

USACE Natural Resource Management

Non-migratory Birds



Northern Bobwhite Quail

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS: The Northern Bobwhite is often considered a characteristic sound of Eastern countryside summers. Over the past half-century, however, their sound has been heard less frequently as this bird's populations have experienced a steep decline. (*All About Birds, Cornell*)

This species' decline is not well understood. It is thought that in the northern edge of its range, this species may be killed during unusually harsh winters. (*Audubon Society*) Habitat loss and changes in agriculture may also be contributing factors to the bobwhite's decline. (*All About Birds, Cornell*) Overall, the species has a high annual mortality rate and short life span, however its reproductive capability can mitigate these factors. (*USFWS*)

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: Due to historically being a gamebird, the Northern Bobwhite has been intensively studied. Research has been done on the impacts of human activities, pesticide application, and prescribed burning on both wild and captive birds. (*All About Birds, Cornell*) Many southern pine forests are managed intensively for bobwhite hunting. (*USFWS*)

HABITAT NEEDS: The Northern Bobwhite is a year round resident of southeastern North America. This bird occupies a variety of habitats including overgrown fields, grasslands, pine forests, and shrubby areas. (*USFWS*)

- Prescribed fire can be used to maintain an open, grassy ground layer as these birds respond well to this management technique.
- Birds are often heard, not seen; they keep to low dense vegetation for cover.
- The species seems to avoid mature woodland and is most numerous in patchwork areas comprised of fields, forest, and croplands.
- Nests are built on the ground in low vegetation, typically near an opening such as a road or field. (*All About Birds, Cornell*)

Size: These are small quail which grow to be larger than a robin, yet smaller than a crow. Total length is generally around 9 inches. (*All About Birds, Cornell*)

Color: These birds have intricate patterns of black, brown, rufous, and buff. Males have heads with a bold black and white pattern. Females have a buffy throat and eyebrow. (*All About Birds, Cornell*)

Photo Credit:

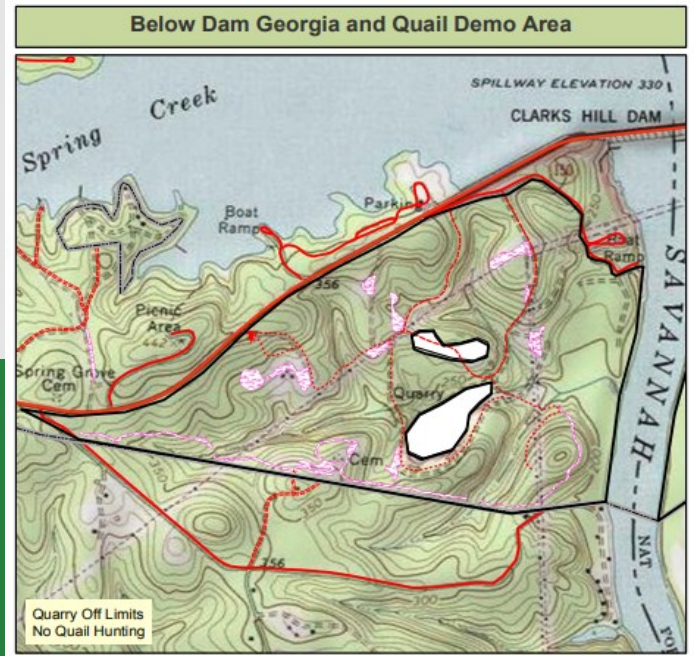
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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USACE ROLE: As part of ER 1130-2-540 requirements, management plans are prepared to accomplish natural resources program objectives. Typically, such plans include specific management objectives, existing activities, and additional work needed. As related to Bobwhite Quail habitat management, plans often include the implementation of silvicultural practices such as timber harvesting and prescribed burns in addition to the establishment of food plots, wild fruit trees, and mast producing trees species.

