



Conservation Reserve Program CP33—Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

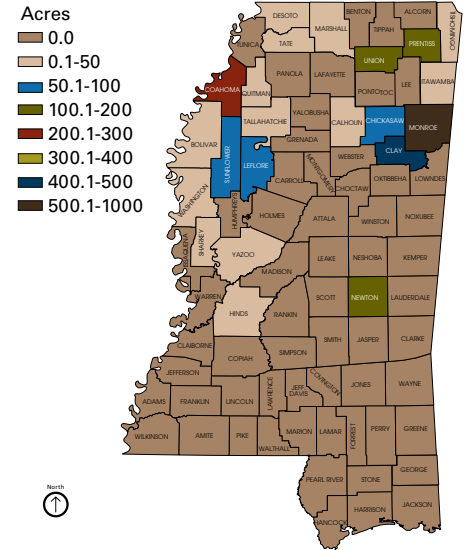
In 2004, the USDA-Farm Service Agency approved a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous signup practice, CP33-Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds.

Mississippi was allocated 9,400 acres of CP33. As of May 31, 2009, 2,164 acres have been enrolled in Mississippi, primarily in the Northeast and Delta regions.

CP33 Habitat Buffers are planted with native warm season grasses, forbs and legumes and intended to provide nesting and brood rearing habitat for northern bobwhite and other grassland bird species in agricultural landscapes.

From 2006–2008, bobwhite and grassland bird response was monitored annually on CP33 buffered and paired non-buffered agricultural fields.

MS CP33 Active Enrollment in 2008



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
 Forest and Wildlife Research Center Note
 Mississippi CRP CP33 Bird Monitoring
 Summary 2006-2008

CP33 Monitoring Key Findings

CP33 buffers were comprised of an average 45% native grasses, 31% forbs, 10% legumes, 13% exotic grasses, and 3% woody species.

Avian species richness was greater on CP33 buffered fields than non-buffered fields.

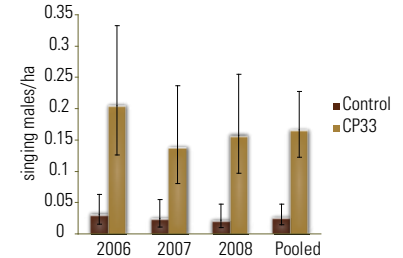
Northern bobwhite were 540% more abundant on CP33 fields compared to non-buffered fields during breeding season.

Fall bobwhite covey densities were 180% greater on CP33 fields, relative to non-buffered fields.

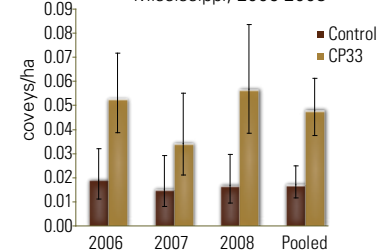
Other early successional bird species, including dickcissel, indigo bunting, and common yellowthroat were more than twice as abundant on CP33 buffered fields.



Northern Bobwhite Breeding Season Density Mississippi, 2006-2008



Northern Bobwhite Fall Covey Density Mississippi, 2006-2008



Conservation Implications

CP33 buffers represented 7.8% of the landscape around surveyed points and 15% of the crop acreage.

Landscapes surrounding CP33 buffered fields supported 0.048 coveys/hectare, surpassing the Mississippi Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative's short-term goals (0.037 coveys/ha) with a single practice.

CP33 upland habitat buffers have the capacity to affect population changes in many declining early successional species of Mississippi, but the practice must be more broadly applied.

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