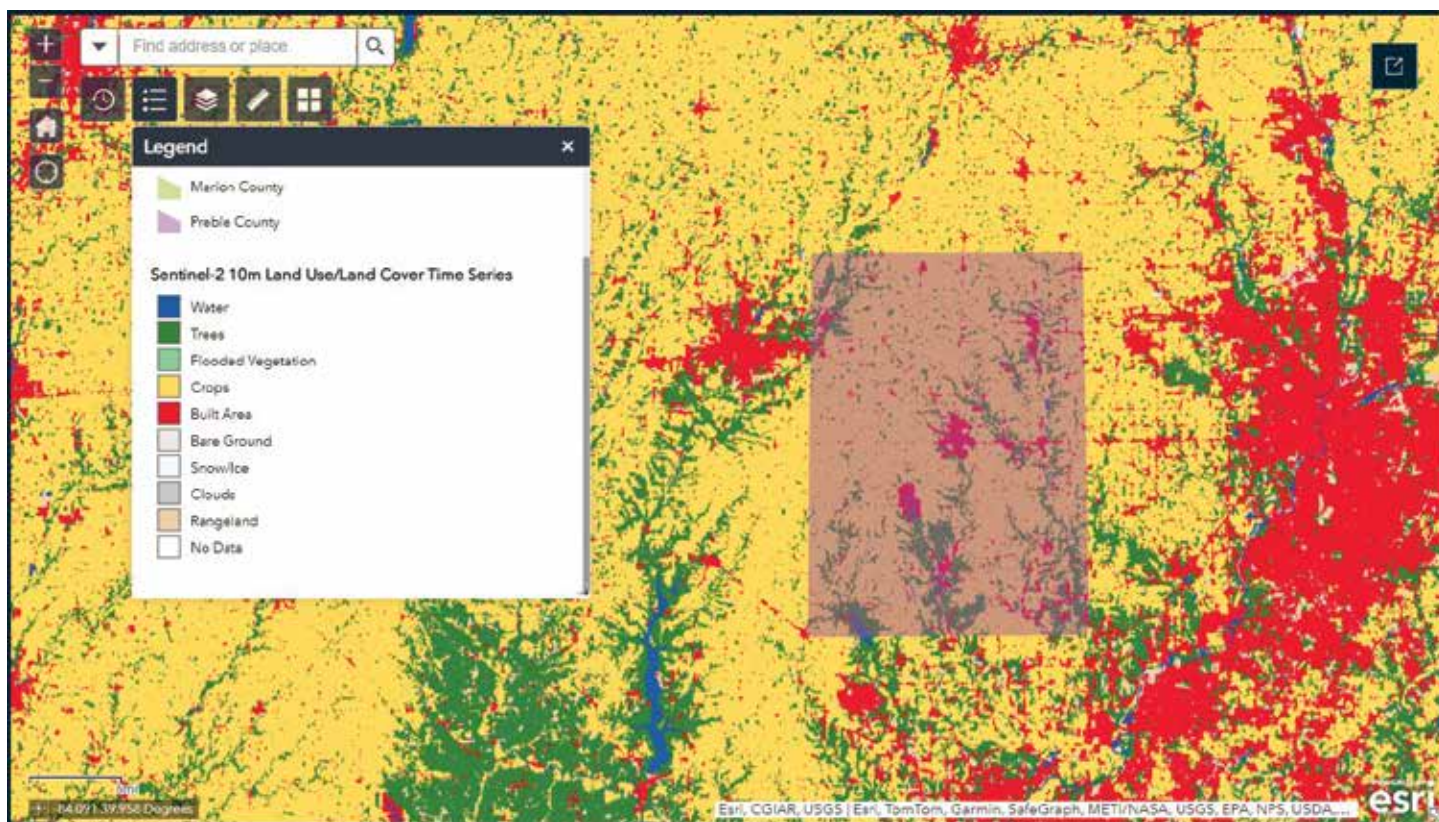


Image created from ESRI products by Allison Dawn

provide quantitative values for these three metrics as they proxy for bobwhite, grassland, and early successional songbird habitat, from the past and annually as data becomes available. To achieve this, we will develop custom landcover classification and conduct time-series analyses within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to understand spatial and temporal trends.

Effective monitoring of these changes at the landscape scale in a cost-effective and feasible way will require the use of remotely sensed data. Satellite-derived data such as the European Space Agency's Sentinel-1 and -2, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS), the United States Geological Survey's National Land Cover Database (NLCD), or similar will be used for land-cover classification. Drones or other aerial collected data may also be used for more fine-scale habitat features, such as to develop Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) point clouds to estimate 3-dimensional structure or bare ground. Models developed in a GIS such as Google Earth Engine (GEE) will be used to create a predictive layer to assess impacts of conservation delivery and other covariates (e.g. weather, soil type) annually. Ground verification of GIS models is also important for training the models and ensuring the accuracy of remotely sensed data. Onsite habitat characterization surveys on landowner properties and from CIP focal areas

will be utilized, as well as more intensive surveys following protocols similar to those developed by Working Lands for Wildlife (WLWF).

We expect our models will reveal effects from land-use (e.g. agriculture, urbanization) and conservation delivery practices (e.g. prescribed fire, brush management, field borders) that serve as a proxy for habitat. Through research and monitoring, we will produce standardized methods and best practices to evaluate changes in landcover composition, health, and connectivity in the participating RCPP CIP states.

Summary

In summary, the CIP landscape will help assess the importance of conservation delivery on private lands conservation and how that impacts habitat connectivity and bird populations at this spatial scale. We expect to see positive effects on bobwhite and other target species in CIP landscapes in response to conservation delivery and landcover change. The RCPPs will allow for critical testing and vetting of the CIP landscape protocol and allow NBGI to take a pivotal intermediate step from the focal area to the region scale of CIP. These studies will allow for more effective conservation delivery and hopefully restore populations of northern bobwhite and other grassland songbird species and the habitats that they depend on.



Congressional Legislation Benefitting Bobwhites and Their Habitats

Jen Mock | NBGI Foundation,
Contracted Policy Director

Thank you to the state fish and wildlife agency members (states) of the NBGI, the Texas-based Quail Coalition, and Tall Timbers Research Station for providing financial support to continue the Policy Director's (Director) work for the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation (NBGIF). The Director provides a quail and habitat focused voice to work with partners, federal agencies, and Congress inside the beltway of Washington, DC. The focus is to shape national private lands and conservation legislation and federal administrative policies and programs to improve benefits to the northern bobwhite, habitats across its range, and other associated wildlife species.

The Director collaboratively works with conservation partners and independently with the Policy Subcommittee of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee to inform and shape national private lands conservation opportunities with the goal of helping to restore wild northern bobwhite populations to sustainable levels. Our partnerships, relationships with private landowners and producers, and the collective implementation success of current initiatives coupled with federal policies, programs, funding, and laws can help restore this iconic rural America species and the habitats it needs to survive and thrive. Policy efforts in 2024 focused on the farm bill, agriculture appropriations, recovering wildlife, and grasslands conservation legislation.

Advancing Habitat Conservation in the Farm Bill

The Director worked with staffs of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the House Committee on Agriculture to inform and shape farm bill legislation in 2024. The Director also collaborated with the



Photo by Jen Mock

NBGI's Policy Subcommittee, the foundation's board members, and community partners to vet legislation, identify opportunities to improve bill text, provide additional recommendations to Congressional staff, and propose written report language. This work focused on the needs of quail and quail habitat through conservation provisions of the farm bill and many meetings with Congressional offices and committee staffs.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 expired and



was extended multiple times in the 118th Congress as legislative negotiations continued but stalled. Chairman Glenn Thompson (R-PA) of the House Committee on Agriculture worked with Ranking Member Dave Scott (D-GA) and committee members to pass with a bipartisan vote the “Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024” on May 24, 2024, but the bill was never scheduled for a floor vote. In the Senate, Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Ranking Member Boozman (R-AR) each released an outline of their frameworks for a new farm bill, and Chairwoman Stabenow ultimately released draft text of her farm bill after the November 2024 elections. While this is written during the lame duck session, it is highly unlikely a new farm bill will be enacted before the end of this Congress. Consequently, the legislative process will have to begin anew in the 119th Congress after committee assignments are finalized. The conservation provisions in the US Farm Bill are the single largest investment in voluntary conservation on private lands in the country providing states and their conservation partners collaborative opportunities to work with agriculture producers and private landowners. It is the critical lift producers need to address natural resource concerns on their lands while sustaining our nation’s agricultural production that provides national and global food security.

The Director worked on select legislative and policy priorities for the NBGI state members with partner coalitions such as the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Forest Conservation Easement Program, National Grasslands Coalition, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

North American Grasslands Conservation Act

The wildlife conservation community also has been working on legislation that would take “bold action to conserve and restore grasslands” across the broad and diverse landscapes of North America. The “North American Grasslands Conservation Act” (S. 4639) was first introduced by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) in the US Senate in the 117th Congress with cosponsor support from Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Michael Bennet (D-CO). The wildlife conservation community collaboratively identified some legislative improvements that led to revisions which helped garner bipartisan support in the US House of Representatives (House) for a new bill. A new bill was

introduced in the House in 2024 by Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC) with cosponsor support from Reps. Sharice Davids (D-KS), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Mike Thompson (D-CA). Conversations with Senate offices about reintroduction of the bill this Congress continued.

Grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America, and this new public-private partnership program would be administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The new program would provide private landowners and conservation organizations with resources to focus on restoring native grasslands and their associated diverse wildlife species from Canada to Mexico. Some members of the conservation community continue to have concerns about some of the bill language and competing legislative interests while others are very supportive. The bill concept is similar to the incredibly successful *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (P.L.101-233).

Recovering America’s Wildlife Act

The “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act” (RAWA, S.1149), a once-in-a-generation piece of wildlife conservation legislation, was reintroduced this Congress in the US Senate by Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) with lead support from Senator Tom Tillis (R-NC), and 18 additional bipartisan cosponsors. It continues to be one of the highest legislative priorities of the states and wildlife conservation community today. The bill would provide \$1.3 billion per year to the states to work with private landowners, conservation organizations, and other state and federal agencies to keep common species common, including the bobwhite in 26 states. It also would provide Tribal Nations with \$97.5 million per year for fish and wildlife conservation priorities on Tribal lands and other similar purposes. Programs and projects would implement voluntary, proactive conservation measures that help restore at-risk species before protections of the federal Endangered Species Act are warranted and save industries, businesses, private landowners, and taxpayers countless dollars and regulatory uncertainty. It also will facilitate state-led collaboration to help recover those species already listed as threatened or endangered.

House RAWA bill champion Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) has not introduced a version of the bill this Congress when this article was written. The House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR) introduced the “America’s Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act,” (H.R.7408) which garnered 22 republican cosponsors and would authorize up to \$300 million per year for five years to the states for implementation of state wildlife action plans. The bill passed out of committee on April 16, 2024, but was not brought to a full vote by the House.



Historic RCPP Efforts Underway in Bobwhite Country

Kyle Martens | *NBGI Foundation, RCPP Initiatives National Director*

The Regional Conservation Program Partnership (RCPP) is officially rolling out in four NBGI member states. The two RCPP's (Ohio/Missouri and Georgia/Mississippi) represent a \$50 million investment by NRCS in conservation delivery and implementation in these partner states. This funding also signifies a strategic effort in geospatial conservation of bobwhites and other grassland-dependent species, a concerted effort to engage historically underserved and first-time participants in conservation programs, as well as building on

NBGI's regional partnership with aims to improve conservation delivery and effectiveness across our network.

In early December, NBGI Foundation staff and state delivery teams from Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio came together in Pigeon Forge, TN in preparation to launch the first pilot programs in each of the RCPP states. These pilots are a critical first step to testing our collaborative approach to facilitating sign-ups, referrals, delivery, and checkout of practices in the partnership. As part of this historic effort, the NBGI Foundation has grown its core team to support the groundwork in each state.

Kyle Martens joined the foundation in September to

State Coordinator, Georgia

Stephanie Koontz

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Stephanie has worked in the conservation field for 15 years primarily focusing on habitat restoration and land management practices that benefit vegetation communities. She began as a research scientist for a non-profit organization in south-central Florida modeling rare plant demographics in response to various land management activities. More recently, she served as a biologist for the Georgia Department of

Natural Resources in the Wildlife Conservation Section, monitoring restoration and land management practices on state lands. In her free time, she enjoys anything outdoors, from hiking, kayaking, or just playing in her vegetable garden.



National Director, RCPPs Initiatives

Kyle Martens

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Kyle is originally from Iowa but has lived in Nebraska for 10 years. He's a self-described conservationist, with aims to transform his family's farms to native, perennial based agriculture. He came to the foundation from the University of Nebraska, where he led a regional grassland research effort focused on patch-burn grazing and mitigating woody encroachment in rangelands. Kyle enjoys spending time with his family, co-leading a community garden effort in his neighborhood, and serving as a volunteer in several community science projects for the University and other nonprofits.

lead the national rollout strategy and grow RCPP opportunities in other NBGI states. Stephanie Koontz started with the foundation in October and will oversee Georgia’s RCPP effort. Matt Gardner also began in October and will focus his energy on growing Ohio’s Wildlife Habitat Initiative—a specific byproduct of the RCPP effort. Emily Beck began her career with the foundation in early December and will lead Missouri’s program. Lastly, Mississippi’s state coordinator Jason Price started in late 2024.

The first-year of implementing these RCPP’s will be largely focused on program outreach and increasing efficiencies in delivery. This will include training within each state as well as strategic outreach in priority counties and focal areas in each state. Additionally, new partnerships with organizations in each state will allow the partnership to directly engage underserved communities in NRCS programs—with a specific focus on enrolling their lands in bobwhite and grassland restoration and conservation. Please take a moment to meet the growing RCPP team at the foundation and don’t hesitate to reach out and say hello!

State Coordinator, Ohio

Matt Gardner

matthew.gardner@nbgif.org

Matt was born and raised in Holmes County, Ohio, and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife from The Ohio State University. He has worked in North Dakota with the USFWS on the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Project, then was a Research Parapro with UGA in Indiana on a northern bobwhite study, and directly before this position was a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in west central Ohio. As a lifelong outdoorsman with a passion



for upland bird hunting, Matt is very excited to work in this role through the Foundation to help improve Northern Bobwhite habitat in the Buckeye State.



State Coordinator, Mississippi

Jason Price

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Jason is originally from Texas but has lived in Mississippi for 28 years. He has a bachelor’s degree in Wildlife Ecology from Texas A&M University. His career has been influenced heavily by technology in natural resources where he has

utilized software development, database management, and GIS in various roles with the USFWS in North Dakota, Texas A&M Research center in Uvalde, Texas, MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and MS Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Jason enjoys spending time with family and participates in many outdoor activities including hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and birding.



State Coordinator, Missouri

Emily Beck

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Emily was born and raised in northwest Missouri, where her family has worked the land for over a century. In her previous roles, she collaborated with several producers across Missouri’s landscapes, including her and her husband’s farm. Before joining NBGIF, she worked at MFA Incorporated as their Natural Resource Conservation Specialist, where she led numerous conservation projects in partnership with various agencies throughout MFA’s trade territory. In her free time, Emily enjoys working alongside her husband on their property, wrestling their two dogs out of the pond, and restoring antique furniture.





Photo by Jef Hodges

Technical Committee Restructure Launches Next Chapter

Jef Hodges | *NBGI Director*

Sitting in a meeting room, all were gathered around waiting for the official start. Most of the talk was conversation about the past year's hunting season or plans for the coming year. In some instances, it was about breeding bird survey results, if they've been analyzed yet. Maybe about family or career. Regardless, it was casual. Upon the start of the meeting, it was time to get down to business. Everyone awaited the subcommittee chair to read the charge handed down by the Steering Committee. That charge would be our marching orders for the next 4 to 8 hours of meeting time across 1 to 2 days. Our collective, seemingly seques-

tered, group would tackle the charge and report to the Steering Committee at the business meeting a day or two later. The charge was addressed in one of two ways; if simple enough, discussion would result in an answer or action item to be passed on to the Steering Committee; if more complex, a strategy would be developed and key responsibilities identified along with a timeline for completion. In some instances, if the issue were significant enough an ad hoc committee would be formed to deal with the issue. That's how the business of NBGI got done.

In 2015, with NBGI fully staffed, eight positions in all including the Director, one staff position existed for each of the subcommittees. The intent of that model was for the subcommittee members to be engaged in the process and





Photo by Jef Hodges

NBGI Technical Committee Structure

Subcommittees:

Habitat Implementation – Jimmy Sloan/Tim Kavan
Policy – Brad Alexander
Science – vacant

Working Groups:

Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP) – Jay Howell
Eastern Grasslands – Ryan Parker (requested change to Eastern Quail Habitat, pending Steering Committee action)
Farm Bill – Brad Alexander
Policy – vacant (proposed Farm Bill and Policy be combined, pending Steering Committee action)
Fire – John McGuire
Research – Mike Eichholz
Songbirds and Pollinators – Kyle Brazil
Training – Lisa Potter
Western Grasslands – Derek Wiley
Working Lands for Wildlife – Jess McGuire

for staff to facilitate the actions or product development that came from the subcommittee meetings. In practice, staff became ex-officio leaders of the subcommittees. Lots of actions and products were happening but didn't appear to be valued. Feedback from subcommittee members revealed that they felt the organization was being led from the top down, rather than the way it had been created, bottom up, leading to disenfranchisement.

