



Farm Service Agency

Conservation Reserve Program

Ohio Upland Bird SAFE

Fact Sheet
December 2020

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) in Ohio is aimed at creating specialized habitat to address a high priority wildlife objective, maintaining and increasing populations of priority game bird species. This will be accomplished by specifically targeting declining pheasant and quail populations in areas of greatest impact. Ohio Upland Bird SAFE seeks to enroll cropland acres in practices CP38-4D and CP38E-42 for 10-15 years to:

- at a minimum, retain existing or restore high-quality grassland habitat in counties where known populations of pheasants and quail currently reside, through re-enrollment of expiring CRP acres; and
- increase prime grassland habitat to promote pheasant and quail as well as other grassland bird population increases through enrollment of cropland into permanent wildlife habitat.

Ohio's Upland Bird SAFE is a State-led effort, mostly the result of Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Pheasants Forever (PF) along with other public and private organizations such as FSA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Ohio is targeting the Upland Bird SAFE CP38 practice in areas, where left untreated, could result in even further decline of grassland birds of economic significance. SAFE has economic and programmatic benefits for landowners including enhanced economic incentives, and the opportunity to enroll whole fields.

Goals

The goal of Ohio's Upland Bird SAFE is to maintain and establish wildlife areas for the enhancement of habitat objectives for the benefit of declining grassland bird species, especially game birds like pheasant and quail. Upland Bird SAFE also meets the national goals and objectives of SAFE

by restoring habitat for species that have suffered a significant population decline. This project is expected to benefit many other important game species including Mourning Dove, Eastern Cottontail Rabbits, and many migratory waterfowl like Pintails, Canvasbacks, and Black Ducks. Priority non-game species, such as Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Upland Sandpiper, and Eastern Plains Garter Snake will also benefit.

The Ohio Upland Bird SAFE project seeks to enroll eligible land in certain counties where ODNR monitoring has determined populations of pheasants and quail exist with the potential to benefit from this project. Additionally, extensive habitat decline is expected from CRP practice expirations and urbanization over the next few years in these targeted counties. Without such a program, current pheasant and quail populations would continue to decline, with no chance of increasing their numbers.

Eligibility

Upland Bird SAFE consists of one CRP practice, CP38E-4D (Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-easement). Upland Bird SAFE may be enrolled only in the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Auglaize, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clinton, Crawford, Darke, Defiance, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Fulton, Gallia, Greene, Hancock, Hardin, Highland, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Logan, Madison, Marion, Miami, Morrow, Paulding, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Ross, Seneca, Shelby, Union, Williams, and Wyandot.



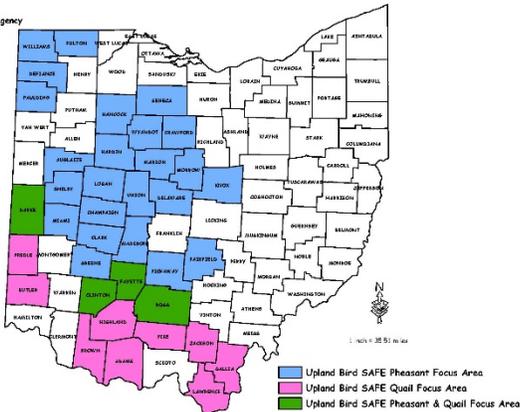
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CRP – Ohio Upland Bird SAFE – December 2020



Ohio Upland Bird Habitat SAFE Area

Ohio Farm Service Agency
200 North High St
Columbus, OH 43215
614-295-2441



Technical assistance will be provided by Federal, State, and private professionals to help participants select proper seed species, locate practice area, and establish and manage the practice cover.

Other SAFE Benefits

SAFE provides a unique opportunity for landowners and producers, within the targeted areas, to enroll whole field acres outside the floodplain under CRP General Signup.

Additionally, SAFE may complement and fill the void left by Continuous CRP or CREP (in those areas where CREP is also available).

Additional SAFE Information

The CP38 practice is for participants with a strong desire to restore or increase wildlife habitat. Participants must be willing to allow monitoring, properly maintain the practice cover for the entire length of the contract, and perform periodic management activities to enhance the cover for wildlife.

Participants whose SAFE contracts are terminated (either voluntarily or because of violations) before the end of its term, because of loss of control of land or other reasons, must refund all payments received under their contract plus interest and liquidated damages. Crop bases will not be restored if the SAFE contract acres are terminated because of contract violations. To obtain maximum benefits from CP38, the practice cover must be retained for the entire length of the agreed-to contract period.

More Information

This fact sheet is for informational purposes; other conditions may apply. For more details and information about Upland Bird SAFE, contact your FSA County office. To locate your FSA County office, visit: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Cropland must be legally and physically capable of producing a crop in a normal manner and must be owned for at least one year prior to submitting an offer. Eligible land is required to have a certain cropping history. The contract period will be 10-15 years and signup will be taken through FSA’s General Signup process which will be held on an annual basis for the life of the 2018 Farm Bill

Practice covers must be established to specific species of grasses and forbs as outlined in the Conservation Plan of Operations. Certain management activities may be required to be performed before the last three years of the contract.

Participants shall allow access to their land by Federal, State, or private wildlife officials to monitor the success of the practice in achieving the goals of SAFE.

CRP Payments

Subject to contract terms and certain limitations, SAFE participants may be eligible for the following FSA payments:

- Cost Share Assistance – equal to 50% of the participant’s eligible costs of establishing the approved practice cover.
- Annual Rental Payment – FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent subject to a statutory 85% proration. FSA will calculate the maximum rental rate for each General Signup offer prior to enrollment.