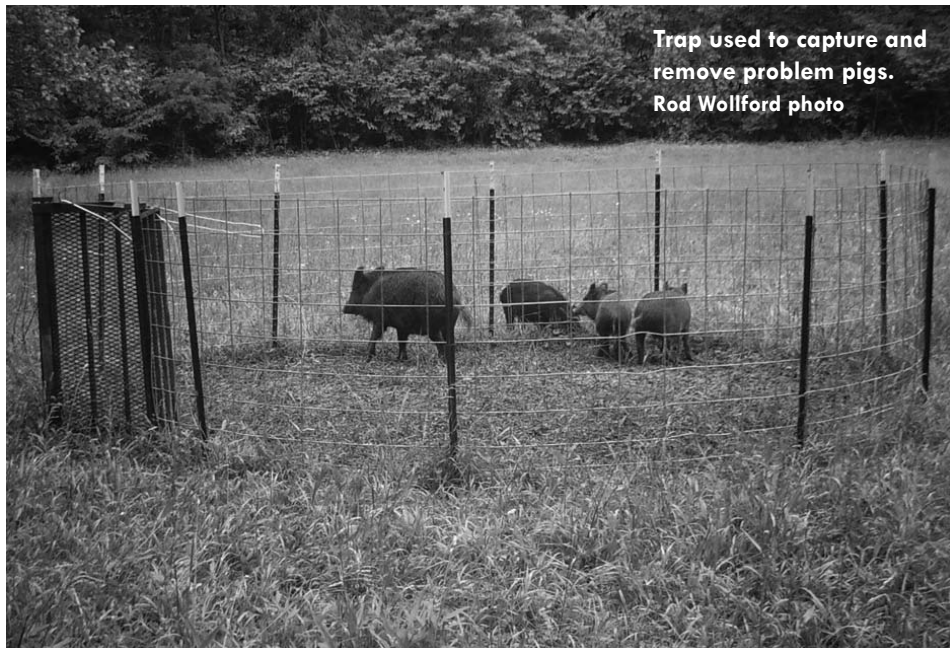




Wild Know-How

Spring 2012

A Private Lands Newsletter from the Division of Wildlife



Trap used to capture and remove problem pigs.
Rod Wollford photo

“Oink”

Problem Pigs in Kentucky

By Chad Soard, Wildlife Biologist

“What on earth has happened to my land? It looks like a tiller has come through!”

Hopefully most of you will never have to ask this question, but regrettably for landowners in a growing number of Kentucky counties this question is being asked; the culprit... wild pigs. The first sign may not have been a rooted field or food plot, but rather a trampled crop, a wallowed pond, a trail camera picture, or even a spoiled hunt. When wild pigs move in the sign is destructive and abundant.

Wild pigs are an exotic pest posing serious ecological, economic, and disease threats. Specifically, damage to habitat and wildlife can be severe, including impacts to forest regeneration, natural soil processes, stream bank erosion, water quality degradation, and direct competition with and predation on native wildlife. This begs the question, “why are they here?”

This species has been present throughout much of the southeastern United States since the 1500’s, descen-

Continued on page 5



SPRING CHECKLIST

March - Mid April

- Prescribe burn in preparation to eradicate fescue.
- Strip disk to promote bare ground and new forb growth.
- Sow clover or lespedeza.
- Sow cool season grasses.
- Apply lime and fertilizer per soil test to wildlife food plots.



“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children.”
— John James Audubon

Habitat Improvement Success

By Chris Mason

Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

The habitat improvements Mike Harvey has invested in have yielded very noticeable wildlife benefits that he can afford to share with family and friends. Deer and turkey hunting opportunities have dramatically increased and he has had some exceptional youth hunts. He has reduced sediments flowing into Mill Creek and in the past few years has begun to see quail for the first time on his farm.

Mike is a proactive landowner. With the exception of his backyard, nearly all of his 200 plus acres are managed for wildlife. He takes great pride in the ownership and management of his northern Taylor County property and is quick to get professional advice.

Working with the Kentucky Division of Forestry through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), he has completed 165 acres of timber stand improvements to favor hard mast producing trees and create favorable conditions for oak regeneration. With continued funding through WHIP, more timber stand improvement work is scheduled for completion in 2012. Consulting with the Taylor County Conservation District, Mike has stabilized an eroding bank

along Mill Creek, with a cedar tree revetment technique. Cooperating with the Taylor County Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices, 9.0 acres of bottom land were enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and planted to trees and native warm season grasses as a riparian buffer. He has also used the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife's Habitat Improvement program (HIP) for technical guidance and assistance with other native grass and forb plantings, wildlife water holes and ephemeral pool creation, annual and perennial food plot maintenance, and using prescribed fire to manage grassland habitat.

