



IOWA QUAIL HABITAT

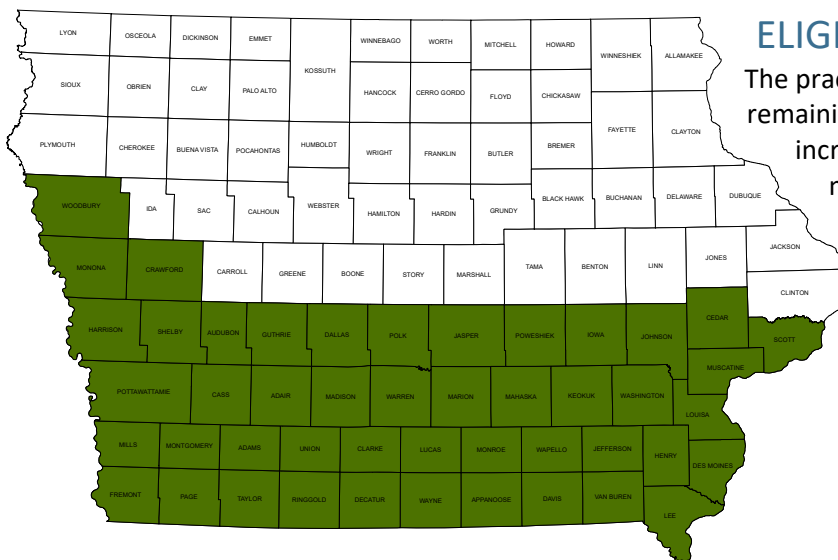
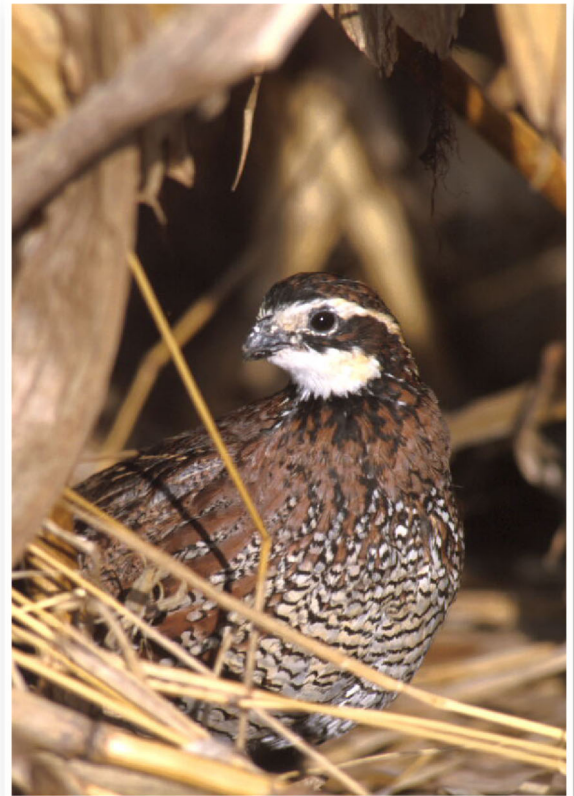
STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

If you miss the cheerful “Bob White” of a male bobwhite quail in the spring, the thrill of a fall covey rise over your favorite gun dog, a new program can help you establish quail habitat on your land.

DESCRIPTION & BENEFITS

Landowners within Iowa’s northern bobwhite quail range have a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice available to help them establish top quality bobwhite habitat on their property. The Iowa “Early Successional Quail Habitat” initiative is the newest practice under USDA’s State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)¹ initiative, also known as CP38. Modern Iowa agriculture has led to a dramatic increase in weed free crops, a reduction in small grain crops, and fewer fence rows and odd areas. These areas historically produced early successional habitat with abundant bare ground that favored abundant and thriving bobwhite quail populations. The loss of these habitats has led to a serious decline in bobwhite quail numbers across Iowa.

The new SAFE initiative is designed to restore early successional habitat where it will be the most beneficial for bobwhite quail. Restoring top quality winter, nesting, and early successional habitats will help increase Iowa quail populations. Other grassland birds and species, especially pollinators, will benefit too. Most of all, Iowa’s natural resources will benefit from reduced erosion and improved water quality. Eligible producers can sign up at their local [USDA Farm Service Agency](#).



ELIGIBLE COUNTIES

The practice is available in counties that have the best remaining quail populations where additional habitat can increase bird numbers. Landowners in other counties may be eligible for other continuous CRP practices.

ELIGIBILITY

- Expiring CRP in eligible counties
- Land that was cropped or considered cropped four of the six years from 2012-2017

PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

Offers must be greater than 5 acres. All enrolled offers will provide nesting and early successional habitat. Nesting cover must be a mixture of native grasses and forbs. Twenty–five percent of each offer will be managed as early successional habitat by seeding a small grain in year one, to be left fallow and unharvested for two growing seasons. Approved small grains include oats, wheat, barley, rye, millet, Korean lespedeza, partridge pea, buckwheat, commercial sunflowers, grain sorghum or mixtures thereof. Small grains are required to be reseeded in years 4, 7, and 11 based on contract length. Winter food plots, edge feathering, and shrub plantings are allowed to enhance benefits, but not required.

PURPOSE

- Increase populations of northern bobwhite quail and other grassland wildlife species
- Improve, connect or create high quality grassland and early successional habitat
- Provide nesting, brood and winter cover
- Provide habitat for beneficial pollinators
- Improve water quality and reduce soil erosion
- Improve income on marginal lands

PAYMENTS

Rental Rate

- Based on maximum soil rental rate established for the three predominant soils
- 10 to 15-year contract length

Cost-share

- 50 percent cost-share to establish the practice.

SEEDING SOURCES

The Iowa DNR recommends planting native Iowa prairie seed types. These grasses and wildflowers are suitable for Iowa's weather and growing conditions. Plant materials can be purchased at local nurseries and seed dealers.

MORE INFORMATION

www.fsa.usda.gov/ia

www.iowadnr.gov/crp

PARTNERS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, USDA – Iowa Farm Service Agency, USDA - Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, Iowa Department of Agriculture - Division of Land Stewardship, Conservation Districts of Iowa and Iowa County Conservation Boards.



State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is a nationwide Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice within the continuous sign-up. The SAFE initiative allows public and private organizations and state and federal agencies to propose areas where new CRP acreage is essential to benefit endangered, threatened or high priority fish and wildlife species. There are four other SAFE CRP projects in Iowa, visit the Iowa DNR's website for more information on other SAFE projects.

