EXPECT SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

PEABODY

QUAIL
All persons 16 years of age or older are required to purchase a Peabody WMA User Permit available anywhere hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

No vehicles are permitted off maintained roads.

Parking is limited to parking areas and along maintained roads. Do not block gates or access roads.

No target shooting is permitted except at designated shooting ranges.

No hunting, parking or camping within 100 feet of gas wellheads.

Upland bird dog training is prohibited on the Sinclair and Ken units.
For more information contact the KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources at 1-800-858-1549 or FW.KY.GOV

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History of Quail on Peabody WMA

Between 1997 and 1998, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife purchased a majority of what is now the Peabody Wildlife Management Area. This area, situated in the middle of the Western Coal Field region, consists of 46,000 acres of reclaimed mine land within Muhlenburg, Hopkins and Ohio counties.

In 2008 KDFWR biologists began work on the “Road to Recovery,” a blueprint for restoring bobwhite quail in Kentucky. The 23,416 acre eastern tract of Peabody showed great potential for quail habitat restoration and three units within the WMA were designated as Quail Focus areas: Sinclair, Ken and Homestead.

KDFWR, in collaboration with the University of Tennessee, began bobwhite quail research in 2009. Biologists chose to concentrate on three objectives: to investigate quail survival and habitat use, to explore movements and home range and examine diet and hunter success.

The restoration of quail is a Kentucky success story, but hunting for them on Peabody WMA can be tricky. For more information on Peabody-specific techniques check out our “Hunting Tips” on page 4.
Wild birds behaved differently than pen-raised birds
- Wild quail ran from hunters under dense sericea lespedeza
- Wild birds held in shrub cover; allowing hunters to pass
- Hunters were more likely to find coveys earlier in the year before birds were pressured

Pen-raised Coveys: 78%
Wild Coveys: 29%

Dogs were 8.6x more likely to find pen-reared quail than wild birds

Average clutch size = 13
86% of eggs hatched

Types of quail found by researchers
- Pen-raised Coveys 78%
- Wild Coveys 29%

Winter crop analysis
Seeds of sericea lespedeza and common ragweed most common. Sericea lespedeza is detrimental to quail due to its hard, indigestible seed, but is most abundant at Peabody WMA

Top 3 keys to success for hunting Peabody WMA
1. Trust the dog
2. Flush less than 4 birds = a covey is there!
3. Hunt no more than 50 yards from shrubby cover
Skilled dogs and hunters detected only 29% of wild coveys at Peabody WMA. The longer you hunt the more likely you are to find birds! Birds are moving all day. The most coveys flushed was 8 during a 5 hour hunt in 2010 at Peabody WMA.
**WORK AROUND SHRUB PATCHES**

Quail averaged a distance of 32yds from cover during non-breeding season. Quail did not use forested areas that lacked thick shrub cover.

**DON’T GET SPACED OUT TOO FAR APART**

Running birds can slip between individual hunters. Keep tighter spacing, particularly when dogs get birdy.

**CONSIDER HUNTING ALL DAY**

Quail at Peabody were observed moving the most during the morning (7 - 10 AM), however their average hourly movements did not vary greatly throughout the day.

**IF YOU FLUSH LESS THAN 4 BIRDS, MORE ARE LIKELY THERE**

Periodically stand still in areas that have birds. Birds will become uneasy and flush. Deploy this tactic where dogs are birdy.

**HUNT DISK BLOCKS NOT FIREBREAKS**

Quail used firebreaks in breeding season, but used disk blocks year round. Focus hunting where shrub cover and disk blocks meet.

**HUNT EARLY IN THE SEASON**

Birds receive tremendous pressure from quail and rabbit hunters. While hunters were successful all the way through February, hunters in November tend to be more successful.

**DON’T GET SUCKED INTO THE FOOD PLOTS**

Quail visit food plots, however spend very little time in them.

**LEAVE SINGLES FOR TOMORROW**

Finding the singles after a covey flush has proven to be very difficult. Consider limiting the pursuit of singles to maximize hunting success.

**MORE DOGS AFIELD = GREATER SUCCESS**

In general, the more dogs you have hunting the greater chance of detecting birds.

**HUNT THOROUGHLY, DO NOT RUSH THROUGH COVER**

With expansive hunting opportunity, avoid the urge to get to the next “good spot”.

**TIP#1 WHEN DOGS GET BIRDY, SLOW DOWN!**

If your dogs get birdy, slow down and hunt the area thoroughly. There is a good chance the birds have moved in response to the dogs. Consider circling and coming through the same birdy area again for a second pass.
QUIAL PLANTS

Important Quail Cover and Food Sources at Peabody WMA

More information available
Common ragweed

Annual common ragweeds are very important to quail at Peabody WMA for two reasons. 1) They provide high-quality forage for quail and 2) they provide brood rearing cover and general cover for adults in the spring and summer.
Sericea lespedeza is by far the most common herbaceous plant at Peabody WMA. This plant is a nonnative invasive and has little food value for quail. As quail are dietary generalist, the presence in the crops of so many birds is a result of its high abundance across the WMA.

