

# Conservation Reserve Program

## UPLAND BIRD HABITAT BUFFER INITIATIVE

Restore Wildlife Habitat | Reduce Soil Erosion | Enhance Water Quality



## Why Choose CRP? You Benefit. Land, Water and Wildlife Benefit.

The Upland Bird Habitat Buffer Initiative gives landowners a way to use a small portion of their land to create bird habitat while continuing to farm. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides farmers and landowners with initiatives like this to achieve many farming and conservation goals. Whatever the conservation challenge – soil conservation, water quality protection, or wildlife habitat enhancement – CRP is a proven land performance and management solution.

## What are Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds?

*And why are they important?*

By creating buffers along cropland or establishing habitat in pivot corners, this initiative provides habitat patches and corridors to facilitate wildlife movement across agricultural landscapes. This upland habitat has sharply declined as cropping practices and land use has changed. By establishing habitat for northern bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasant specifically, as well as other grassland dependent birds, farmers enable increased hunting, recreation, and improved ecosystem performance -- from reducing soil erosion to protecting water quality.

### Affiliated Practice:

CP-33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

For more information about this individual practice, visit: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>



## Habitat Buffer for Upland Birds Initiative Benefits

Over the past two decades, field edges and hedgerows have been plowed under to create more cropland. These buffered borders served as vital living space for quail, pheasant, and grassland birds – whose populations have been declining. Planting native grasses and other native vegetation in buffers around crop fields gives bobwhite quail and other important farm wildlife critical nesting and brood rearing habitat. This additional habitat enhances these wildlife populations.

A less recognized but critical role for these buffers is the wintering shelter they provide after crops are harvested. The wildlife using these buffers attract hunters, bird watchers, and other recreationalists contributing to the growth and vitality of rural economies.

### Financial Benefits

- 10 years of annual rental payments
- Payments covering 90% of the eligible costs of establishing the wetland restoration practice
  - 50% from a Cost-Share Payment and
  - 40% from a Practice Incentive Payment (PIP)
- Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) up to \$125/acre
- Additional incentives may be available in your state under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

### Impact

- Creates needed habitat for quail, pheasant, and other important upland bird species
- Decreases chances of weed or pest invasion on cropland
- Intercepts sediment and nutrients, protecting water quality
- Enables use of marginal land for conservation enhancement and erosion management
- Increases (at full enrollment) quail numbers by more than 450,000 birds annually
- Supports habitat for reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic species, in addition to the numerous upland bird species

For more information, contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency office: <http://offices.usda.gov>

Photo Courtesy of Lynn Betts, NRCS