In 2021 the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative (NBGI) Management Board approved a new business model, which is based on service to the partners. To help deliver service to our partners and address member disenfranchisement, the NBGI Technical Committee would undergo a restructuring. The process began at the 2022 NBGI Technical Committee meeting in Springfield, MO. Facilitated discussions were held to include all members in the restructuring discussions and identify what the new structure would look like, how it would operate. Following up on the 2022 meeting, the process was completed at the 2023 Harrisburg, PA Technical Committee meeting. Subcommittees had been decided upon but working groups still needed to be determined and the process for identifying and dealing with issues, where and how progress would be reported.

The 2024 Technical Committee meeting in Tupelo, MS marked the first meeting under the new structure and while there are still some kinks to work out, the consensus was the new restructure was a refreshing return to busi-

ness, very much like it had been in the past.

The new structure now operates with three subcommittees and ten working groups (see sidebar), none of the working groups report singularly to any one subcommittee. This hierarchy (lack of) came from the facilitated discussions where members expressed a working group may have issues that apply to multiple subcommittees. This structure allows the working

group to report to any one or all subcommittees if applicable. Another issue that was identified in the facilitated discussions; it was impossible for an individual to attend all the subcommittee meetings to be aware of all that was being addressed. Under the new model, the working groups report to all subcommittees in one meeting room. In this manner, all who are interested can be aware of what each of the working groups is working on and what progress has been made. Action items/issues are intended to be a two-way street. Unlike the first model where only the Steering Committee handed down the charges, working groups can also elevate a concern or issue to the Steering Committee for their consideration and assignment to a working group. Charges or action items can come from either direction.

The overall process of the restructuring was to build a technical committee based on the members' recommendations, to create ownership and engagement and allow the members to get back to the work of facilitating the delivery of bobwhite and grassland habitat.





Photo by Tall Timbers Research Station

This photo shows Tall Timbers Quail Expansion Biologist, Alex Jackson, and University of Georgia Master's student, Caitlin Jackson, loading quail transport boxes in Thomasville, Georgia for a translocation flight to Pennsylvania provided by LightHawk Conservation Flying.

abama, the Carolina's, Central Florida, the Delmarva Peninsula, and East Texas. Our regional programs work to provide technical guidance to local landowners and conduct regionally specific research to further our understanding of bobwhite populations range-wide.

Tall Timbers' regional programs have demonstrated to landowners that wild quail restoration outside of the Red Hills is possible. The success of these programs and the landowners we work with has continued to broaden geographic interest and has necessitated a growth in our capacity. Recently, due to the generosity of private donors committed to conservation, Tall Timbers developed the Chuck and Martha Ribelin Quail Expansion Program, with an emphasis on seeking opportunities to work with landowners outside of

our current regional scope to facilitate bobwhite population recovery on both private and public lands. The Quail Expansion Program is focused on developing partnerships with landowners, state and federal agencies, private conservation groups, and universities to leverage our collective resources to increase local quail populations. The Quail Expansion Program is also responsible for facilitating translocation efforts in collaboration with our regional programs and conservation partners when local populations have been extirpated but sufficient habitat has been restored.

Our objective is to increase interest in bobwhite restoration, and ultimately hunting, in key areas throughout the Southeast. Currently, the Quail Expansion Program is working with several conservation partners to facilitate restoration projects in Pennsylvania, West Tennessee and the greater Mid-South. The development of these projects has clearly demonstrated the strength in numbers and the momentum that can be generated when partners work with common goals and a core belief that bobwhite restoration is feasible and worthwhile.

Tall Timbers' Quail Expansion Program

Alex Jackson | Tall Timbers Quail Expansion Biologist

Tall Timbers was founded in 1958 upon the vision of Henry Beadel, Herbert Stoddard and a group of like-minded conservationists. They recognized the importance of developing a research station dedicated to the study of prescribed fire, northern bobwhite, and other fire-dependent species. Their vision laid the foundation for decades of long-term research resulting in a detailed understanding of prescribed fire and bobwhite ecology and management. Tall Timbers' history in the Red Hills and Albany regions of North Florida and South Georgia has resulted in a deep connection with the landowners and land managers who work to conserve these regions.

While the Red Hills and Albany are certainly historic bobwhite regions, interest in wild quail management across the Southeast has grown and so has the Tall Timbers' Game Bird Program. We currently have regional programs in Al-

NBGI State Northern Bobwhite Density Estimates from Fall Covey Counts and Spring Point Counts

Jared A. Elmore | NBGI Science Coordinator
Research Assistant Professor, Forestry and Environmental Conservation, Clemson University

Marisa Zimmerman | PhD Graduate Research Associate, Forestry and Environmental Conservation, Clemson University

Northern bobwhite covey counts can be used to estimate their abundance during the fall season and point counts can be used to estimate their abundance during the breeding season. Fall covey counts involve monitoring points during early morning for auditory ‘kio-lee’ calls before bobwhite coveys leave their roosting location. Spring counts use both visual and auditory monitoring during a 5-minute period at each point. However, the value of these counts is limited without using models to correct for detectability which produce an estimate of density.

Northern bobwhite density estimates were derived from fall covey count and breeding point count data using models in the package “Distance” in program R. Density models used data submitted from all states within a given year to produce density estimates. Data was first inspected to satisfy assumptions and distance observations that exceeded study design specifications were removed from analysis (greater than 500 meters in Fall and greater than 250 meters in Spring). To pro-

duce density estimates, a detection function was first fit using seasonal count data from each year with a half-normal key, Hermite adjustment, and 5% truncation distance for Fall data and hazard-rate key, cosine adjustment, and 10% truncation distance for Spring, with states set as “study areas”, each Focal/Reference area set as the “region” within each study area, and each sampling point defined as the “sample label”. Effort was defined using the number of distinct dates for submitted data at each sample label within a given year. A conversion factor was defined to convert units from meters (distance estimates from covey counts) to acres (area). The area (acres) was calculated for each focal/reference area and used within the models to calculate the density of coveys per acre. Models were summarized and checked for goodness of fit using distance sampling Cramer-von Mises tests. Most, but not all, yearly models satisfied these tests and used to plot density estimates across years for each focal/reference area within each state.

Figures were produced for Kentucky, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Fall covey density figures have the number of coveys per acre on the y-axis and spring breeding point count figures have number of individuals on the y-axis; both figures have year on the x-axis. Different color lines and 95% confidence intervals are displayed for different focal and reference areas within each state. Some very recent data may be missing due to quailcount.org (data submission portal) being down in the fall of 2024.

State Conservation Reports

The following section contains highlights of bobwhite conservation during 2023 and early 2024, as reported by each state’s quail coordinator. Figures shown for CIP member states were produced following the methodology from the above section for quail trends on that state’s CIP sites. Figures represent the most up to date data submitted to quailcount.org. All figures produced by Marisa Zimmerman. The most up-to-date information on 2024 bobwhite population and hunting information is available on state agency websites. State quail coordinator contact information can be found at the end of each report. See page 55 for acronyms.

State agencies continued to expand quail restoration despite challenging budgets and continued to forage partnerships with public and private land agencies, hunting organizations, research institutes, and non-government organizations. All are needed to bring about the landscape-scale change necessary to restore sustainable bobwhite populations.



Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

Population: Population estimates were not conducted due to lack of staff and a vacant quail biologist position. Presence and absence surveys were conducted by habitat biologists between May 15th, 2024 and July 1st, 2024. Calling males were detected on the Buckaloo Tract of the Ted Harvey Conservation Area. Fall covey surveys were conducted in New Castle County (NCC). These surveys were used by habitat biologists to estimate 69 coveys at the Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area, 3 coveys on the Seven Hawkes Tract of the Eagles Nest Wildlife Area, and 2 coveys on the Collins Burrows Tract of the Eagles Nest Wildlife Area.

Hunting: The hunting season on wild northern bobwhite in Delaware remains closed.

Management:

- NCC was able to burn over 300 acres of early successional habitat to improve northern bobwhite habitat.
- NCC plans to create 60 acres of new early successional habitat in the coming year.
- The Delaware DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife will also assist in the creation of up to 90 acres of northern bobwhite habitat with other partners in the coming year.
- Kent County continues to manage and maintain early successional habitat on the roughly 500 acres of quail habitat created in the last 3 years using prescribed fire and fallow disking.
- An additional 65 acres have been identified in critical areas of Milford Neck Wildlife Area in Kent County to restore quail habitat in the coming year.
- Hedgerow habitat improvement continues through hedgerow thinning and supplemental planting of native shrubs and trees.
- 300 acres of new quail habitat were created on Marshy Hope Wildlife Area in Sussex County in a joint project with the Delaware Forest Service.
- The Division hosted a Quail Habitat Workshop at the Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area in New Castle County with in-state and out-of-state partners and constituents to highlight successes and create cooperation in the region.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Sean O'Connor, Regional Wildlife Manager, Sean.O'Connor@delaware.gov

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Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division (GADNR)

Population: Through 2007, the GADNR statewide bobwhite population index had declined by more than 75% since 1966. However, from 2007-22, USGS Breeding Bird Survey data shows that bobwhite numbers have doubled in recent years and are now similar to numbers seen in the early 1990s.

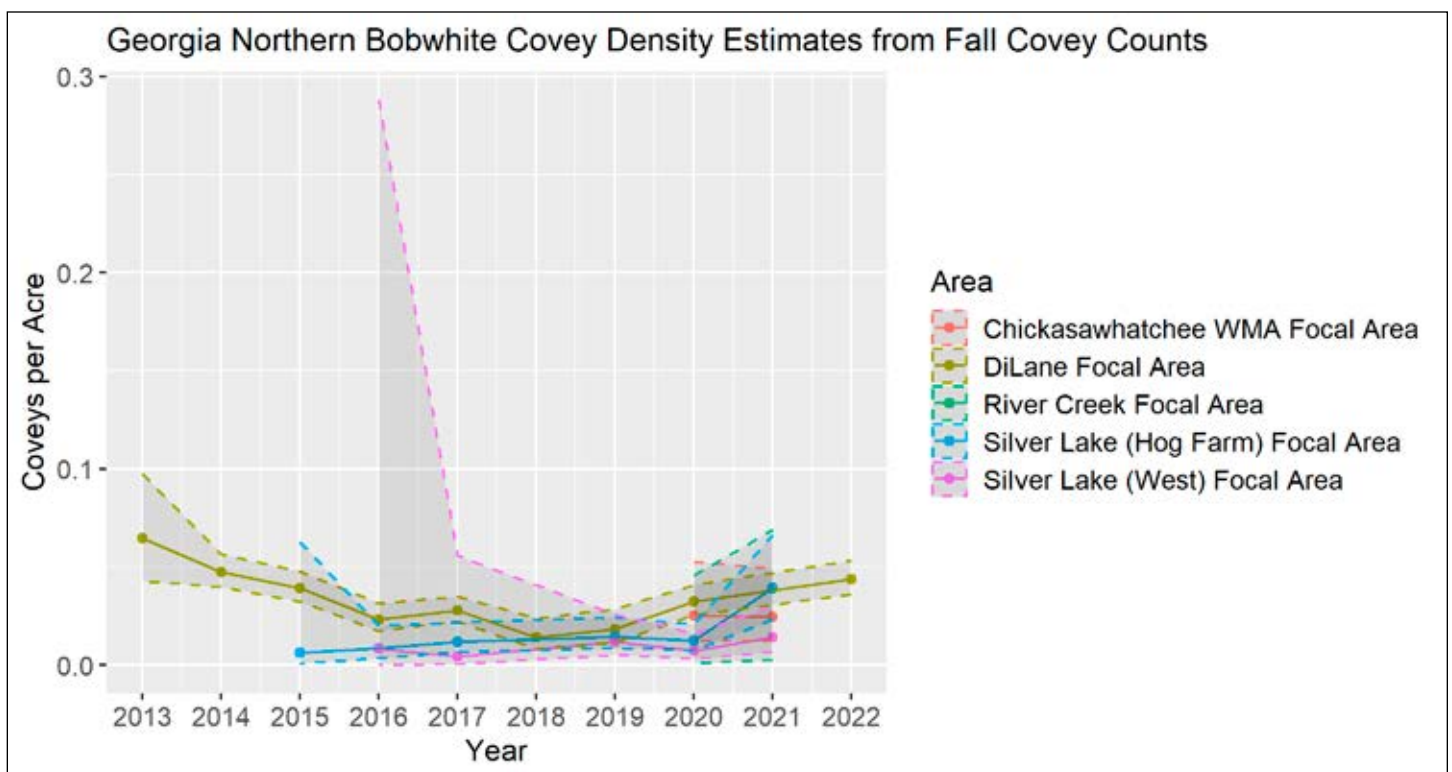
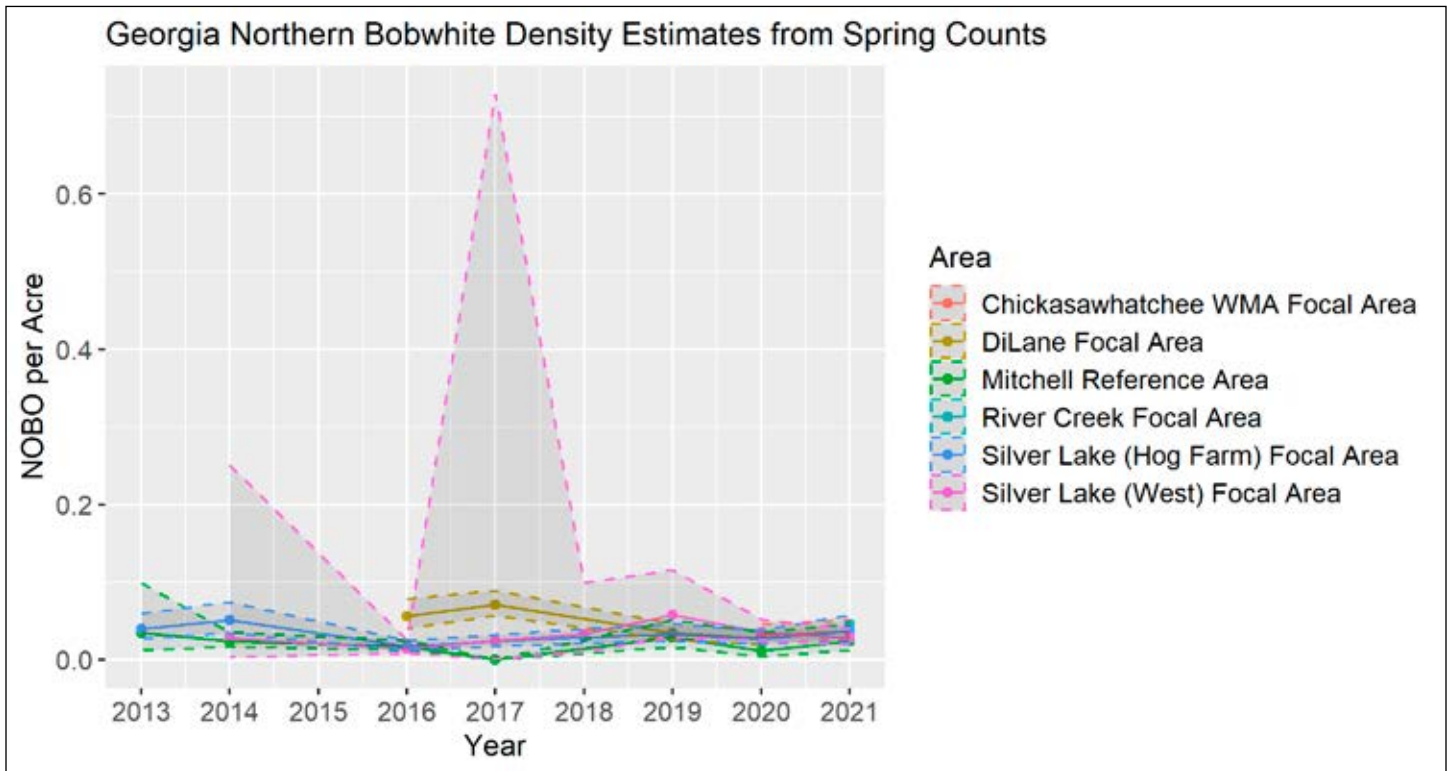
Management: The GADNR Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) Bobwhite Quail Initiative completed the revision of their 10-year plan, Gaining Ground for Bobwhites, 2024-2033. Other quail management highlights include:

- The Georgia Department of Natural Resources continues to work with Quail Forever (QF) chapters to improve quail habitat on public land through QF Chapter donations. QF is also a huge asset for private land conservation. QF Georgia has 6 partner biologists, a 4-person habitat crew, state coordinator and a precision ag specialist that greatly increase the capacity of our private lands program (PLP).
- BQI continues to partner with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to deliver [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) and general wildlife funding through EQIP and CSP. In 2024, PLP biologist planned over 44,000 acres of habitat management on working farms and forests in Georgia. Practices such as thinning timber, prescribed burning, brush management, and disking are being implemented to increase quality quail habitat across the landscape. Quail Forever technical assistance staff planned 15,450 acres of prescribed fire for private landowners, 4,700 acre of forest stand thinning, and 800 acres of early successional habitat development.
- BQI and QF biologists provided technical assistance to landowners throughout the state that impacted over 250,000 acres of habitat for FY23 and wrote plans for an additional 18,000 acres of habitat management.
- Georgia continues to focus intensive quail management efforts on five WMAs, totaling about 24,500 acres that serve as core habitats in the BQI. Several other WMAs also conduct habitat management that benefit bobwhite totaling



over 65,000 acres of upland habitat.

