

# Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 56 counties in south, west and northwestern Illinois. The purpose of the Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE is to restore grassland habitat for Quail and other grassland dependent species.

## Background

SAFE is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with landowners and agricultural producers to establish and manage vegetative covers that control soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.

SAFE is a unique type of CRP that offers organizations the opportunity to partner with the USDA to establish habitat for high-priority wildlife species on agricultural land. SAFE sponsors work with the USDA to identify the wildlife species, the vegetative cover that provides habitat for the target species, and the location in the state where the habitat is needed. A partnership is formed between the SAFE sponsor and the USDA, and federal funds are made available to allow for CRP enrollment on eligible land within the SAFE project location.

## Target Wildlife Species

The goal of the Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE project is to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail. Grasslands established through the Illinois Quail SAFE initiative will secure critical habitat for many of Illinois' species in greatest need of conservation, including bobwhite quail.

## Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in the Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or a technical service provider. The conservation plan will provide details on how to plant, establish, and manage

habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail. The habitat being established is grassland habitats consisting primarily of native short grasses and forbs. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by completing activities designed to enhance the cover such as prescribed burning, disking, strip herbicide application or interseeding. At least one management activity is required to be completed 1 time every four years. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for the Northern Bobwhite Quail.

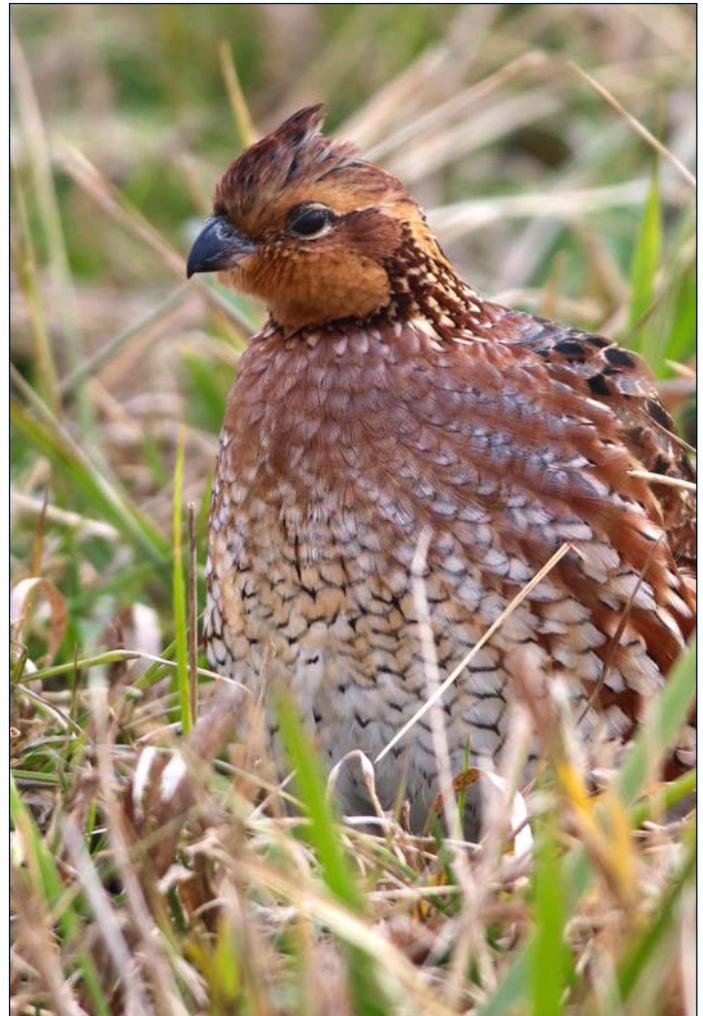


Photo by Chris Young

## Project Location

The Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE project location includes the following 56 counties: Rock Island, Mercer, Henderson, Warren, Hancock, McDonough, Fulton, Adams, Schuyler, Brown, Cass, Mason, Pike, Scott, Morgan, Calhoun, Greene, Macoupin, Montgomery, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Fayette, Effingham, Cumberland, Clark, Madison, Clinton, Marion, Clay, Jasper, Crawford, Richland, Lawrence, Wabash, Edwards, Wayne, Jefferson, Washington, Saint Clair, Monroe, Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Hamilton, White, Jackson, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac. Participants in these counties are required to enroll a minimum of 10-acres per contract. Multiple touching fields may be enrolled to meet the 10-acre minimum.

## Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38B-23A, SAFE Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- ◆ CP38E-2, SAFE Permanent Native Grasses and Legumes
- ◆ CP38E-4D, SAFE Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement
- ◆ CP38E-25, SAFE Rare and Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-33, Habitat Buffer for Upland Birds
- ◆ CP38E-43, Prairie Strips
- ◆ CP38E-12, Wildlife Food Plot

## Haying and Grazing

Non-emergency haying and grazing and emergency haying and grazing are not authorized in the Illinois Pheasant Initiative SAFE project area.

## Eligibility Requirements

Because SAFE is part of CRP, certain land and participant eligibility rules apply. To begin with, land must be in the project area and meet cropping history. CRP participant eligibility rules also apply to SAFE.

## Payments and Incentives

In exchange for participation in CRP SAFE, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with annual per acre rental payments, cost-share to assist with habitat establishment expenses, and in some cases additional monetary incentives.

## For More Information

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details. For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).



Photo by Bonnie Arends

# Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE Project Map



## Legend

 FSA County Boundary

 Illinois Quail Initiative SAFE Project Area