



CP33 - Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

- CP33–Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds was introduced in 2004 under the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and offers landowner incentives for establishment of 30-120 ft buffers of diverse native grass and forb communities along crop field edges to provide habitat for Northern Bobwhite and other grassland birds.
- CP33 exemplifies progressive conservation in working landscapes because it allows landowners to remove low-yielding field margins from production with minimal or positive economic impact on whole-farm profitability.
- CP33 is the first federal conservation practice specifically designed to help meet the habitat objectives of a large-scale wildlife conservation initiative, the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative.
- 250,000 CP33 acres were allocated to 35 states in the bobwhite range. More than 218,000 acres have been enrolled since 2004.

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National Distribution of CP33 Acreage



National CP33 Monitoring Points



National CP33 Monitoring Key Findings

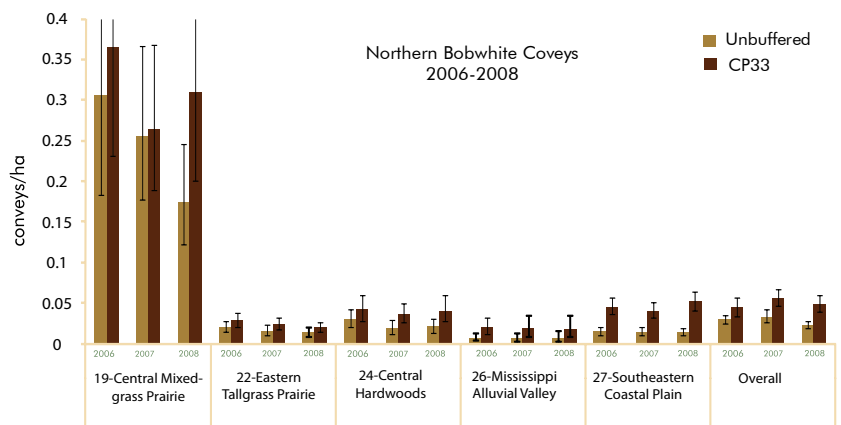
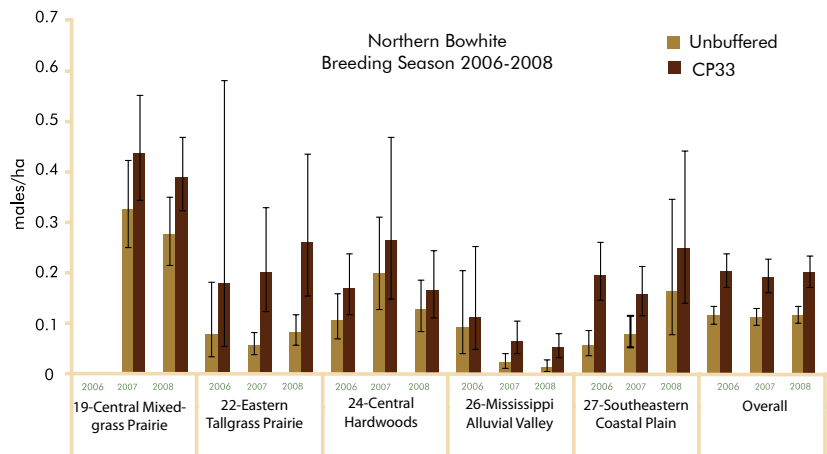
To evaluate bobwhite and grassland bird response to CP33, monitoring was implemented on ~550 CP33 fields paired with unbuffered crop fields in 14 states (9 Bird Conservation Regions (BCR)) from 2006-2008.

Overall breeding bobwhite densities were 70-75% greater on CP33 buffered fields than unbuffered crop fields.

Regional breeding bobwhite densities in the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie (BCR 22), Mississippi Alluvial Valley (BCR 26), and Southeastern Coastal Plain (BCR 27) were up to 265% greater on CP33 than unbuffered crop fields.