- Monitoring efforts include fall covey counts on 12 WMAs and two private focal areas plus the use of ARUs on 3 WMAs and 1 private property. Spring monitoring for several pine savanna species was conducted on 46 WMAs and 9 private properties. BQI also placed ARUs on 7 private properties to supplement breeding bird monitoring. These surveys were only possible thanks to the additional assistance provided by QF staff and lots of volunteers.



- 43 private landowners in Georgia were involved in the Working Lands for Wildlife Outcomes Assessment surveys for bobwhite quail and a suite of grassland bird species. Surveys were conducted by QF staff and included: automative recording units deployed, spring and fall counts conducted and vegetation surveys. Surveys took place across 24 Georgia counties.
- Quail Forever Habitat team conducted 1,705 acres of prescribed fire on private lands within Georgia’s bobwhite quail focal counties. The average prescribed burn for all operations was approximately 55 acres.
- The Bobwhite Quail Initiative works with QF chapters across the state to improve habitat on Georgia public lands through donations of funds for contract services including prescribed burning, herbicide application, and brood field maintenance and for needed equipment and supplies. Chapters also donated funds to support events such as BQI youth quail hunts, ladies hunt and learn events and landowner field days.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Dallas Ingram, State Quail Biologist, dallas.ingram@dnr.ga.gov

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Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Population: The IDNR roadside counts for bobwhite are very similar to the USGS North American Breeding Bird Survey protocol. In 2024, observers across Illinois recorded an average of 0.53 quail per stop during the surveys (a 34% increase from 2023). Quail were recorded at 26.3% of stops (percent occurrence), up 23%. Positive nesting and brood reports due to favorable summer conditions, provides optimism for this upcoming hunting season.

Hunting: As of the date of this report, data from the 2023-24 Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey is unavailable. An issue with our permits and licensing vendor led to a late rollout of the survey this year. Harvest estimates are based on results from the 2022-23 Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey. The 2022-23 quail survey estimated that 4,457 hunters shot 10,306 wild quail (38% decrease), compared to 5,437 hunters and 16,658 quail in the 2021-22 survey. Despite the decrease in hunters, the number of quail per hunter/day was up in 2022-23 (0.56 in 2021-22 to 0.87 in 2022-23).

Management: IDNR continues to operate under a statewide Wildlife Action Plan (where quail are considered a species in greatest conservation need) and as a partner of NBGI. Bobwhite management highlights include:

- The USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is by far the greatest source of potential grassland wildlife habitat in Illinois. In September 2024, Illinois had 790,224 acres of CRP (a 21,630-acre decrease from February 2023), including:
 - [USDA CP-33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds](#) – 44,049 acres enrolled, a 216-acre decrease from 2023.
 - [USDA CP-38 SAFE](#) – 50,014 acres enrolled, a 8,156-acre increase from 2023.
 - [USDA CP-42 Pollinator Habitat Initiative](#) – 120,042 acres enrolled, a 1,000-acre decrease from 2023.
- Dr. Mike Eichholz (Southern Illinois University) continues to assess habitat and population dynamics and their effect on bobwhite populations in Illinois. This Pittman-Robertson funded project is intended to help facilitate the monitoring and vegetation surveys for an Illinois bobwhite focus area.
- Dr. Mike Ward and colleagues (University of Illinois) continued research investigating grassland wildlife response to the SAFE program, cover crops, and other agricultural practices and is developing a GIS that utilizes remote sensing and aerial imagery to differentiate between stands of cool-season and warm-season grasslands.
- Illinois is looking for ways to increase upland habitat on state-owned sites through their Ag Lease Program. We are also looking to ramp up habitat restoration efforts at Burning Star State Fish and Wildlife Area (SFWA), Illinois’ NBCI Coordinated Implementation Program focal area in Southern Illinois. Much of the habitat has matured beyond the successional stage that is appropriate for bobwhites and exotic invasive species pressure has greatly impacted the habitat.
- Speaking of our focal area, Burning Star SFWA will open to upland small game hunting this fall. Dr. Eichholz and his research team will be collecting crops and harvest data from harvested bobwhites this season.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Don Kahl, Agriculture and Grassland Wildlife Program Manager, don.kahl@illinois.gov



Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Population: Indiana DNR fish and wildlife areas conducted their yearly covey call count surveys revealing our quail population is increasing. There has been a slight rise in quail numbers for the past 3 years.

Hunting: There are 42 public access locations that allow quail hunting in Indiana, totaling 490,412 acres. 16 of these properties are fish and wildlife areas (FWA) managed by the Indiana DNR. Quail harvest on FWAs has slightly increased from last year.

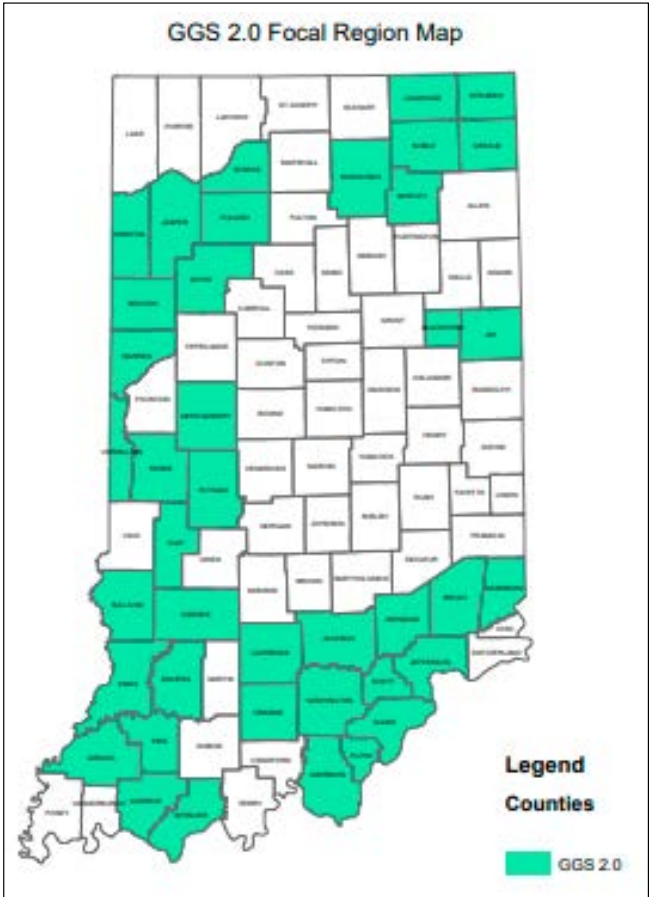
Management: IDNR continues to work with partners, agencies, and various organizations to fund and create quail habitat.

Public Land

- Willow Slough FWA, with the help of Pheasant and Quail Forever, added approximately 173 acres to the Area bringing the total acres to 10,128. The new acres will be converted into oak savannah and maintained with prescribed fire. Approximately 2,000 acres are burned on Willow Slough each year to maintain open habitat.
- Goose Pond FWA had their highest harvest numbers since 2008. The population crashed in 2021, but with habitat work and adaptive management practices, there has been a steady increase since.

Private Land

- The SAFE (state acres for wildlife enhancement) program focuses on creating and maintaining early successional grasslands. There are approximately 55,000 acres of the state enrolled in the SAFE program.
- The Working Lands for Wildlife program also assists with creating quail habitat. Approximately \$1,100 is being paid to landowners in this program.
- There are approximately 11,800 CRP acres that specifically target grassland installation (CP2, CP4D) in Indiana.
- In partnership with the NRCS and NRF, Indiana DNR implements the Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds Initiative (GGI). This initiative focuses on expanding grasslands with the hope of creating habitat for quail, Henslow’s sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and ring-necked pheasant, as well as other grassland species. In its 4th year, the GGI program exceeded its goal of 3,250 acres and now has 3,380 acres enrolled.



NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Vacant. Submitted by Nicole Alonso-Leach, former Upland Gamebird Coordinator

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Population: The IDNR [statewide bobwhite quail index](#) trended lower from last year with 0.5 quail per route in 2024 compared to 0.7 quail per route in 2023, however the change was not statistically significant. Counts were higher in the WC and SE regions, with lower counts in the SC region, and no change in counts in the SW region. This year’s statewide quail index is -49% below the 10-year average and -62% below the long-term mean. Staff reported coveys appeared very stressed in the SC region during the mid-January blizzard, but in other regions like the WC, the blizzard was less severe. Staff detected similar brood numbers in 2024. The SW region reported the best overall quail numbers in 2024, followed by the WC region.

Hunting: The [2023-24 hunting season survey](#) showed approximately 11,928 quail hunters harvested an estimated 30,232



quail during the 2023 quail season an increase (42%) over the 2022 estimate. Hunter numbers increased 18% compared to 2022 the estimate. Quail hunters averaged 6.5 days a field and harvested 2.5 birds for the season. 59% of the quail harvest occurred in the first month of the 2023 season. Over 50% of Iowa quail hunters hunted 4 days or less during the 2023 season. Resident quail hunters accounted for 70% of the total quail harvest. The 2023 roadside counts showed quail numbers were slightly lower (-13%) than in 2022, so the higher hunter numbers and harvest were unexpected.

Management: IDNR manages bobwhite by partnering with multiple agencies, NGOs, and private citizens, as well as the NBGI:

- Iowa was an active participant in the NBGI CIP focal area project, with two officially identified focal areas (Ringgold and Shawtee). Iowa wrapped up it’s 10-year monitoring efforts on both areas in 2023, and is waiting for NBGI analysis with other states data.
- The [Iowa Habitat and Access Program](#) cost-shares the creation of habitat on private CRP acres statewide. In Iowa’s southern quail range, habitat improvements to benefit quail are a priority. Statewide enrollment is over 40,000 acres. Each area has a habitat management plan and is open to public hunting.
- Iowa has multiple CRP practices that benefit bobwhite quail including CP-33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds, with 22,089 acres enrolled, the 4th highest enrollment in the nation, with only Illinois, Kansas, and Texas having more enrolled acres.
- Iowa’s other primary CRP practice benefiting bobwhite is the CP-38 [Early Successional Habitat Quail SAFE](#) practice, which creates early successional habitat with native grass seeding using small grain rotations that are disturbed every three years.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, todd.bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov

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Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP)

Population: 2024 statewide bobwhite breeding abundance index was 9% above the 2023 index, 5% above the 5-year average, and <1% above the 10-year averages.

Hunting: According to the [2022-23 hunting season statistics](#), 56,684 quail hunters harvested 324,840 bobwhites.

Management: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) continues to manage bobwhite throughout the state by partnering with multiple agencies, NGOs, and private citizens, as well as NBGI. Quail management highlights include:

- Bobwhites are a species of conservation importance for both State Wildlife Grant and USDA program funding ranking processes.
- QF and KDWP worked with USDA to expand the Northern Bobwhite Working Lands for Wildlife program to include a fourth priority area. Recent funding has been increased for the program within the state.
- KDWP is partnering with UGA to begin research on landscape characteristics that predict quail occupancy and density and identify motivations for producers to install/maintain these conservation practices.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Jeff Prendergast, Upland Gamebird program coordinator, jeff.prendergast@ks.gov

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Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR)

Population: According to the KDFWR statewide mail carrier survey, the bobwhite population has declined by 55% since 1960. The 2024 index is 65% below our 1981 restoration target. Statewide, there was a 6% increase from 2023 to 2024, likely due to spring and summer weather which delayed hay cutting and was generally mild in the mid-south.

Hunting: On average, hunters bagged 0.17 birds/hour in the 2023-24 hunting season and observed 0.24 coveys per hour. The harvest rate is 41% below the 5-year average, and covey detections were 15% below the 5-year average.

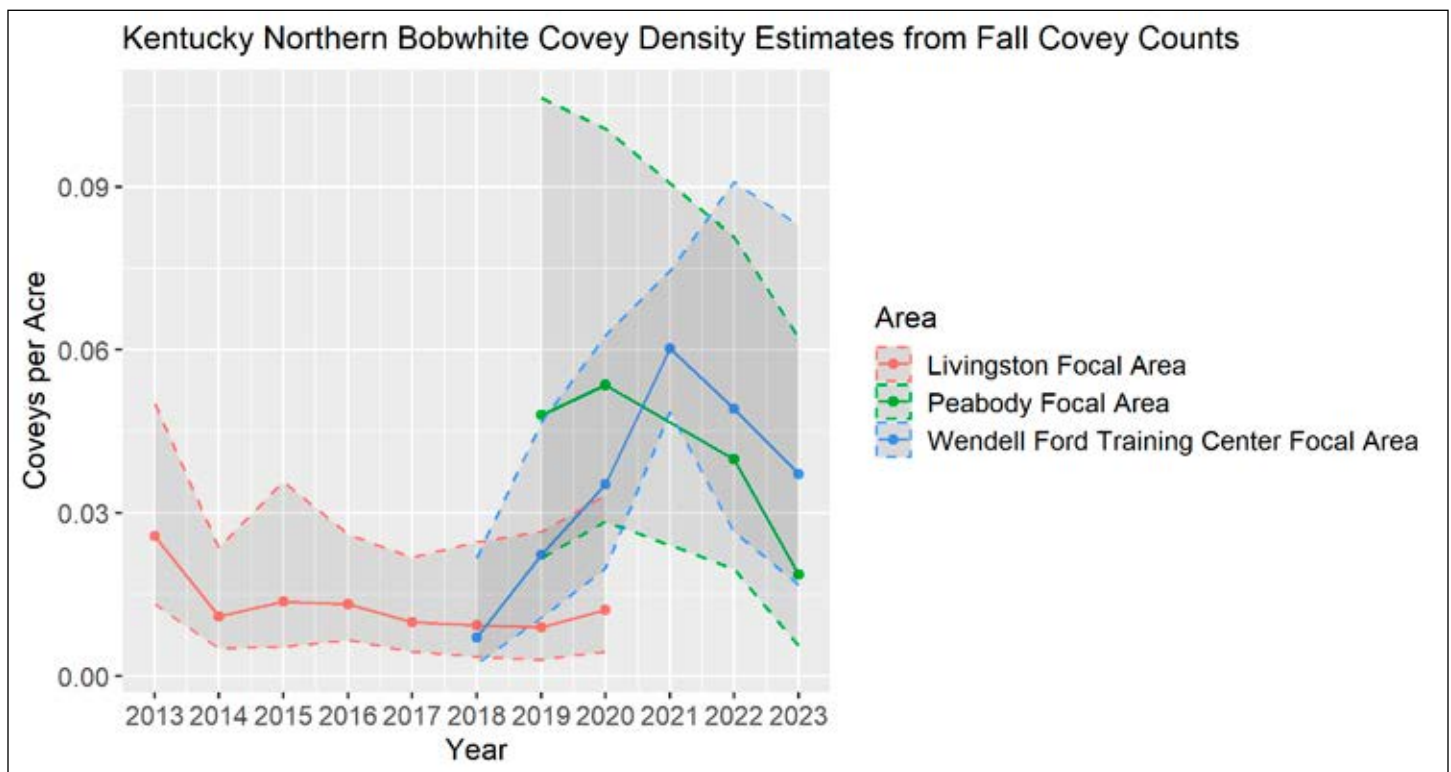
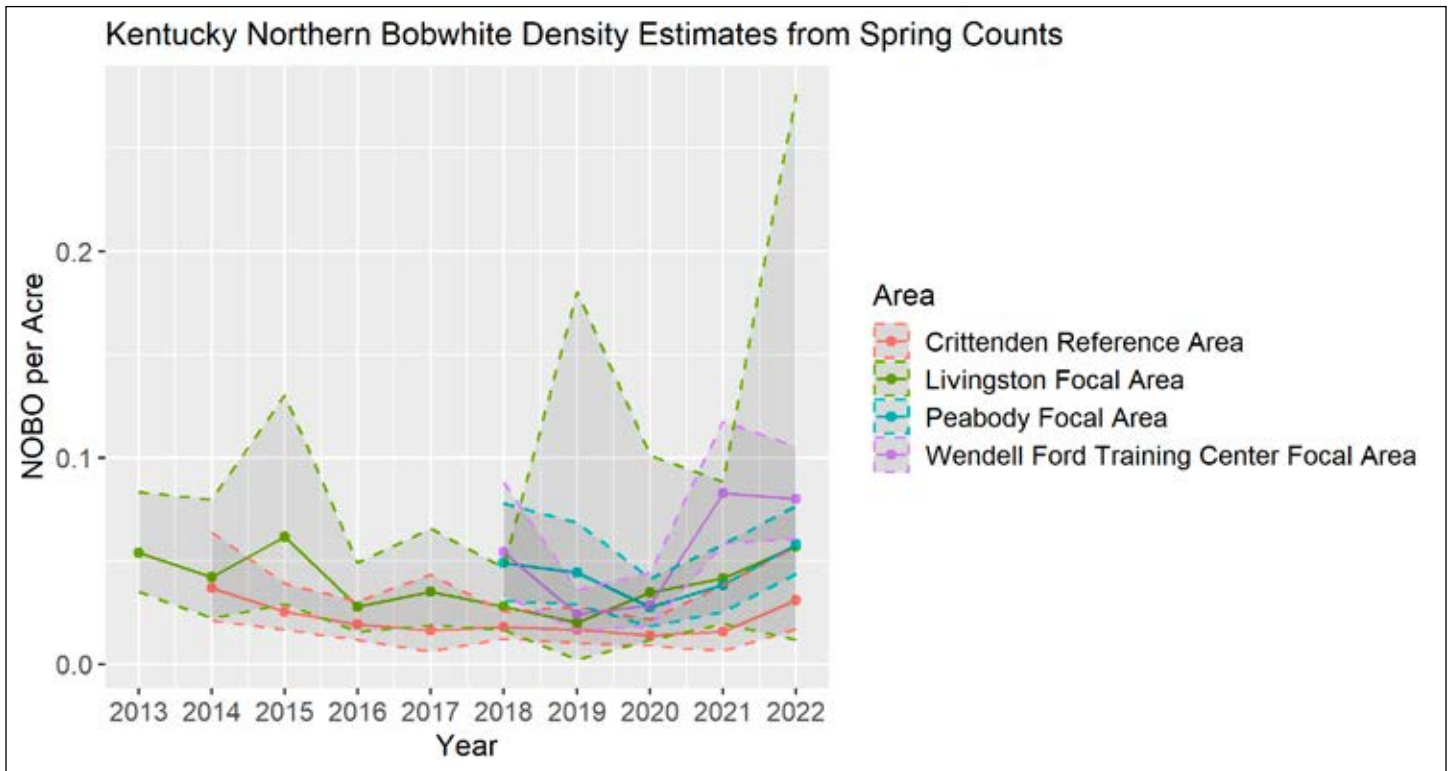
Management: The agency continues to utilize the findings of the 10-Year Quail Plans (ending in 2020):

