
Title: **Quail Translocation**

Policy Number:

WRD-Q-001

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Division Director

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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for implementation by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) for the translocation of wild Northern Bobwhite Quail (*Colinus virginianus virginianus*) (NBW) from private lands with high-density populations (> 1 NBW per 2 acres) to lands with newly developed high quality habitat and ongoing management, but which have low-density populations (< 1 NBW per 5 acres). The objective of translocations must be to expedite NBW population recovery. Furthermore, it is not the purpose or intent of this policy to promote the privatization of NBW nor allow their translocation into low quality habitats.

Policy:

According to US Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey data, NBW populations in Georgia declined by an average of 4 % per year between 1966 and 2003. This decline, was due primarily to changes in land use that drastically reduced the abundance and continuity of quality early succession habitat. Habitat loss coupled with increased fragmentation of remaining habitat has resulted in low-density quail populations and even population extirpation in some landscapes. The most notable exception to the above occurs in Southwest Georgia where, through intensive management, high-density quail populations are maintained for the primary purpose of sport hunting. There is demand for land supporting high-density NBW populations and some people are willing to buy substantial amounts of farmland and/or woodland and, at great expense, restore early succession habitat and huntable quail populations. However, in certain landscapes NBW densities have declined to the point that population recovery, even after the habitat is fully restored, can take many years. This extended recovery time can serve as a disincentive for landowners to develop large tracts of high quality NBW habitat. Bobwhite population recovery may be expedited by translocation of NBW into habitat blocks of sufficient quality and size; and permitting this activity could serve to encourage the establishment and maintenance of significant amounts of quality early succession habitat for NBW and other wildlife.

NBW Translocation permits shall be issued only to those who submit fully completed proposals and otherwise meet the criteria specified herein.

A. Application Process

Applications must be submitted using a WRD NBW Translocation Application form (Attachment 1). The Recipient (owner of property to receive NBW) and Donor (owner of property donating NBW) must sign this form along with the WRD approved Wildlife Biologist (NBW Agent), who will oversee the capture and movement of NBW from Donor to Recipient properties. NBW Agent status will be restricted to professional wildlife biologists working in affiliation with Universities or non-profit research foundations. All applications must be

completed in their entirety and submitted to the State Quail Project Coordinator by December 31. The State Quail Project Coordinator will evaluate applications, obtain approval from the WRD Game Management Section Chief, and notify applicants of their status by February 1.

B. Permits

Permits will be issued solely at the discretion of WRD and may be revoked at any time. Permits will be valid only for the time frame indicated on the permit. The WRD data form with permit number and date will serve as the permit and all persons involved in the trapping and translocation must have a copy of the permit with them at all times while trapping, holding, transferring or releasing NBW. Failure to comply with any and all procedures set forth in this policy may result in permit revocation.

C. Landowner Eligibility

Individuals and corporations are eligible to apply. The applicant(s) must own and control all land included in the translocation proposal.

D. Recipient Property Size and Habitat Conditions

Recipient properties must be located in Georgia and comprised of at least 1,500 contiguous acres of habitat deemed to be good to excellent for NBW as determined by a WRD Wildlife Biologist. Additionally, a detailed long-term NBW habitat management plan must be submitted as part of the application. The plan must include detailed maps and management prescriptions for all land cover types for a period of at least 5 years from the date of submission. Recipient properties can have more than one owner as long as properties are contiguous, covered by one management plan and all owners agree to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

E. Recipient Property NBW Population

Recipient properties must have a NBW population with an average fall density < 1 NBW per 5 acres of suitable habitat at the time of application. NBW density must be estimated by a standardized fall covey count, approved by a WRD Wildlife Biologist and conducted under the supervision of a NBW Agent. The covey count must be of adequate sample size and distribution to accurately estimate the NBW population for the entire property proposed for restoration.