This is a nonnative, INVASIVE species! We do NOT recommend planting this plant for quail habitat!
Maximillian Sunflower

Maximillian sunflower provides quail with an excellent food source during the fall and winter months and good winter cover. Sunflowers also provide good overhead cover and support insect communities eaten by quail, especially quail chicks.
Many bird species, quail included, favor pokeweed berries. Pokeweed is important to quail for shading and cover as well. This plant is also good for attracting pollinating insects, which are also eaten by quail.
Grain sorghum

Sorghum, also called milo, is very high in nutritional value for quail. It is planted in food plots at Peabody WMA. Sorghum also provides some escape cover in the summer and fall for quail.

SEEDS
Grain sorghum

5mm
Black locust

Black locust is widely distributed on Peabody WMA, its seed is readily eaten by quail and mourning doves alike.

SEEDS
Black locust

GROWING
Black locust

FOOD
COVER
Sumac (various species) are important to quail at Peabody because it is eaten year round and can be very critical in the winter months when most other food items are under snow or not growing. Sumac thickets can also provide cover for quail.
Japanese honeysuckle is widespread across the WMA. The fruits of Japanese honeysuckle have marginal nutritional value for quail, however they are an important emergency food. The tangled vines of this nonnative invasive can also serve as winter/escape cover for quail.

This is a nonnative, INVASIVE species! We do **NOT** recommend planting this plant for quail habitat!
Foxtail millet

Millet is very high in nutritional value for quail. It is planted in food plots at Peabody WMA. Millet also provides some escape cover in the summer and fall for quail.
Quail at Peabody WMA eat plum seeds readily, however its most important role is that of cover. Quail use plum as a thermal refuge in the summer and as covey headquarters in the winter months.
Research
for Peabody WMA
Management at Peabody

Management began in 2009 targeting the Ken and Sinclair units at Peabody
The team at Peabody has managed almost 4,000 acres for quail habitat
Management techniques consist mostly of disking and woody cover enhancement

LESSONS LEARNED

Management techniques pre-research:
1. Strip disking in open herbaceous vegetation types
2. Using triclopyr for sericea control
3. Using prescribed fire in open herbaceous vegetation types
4. Emphasis on burning and disking

Management techniques post-research:
1. Block disking near shrub cover
2. Using metsulfuron methyl for sericea control
3. Using prescribed fire only prior to herbicide/disking and in forested areas
4. Emphasis on disking and herbicide
5. Creating shrub cover
6. Winter wheat firebreaks important for adults and broods in summer. Best to widen and alternate planting every other year.

More information available
Research Highlights

Captures 2009-2014
► Total birds captured: 2,015
► Number of birds fitted with radio-collars: 1,537

Survival 2009-2014
► Non-breeding season (1 Oct. - 31 Mar.): 28%
► Breeding season (1 April - 30 Sep.): 15%

Habitat use
► Telemetry Locations: 34,970
► Largest percentage of locations were in open herbaceous vegetation
► Distance to shrub cover averaged 40yds
► Over 60% of winter locations were less than 25yds from shrub cover

More information available

Movement

These data were collected during the hunting season.

Hourly covey movements were slightly greater in the morning, however quail at Peabody appear to move similar amounts throughout the day.
PEABODY WMA

MAPS

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Sinclair Unit

UNITs

- SINCLAIR
- KEN
- HOMESTEAD

PARKWAYS
US HIGHWAYS
STATE ROADS
INTERIOR ROADS

Paradise Power Plant
Office
Ken Compound
Sinclair Unit
Homestead Unit
Western Kentucky Parkway

Exit 58
Exit 75
Green River
K1 RD
H1 RD
S2 RD
S1 RD
RIVERSIDE RD
K4 RD
WYSOX RD
H5 RD
PM HAUL RD
K15 RD
S3 RD
S5 RD
K7 R D
SHOP RDK10 RD K8 RD
K9 RD
RIVERSIDE CHURCH RD
H2 RD
S12 RD
S10 RD
K2 RD
62
231
431
369
176
269
70
369
70

WESTERN KENTUCKY PARKWAY
KEN & HOMESTEAD UNITS

Current Landcover

- SINCLAIR UNIT
- KEN UNIT
- HOMESTEAD UNIT
- PARKWAYS
- US HIGHWAYS
- STATE ROADS
- PERMANENT FIRE BREAKS
- INTERIOR ROADS
- OPEN/OLD FIELD
- FOREST
- SHRUBBY
- NATIVE WARM-SEASON GRASS
- WATER

MAPS