- The Bluegrass Army Depot “Beyond the Fence” Project moves into the 6th growing season after planting for over 200 acres of production native grasses in a 10,000-acre focus area. Field staff will work closely with producers to insure



establishment.

- KDFWR coordinated a multi-partner conservation team aimed at conserving the legacy of Kentucky's highly successful Green River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) initiative. The partners identified a 10,000 acre focus area and recruited native grass production plantings totaling 150 acres. Planting and bird monitoring take place every spring.



- KDFWR and The Kentucky Prescribed Fire Council has collaborated to train 173 people in 2024 for the application of prescribed fire on their private property along with 31 USDA employees aimed at achieving the JAA for planning fire in NRCS contracts.
- The Small Game Program is working closely with the Private Lands Program on 3 Focused Conservation (NRCS) Projects on working lands within the state.
- Membership of the Kentucky Bobwhite Battalion Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KentuckyQuail) increased to 4,549 members.
- KDFWR utilized nearly \$40,000 through the Habitat Management Services Center for dozer work on one public land QFA and mastication work on another public land QFA.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Cody Rhoden, Small Game Coordinator, cody.rhoden@ky.gov

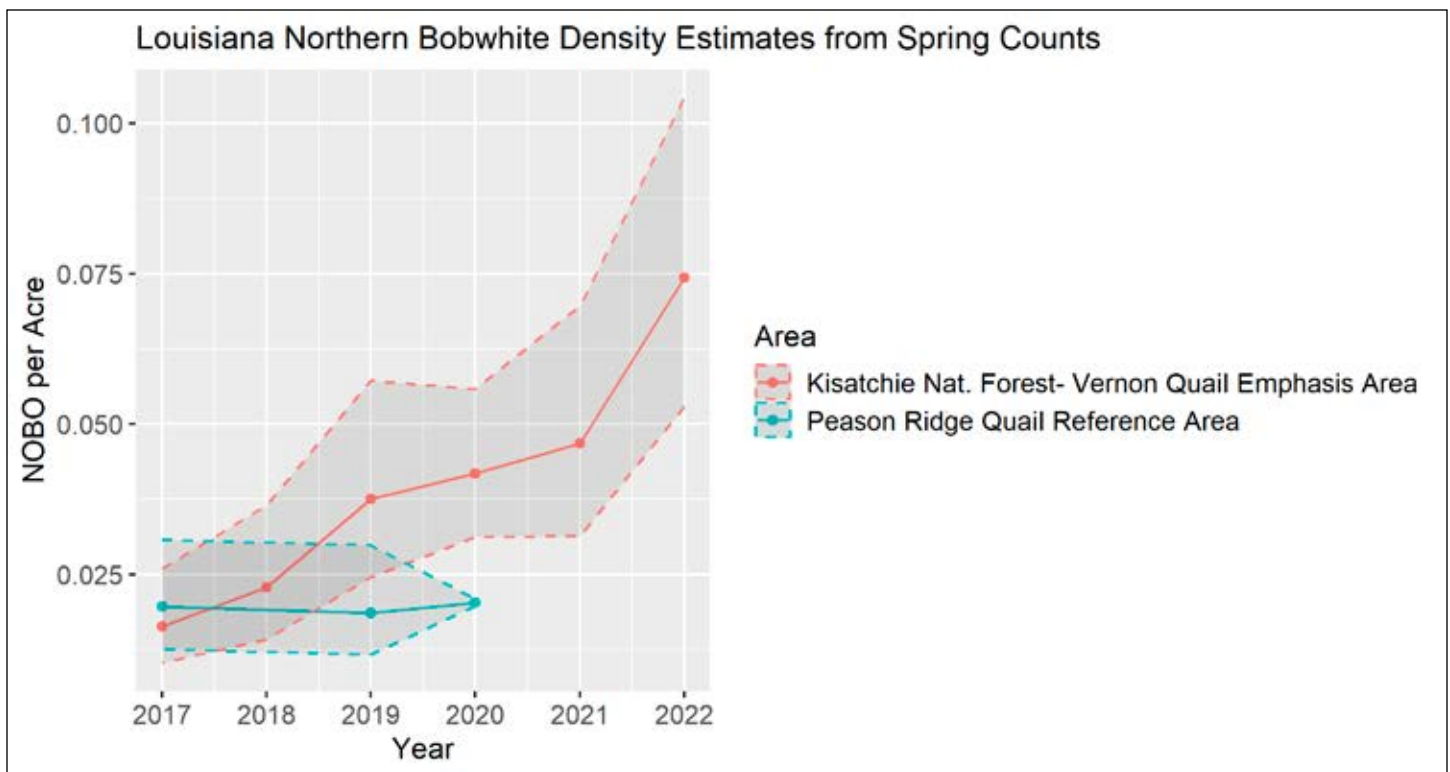
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)

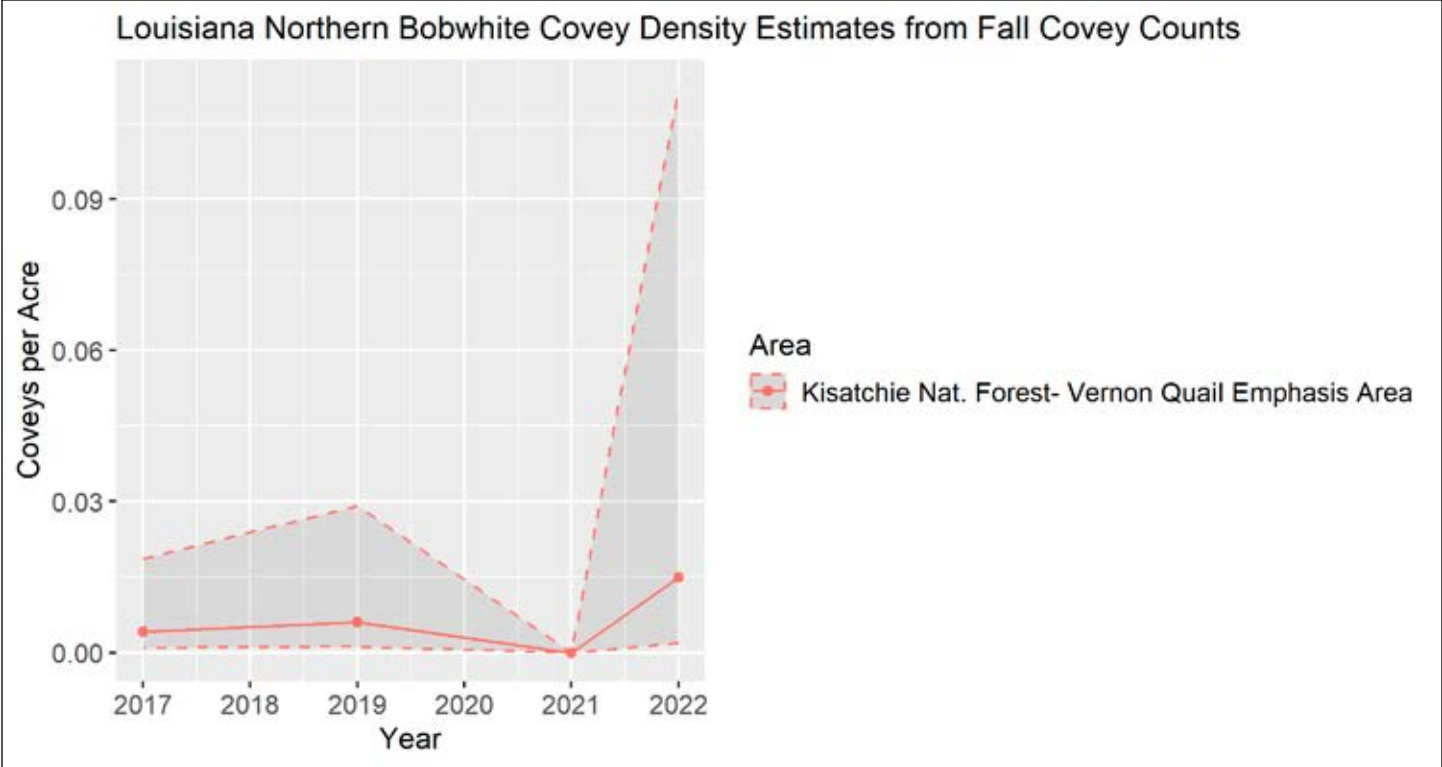
Population: The LDWF annual 2023 Bobwhite Whistle Survey combined results were not significantly different from 2022. Quail whistles heard continue to be near the lowest numbers across Louisiana since the survey began in 1983.

Hunting: The Big and Small Game Harvest Survey for 2023-24 estimated that 500 hunters harvested approximately 1,700 wild quail. Note: low survey response.

Management: LDWF continues to work with private, corporate, and government landowners and partners to improve quail habitat.

- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs in 2023: 619 acres of longleaf pine were planted and 4,454 acres burned.
- An additional 4,384 acres were burned and 1,304 acres of longleaf pine were planted by private and NGO funding on private lands in LA in 2023.
- Worked with the NRCS, National Wild Turkey Federation, and other agencies to hold longleaf pine workshops for private landowners and land managers.





- LDWF, Quail Forever, and other partners initiated the establishment of Prescribed Burn Associations in Northwest and Southwest Louisiana
- Bird and Habitat monitoring on Sandy Hollow Wildlife Management Area - 4,996 acres

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Cody Cedotal, Resident Small Game/Wild Turkey Program Manager, ccedotal@wlf.la.gov

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

Population: Maryland’s statewide bobwhite population has declined by more than 95% over the past 50 years according to Breeding Bird Survey data. The highest densities occur in the eastern part of the state. Some local populations have increased significantly in recent years where habitat management efforts have occurred.

Hunting: The 2022-23 annual hunter mail survey estimated 130 bobwhite hunters harvested about 320 wild birds, but small sample sizes limit reliability. The survey only requests data on wild quail hunts, but hunting of pen-raised quail remains popular.

Management: Management highlights include:

- Five MDNR Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) encompassing about 12,000 acres continue to be managed with a focus on bobwhite and other early successional species. Monitoring via summer and/or fall surveys indicates stable or increasing populations on most areas. On some areas, densities are well-above the long-term average and near record high levels.
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Quail Forever, and MDNR have partnered to hire a farm bill biologist to provide technical assistance within the Working Lands for Wildlife bobwhite focus area.
- MDNR has partnered with Tall Timbers Research Station to hire a biologist to provide technical assistance and prescribed fire outreach in the MD/DE region.
- Approximately 20,000 acres are currently enrolled in quail-friendly practices under various USDA Farm Bill programs.

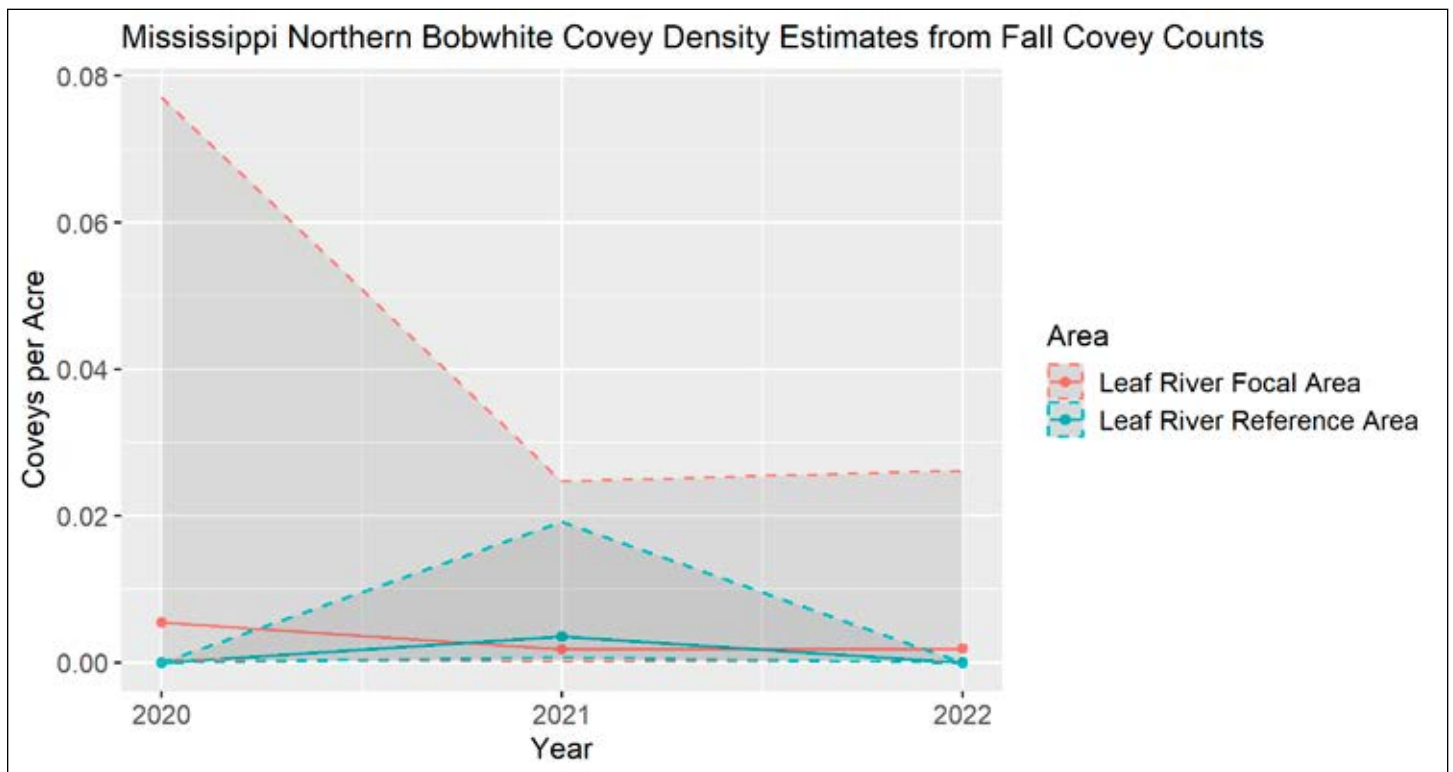
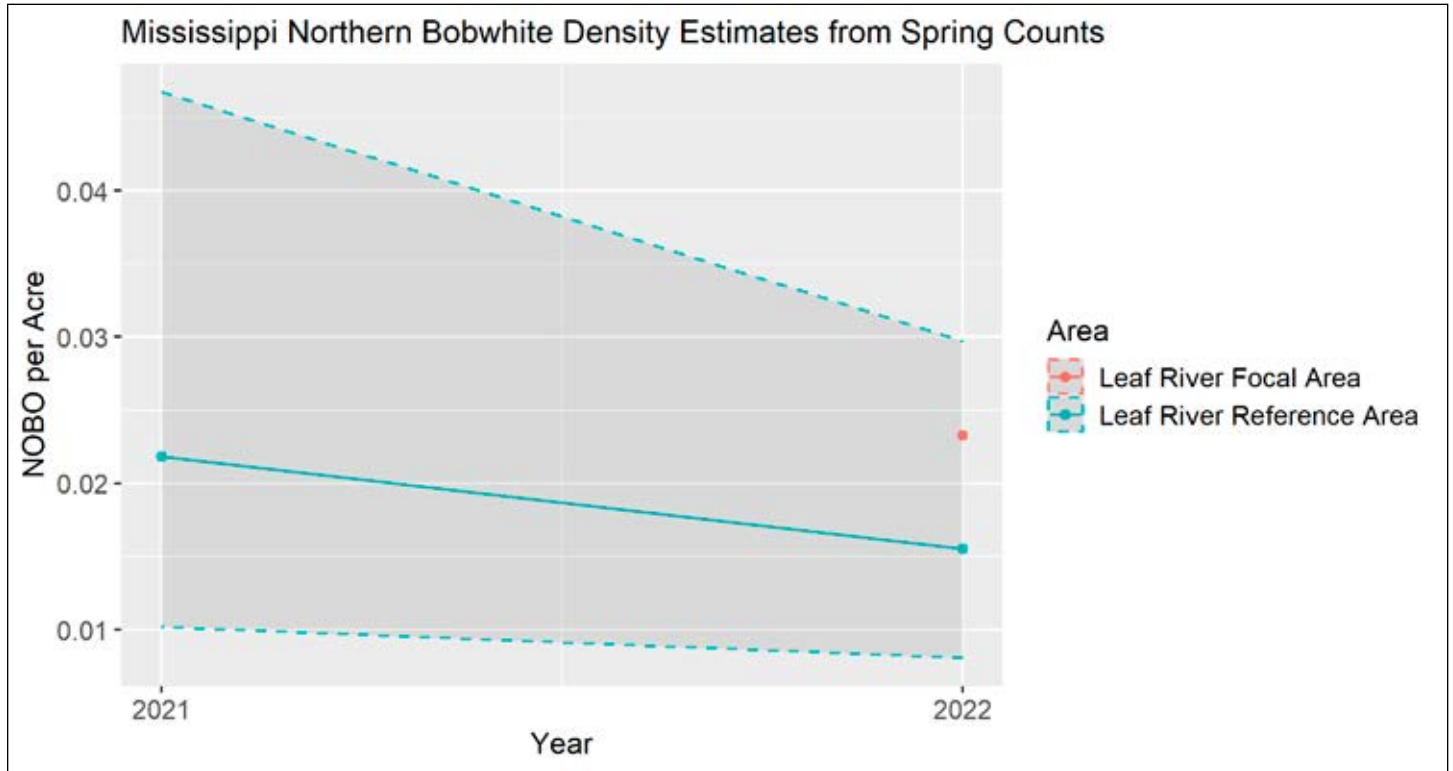
NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Bob Long, Wild Turkey and Upland Game Bird Project Manager, bob.long@maryland.gov



Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP)

Population: The MDWFP 2024 Wildlife Management Area [bobwhite abundance index](#) was 7% above the 2023 index.

Hunting: [2023-24 hunting season statistics](#) were greater than the previous season, and above the previous 5- and 10-year averages. These estimates are derived from surveys of a sample of licensed hunters (residents and non-residents).



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Due to small sample sizes, estimates can vary significantly annually, and our survey does not distinguish between hunters taking wild and pen-reared quail.

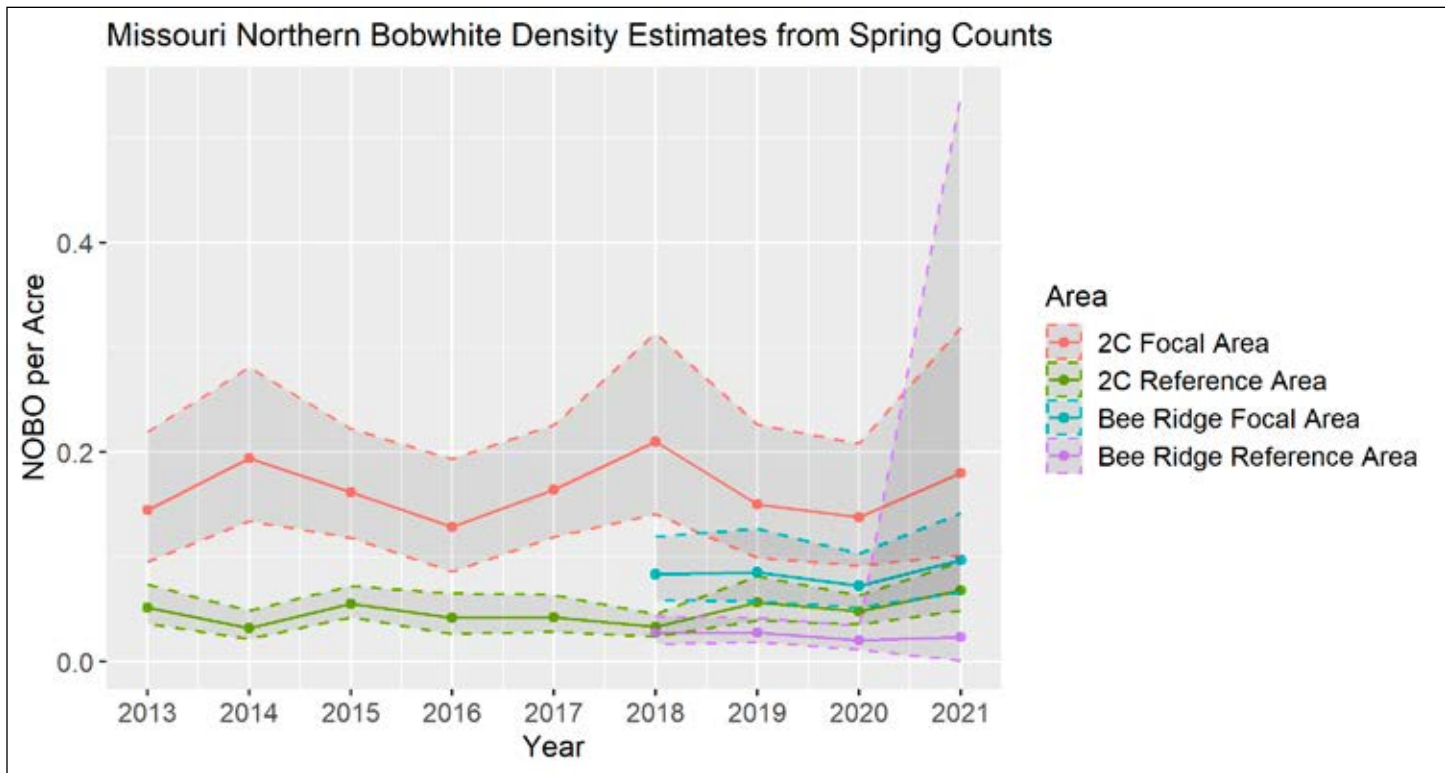
Management: Quail management highlights include:

- Cooperated with conservation partners to promote prescribed burning through [Fire on the Forty Initiative](#); provided cost-share assistance to landowners (cost-shared 8,900 acres of prescribed burning) and conducted prescribed burning technical guidance.
- Provided early successional habitat management technical guidance to private landowners statewide.
- Provided education and outreach via popular articles, website, and other media.
- Conducted a quail and wild turkey workshop in collaboration with Mississippi State University Extension Service.
- Cooperated with DeSoto National Forest (DeSoto Ranger District) on implementation of Leaf River Focal Area.
- Continued cooperative research project with Mississippi State University to measure scale of habitat management effects on quail populations within landscapes around five Wildlife Management Areas.
- Wildlife Management Areas implemented 6,815 acres habitat management practices beneficial to quail (e.g., prescribed burning and early successional vegetation management).
- Cooperated with NBGI to develop Regional Conservation Partnership Program project application.

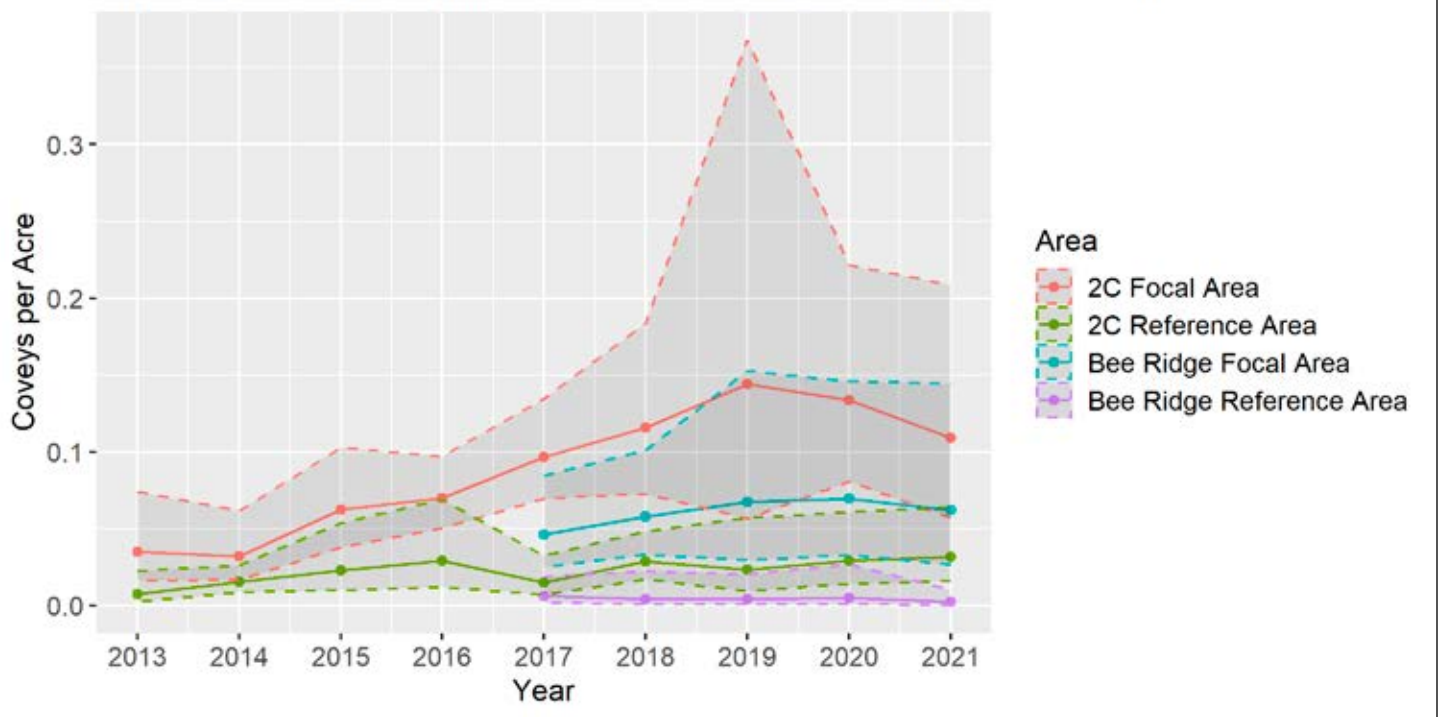
NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Rick Hamrick, Small Game Program Coordinator, rick.hamrick@wfp.ms.gov

Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)

Population: The 2024 August Agent’s roadside survey (conducted from August 1st-15th in 111 of Missouri’s 114 counties) had a statewide index of 2.10 quail per 30-mile route. This was 86% higher than last year’s index of 1.13. Despite a record breaking cold snap in January, the winter of 2024 ended up as Missouri’s 2nd warmest winter on record. Winter temperatures ranged from 1.5 degrees below average in January to 12.1 degrees above average in February, with locations in southern Missouri reporting temperatures in the high 80’s. Winter precipitation was slightly below average, except in January it was 1.42 inches above average. Increased precipitation during the spring helped alleviate 2 years of drought conditions throughout most of the state. Spring precipitation amounts ranged from 0.09 inches to 1.84 inches



Missouri Northern Bobwhite Covey Density Estimates from Fall Covey Counts



above average. Mild winter conditions and near normal precipitation amounts in the spring were beneficial to quail production in 2024. We are looking forward to seeing results of October’s fall covey surveys.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Beth Emmerich, Research Scientist, beth.emmerich@mdc.mo.gov

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC)

Population: The NGPC statewide abundance index from the 2024 [Bobwhite Whistle Count Survey](#) was equivalent to 2023, but increased in comparison to the 5-year average (16%). Statewide indices from the [2024 July Rural Mail Carrier Survey](#) (RMCS) were 7% above that in 2023 and equivalent to the 5-year average.

Hunting: [The Hunter Success Survey](#) estimated 10,501 hunters harvested 25,365 bobwhites during the 2023-24 bobwhite hunting season (28 October 2023 - 31 January 2024), which is significantly below the previous year’s and long-term averages. These estimates are based on survey responses from a sample of small game license holders, and due to response rates, estimates can vary significantly year to year.

Management: NGPC continues to implement early successional habitat management on both public and private lands for the benefit of bobwhites and other wildlife species. A summary of these efforts includes:

- As part of the Early Successional Habitat Initiative, over 80,000 acres of state-owned lands were improved for the benefit of quail, pheasants, and other upland game.
- In partnership with Nebraska Pheasants/Quail Forever, an additional 4,481 acres of habitat on public lands were positively impacted through the “Habitat Share” initiative.
- NGPC Partners Section staff continue to work cooperatively with landowners and partner agencies/organizations to enhance wildlife habitat on privately-owned lands. This year, private lands programs collectively impacted over 80,000 acres of upland habitat within the state’s quail range.
- Bobwhite Quail Conservation Delivery Specialist worked with private landowners on 10 project through Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative to improve over 950 acres of habitat for bobwhites in southeast Nebraska.
- Public hunting access opportunities on privately-owned lands have increased consecutively during each of the



last seven years. Since 2016, over 153,000 acres have been added to the agency’s Open Fields and Waters (OFW) program, which provides financial incentives to landowners willing to allow walk-in access for hunting and fishing. Statewide enrollment during the 2023-24 season was more than 388,000 acres, and the vast majority of these acres fall within Nebraska’s bobwhite range.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Bryan O’Connor, Upland Game Program Manager, bryan.oconnor@nebraska.gov

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North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC)

Population: Quail populations across the state have declined for many years and remain near all-time lows, with quail particularly scarce in the piedmont and mountains. The USGS North American Breeding Bird Survey serves as the state’s primary quail monitoring reference for regional and statewide trends. Populations are stable or increasing in a few areas where landowners are committed to intensive habitat restoration and management.

Hunting: Each year, the NCWRC uses a post-season survey to estimate the number of hunters, days hunted, and harvest of all game species in the state. During the 2023-24 season, approximately 4,700 hunters spent 37,000 days hunting quail and harvested 19,000 birds. The bulk of quail hunting and harvest occurs in the coastal plain of eastern North Carolina, with very little quail hunting taking place in the piedmont and almost none in the mountains. The agency’s Avid Hunter Survey captures additional important information about quail hunting in the state and points to higher success rates on private lands as compared to game lands.

Management: The NCWRC continues to implement Wild Quail Management Areas program that will allow dedicated property managers to implement specific management actions (nest predator trapping and supplemental feeding) for the benefit of wild bobwhites.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Hannah Plumpton, Upland Game Bird Biologist, hannah.plumpton@ncwildlife.org

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Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife (ODNR)

Population: In 2023 Ohio refocused their spring quail survey efforts to concentrate only on areas with a recent history of quail occurrence. Ohio’s remaining quail populations are highly fragmented with two main populations in 1) Darke, Preble, and Butler counties and 2) Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, Ross, and Highland counties. Small population fragments can be found in Jackson, Lawrence, and Gallia counties. The 2024 spring bobwhite quail population estimate was 7,473 (95% confidence interval: 5,018–11,128). These new estimates are not compatible with earlier statewide surveys. Spring population densities across southern Ohio averaged approximately 2 quail per 100 acres in surveyed areas.

Hunting: Results of ODNR Division of Wildlife hunter harvest surveys over the last two years show that quail hunting participation has declined significantly in Ohio. In 2011-12, approximately 3,000 hunters pursued wild quail in Ohio. Recent estimates are that there are less than 750 quail hunters in Ohio, making it difficult to acquire harvest data on a consistent basis from general surveys. Average hunting effort remains at about 1 day out of Ohio’s 24-day season with a daily bag average of 1-2 birds. Ohio offers a 2-bird daily bag limit. Hunting on public lands is closed except for special hunts on two areas.

