



# Continuous CRP

January 2015

## CP-38E SAFE Habitat for Upland Game Birds

CP-38E SAFE 'Habitat for Upland Game Birds' is a Nebraska specific initiative to combat the decline and increase populations of northern bobwhite quail. Northern bobwhite quail continue to decline by roughly 3% annually across their range.

The design hones in on providing quality nesting and brood rearing cover on the landscape, complimented by the addition of shrubby cover, winter cover, and edge habitat based on needs and species potential for specific tracts of land. These habitat components are placed side by side in "patches" ensuring all critical life cycle elements are available in close proximity to one another. This limits exposure to weather and predation when traveling between cover types.

Pheasants and quail respond positively to "edge" which can be achieved through use of food plots, firebreaks, or other habitat transitions. Edge practices such as firebreaks ease the division of management of large fields into multiple years.

### Nesting Cover

Nesting cover is less dense than traditional CRP, comprised of approximately 50% grasses and 50% broadleaf plants. A combination of bunchgrasses and cool season grasses provide optimal structure and timing of growth.

### Brooding Rearing Cover

A diversity of blooming plants attracts insects for the entirety of the growing season. Broadleaf plants also provide the overhead canopy structure and bare ground for efficient brood foraging.

### Shrubby Cover

Shrub thickets are vital as quail covey headquarters and function year round as escape and thermal cover for all upland game bird species.

### Winter Cover

Densely planted tall, warm-season grasses provide thermal refuge in winter months.



*Ideal brood habitat consists of flowering species to attract insects and bare ground to allow for easy movement.*



*Maintaining about 40% bare ground in structurally and vegetatively diverse cover is the rule of thumb for quail management.*

### Key Quail Habitat Requirements

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

### INTERESTING FACT

**Quality nesting and brooding habitat is the limiting factor for upland game bird populations in Nebraska.**



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If quail need to travel further to meet their food and cover needs, the increased exposure to predators and the elements will lower survival.



A covey headquarters can be created by planting shrubs like American plum, chokecherry, sand cherry, or buffaloberry.

**Purpose**

- Improve or create high quality grassland habitat that will benefit declining bird populations such as bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasant.
- Create side benefits for other grassland dependent species in decline such as grassland nesting song birds and pollinating insects.

**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 CP38 is 5 acres with a maximum of 160 acres.
- Contracts may have a duration of 10 to 15 years.
- Planting of food plots is allowed without cost assistance.

**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 \$100 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.
- If CP38 is planted into existing grass cover, an initial MCM activity will be required to establish the planting.
- Haying and grazing are allowed on CP38 acres.



Quality quail habitat is typically comprised of three habitat components located immediately next to each other: large thickets of shrubby cover, areas of bare soil provided by food plots, crops or light disking and a grass /forb mixture.

**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](http://NebraskaPF.com) or call 844-733-3669.



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