



Continuous
CRP

January 2015

CP-33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds or Quail Buffers

Northern Bobwhite have been declining by 3% annually throughout their range. The dramatic population decline of northern bobwhite quail over the last few decades has been cause for concern among wildlife conservationists and hunters. This concern has led to new research, multi-state partnerships, and on-the-ground conservation initiatives in attempts to reverse the decline of this iconic game bird.

While solutions remain elusive, localized efforts to restore quality quail habitat have had promising results. Unlike many other upland game birds, quail have small home ranges and can be managed for in small areas present on almost every farm in their range.

Quail coveys require a variety of habitat types in close proximity to one another. Grasslands for nesting cover, bare ground and annual plants for foraging broods, and brushy-woody areas for escape cover and thermal cover are all needed. Close proximity of these habitats is especially beneficial in spring and early summer when quail chicks are less than two weeks old and very susceptible to predation and hypothermia.

Quail Buffers establish diverse, low density grass and forb seedings along agricultural fields. These plantings provide edge habitat quail thrive on. Field buffers naturally place all the habitat components quail require close together without sacrificing large areas of crop production.

Edges of agricultural fields often suffer yield loss from shading, wind stress, soil compaction or wildlife depredation. Buffers allow landowners to eliminate their lowest producing acres and straighten out edges to farm the field more efficiently, while receiving a reliable, set annual payment.



Example of a habitat buffer for upland birds.



A diversity of grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs will provide winter and nesting cover, and blooming plants for great brood-rearing habitat.

Key Quail Habitat Requirements

- Covey Headquarters or Low Lying Woody Cover
- Diverse Mix of Grasses and Forbs
- Bare Ground
- Location

INTERESTING FACT

Crop yields can be 40-60% lower next to woodlots and hedgerows.

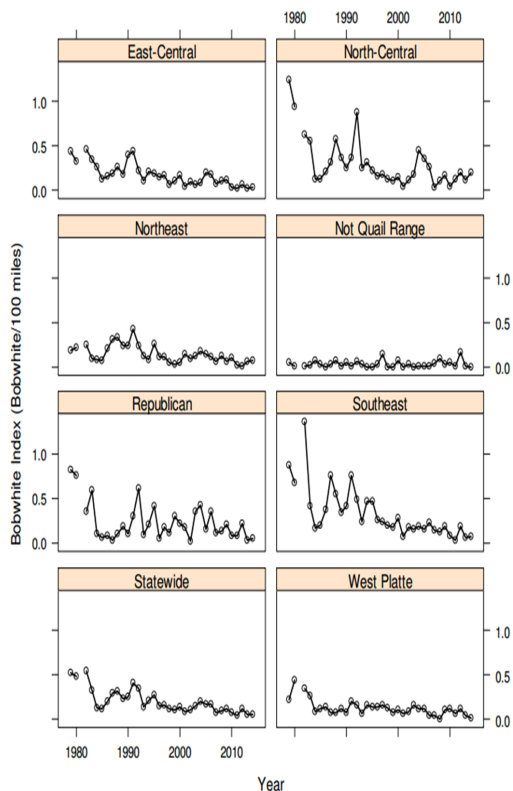


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The wider the buffer, the more benefits for soil, water, and wildlife enhancement a landowner can expect.



Regional and statewide time series (1979 -2013) of bobwhite population indices from the April Rural Mail carrier Survey. Graphic courtesy Jeff Lusk with NGPC.

Purpose

- Create a field border of vegetation around the edges of crop fields designed to benefit bobwhite quail and other grassland species.

Eligibility

- Acres must be cropland or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four of six crop years. Years are determined by the Farm Bill.
- Eligible acres may be signed up on a continuous basis and do not have to wait for a sign up period as long as acres are available.
- Does not have to be Highly Erodible Land (HEL) to be eligible.
- Minimum size requirements for CP33 is 5 acres or an average of 5 acres if on multiple fields on the same tract.
- Whole pivot corners are now eligible with no minimum acreage requirement.
- Field border must be a minimum of an average width of 30' with a maximum of 120'.
- Contracts must have a duration of 10 years.

Rental Rate

- Annual payment based on the county soil rental rate established for the three predominate soils.

Incentives

- One time sign up bonus payment (SIP) of \$150 per acre.
- Reimbursement payment of approximately 50% of costs for establishment and management practices.
- One time practice incentive payment (PIP) of approximately 40% for

establishment costs once all the practices are completed and initial 50% reimbursement payment is made. Both of these payments together make up about 90% of the cost of establishment.

Management

- Mid-Contract Management (MCM) is required at least once during the length of the contract.
- Incidental grazing is allowed on CP33 acres and can be counted as a MCM activity.



Field borders place all the critical habitat components (nesting cover, bare ground, and escape/thermal cover) immediately next to each other.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Through a partnership with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, wildlife biologists are available to help provide wildlife habitat guidance, technical assistance on the available conservation programs and design seeding mixtures.

For further information visit NebraskaPF.com or call 844-733-3669.



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