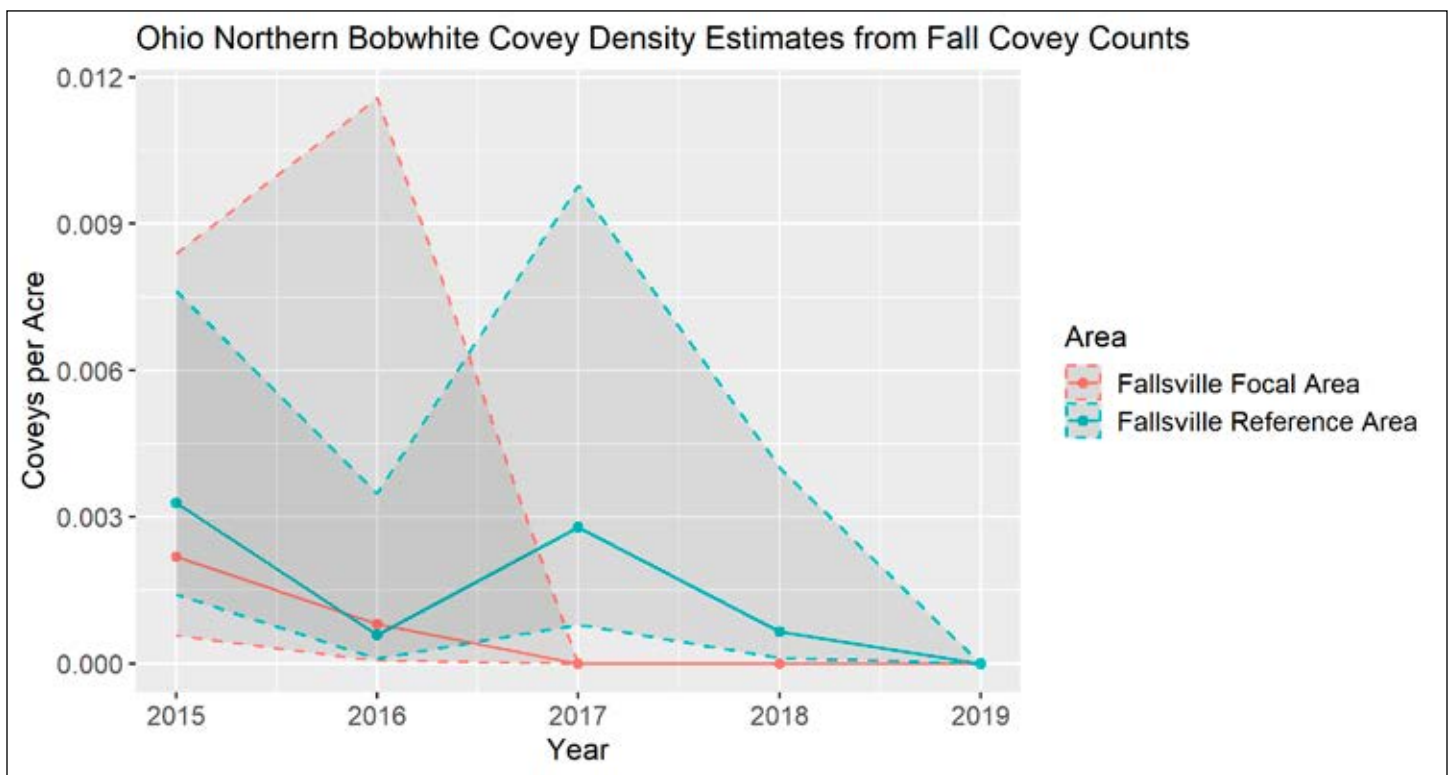
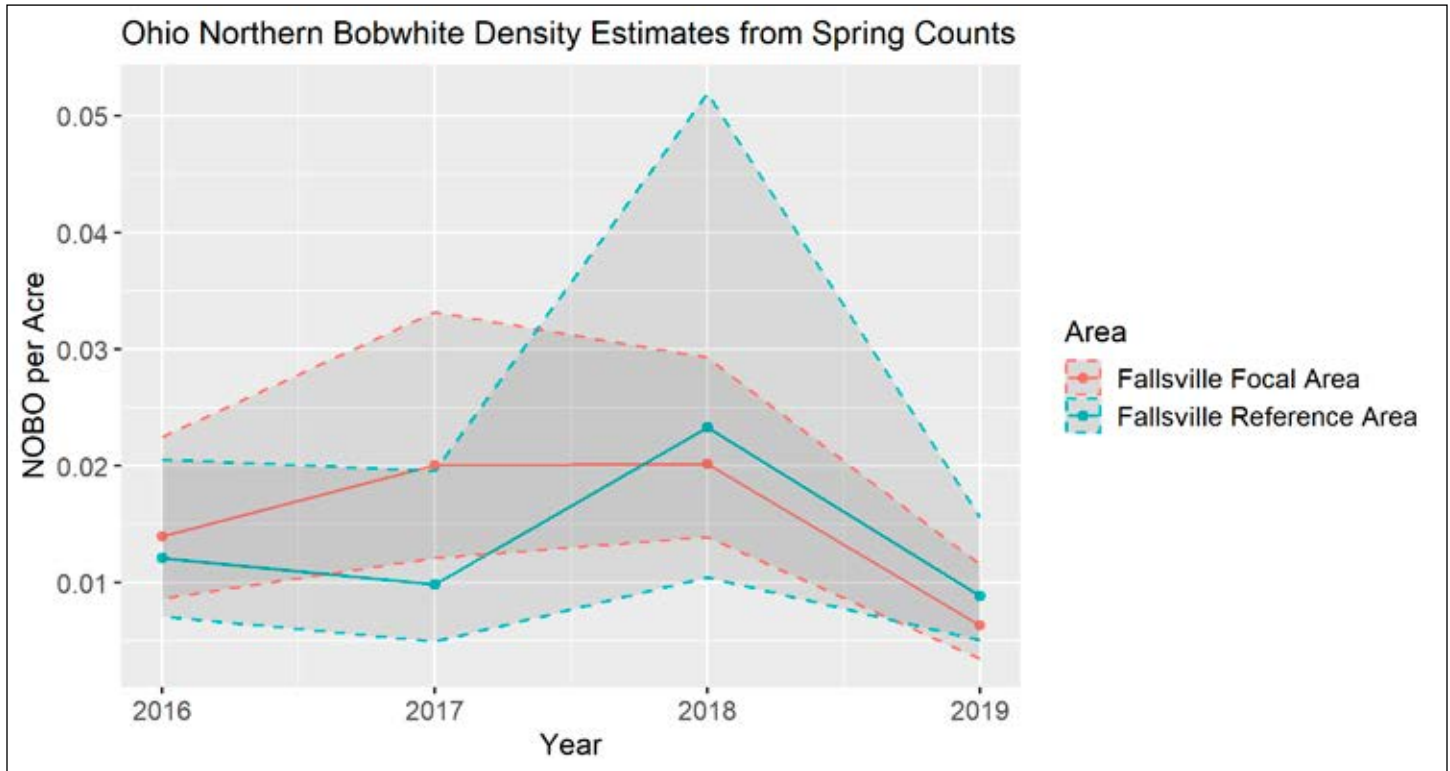
Management: Ohio’s largest quail population on public lands occurs on the Crown City Wildlife Area (Gallia and Lawrence Counties of southeast Ohio). Recent management efforts included the installation of several miles of permanent fire breaks to facilitate management of the approximately 2,200 acres of grassland on the area. Efforts are also underway to reduce invasive woody cover (black locust and autumn olive, primarily) on these upland areas.

In preparation for the implementation of Ohio’s RCPP/ Wildlife Habitat Initiative, we conducted roadside point-count surveys at 185 locations across Preble County along randomly selected routes. We visited each point three times from May 15–June 30, 2024. Staff recorded quail that were seen or heard during each three-minute survey and estimated the distance to every individual. During our surveys, we detected 84 bobwhite, all whistling males. We used both distance sampling and occupancy modeling to evaluate the bobwhite population within Preble County. Assuming a 1:1 sex ratio, our estimated density was 0.474 quail^{km2} (95% CI: 0.290–0.775). In total, we surveyed across 1,334^{km2} in Preble and



portions of adjacent counties. Extrapolating the average density across the surveyed region yields a population estimate of 633 bobwhite (95% CI: 387–1,034 quail). Our survey efforts provide baseline information on the distribution and abundance of bobwhite across Preble County.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Nathan Stricker, Wildlife Biology Supervisor, nathan.stricker@dnr.state.oh.us



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Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)

Population: A detailed analysis of all existing population data (e-bird, Breeding Bird Atlas, BBS, Christmas Bird Count, and survey of land managers throughout the state) was conducted in 2014 by the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management at The Pennsylvania State University. That analysis concluded that there were no viable and self-sustaining populations of bobwhite remaining in Pennsylvania, likely towards the end of the 20th century or in the first several years of the 21st century.

In 2024, bobwhite were reintroduced to Pennsylvania. A total of 87 bobwhite were translocated to Letterkenny Army Depot in March of 2024, the first of three translocation years. Although there was not fine scale survival and reproduction data, other surveys and observations show promise for this reintroduction. Spring whistle counts indicated good survival of translocated bobwhite through that survey period. Three broods were observed between July and August as the first sign of reproduction. Fall covey call surveys supported indications of reproduction within the population.

Hunting: The PGC does not raise and release bobwhites, but many sportsman clubs and shooting preserves do for the purposes of training and hunting. Based on a survey of game bird propagators, we estimate that over 60,000 pen-reared bobwhites were released in 2013, primarily for dog training. Bobwhites harvested in Pennsylvania are from pen-reared and released birds. The state is open to put-and-take quail hunting, with a split season running from the beginning of September through the end of March, without a bag or possession limit.

Bobwhite hunting and release of pen raised bobwhite is banned by regulation within the Bobwhite Quail Recovery Area (BQRA). The BQRA buffers the area where bobwhite have been reintroduced to protect that population from direct harvest and mixing genetics with pen raised birds while the population becomes established.

Management: PGC has been managing habitat on the Bobwhite Quail Focus Area (BQFA) as bobwhite reintroduction efforts continue. Management highlights include:

- Bobwhite were reintroduced to Pennsylvania in March 2024. A total of 87 bobwhite were translocated from three sources: 50 from Tall Timbers, 22 from Fort Barfoot and Virginia DWR, and 15 from Fort Knox.
- Pennsylvania continues to work closely with Fort Barfoot and the Virginia DWR, Fort Knox, and Tall Timbers for the upcoming translocations planned for 2025 and 2026.
- A total of 2,869 acres and 1,193 acres of bobwhite management occurred on Letterkenny Army Depot in 2023 and January through October of 2024 of respectively.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Haley Keff, Quail, Dove and Pheasant Biologist, hkeff@pa.gov

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South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)

Population: The 2023 Summer Turkey and Quail Brood Survey reported an average brood size of 8.0 quail chicks and an age ratio of 1.8 juveniles per adult, a slight decrease from 2023 which was not statistically significant. The 2023 Fall Covey Counts had a slight increase in detected coveys across all surveyed areas. On average, 4 more coveys were detected on focal area properties compared to reference area properties. Number of whistling males heard during the 2024 Spring Whistle Count remained steady for 3 of the 4 focal area properties compared to 2023. One focal area, Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge, reported its highest detection in 2024 of 17 singing males.

Hunting: The 2023-24 Quail Hunter Survey for wild quail hunts reported a small decrease in average covey size compared to the 2022-23 survey, though this decrease was not statistically significant. The 2023-24 survey produced a juvenile harvest percentage of 66.7%. The average hunter success decreased slightly over the prior year in the annual [Quail Hunter Survey](#). The 2023-24 hunting season reported 0.14 coveys per hour of hunting.

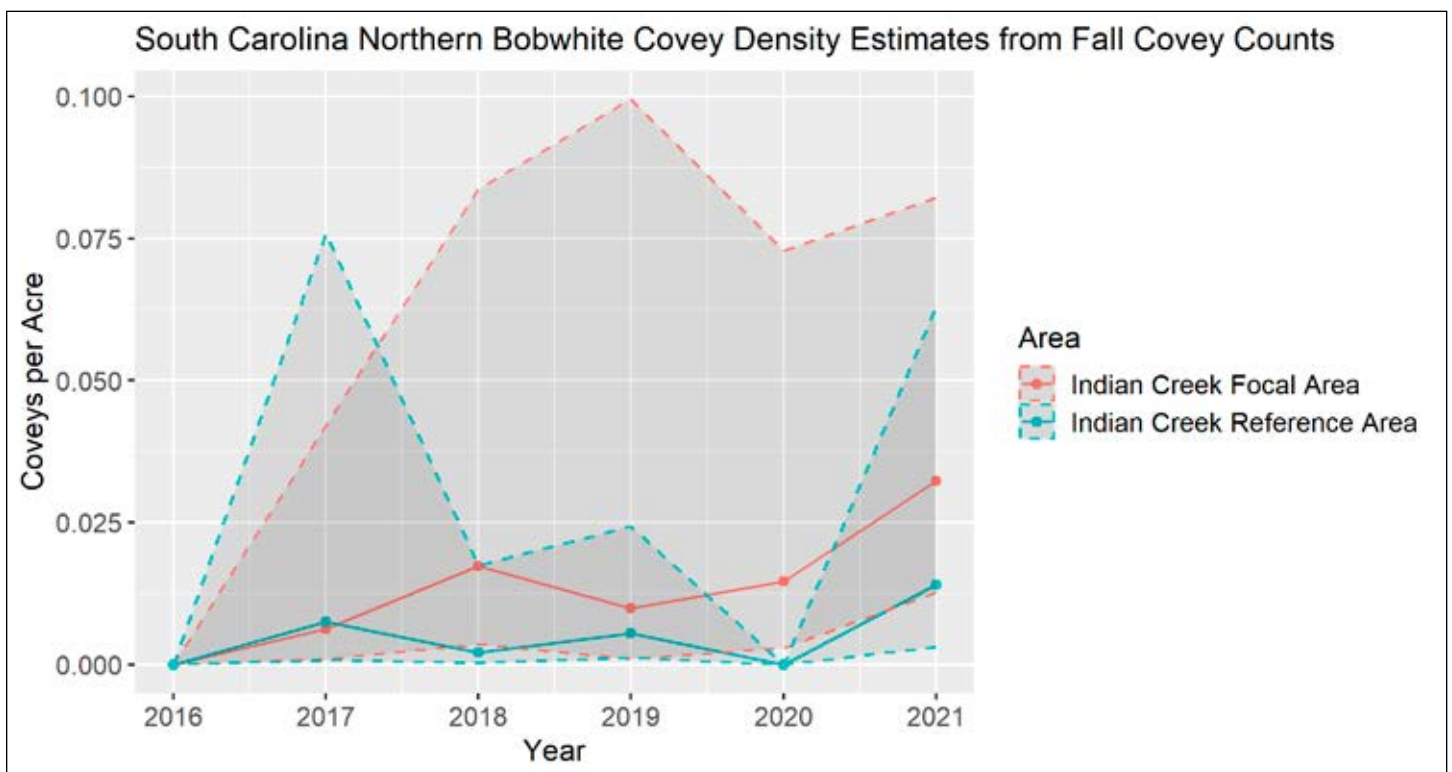
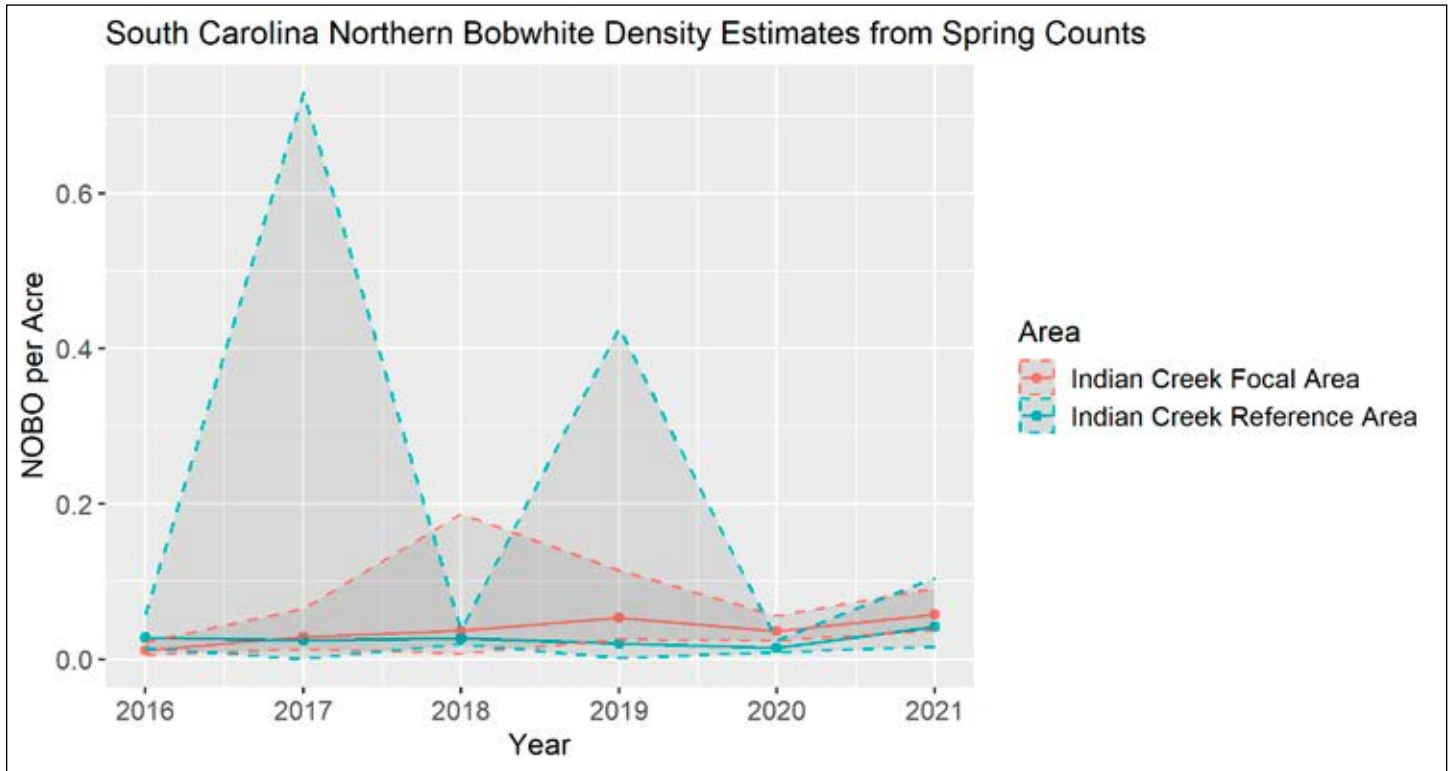
Management: Quail management highlights include:

- Monitoring and habitat manipulation continued in 2024 with many projects being completed, new projects being started, and habitat continues to be manipulated on all four focal areas in the state. Spring bird counts, fall covey



counts, and habitat surveys were also completed on all four focal areas.

