



## **NATIONAL BOBWHITE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

### **Focal & Reference Area Essentials**

An updated version of the NBCI Coordinated Implementation Program (CIP, Version 1.1) was released in March 2016, and is available on [NBCI Technical Web Site](#) as a 12 mb PDF. This 2-page document summarizes essentials such as number of monitoring areas, size, and timing. As of March 2016, 14 CIPs were operational, or in development, and being led by Arkansas Game & Fish Commission/Pea Ridge National Military Park--N. P. S.; Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife; Illinois Department of Natural Resources/Southern Illinois University; Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources; Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks; Missouri Department of Conservation/Quail Forever; Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife; Ohio Division of Wildlife; Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation/Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture; Texas Parks & Wildlife Department/Oaks & Prairies Joint Venture; South Carolina Department of Natural Resources; and Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries.

The CIP aims to demonstrate in numerous places that, within 5-10 years, management, principally of habitat, can achieve a bobwhite population level that simultaneously meets the state's NBCI 2.0 population goals for that area, and is sustainable. CIP has standard protocol for measuring bobwhite and grassland bird population responses to prescribed management. The CIP calls for  $\geq 1$  focal area per state, paired with a similar-sized reference area lacking prescribed habitat management, but measured similar to the focal area.

NBCI CIP *minimum* standards include:

1. For focal area,  $\geq 1,500$  acres (607 ha) of year-round quail habitat that comprises  $\geq 25\%$  of the area (5 to 10-year goal),
2. Annual breeding bird population point transects on focal and reference areas,
3. Annual fall covey call point transects on focal area,

4. Periodic habitat transects (1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> years) and annual management tracking on Focal and Reference Areas.

Recommended but optional management and/or measurements – designed to increase chances of documenting and successfully linking bobwhite and grassland bird population responses to habitat management – include:

5. Annual measuring and/or managing bobwhite harvest on focal and reference areas,
6. Annual prevention of, or measurement of, released domesticated bobwhites on focal and reference areas.

The foundation of the CIP is that focal areas should have concentrated bobwhite habitat and be able to sustain a bobwhite population indefinitely, regardless of the surrounding landscape. Research points to focal areas containing  $\geq 1,500$  acres of year-round suitable habitat, more or less contiguous (i.e.,  $\geq 25\%$  of the focal area). These numbers translate to a 1,500-acre focal area if all the suitable habitat is contiguous, e.g., diverse grassland, shrubland or woodland. Most focal areas range in size from 3,710 to 6,000 acres, and up to 15,000 acres. The upper size is limited by the time and cost to measure bird and habitat metrics in the field.

The CIP requires year-round coordination and seasonal increases in technical labor before, during and after field data collection. The typical mid-sized focal and reference areas require 20-30 breeding season point transects each. This translates to 3 to 12 seasonal or full-time staff, including a coordinator, GIS expertise, field data collectors and data entry staff.

The NBCI CIP objective is to achieve bobwhite population density goals based on NBCI 2.0, with 50% recovery in 5 years, and 100% recovery by the end of each state's CIP, in 10 years. Comprehensive data analyses and reporting will occur coincident with this timeline, along with annual preliminary analyses to evaluate progress and efficacy of statistical design.

NBCI is providing coordination, design, training, data management and analyses, reporting tools and nation-wide outreach (e.g., annual NBCI State of the Bobwhite Report). Many new technical services are being launched in 2016 and will be available on <http://quailcount.org/>. CIP progress will be evaluated annually at the NBTC Annual Meeting, and reported to the NBCI Management Board.

For further information visit the NBCI public web site <http://bringbackbobwhites.org/> or new technical web site <http://www.quailcount.org/> or contact NBCI Science Coordinator Tom Dailey, [tdailey7@utk.edu](mailto:tdailey7@utk.edu), 573-881-1782.