



Make your field edges pay.

A new conservation practice for landowners and farmers with double benefits: higher quail populations and dependable annual rental payments from field edges (where crop yields are often low).

Upland Bird Habitat Buffer - a new Conservation Reserve Program practice that will benefit farmers, bobwhites, and declining populations of grassland and brushland songbirds in North Carolina.

This program pays farmers to establish habitat buffers around existing cropland. Buffers are strips of volunteer vegetation on field edges that provide valuable nesting and brood cover for bobwhite quail and other wildlife, protect water quality and support integrated pest management.

Program elements

- continuous sign-up
- 10-year contracts
- no limit to acreage enrolled per farm
- annual rental payments based upon soil fertility and local established rental rates
- a one-time signing bonus of about \$100 per acre enrolled
- an annual maintenance payment of \$5 per acre
- management payments of up to \$100 per acre over 10 years
- enrollment for landowners or tenants with long-term leases

Program requirements

- buffers must be on land cropped for four of the six years from 1996 to 2001
- buffers need to grow volunteer vegetation
- buffer strips must have an average width between 30 and 120 feet
- landowners must control woody plants and manage habitat using one or more of the following methods on one-third to one-half of the buffer length each year: fall or winter disking, prescribed burning or spot-applied herbicide
- buffer edges must be identified with PVC pipes

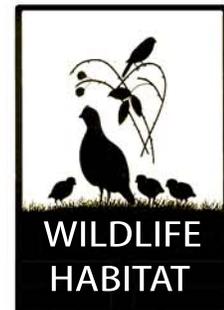
Buffers are not...

- wildlife food plots,
- for production of hay, forage, or crops; or
- for turn rows, roads, or storage areas for crops or equipment.

Also, buffers cannot

be disked,
mowed or
burned
during the
nesting

season
(April 15 -
September 15).



Buffers of volunteer vegetation provide the right structure, cover and food for birds in a farm landscape. Not only bobwhite quail, but other declining birds like the northern shrike, field sparrow and prairie warbler benefit from the grasses, forbs and vines that make up a field border. Research in eastern North Carolina has consistently documented increases in bobwhites on farms with field buffers in place.

Sign up at your local Farm Service Agency.

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