

**Southern Illinois University / USDA-NRCS
Illinois Landowner's Quail Management Workshop
16 September 2006, Executive Summary**

*Donald W. Sparling, Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory
Douglas C. Osborne, Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory*

Event Summary

More than 100 landowners and natural resource professionals attended the workshop. Borah and Hibner farms in Wayne County, Illinois are 2 farms incorporated in the CRP Management research efforts through Southern Illinois University and the Bobwhite Restoration Project. The event featured 4 morning presentations along with a field tour on hay-rack through 5 different management sites. Topics included bobwhite habitat requirements, Farm Bill programs, Acres for Wildlife, QU habitat projects, CRP management, native grasses/forbs, food plots, fence row management, cool-season grasses/legumes, and prescribed fire (see agenda). Several state and federal professionals, NRCS, FSA, IDNR, University personal and private landowners were in attendance. The Workshop would not have been possible without financial and logistical support from many contributors, especially Dave Howell and the Quail Unlimited staff.

Attendance

The workshop was attended by approximately 90 landowners and 15 resource professionals from NRCS, IDNR, Quail Unlimited, and University faculty and graduate students

Materials

All who attended were given a Northern Bobwhite Quail Conservation Initiative Folder (SEQSG) with the following materials at the time of their registration. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources donated over 100 copies of the newly published "The Bobwhite Basics" by John Roseberry and John Cole.

1. *The Bobwhite Basics*

John Roseberry and John Cole, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

2. *Bobwhite Basics*

Southeast Quail Study Group (SEQSG), Habitat Implementation Committee, and Quail Unlimited

3. *Filter Strips for Wildlife*

USDA-NRCS, Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, Illinois Division of Wildlife Resources, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Quail Unlimited, and Illinois Pheasants Forever.

4. *Bobwhite Call Counts, 2006: Upland Wildlife Program Management Note 06-1*
John Cole Illinois Department of Natural Resources
5. *Illinois Wildlife Enhancement Bonus Program*
Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Resources Habitat Stamp Fund
6. *Improving Bobwhite Habitat in Wayne County with CRP Management: Project Update*
Doug Osborne, Graduate Research Assistant, Southern Illinois University
7. *Conservation Reserve Program Management: Illinois activities and payment rates*
Illinois NRCS CRP Management
8. *Establishment and Management of Forbs in Grass Plantings*
NRCS, Illinois Biology Technical Note No. 21 January 2002
9. *Grazing Native Warm Season Grass*
Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska Extension Forage Specialist
10. *Guidelines for Prescribed Burning*
Jef Hodges, Quail Unlimited Magazine July-August 1999, pp. 38-41)
11. *Border Plantings for Wildlife*
Kenton Macy USDA-NRCS Biologist, Charleston, IL
12. *Quail Unlimited Habitat Accomplishments: the last 5 years*
Quail Unlimited, Inc, Edgefield, SC

Agenda

AGENDA ILLINOIS LANDOWNER'S QUAIL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Borah & Hibner Farms, Wayne County, IL
September 16, 2006

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| 8:00 am | Morning Registration |
| 9:00 am | Welcome and Introduction – Dave Howell, Quail Unlimited, Moderator |
| 9:05 am | Bobwhite Quail Habitat Requirements
John Roseberry, Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory
Southern Illinois University Carbondale |
| 9:45 am | Quail Management Opportunities thru Federal Farm Bill Programs
Charles Tremble, Natural Resource Conservation Service |

- 10:00 am IDNR Private Land Wildlife Habitat Program – Acres for Wildlife
Steve Kern, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- 10:10 am Illinois Bonus Program/Habitat Work
Mel Gajewski, Quail Unlimited Illinois Habitat Coordinator
- 10:20 am Field Tour of Quail Habitat (Time approximately 1.5 hours)
CRP Management Research – Doug Osborne and John Cole
Native Grasses and Forbs – Dave Howell
Food plots and Fence row management – Steve Kern
Cool-season grasses and legumes – Mel Gajewski
Prescribed fire – Dave Howell & Steve Kern
- 12:15 pm Lunch – Courtesy of WEW Bobwhite Quail Unlimited
Drawing for Gun

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our appreciation to Ray Webb and the Borah and Hibner families for allowing us to use their property for this special event. At the event both families were awarded a Special Edition signed, framed and numbered “Quail Study” print that was commissioned by Anthony J. Padgett in celebration of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory’s 50th anniversary and to honor retiring senior scientist John L. Roseberry. In addition we would like to recognize all the staff that had a hand in organizing the field day.



