



## Bobwhite Quail:

### Bobwhite Quail situation in Indiana:



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

Bobwhite populations have decreased significantly in recent years, as much as 70 to 90 percent in some areas. Among the most influential impacts reducing quail population numbers continues to be the loss of nesting and protective cover. The removal of overgrown hedgerows, fencerows, and windbreaks from agricultural fields and rural landscapes; the conversion of open, native grasslands, woodland edge, and other idle habitat to introduced grasses and developed lands has reduced or eliminated bobwhite quail populations from traditionally occupied areas across the United States.

#### Area:

1. A healthy Quail population needs an area between 20 to 40 acres of land in typical conditions.
2. Generally an acre can support one quail bird but it depends on the habitat quality and diversity.
3. Intensively managed areas can average one convey per 15 acres, whereas less intensively managed lands may require 50 acres or more to support a covey
1. Pastures with a shrub or brushy component.
2. Woodlands with grass
3. Brushy fencerows
4. Roadway and power line rights-of-way.

#### Diet:

1. The quail chicks need insects so they have an easy source of protein. That's

#### Cover:

why we recommend grassed areas with shrubs and bushes.

2. The adults will be willing to include in his diet crops like: soybeans, corn, grain sorghum, wheat, millet, and rye.
3. Also they will feel attracted to eat wild fruits and seeds like mulberries, raspberries, huckleberries, crabgrass,

blackberries, sunflowers, bayberries, strawberries, foxtail, hackberry, grapes, plums and ragweed.

### **Things to look for if you are interested in providing habitat for quails:**

Quails are relatively easy to manage because they thrive in early successional communities which can be established quickly through various soil disturbance activities. However, the intensity of management to control succession can be more expensive than other wildlife management actions. The following management practices are used to disturb soil and vegetation in order to promote early successional growth of plants and attract insects. More than one practice may be beneficial in an area depending on the primary land use. The area's size, management goals, vegetation, and geographic region may dictate which management practices are most appropriate.

### **Planting and proper land disturbance practices for quail habitat management:**

**Recommended practices for a regular habitat disturbing are:**

If you are interested in attracting Quail to your farm you should remember to have regular habitat disturbance like fire, timber harvest, grazing, and disking. **Disking** with adjacent strips 10 to 20 feet wide and no less than 100 feet long should be disked rotationally along woodlot, grassy field, and fence and hedgerow edges.

**Burning** returns valuable nutrients to the soil and maintains grasslands and open woodlands as open habitat while promoting new growth of grasses, forbs, and shrubs preferred by bobwhites. Although beneficial, prescribed burning **is a highly regulated activity** and should only be conducted in cooperation with assistance from licensed burners. Prescribed burns should be conducted on a 4- to 5-year rotational basis in late winter or early spring.

Managed **grazing** can be a powerful tool to control succession and maintain productive bobwhite habitat in native pasture and rangelands and other situations.

Rotational **mowing** can be used to maintain grassland communities in various stages of growth and vegetation diversity

“Weed sweep” **herbicide** treatment —. This practice is useful for maintaining quail habitat along ditch banks, utility rights-of-way, field borders, filter strips, pond margins, pastures, and roadsides.

Planting native trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs in odd areas and along woodlots or fencerows can create both food and cover for quails. Blackberry, dogwood, red cedar, and sumac are some species that can be used for quail. Cover plantings should occur in strips of two to five rows with a 15- to 20-foot herbaceous border. Tree and shrub rows are most beneficial when trees are planted six to 10 feet apart in the center rows with surrounding shrubs at 4 to 6 feet apart. Food plots may be beneficial in years of low food availability. One-acre food plots per 10 to 25 acres is suitable for large areas, but four or five smaller food plots with irregular edges planted adjacent to fencerows, field borders, and woodlot edges will bring food and cover areas closer together. Also it's good to keep in mind that the shape of the fields can improve the habitat appearance for quails. That's because changing the size and shape of quail habitat units can increase the amount of edge component available. Fields can be reshaped from square edges to irregular edges and broken down into a number of smaller individual fields from a single large plot. For example, a square field of 100 acres has about 83 feet of usable edge per acre while a 10-acre field has 264 feet of edge per acre. A 100-acre woodlot that is five times as long as it is wide has 35 percent more edge than a square woodlot of the same size.