Fall bobwhite covey densities were 50-110% greater on CP33 fields than unbuffered crop fields.

Regional covey densities in the Southeastern Coastal Plain (BCR 27) and Mississippi Alluvial Valley (BCR 26) were up to 278% greater on CP33 fields than unbuffered crop fields.



Forest and Wildlife Research Center Note

National CP33 Bird Monitoring Executive Summary 3-yr Report



Key Findings Continued

Several upland songbirds responded strongly to CP33, but response varied by species, year, and BCR.

Dickcissel and Field Sparrow exhibited 80-190% greater overall densities on CP33 fields compared to unbuffered crop fields.

Indigo Bunting was the most abundant species and exhibited substantively greater overall densities on CP33 than unbuffered crop fields.

Eastern Meadowlark exhibited the reverse, with greater densities on unbuffered fields the first year, followed by a substantial response to CP33 the second year.

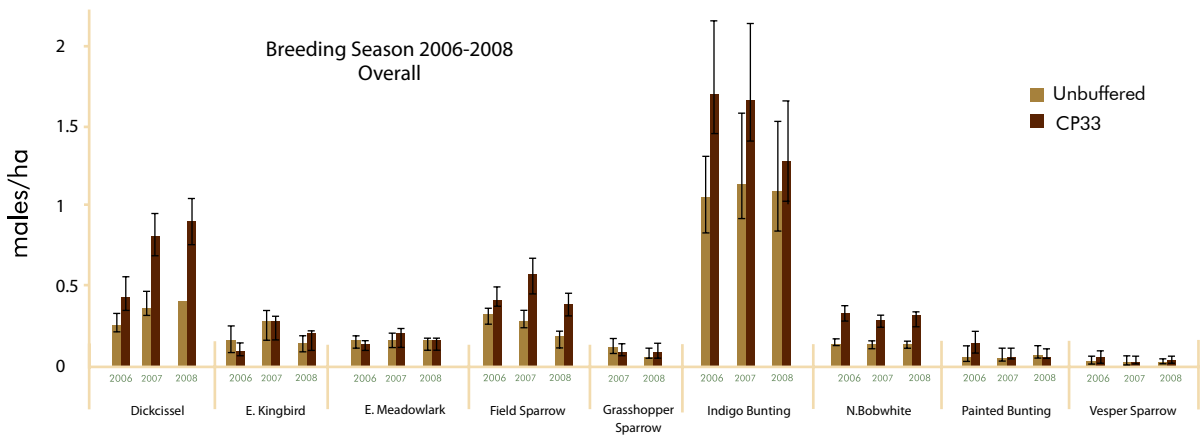
Other species showed little or variable response to CP33, possibly due to sensitivity to patch size (e.g., grasshopper sparrow) or habitat structure.



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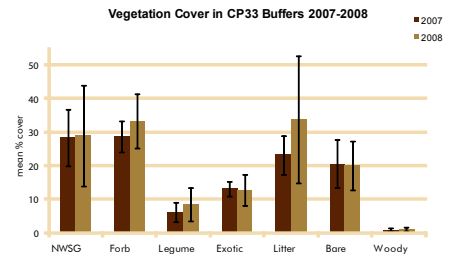
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Average CP33 buffer width was 80-86 ft, which was greater than the average contracted buffer width (76 ft).

Average percent cover was <35% for all vegetation variables, suggesting a quality mix of nesting and brood-rearing habitat for bobwhite within CP33 buffers.



Conservation Implications

- Conservation buffers like CP33 that invoke relatively small changes to primary land use at little or no cost to landowners can be used to provide essential wildlife habitat in productive working agricultural landscapes.
- Presuming increases in abundance represent net population increases rather than redistribution of existing populations from the surrounding landscape, CP33 may have the capacity to affect large-scale population changes in declining species.
- However, to accomplish regional recovery of bobwhite and upland songbird populations in agricultural landscapes this effective conservation practice must be much more broadly applied.

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