- There have been changes in the staffing of Farm Bill Biologist. There is 1 Quail Forever, NRCS, and SCDNR vacancy that should be filled soon. An agreement between SCDNR and NRCS has created an additional Farm Bill Biologist position that will also be posted and filled soon.
- The Quail Forever Habitat Team in South Carolina is nearing their 1-year anniversary in South Carolina and have helped



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private and public landowners complete prescribed burns and other vegetation control measures across the state.

- The Bobwhite Quail Whistling Cock Census was conducted for the 46th year, the Annual Summer Bobwhite Quail Brood Survey was conducted for the 31st year, and the Annual Fall Covey Count Survey was conducted for the 24th year.
- The Northern Bobwhite Quail Seminar held in March every year continues to be successful among private landowners and professionals.
- SCDNR Small Game Staff keep the quail page on the SCDNR website updated. Visitors can also find out more about SCBI on our webpage, on Instagram (@scbobwhites), or at www.facebook.com/scbobwhites.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Michael Hook, Small Game Program Coordinator, hookm@dnr.sc.gov

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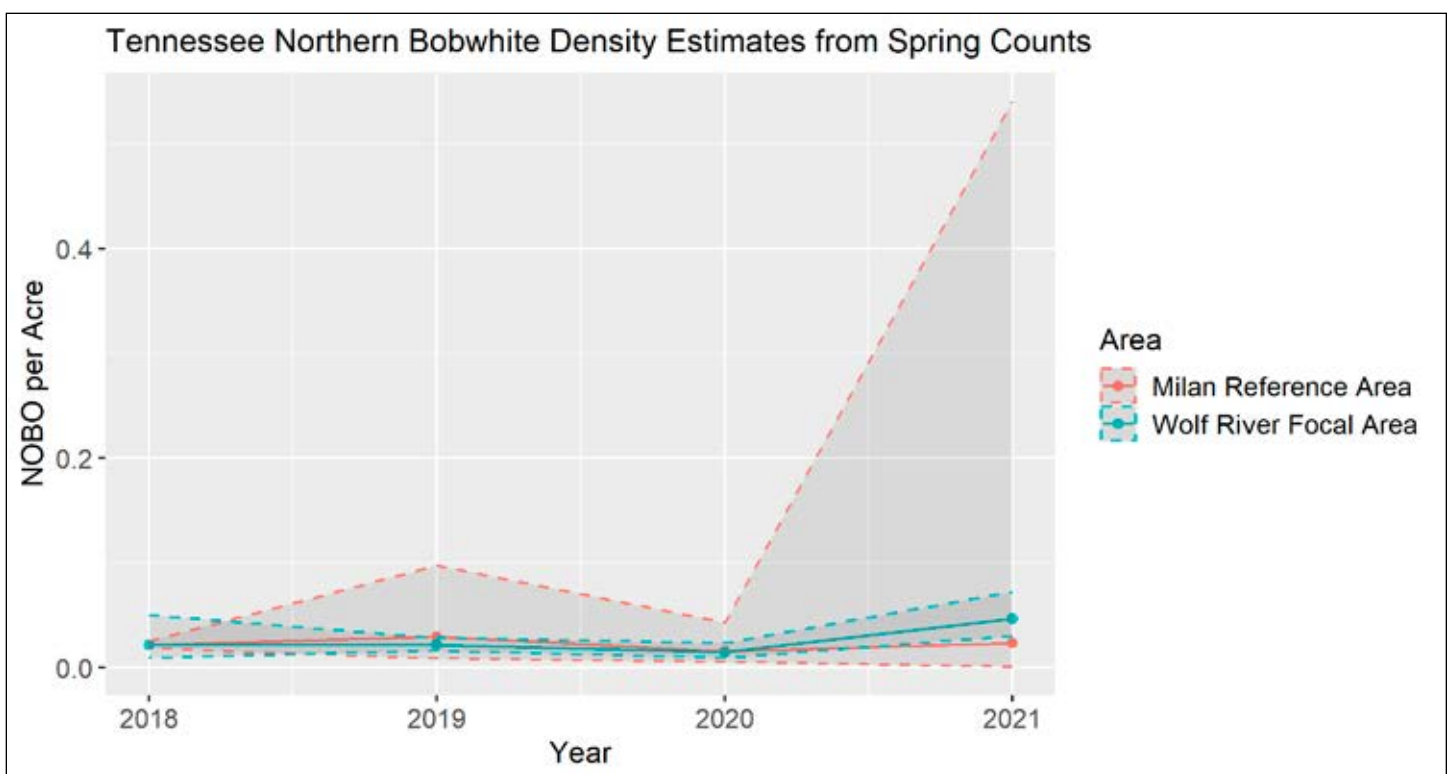
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)

Population: Tennessee’s bobwhites continue to slowly decline across the state but managed lands are showing growth.

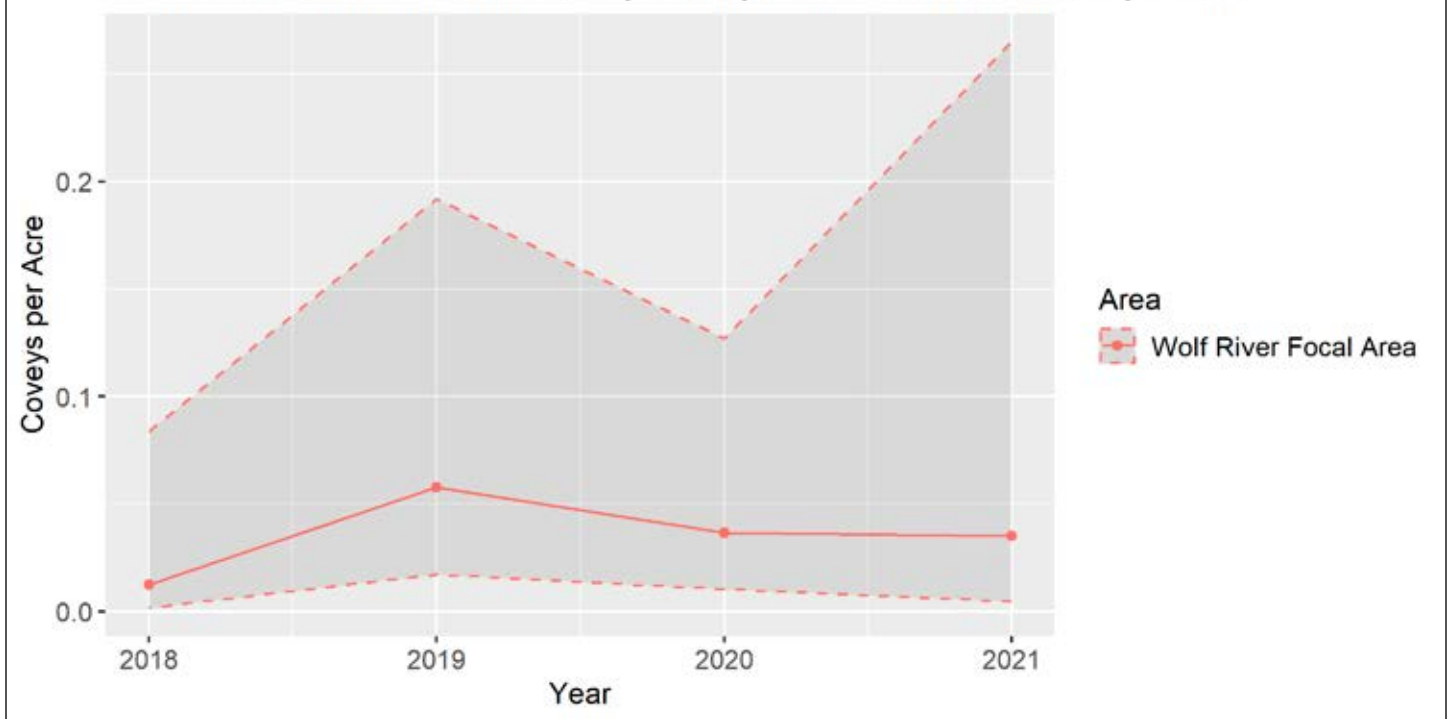
Hunting: Tennessee did not survey small game hunters following the 2023-24 season.

Management: Quail management highlights include:

- Completed habitat projects on more than 16 wildlife management areas across Tennessee specifically targeted to benefit bobwhites
- Provided early successional habitat management technical guidance to private landowners statewide.
- Continued education and outreach via public contacts and website.
- Partnered with Quail Forever Habitat Team to improve habitat on public and private lands on the Cumberland Plateau
- Monitored bobwhite populations on WMAs and adjacent private land using June whistle counts and fall covey counts.
- Continued cooperative research project with Mississippi State University to measure scale of habitat management effects on quail populations within landscapes around five WMAs.



Tennessee Northern Bobwhite Covey Density Estimates from Fall Covey Counts



- Collaborated with a local TV station to produce a segment on bobwhite management
- Established the first bobwhite quota hunts in Tennessee

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Michael McCord, Small Game, Furbearer and Feral Swine Coordinator, michael.mccord@tn.gov

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)

Population: Since 1976, TPWD has monitored bobwhite populations via annual roadside counts. In 2024, we observed [significant gains](#) across the state as a result of good habitat conditions and timely spring rainfall; the largest increases were in the Rolling Plains, with good reports out of South Texas as well. This bump will help arrest regional [declines](#) in the short-term. Over the long-term, the annual [Breeding Bird Survey](#) estimating a ~2% statewide annual decline in Texas since 1966.

Hunting: TPWD estimates and tracks hunters and harvest via our [Small Game Harvest Survey](#). In 2023-24, ~32,000 hunters went afield, harvesting ~360,000 bobwhites. The former represented a 21% increase in hunters from the previous season but was still 20% below our 15-year average (~40,000). The latter represented an 87% increase in harvest from the previous season but was also 24% below our 15-year average (~476,000). We anticipate an increase in hunting opportunities this upcoming season (2024-25) as bobwhite numbers across the state have improved, indicative of a productive nesting season, especially in the Rolling Plains of West Texas.

Management: Most bobwhite management in Texas is focused on and aligns with complementary grassland bird habitat programs and initiatives, all of which allow for well-established conservation practices to be implemented on private and public lands. Over the last decade the suite of program offerings has grown to cover most regions in the state, including the newest frontier in East Texas.

- **Habitat Programs:** Grassland Restoration Incentive Program (Central Texas, Gulf Coast, South Texas, West Texas, Southern Great Plains), Pastures for Upland Birds (USFWS), and the Northeast Texas Habitat Incentive Program, among others (>\$10 million allocated since 2014).
- **Funding Sources:** Natural Resources Conservation Service - RCPP, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and



Wildlife Service (e.g., Partners Program, Pittman-Robertson), and TPWD’s Upland Game Bird Stamp fund (i.e., hunter generated state revenue), among others.

- Research: Grassland bird (to include bobwhites) monitoring to assess grassland habitat restoration efforts on Wildlife Management Areas (Playa Lakes Joint Venture); investigating landowner attitudes toward bobwhite declines and management approaches (Texas A&M University-Kingsville), investigating knowledge and adoption of habitat management practices and programs by landowners across Texas (Texas State University).
- Partnerships: Led by Tall Timbers Research Station (Western Pineywoods Quail Program), in concert with the U.S. Forest Service and local partners, TPWD is assisting in improving bobwhite-specific management on Wildlife Management Areas in East Texas via changes to long-term management plans (e.g., thinning, burning) using examples from federal partners in Louisiana.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: John McLaughlin, Upland Game Bird Program Leader, john.mclaughlin@tpwd.texas.gov

Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation (Texas)

Population: The Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch 2024 roadside and fall covey counts indicated a 380% increase of bobwhite quail on the ranch. Roadside counts in 2023 estimated 4.5 quail per mile on survey routes, compared to 11.7 birds per mile in 2024.

Hunting: Across the state, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department suggest an increase in numbers for the 2024-25 hunting season, with average quail numbers being slightly above to above the long-term averages. The Rolling Plains Ecoregion saw the greatest increase in quail numbers within Texas compared to 2023-24, with South Texas remaining constant, and the Trans-Pecos expecting to see a slight increase in scaled quail numbers over the previous year.

Management: Quail management highlights on the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch include:

- Prescribed fire on 80 acres of the research ranch. The purpose of this was to restore vegetation production in dormant CRP fields.
- Native plant reseeding is being conducted on approximately 300 acres of unused agricultural pasture on the north end of the ranch.
- QuailGuard medicated feed for the treatment of parasitic worms affecting quail was released in Texas through partnerships with Park Cities Quail Coalition, Texas Tech University, and RPQRF. Following this RPQRF is in the process of launching a landscape scale study to determine the efficacy of the feed to wild birds on multiple study sites throughout the Rolling Plains Ecoregion.
- RPQRF has partnered with the Wildlife Habitat Federation to offer quail management/habitat consultations to landowners throughout the State of Texas.