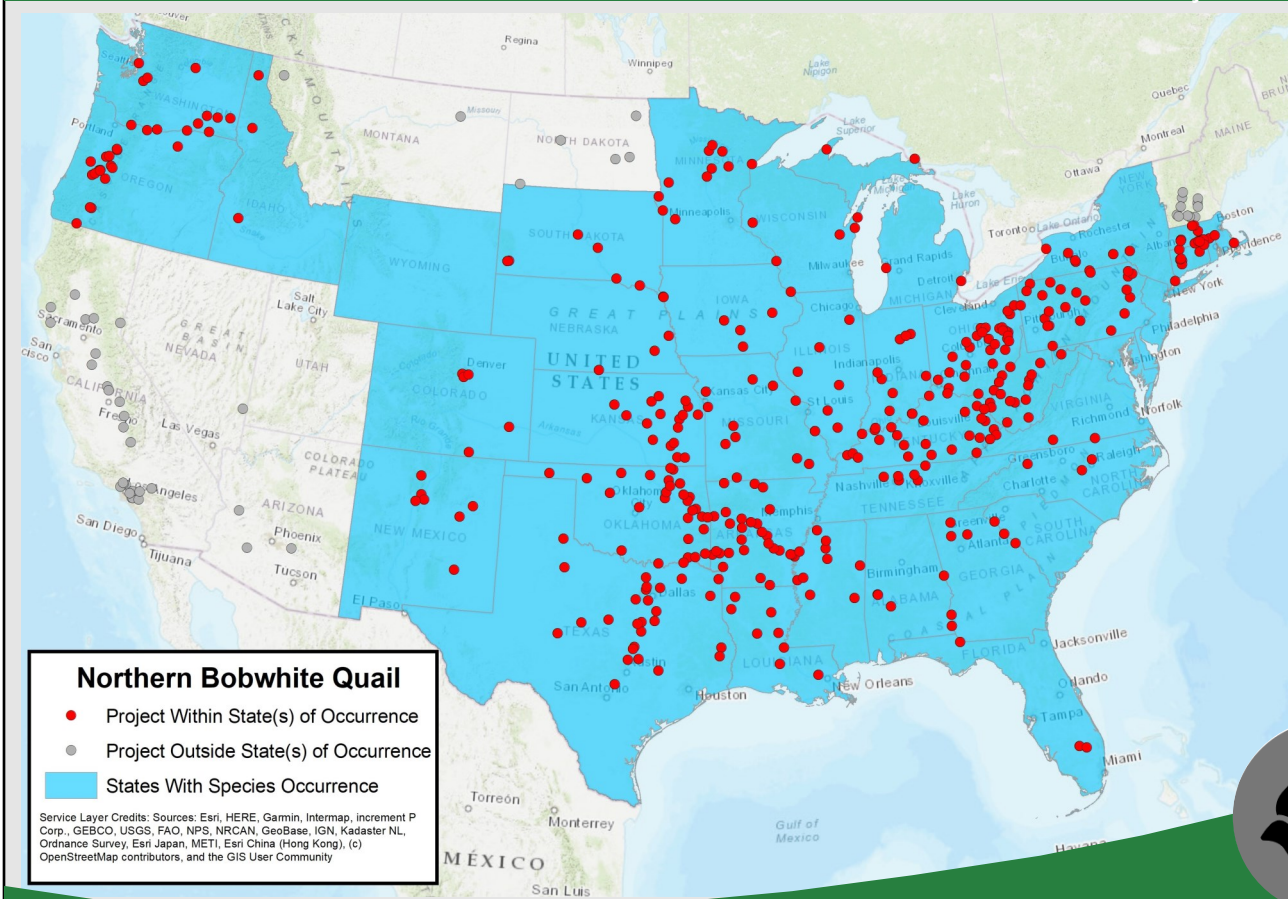


WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING:

The goals of Savannah District's J. Strom Thurmond Project wildlife management program are to maintain habitat diversity, improve habitat for a variety of game and non-game species, encourage and accommodate public use and appreciation of wildlife resources and, in the case of rare, threatened, or endangered species, to provide optimum habitat conditions and/or protection. Staff at J. Strom Thurmond work to manage approximately 10,000—15,000 acres for early successional habitat. A quail demonstration area has been established below the Clark Hill Dam which is managed in partnership with Quail Unlimited, Inc. to help restore Bobwhite Quail to the region.

Map Top Right: Quail Demonstration Area at J. Strom Thurmond Lake, managed in partnership with Quail Unlimited, Inc. Quail hunting is not permitted within this area.

The Hunt Hollow Wildlife Management Area at Georgetown Lake, Ft. Worth District, was acquired for project operations, but has since been designated for wildlife management. Best suited to upland game bird, songbird, rabbit and waterfowl management, agricultural activities have been undertaken to improve wildlife habitat. Emphasis has been placed on improving habitat components specifically for Bobwhite Quail and the Rio Grande Turkey.



Northern Bobwhite Quail

- Project Within State(s) of Occurrence
- Project Outside State(s) of Occurrence
- States With Species Occurrence

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Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

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