Sponsors

Illinois Quail Unlimited
WEW Bobwhite Quail Unlimited Chapter
Southern Illinois University
Wayne County SWCD
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Wabash Valley RC&D.



Mel Gajewski, The Illinois Quail Unlimited Wildlife Habitat Coordinator discusses various Illinois bonus programs and current habitat work being done around the state.



John Cole (Rt. Illinois Department of Natural Resources) explains the importance of maintaining early succession for bobwhites and Doug Osborne (Southern Illinois University) provides some preliminary results and observations from the 2006 field season.

News Release

For more information: John Cole -- 217/782-6384 Dave Howell -- 812/536-2272

2006 Illinois Quail Management Workshop Set

Illinois landowners, sportsmen, and others, who want to see bobwhite quail numbers improve, are invited to attend a free Landowner's Quail Management Workshop, on Saturday, 16 September, 2006 at the Borah and Hibner Farms in Wayne County.

To reach the Borah and Hibner properties from Fairfield, take Route 15 east from the Highway 45 junction for 5.5 miles to Kline Store Rd. (2400N), Go north on the blacktop road for 1.5 miles to CR 950. Turn east for .75 miles to the workshop site on the left. Workshop signs will also be posted.

The workshop will include a morning program at 9:00 am, followed by a field tour to observe actual habitat practices and concludes with a free lunch provided by Quail Unlimited.

The event, the thirteenth annual, is jointly sponsored by Illinois Quail Unlimited and the WEW Bobwhite Chapter of Quail Unlimited, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District, Southern Illinois University (SIU), Wabash Valley RC&D, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

The workshop will focus on improving quail habitat and accessing state, federal, and private programs to implement various wildlife management practices. Resource agency speakers will discuss various Farm Bill conservation programs, including CRP and CP-33(Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds). Special focus will be on CRP mid-contract management and practices (strip disking, legume inter-seeding and strip spraying) that improve bobwhite food and cover conditions. An overview of a CRP mid-contract management study by the Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab at SIU will be covered.

Please register in advance for this free workshop by calling the Wayne County SWCD at (618-842-7602 Ext. 3) with your name and number attending. All are welcome, but only those who pre-register will have their names entered in a drawing for a shotgun donated by Quail Unlimited.

CRP MANAGEMENT AND BOBWHITE QUAIL HABITAT IN WAYNE COUNTY

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has greatly influenced grassland wildlife conservation. The program provides financial incentives to retire highly erodible cropland from production for 10-15 years. Unfortunately, the quality of habitat for quail to raise broods diminishes after 3-4 years, as the annual weeds and forbs are out competed by perennials and dominating grasses. Kentucky-31 tall fescue was the primary grass planted to CRP because of the relatively cost of the seed and its ability to stabilize the soil more quickly. However, fescue gets extremely thick, making it nearly impossible for newly hatched quail chicks to move through the field in search of protein rich insects. In addition, the grass stays relatively short and provides no overhead cover from avian predators.

CRP Management was introduced in 2003 to restore aging CRP fields back to early successional habitats that are more desirable for quail. The program administered by the Farm Service Agency, provides cost share incentives to implement some type of cover disturbance such as disking, burning, herbicide spraying and legume inter-seeding to portions of a CRP fields that are more than 4 years of age.

The Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at Southern Illinois University Carbondale has teamed up with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, United States Department of Agriculture and Quail Unlimited to investigate the benefits of CRP Management for quail and quail habitat. We will apply strip disking, herbicide spraying and some re-seeding of lespedeza and partridge pea to CRP fields in Wayne County from 2006-2008. We are now 1-year through the study. In the strips sprayed with Roundup Original Max® there is less ground cover, allowing increased mobility for quail chicks and more overhead cover, providing visual protection from avian predators. The strips also support a greater abundance of insects that are essential to the survival of quail chicks. We have also re-seeded several fields that were strip sprayed (Roundup) with lespedeza and partridge pea which have shown an increase in the number of insects and will provide quality seeds for quail during the fall and winter months.



We are highly anticipating the results of this study and we are excited about the amount of CRP fescue we are converting to quality quail habitat. By the fall of 2008 we will have converted over 700 acres of fescue to potential quail habitat. We will produce brochures with management recommendations and suggestions for applying CRP Management. We are thankful for the landowners that have agreed to participate in this study. Please contact me with questions or comments you may have.
Doug Osborne: Work 618.453.6959 or Home 618.942.4762.