RPQRF Executive Director: Dr. Ryan O’Shaughnessy, rosshaughnessy@quailresearch.org

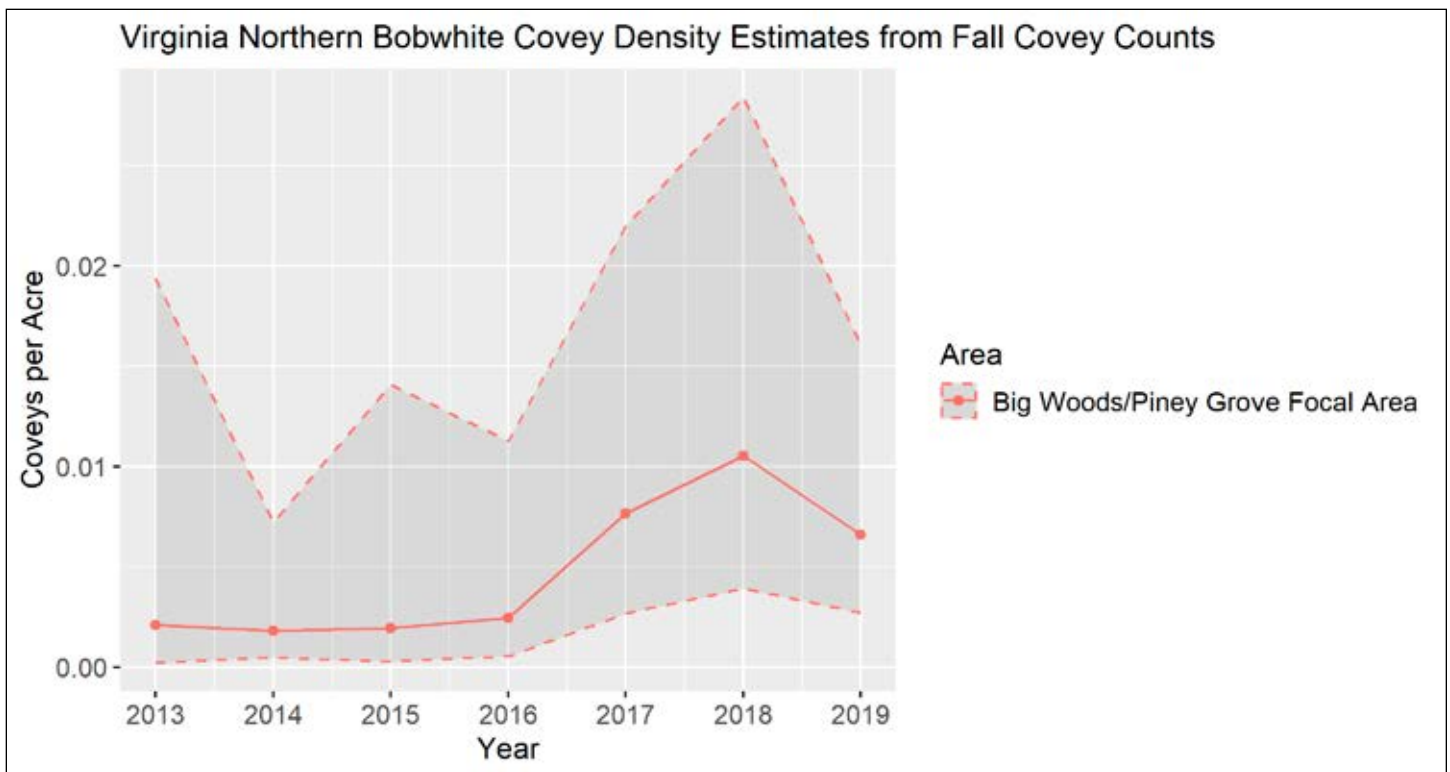
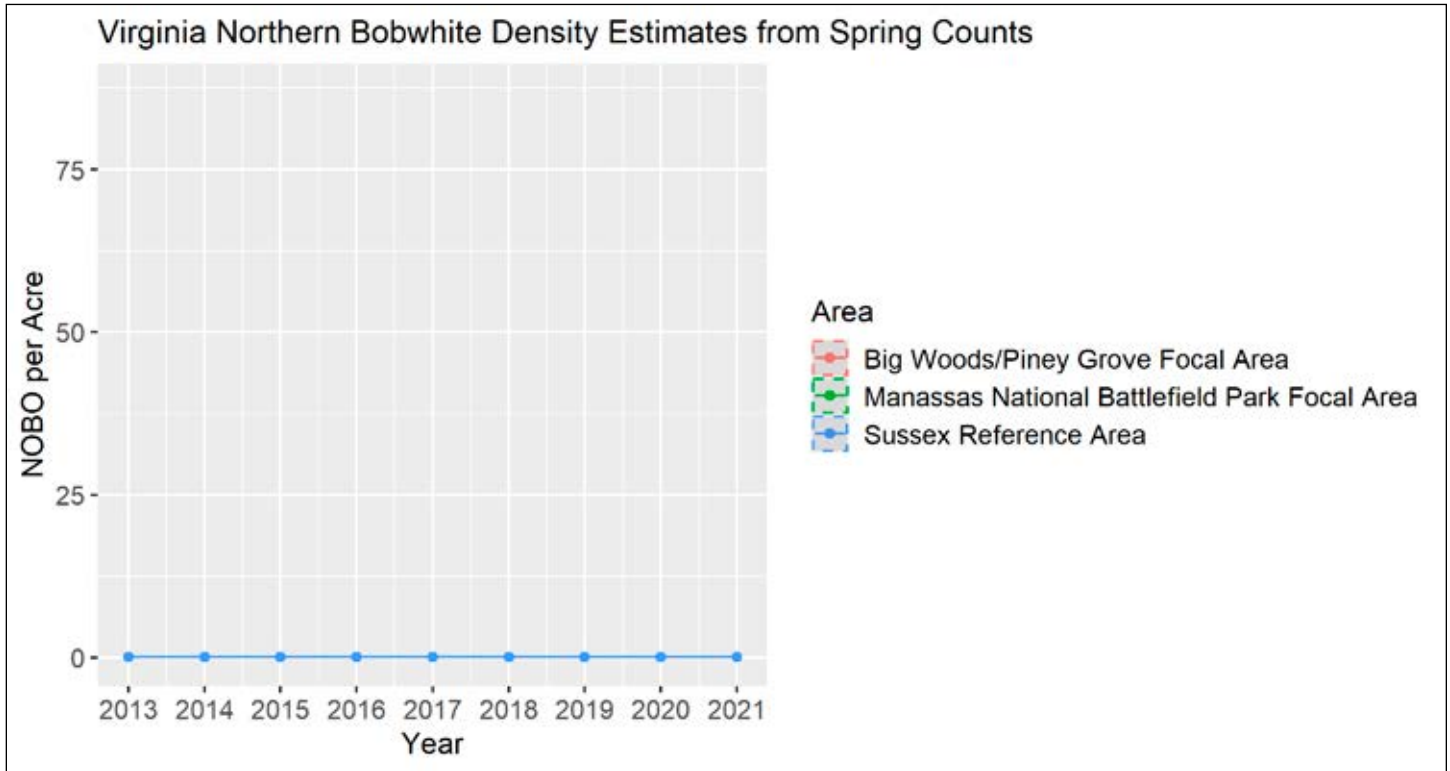
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR)

Population: The annual quail call and rabbit survey is performed by agency staff and volunteers throughout the month of June. Observers are assigned routes designated along secondary roads throughout Virginia. Each route consists of a quail and a rabbit section. Data is still being collated and analyzed for 2024. In 2023, 33 observers completed 60 routes. State-wide the average number of quail observed on a route was 2.73. While this is a 12.5% decrease from 2022, this is still the second largest number observed since 2009.

Hunting: VDWR conducted the annual 2023-24 quail hunter cooperator survey (mailed to a list of about 40 remaining participating quail hunters – down from its peak of approximately 250 in the 1980s). This year 21 hunter cooperators sent in a seasonal report, the same as last year. Hunters reported on 371 hunts and found 634 quail coveys, or 1.7 coveys per hunt (up from the previous years). On average hunting parties found one covey per 1.83 hours of hunting, an improvement over the 10-year average. Hunters killed 549 quail and averaged killing less than one quail per covey flushed. Hunters found an average of 0.53 coveys per hour. Compared to averages for the period from the 2009-10 season to the



2020-21 season of 0.40 coveys per hour, 1.39 coveys per hunt, and 2.64 hours per covey find, hunting success improved significantly (though sample size is low and biased and should be interpreted cautiously). Of note, some individual hunters did very well, with the most successful hunter reporting 120 hours hunted, resulting in 135 coveys flushed and 118 quail killed. That is an average covey find rate of one every 0.88 hours. Several hunters averaged finding coveys in 1.4 to 1.7 hours of hunting.



Management: VDWR completed the 15th year of the Quail and Early Successional Species Recovery Initiative (www.dwr.virginia.gov/quail) as of June 30th, 2024. During this entire 15-year period, the Private Lands Wildlife Biologists (PLWBs) made a total of 6,536 site visits and wrote 3,496 management plans for landowners who own over 609,260 acres. During the most recent reporting period, the PLWBs continued to do great work making 360 landowner site visits and 505 new contacts, writing 142 management plans, and working with landowners who own over 26,500 acres. They helped establish or maintain approximately 21,300 acres of early succession private lands habitat.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Jay Howell, Small Game Project Leader, jay.howell@dwr.virginia.gov

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West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR)

Population: The current extent and population size of bobwhite in West Virginia is unknown. In 2022, administration directed the WVDNR to initiate a bobwhite quail release program on select state managed WMAs and state forests. Reports of quail are common on these select WMAs and forests, and it is typical to see quail venturing outside of release areas, too. West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) Wildlife Resources employees track turkey and grouse broods statewide and are asked to record northern bobwhites seen or heard. Reports of quail are rare, except for areas near quail releases. It is assumed outside of those designated release areas that observations were of pen-reared and/or escaped/released birds, as it is legal in West Virginia to utilize bobwhite quail for dog training or shoot-to-retrieve field trials. Given the rapid decline, distribution, and type of observations between the current West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (unpublished) and the prior atlas ([West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, 1984-89](#)), it is believed that populations are extremely low and have been extirpated in the vast majority of the state.

Habitat: West Virginia is only a marginal state for bobwhite, being mostly forested and lacking the largescale continuous vegetation disturbances that are needed to create the brush and grasslands required to support bobwhite. According to the West Virginia Division of Forestry, West Virginia was 57% forested in the 1950s. Today, it is 78% forested, and the age composition of that forest is almost 70% saw timber, 22% pole stage, and only 8% seedling/sapling (young forest). Compounding the problem of too little young forest is that the 8% is not evenly distributed across the landscape. Where the national forests and even some state forests used to contain a diversity of age classes, purposeful reductions, if not outright elimination, of active timber management have resulted in entire regions of the state exceeding 90% forested.

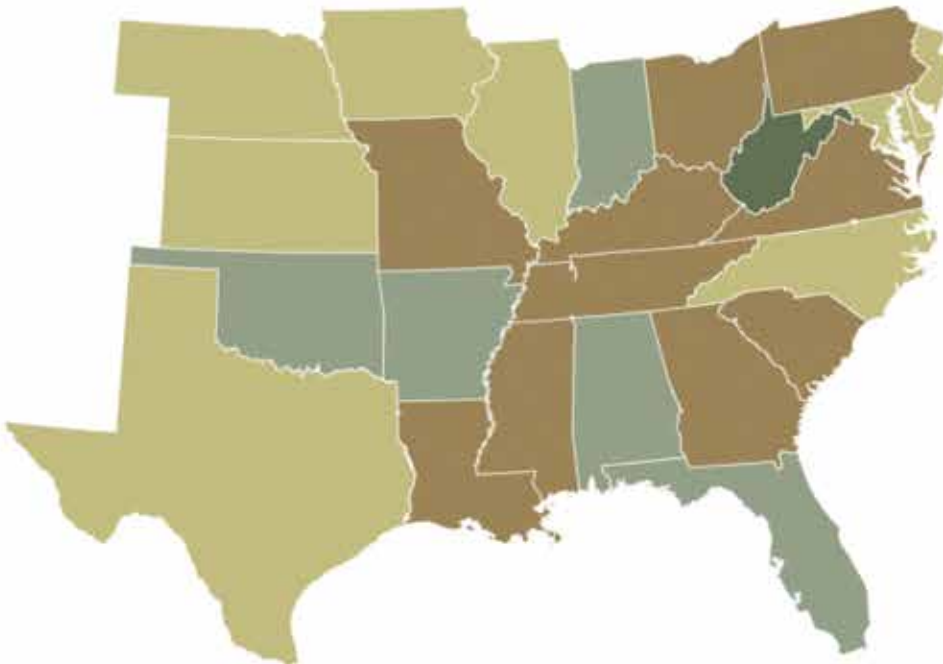
Hunting: This species remains a game bird in West Virginia with no annual harvest limit, a bag limit of three and possession limit of nine. The continued open season assumes that most, if not all, harvested birds are captive-raised released birds. Hunting remains closed on the Tomblin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in the southwestern coal fields.

Management: West Virginia has a statewide bobwhite operational plan and state management guidelines, but they are opportunistic in nature (i.e., in conjunction with creating early successional habitat for grouse and turkey). The Tomblin Wildlife Management Area in the southern coal fields of the state is still the focal area for quail habitat enhancement. For the past 2 years, 21,000 quail have been released annually on select state managed WMAs and state forests. For the upcoming 2024-25 season, 27,000 quail will be released. The releases occur from August through November to provide wildlife viewing, dog training, and hunting opportunities. In addition, habitat manipulation to support quail is being conducted on these select WMAs and state forests.

NBGI State Quail Coordinator: Holly Morris, Furbearer and Small Game Project Leader, holly.n.morris@wv.gov



FY25 NBGI Funding



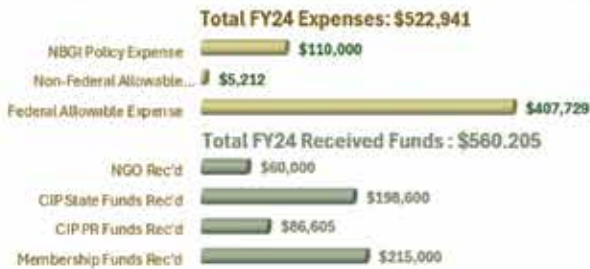
- Habitat & Science
- Outreach & Coordination
- Policy & Support
- Declined

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Clemson University and NBGI'S Fiscal Year begins July 1 and ends June 30 each year.

FY24: July 01, 2023 – June 30, 2024 ♦ FY25: July 01, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Total Actual FY24 Expenses and Received Funds



FY24 Type of Expense	Actual FY24 Expenses	Actual FY24 Federal Allowable Expense	Actual FY24 Non-Federal Allowable Expenses
Salaries	\$ 249,271	\$ 247,920	\$ 1,351
Benefits	\$ 106,160	\$ 103,522	\$ 2,638
Travel	\$ 35,344	\$ 35,344	\$ -
Printing (flyers/publication)	\$ 3,547	\$ 3,547	\$ -
Website hosting/CCIT servers	\$ 2,186	\$ 1,786	\$ 400
Postage/Freight/Shipping	\$ 633	\$ -	\$ 633
Office Digital devices	\$ 162	\$ -	\$ 162
Office supplies	\$ 28	\$ -	\$ 28
Subcontractor (Policy/JMS Ntrl)	\$ 110,000	\$ -	\$ 110,000
Contractual(videos/Interns)	\$ 15,610	\$ 15,610	\$ -
Total Actual FY24 Expenses	\$ 522,941	\$ 407,729	\$ 115,212

Total Projected FY25 Expenses and Funds



FY25 Type of Expense	Projected FY25 Expenses	Projected FY25 Federal Allowable Expense	Projected FY25 Non-Federal Allowable Expenses
Salaries	\$ 197,332	\$ 183,059	\$ 14,273
Benefits	\$ 85,247	\$ 79,081	\$ 6,166
Travel	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ -
Printing (flyers/publication)	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -
Website hosting/CCIT servers	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -
Postage/Freight/Shipping	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ 400
Office Digital devices	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200
Office supplies	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 100
Subcontractor (Policy/JMS Ntrl)	\$ 110,000	\$ -	\$ 110,000
Contractual	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ -
Total Projected FY25 Expenses	\$ 442,779	\$ 311,640	\$ 131,139



NBGI State Agencies

Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC)
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (GADNR)
Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife (IDWF)
Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWP)
Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDWFR)
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)
Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources (MDNR)

Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP)
Missouri Dept. of Conservation (MDC)
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC)
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW)
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC)
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR)
Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC)
Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources (SCDNR)
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD)
Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources (VDWR)
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR)

Acronyms

ALPFC – Alabama Prescribed Fire Council
BBS – USGS North American Breeding Bird Survey
BMP – Best Management Practices
BQFA – Bobwhite Quail Focus Areas
BQI – Bobwhite Quail Initiative
CCI – Collaborative Conservation Initiative
CIP – Coordinated Implementation Plan (NBGI CIP)
CNF – Conecuh National Forest
CP – Conservation Practice (as used in the Conservation Reserve Program)
CP-33 – Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
CP-38 – State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement, SAFE
CP-42 – Pollinator Habitat
CCRP – Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
CLAP – Collaborative Landowner Assistance Program
CNGM – Center for Native Grasslands Management
CRP – Conservation Reserve Program
CS – Cost-share
DNR – Department of Natural Resources
ESH – Early Successional Habitat
FB – Farm Bill (CCRP, CRP, EQIP, GRP, etc.)
FFA – Future Farmers of America
FSA – Farm Service Agency
FWA – Fish and Wildlife Area
EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FSA – Farm Service Agency
GRIP – Grassland Restoration Incentive Program
JQC – Joint Quail Conference
KNF – Kisatchie National Forest
LEAD – Letterkenny Army Depot
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NBCI – National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
NBGI – National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative
NBGIF – National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Foundation
NBTC – National Bobwhite Technical Committee
NFWF – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NPS – National Park Service
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
OCI – Office of Conservation Investment
OPJV – Oaks and Prairie Joint Venture
OSU – Oklahoma State University
P-R – Pittman-Robertson
PCQ – Park Cities Quail
PF – Pheasants Forever
PLP – Private Lands Program
PSU – Pennsylvania State University
QF – Quail Forever
QRL – Quail Restoration Landscape
RCP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RS – Research Station
SAFE – State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement, CP-38
SCBI – South Carolina Bobwhite Initiative
SCBFP – South Carolina Bobwhite Funding Partnership
SE – Standard Error
SHC – Strategic Habitat Conservation
SWAP – State Wildlife Action Planning
TTRS – Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy
UDEL – University of Delaware
UERP – Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project
USFS – United States Forest Service
USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USGS – United States Geological Survey
UT – University of Tennessee
UTIA – University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
VWL – Virginia Working Landscapes
WA – Wildlife Area
WLFW – Working Lands For Wildlife
WMA – Wildlife Management Area
WRD – Wildlife Resources Division
WSFW – Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration





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