When asked how he felt about the wildlife programs he has been involved in, Mike Harvey said, "I feel that the best steward of the land is the landowner. I am trying to be the best steward I can. It is an investment in the land and the future".

Investing time and some hard work into habitat improvements can produce proven wildlife results. Contact your private lands biologist to get the wild know-how that can help transform your land into quality wildlife habitat.



Successful youth hunt on the Harvey Farm.

JOIN *the* KENTUCKY BOBWHITE BATTALION



KENTUCKY
QUAIL
PROJECT

www.facebook.com/KentuckyQuail



A productive dove field.
Brian Clark photo

Time To Apply for 2012 Cooperative Dove Field Program

**By Rocky Pritchert
Wildlife Program Coordinator**

Kentucky farmers can pocket extra cash in the Cooperative Dove Field Program offered by Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) and it's not too late to be included in this year's program.

Started in 1998, the Cooperative Dove Field Program (CDFP) has been successful not only in expanding public hunting opportunities, but also in generating additional income for Kentucky farmers.

Now called the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), increased payments are available dependent upon the number of acres enrolled. If you're interested in learning more, read on!

WHAT IT'S ABOUT:

Through the CDFP, fields planted in the spring (sunflowers, millet, etc.) and managed specifically as prescribed for dove hunting the following fall

can generate as much as \$10,000 for a landowner when leased to KDFWR for public hunting.

Think about it! Plant an idle field to sunflowers, millet, soybean/millet hayfield or other acceptable crop and it can generate some additional income. By working with your local wildlife biologist, fields intended to be put in silage could also qualify for additional income. Fields accepted into the program vary in size. While 15-30 acre sites are generally preferred, the KDFWR encourages anyone interested to apply.

Simply "OK" an agreement with KDFWR whereby sportsmen and women needing a place to hunt doves next fall can come onto your land during the legal season.

Then plant and manage your dove field as prescribed in the agreement. That's all there is to it! After season's end, you'll get a check for up to

\$10,000. Farm operators must fulfill their planting and plot management agreement in order to receive full payment. Fields are inspected in mid-August. If the crop fails, the landowner is reimbursed for planting costs.

LIABILITY

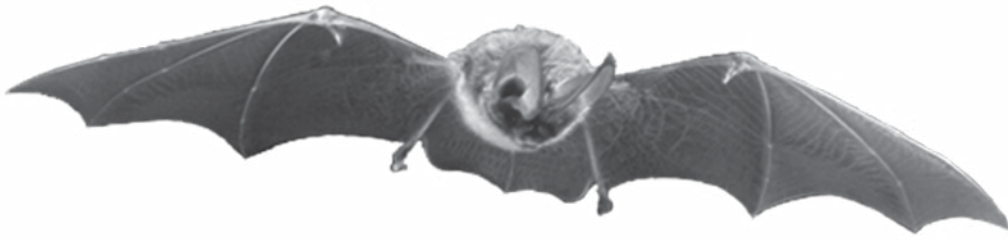
If you've never before hosted hunters on your property, you may wonder about liability issues. Kentucky's Recreational Use Statutes (KRS 411.190 and KRS 150.645) are intended to encourage landowners to open their lands to public use – without charging a user fee – for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities. CDFP participants are included under these state statutes.

FIND OUT MORE!

To learn more about the Cooperative Dove Field Program, contact your KDFWR Private Lands Biologist or Natural Resources Conservation Service Liaison.

Applications will be accepted until mid-March. For more information call 1-800-858-1549 or visit www.fw.ky.gov.





Create Wildlife Habitat by Building Ephemeral Pools

By Terri Estes, Wildlife Biologist

Ephemeral pools are small pools of water 1.5 to 2.5 ft deep that often dry up during hot summer months. This prevents fish from invading and preying upon tadpoles and salamander larvae. The aquatic life cycle of amphibians is complete before the pool dries up. Many landowners are surprised at the diversity of wildlife an ephemeral pool will attract. Amphibians can be well hidden and, unless you are out on a warm rainy night actively searching for them, you may never see some of these species.

