

**THE COVEY CALL E-NEWSLETTER
MARCH-APRIL 2018
METRO & SE QF CHAPTERS
“Helping To Bring Back The Bobwhite Quail”**



Each month, we will try to get our Metro and Southeast youth out on some outdoor activity. Above is a photo of some metro youth and their parents checking on some wildlife habitat work done in Dakota County in January.

UPCOMING QUAIL FOREVER ANNUAL SE BANQUET

Date: Sat. March 24, 2018
Location: Good Times Restaurant & Bar Caledonia, MN 55921
Time: 5:30 pm 7:30 pm Prime Rib Dinner

This will be our 12th Annual Quail Forever Banquet in Caledonia, MN. We have attached a registration form with the newsletter email for your convenience. If you have additional questions, **Contact: Kris Wedl email: kriswedl@gmail.com**



Honeybees and Pollinators

Eric J. Ressel, Farm Bill Biologist
Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever



"Since my CRP workload has been lulled in limbo, I've recently been promoting the honeybee and pollinators initiative offered through the USDA. Generous funding will be available through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, or EQIP, for fiscal year 2019, to promote practices that will enhance habitat for honeybees, butterflies (especially monarchs), and beneficial insects. The diverse native mixture of forbs, wildflowers, and bunchgrasses will also provide excellent foraging, sheltering, and nesting opportunities for upland birds as well. Please contact me or NRCS staff if you're interested in transitioning retired cropland, former pastureland, field borders, forest edges, or odd areas that could be considered for pollinator habitat. There is no minimum or maximum acreage requirements. We will work with you through the application process."

Eric J. Ressel, Farm Bill Biologist
Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever

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In this issue of the Covey Call Newsletter you will find helpful information on what types of habitat quail prefer, and some photos of those types of habitat components.

PUBLIC LAND QUAIL



Public Land Quail:

David Hoover, MDC Small Game Coordinator

Courtesy of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation – The Covey Headquarters Winter 2017 edition

As an avid bird hunter I hunt both public and private lands and have had many quality hunts on both. However, as many of you have likely experienced, hunting quail on public lands is often more challenging. So much so that hunters are often left with the impression there are no quail to be found; even on areas where proven survey techniques have documented good quail populations. Why is this?

One of the obvious reasons relates to the fact that public lands generally receive more hunting pressure, which can cause quail to engage in evasive maneuvers not often deployed by their private land brethren. One of the most often cited responses of quail to hunting pressure is to seek refuge in hard-to-get-to patches of habitat or to simply move off the area. This has been documented in studies involving banded and radio-collared quail. So what is the public lands quail hunter to do?

Quail researchers in Kentucky recently investigated quail biology, habitat use, and daily movements on a large wildlife management area managed primarily for quail. The results of the study yielded little in the way of new information on basic quail biology and habitat use; however, what they found regarding quail behavior in relation to hunting pressure may be surprising to many.



QUAIL FOOD PLOT

Some of the more interesting findings included:

- Bird dogs were 8.6 times more likely to find pen-raised quail than wild birds.
- Skilled dogs and hunters found only 29% of wild coveys on the management area.
- Wild quail ran from hunters in herbaceous cover and held in shrubby cover, letting hunters pass by.
- Most of the year, quail were found in open herbaceous vegetation within 40 yards of shrubby cover.
- During winter, distance to shrubby cover was generally less than 25 yards.
- Quail spent very little time in food plots.

Simple tips for improving success when hunting public land quail include:

- Trusting your dog – when dogs get birdy but don't find anything, slow down and circle back through the area. Birds are likely there, but have moved in response to the dogs
- Maintaining close spacing between hunters to minimize birds slipping through.
- Hunting no more than 50 yards from shrubby cover.
- When you flush fewer than 4 birds, don't give up, the rest of the covey is likely close by.
- More dogs equals greater success.
- Slow down and hunt cover thoroughly.

Public land quail hunting is challenging; however, it can be rewarding with the right attitude and approach.



Shrubby Cover

Think Big Picture Before Food Plots

Do you have all quail habitat requirements in place before you plant food plots?

Sure, food plots provide a great source of energy in the winter months, but quail must have good shrubby cover and wildlife friendly grasses before they even think about eating from a food plot that you create.

According to numerous studies of fall and winter food habits, the most frequently consumed foods are seeds from native plants like ragweed, desmodium, and partridge pea. In fact, Missouri researchers found that quail living in weedy CRP fields have more fat than quail that inhabit corn and soybean fields. Any extra fat on a quail's body is a good thing. During extreme weather, such as an ice storm or heavy snowfall, a quail with a little extra fat will be able to live a few days without food. Less fat birds will die more quickly of hypothermia or may be forced to venture out in the cold to search for food.

By creating shrubby cover and establishing quail-friendly plants (grass, wildflowers, legumes), you will be promoting many of the weedy plants quail need to survive. Weedy plants can also be created by burning, disking, and spraying brome/fescue in fencelines and woody draws.

Remember the basis of this newsletter – quail generally stay within 70 feet of shrubby cover. Make sure you are providing good shrubby cover and quail-friendly plants adjacent to each other. Then you can plant your food plots for an additional energy source.

VISIT OUR QF WEBSITE

Our website is back up and running again. With things looking good for quail, and we have more youth involved with our habitat efforts, we look forward to posting some exciting information on our website. You can visit the website by going to.... <https://www.mnquailforever.org/>



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We want to say thanks to our Metro QF Sponsors:

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WEEKLY FACEBOOK

Visit our Facebook Weekly for Information on Quail and Other Birds:

<https://www.facebook.com/Quail-Forever-Minnesota>

MN QUAIL FOREVER WEBSITE

The Website for our two QF Chapters is: <https://www.mnquailforever.org/>

Thurman Tucker, Metro & SE QF Chapters Coordinator