

North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, U.S. Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Quail Forever are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in fourteen counties in the coastal plain of North Carolina. The purpose of the North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE is to develop 2,500 acres of native early successional habitat to benefit several bird species identified by the state as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Restoration of habitats will occur in North Carolina's coastal plain, which has been targeted as an area for early succession bird conservation efforts.

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 permanent 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. Through this partnership between the SAFE sponsors and the USDA, federal funds are made available for enrollment of this continuous CRP practice on eligible land within the SAFE project location.

Target Wildlife Species

The goal of the North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE project is to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail, Loggerhead Shrikes, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks and Field Sparrows. These bird species are considered species of greatest conservation need in the NC Wildlife Action Plan. Each

of these species has experienced a significant population decline not only in North Carolina but across their native range. Habitat loss and degradation due to changing land use is the primary reason for the population decline. Many other species of wildlife and beneficial insects will benefit from the enhancement of early succession habitat.

Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or a technical service provider. The conservation plan will provide details on how to plant, establish, and manage habitat for Northern Bobwhite Quail, Loggerhead Shrikes, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks and Field Sparrows. The habitat being established is native early succession vegetation. Native bunch grasses will provide nesting locations for ground nesting species. Forbs and legumes will increase seed production while also increasing insect quantity and diversity in these fields. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by prescribed burning, rotational disking and selective herbicide applications to enhance herbaceous plant communities. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for quail, shrikes, sparrows and meadowlarks.



Project Location

The North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE project location targets cropland in Bertie, Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Edgecombe, Halifax, Hertford, Johnston, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Sampson, Wayne and Wilson counties in the coastal plain of North Carolina.

Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38E-4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-12, Wildlife Food Plots.

Haying and Grazing

Enrolled acres shall not be harvested or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the CRP-1. Any type of haying and/or grazing is prohibited.

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.

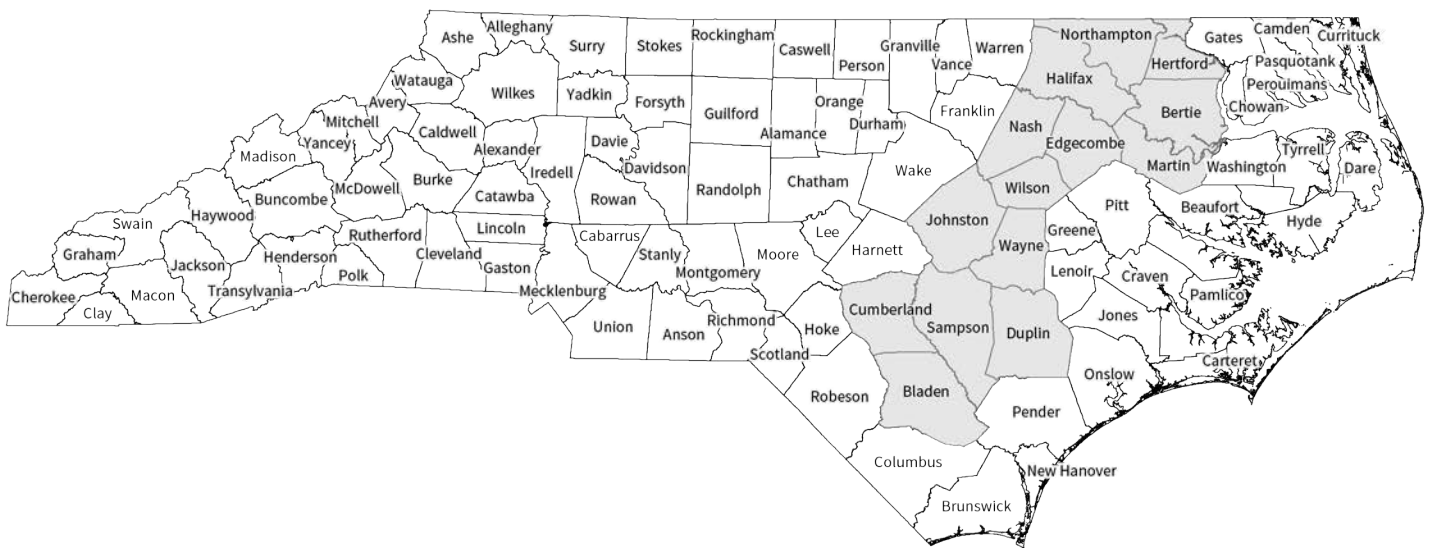
For More Information

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.



Photo by John Isenhour, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE Project Map



Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  North Carolina Early Succession Bird Habitat SAFE Project Area