In Kentucky, 22 amphibian species are considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). These frog and salamander populations are declining in Kentucky, and additional breeding habitat (ephemeral pools) will help restore populations.

Amphibians aren't the only wildlife species benefiting from ephemeral pools. Studies show ephemeral pools located in forests have higher insect abundance than forests without a water source. These pools attract many beneficial insects, like dragonflies that require water for reproduction. Bats naturally congregate around these water sources to take advantage of this high protein food source. Bats are one of nature's most efficient methods to keep insect populations under control.

Endangered Indiana Bats roost under the loose bark of trees such as shagbark and shellbark hickory when caring for their young. These maternity colonies, often comprising up to a hundred bats, benefit from the creation of snags through forestry practices. Since bats often target water looking for insects, the addition of ephemeral pools provides mothers with adequate food supply for their young.

Maybe managing for salamanders, frogs, or bats doesn't interest you? Did you know that ephemeral pools are also a great place to set up a deer stand and wait for that big buck you've been scouting?

Establishing ephemeral pools in forests is an often overlooked practice, but the wildlife benefits are great. Forestry practices such as forest stand improvement, edge feathering and brush management are offered to landowners through several Farm Bill Programs. Combine these practices with an ephemeral pool or two and your forest will quickly become a hotspot for many species of wildlife.

If you'd like to learn more about ephemeral pools and forest management contact your local USDA Service Center, Division of Forestry (502-573-1085), or KDFWR private lands biologist (1-800-858-1549).



SPRING & SUMMER CHECKLIST

April - May

- ___ Begin preparation of dove fields.
- ___ Plant tree and shrub seedlings.
- ___ Spray herbicide to eradicate fescue.
- ___ Conduct timber stand improvements and create brush piles.
- ___ Establish wildlife mineral licks.

May - June

- ___ Plant annual grain food plots/ dove fields (do not plant in same location as last year).
- ___ Sow warm season grasses and wildflowers.
- ___ Hinge-cut cedar trees for living brush piles.

July - August

- ___ Create wildlife waterholes when the soil is dry enough.
- ___ Perform exotic/invasive species removal.
- ___ Mark trees for Timber Stand Improvement.
- ___ Manipulate dove fields for season opener.
- ___ Plant winter wheat in late August.

**REPORT A
POACHER!**

1-800-25ALERT
(1-800 252-5378)

**to report wildlife
violations**

“Oink,” continued

dants of domestic pigs accompanying early European explorers. However, populations of wild pigs have only begun to emerge in Kentucky in the last two decades. Clear disconnections between emerging wild pig populations have made it apparent that natural population expansion is not solely responsible. Rather, many of these populations have been created through illegal releases in an attempt by misguided individuals to create a recreational hunting opportunity. Unfortunately, once populations are established damage is often unavoidable, habitat and native wildlife suffers, and control can prove difficult.

However, all is not lost if you're experiencing wild pig damage. The KDFWR considers wild pig control a

management priority and encourages cooperative efforts between impacted landowners, our agency, and other stakeholders to ensure effective control in protecting the land and wildlife we're all invested in. The KDFWR promotes effective pig management by offering guidance and assistance with control maintaining a focus on removal through trapping, including the offering of a trap cost-share program. Thankfully, the most effective means of removing wild pigs is also inexpensive relative to the losses associated with pig damage.

The KDFWR recommends the use of baited corral traps on an ongoing basis. This tactic will simultaneously accomplish several management goals by removing multiple pigs in a single capture occasion, often removing an entire sounder (term for a group of pigs), and

concentrating removal efforts on female pigs across all age classes. Effective control demands the removal of female pigs to decrease population growth. Unfortunately, removal efforts often rely too heavily on hunting which is incapable of removing enough pigs to outpace reproduction in established populations. Chiefly, juvenile pigs regularly escape removal via hunting and may reproduce at only 6 months of age.

Effective wild pig control is a dynamic and ongoing process. The key is being adaptive; implementing the most effective control strategy at the right time. While I hope most Kentucky landowners will never experience wild pig damage, if you'd like more information on wild pig control or the trap cost-share program contact a wildlife biologist at 1-800-858-1549.



The Kentucky Quail Plate is available now at your local county clerk's office!



Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources
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 Frankfort, KY 40601

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PRIVATE LANDS BIOLOGISTS

