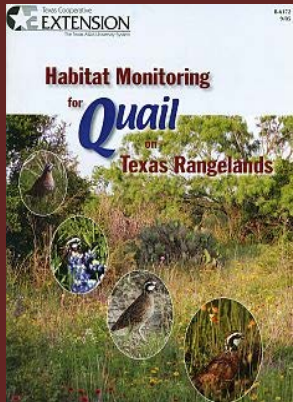


Quail Decline Initiative

Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences Unit



REVERSING THE DECLINE OF QUAIL IN TEXAS

Objective: Understand, address, and reverse the critical quail decline in Texas through Extension education and research focused on investigations into diverse factors that interact to cause quail decline and landscape improvements to increase quail populations.

Integrated Approaches to Address Quail Decline

- Extension Education:
 - Develop educational resources and programs specific to recovery and growth of quail populations based on new and existing research-proven best management practices.
 - Many quail-focused resources are currently available through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Additional resources will be developed to provide managers with sound research-based information to assist in improving quail habitat with the goal of restoring healthy quail populations.
 - **QuailMasters** – A series of intensive, hands-on training sessions designed to educate land managers about the art and science of quail management.
 - **Quail Appreciation Days** – Six-hour workshops for land managers to increase awareness of quail management needs.
 - **Texas Brigades** – A youth-focused camp facilitated by top wildlife and natural resource professionals from across Texas. Youths gain vital experience in critical-thinking, communication, leadership and team building, while learning about quail biology, habitat management, population dynamics and ecology.
 - **Texas Quail Index** – A large-scale, long-term demonstration to evaluate various indices of quail abundance as predictors of quail reproduction. The goal is to develop practical management strategies to optimize quail populations and empower county Extension agents and landowners to monitor quail response to various management actions. Statewide facilitation of this demonstration can be accomplished through County Extension Agents and private cooperators.

Integrated Approaches to Address Quail Decline

o Applied Research:

- Conduct investigations into the impacts of insect-vectored parasites, mycotoxins (e.g. aflatoxin contaminated deer corn), habitat destruction and predation by invasive exotic species such as feral hogs and fire ants.
- Develop rapid nonlethal diagnostic tests for diseases in quail.
- Evaluate how health is influenced by environmental factors to affect wild quail survival and demographics using radio-marked quail and quail counts.
- Develop and disseminate best management practices on converting tame pastures to native grasses.

Establishing Connections with Conservation Partners

- Organize an advisory committee consisting of wildlife professionals and private stakeholders to provide input on proposed strategies.
- Solicit research proposals focused on restoring quail populations, improving quail habitat, and minimizing threats from disease, predation and invasive species.
- Identify common research connections with quail-focused entities such as the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, Texas Quail Coalition, Texas Parks and Wildlife and university researchers from across the state.

Benefit to Texans

- By restoring healthy quail populations in Texas, AgriLife Extension and Research will work to restore the grassland ecosystems capable of supporting quail while maintaining the economic and recreational benefits of quail hunting in the state. These combined efforts will not only benefit quail, but they will provide the next generation of Texans with an opportunity to appreciate this magnificent upland gamebird.