F. Donor Eligibility

The State Quail Project Coordinator will maintain a database of volunteer donors. Only donors already in the database can be used for quail translocation projects. Recipients may not select the donor of their choice. Donors shall not receive any form of payment or anything of value for the provision of NBW to Recipients. Each donor property must have a NBW population documented at a fall density of > 1 NBW per 2 acres. This density must be estimated by a fall covey count survey as approved by the state quail biologist and conducted under the supervision

of a NBW Agent. The NBW Agent must provide assurance that this translocation will in no way result in a significant reduction in the NBW populations on Donor properties. Donor properties must be located in Georgia or an adjoining state and translocated birds must be wild reared, free ranging and from within the range of the sub-species *Colinus virginianus virginianus*. Additionally, a letter of approval signed by the donor state's Wildlife Agency Director must accompany the application when a donor site is located in a neighboring state. Out of state donors must also have a Wildlife Importation Permit from the Georgia DNR.

G. Trapping and Translocation Procedures

All trapping, holding, translocation and release of NBW will be conducted during February - March prior to the spring covey break-up and under the supervision of the NBW Agent. All NBW captured and moved must be leg-banded with bands provided by WRD. A record of the date of capture, date of release, sex, and age of all birds captured and moved will be maintained on a standard data form to be provided by WRD upon approval of the application. Captured NBW shall not be held for more than 24 hours from the time of capture. All NBW mortality associated with the translocation process shall be reported on the data form. A target translocation goal will be 50 pairs of NBW per year per 1000 acres of suitable habitat. Translocations may occur for three years or until the recommended numbers of translocated quail are reached, whichever is less.

H. NBW Population Monitoring

NBW populations must be monitored on Recipient properties during the approved translocation period and two years post-translocation. At a minimum, monitoring shall include a standardized fall covey count survey as approved by the State Quail Biologist and conducted under the supervision of a NBW Agent.

I. Special Conditions

NBW hunting and/or release of pen-reared quail or other game birds shall be prohibited on Recipient properties during the NBW restoration period, as specified on the permit. Recipients, Donors, NBW Agents or WRD may cancel permits and translocation process at any time.

J. Annual Reports

The NBW Agent must submit annual reports of the translocation and monitoring data by June 30 each year to the State Quail Project Coordinator. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner will be grounds for permit revocation. Unused leg bands must be returned at the end of the permit period.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Northern Bobwhite Quail Translocation Application



MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

RUSTY GARRISON
DIRECTOR

Northern Bobwhite Quail Translocation

A. Agent Information

Agent Name: (Print name)	Date:	
Agent Employer:	Phone Number:	
Agent Employer Address:	State:	Zip Code:

B. Recipient Property Information

Recipient Name: (Print name)	Phone Number:	
Address:	State:	Zip Code:
Recipient Property Name:	County:	Acreage:

** Please also submit the following information:

- 1) Recipient property tract map(s) and acreage of only contiguous acres of suitable NBW habitat.
- 2) Monitoring map, pre-release, and post release monitoring sampling design.
- 3) Baseline fall covey count data for previous year that indicates estimated density of NBW for the recipient property.

C. Donor Property Information

Donor Property Name: (Print name)	Phone Number:	
Address:	State:	Zip Code:
Recipient Property Name:	County:	Acreage:

** Please also submit the following information:

- 1) Tract map(s) with exact locations of proposed capture sites.
- 2) Attach monitoring map and baseline fall covey count data for previous year that indicates estimated density of NBW for Donor property.



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

RUSTY GARRISON
DIRECTOR

D. Quail Information

Proposed Number of NBW to be captured and released per year:	
Proposed dates for NBW Capture and release:	

E. Field Technicians

Technician Name: (Print name)	Date:	
Agent Employer:	Phone Number:	
Agent Employer Address:	State:	Zip Code:

Technician Name: (Print name)	Date:	
Agent Employer:	Phone Number:	
Agent Employer Address:	State:	Zip Code:

We the undersigned agree that we have read and agree to abide by all conditions specified above and that any departure from these conditions may result in revocation of the translocation permit.

Recipient signature: _____ Date: _____

Donor signature: _____ Date: _____

NBW Agent signature: _____ Date: _____

Submit to: Attn: State Quail Project Coordinator
GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division
116 Rum Creek Drive
Forsyth, GA 31029