



# Quail Times

Winter/Spring 2019

## UPCOMING WORKSHOP

**When:** Tuesday, October 8, 2019, 9 am – 4 pm  
**Where:** Wise's BBQ  
25548 US-76, Newberry, SC 29108  
**Topic:** Bobwhite Quail: History, Biology, and Practical Management for SC Landowners  
**Cost:** \$25.00/person Lunch provided  
**Register at:**  
<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry>

See attached flyer for more details and registration information.

## Invasive Species Spotlight European, Chinese & Japanese Privet By: Jeff Fellers

Many of us have probably had the misfortune of dealing with privet on our property. Whether it is in a flower bed, garden, or timber stand, privet has the ability to form thickets with dense canopies that can shade out and out compete desirable vegetation. Privet is in the Genus *Ligustrum* and was introduced in the United States in the mid-1800's as an ornamental shrub. There are numerous varieties of privet, but primarily the most common invasive variety is Chinese privet with Japanese privet following.

Privet is a semi-evergreen to evergreen shrub that commonly grows five to twelve feet tall but can reach heights of 30 feet. It has white to cream flowers that appear from April to June. The flowers lead to fruits that typically ripen July through February. The fruits will be pale green in summer and turn to a purple and black color when ripe. Birds will eat the fruit and spread seeds through their droppings.

If you have privet established on your property your best means of control will be the use of herbicides. Timing is very important in the control of privet. It is recommended to spray privet during the fall and early winter. In our area, October through January would be the ideal time to treat privet. Do not treat privet on days where the temperature is freezing or below. In most

situations, a herbicide with a 41 percent active ingredient of glyphosate will provide adequate control.

There are a couple of different herbicide application techniques to consider when treating privet. Foliar treatment is probably the most efficient method. During a foliar treatment it is important to

spray the foliage until wet, but be sure not to over spray to create runoff. Creating runoff wastes herbicide and reduces the effectiveness of the treatment. The best control is achieved when all the foliage is treated. Treating only part of the foliage may not lead to control. With glyphosate, mix at a rate of 4-6 fluid ounces per gallon of water (3-5% solution). If you are spraying around water, please be sure to use a glyphosate herbicide label for use in aquatic environments. If by chance the privet has reach a height where a foliar spray is not practical, you may use the cut stump method. With the cut stump method, cut the privet down and then immediately treat the stump with herbicide. The stump can also be treated with 41 percent glyphosate at a mixture of 32 ounces per gallon of water (25% solution). It is very important to treat the stump immediately after cutting or control will be greatly reduced.

Privet has aggressive growth characteristics. It has the ability to reproduce by seed and root and stump sprouts. Eradication is tough and may be impossible, however you can control it. Treated privet stands will more than likely have seed germination, root sprouts, and maybe even stump sprouts the next growing season. Monitor the treated privet stand and re-treat in the fall with a foliar spray of glyphosate if necessary.

Please be aware that glyphosate is a non-selective



Figure 1 European privet in flower. Image from [invasive.org](http://invasive.org)

herbicide. It can kill or damage desirable vegetation if it contacts the leaves. Spraying during November, December, and January can reduce this damage if desirable vegetation lose their leaves during the winter. Glyphosate is not residual, so it does not remain in the soil. As with any herbicide, it is very important to READ THE LABEL and fully understand how to use the herbicide properly, the appropriate equipment to use and what to wear.

## Spotlighting a Native Big Bluestem

### By Gary Peters

Turkey foot grass, the ‘old timey’ name for Big Bluestem, was and is a major component of the tall grass prairie regions of the United States, including the Southeast. A leafy warm season grass, it produces high quality hay perhaps the best in forage quality and nutrition of any of the native grasses. It is easily grown in average, dry, medium to well-drained soils in full to partial sun. It is quite tolerant of a wide range of soils, pH, nutrient levels, and growing conditions.

The light fluffy seeds require special handling when seeded but the results are worth it. Once established, this deep-rooted plant can produce in excess of 8 tons of forage per acre in the hottest, driest summer months making it extraordinarily beneficial for grazing livestock and producing hay for horses. When grazing or



Figure 2 Picture of Big Bluestem

cutting for hay it is important to leave stubble 8” high or more and do not mow or graze after August 15<sup>th</sup> at this latitude.

**Common Name:** Big Bluestem, Tall Bluestem, Turkeyfoot

**Scientific Name:** *Andropogon gerardii* sp.

#### Identification:

- Perennial upright grass 6 - 8 feet or more in height
- Slender green grasslike leaves

- Leaf venation is parallel
- An upright bunch grass, 1 plant may only occupy 1 square foot in area

#### Ecology:

- Grows in full sun to partial shade
- Drought tolerant
- Prolific foliage producer, especially when adequate soil moisture is present throughout the growing season
- Responds well to annual prescribed burning, spring growing season burns are best
- Propagates by rhizomes and by seed
- One crop of seeds in late summer to early fall
- Provides excellent wildlife habitat
- Forage eaten by all grazing animals and some browsers such as deer.
- Attracts butterflies
- Host plant for Delaware Skipper and Dusted Skipper

## NSWCD Apply for Federal Funds to Remove Feral Swine

**By Joseph Berry, district coordinator of Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District**

Wild boars, feral hogs, razorbacks, or wild boars, feral swine have many names. However, one thing is a constant, they cause a lot of damage to landowners throughout the country. With the passage of the most recent Farm Bill from Congress, came a number of new projects designed to aid landowners. One such program put inside the bill is the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (FSCP).

The FSCP is designed to be a joint effort between two United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies including Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to tackle the problem.

The program is meant to address the threat that feral swine pose to agriculture, ecosystems, and human and animal health. APHIS has worked with FSCP to select states that have been determined to have a large feral swine population densities and associated damages in counties. These include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

Two counties within South Carolina were selected for the pilot program grant, Hampton County and Newberry County. The project is designed to bring in a third-party local partner to the program to provide assistance to producers throughout the project. The





Figure 4 Picture of Feral Hogs

Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District (NSWCD) has stepped in and applied for the funding available through NRCS to establish a pilot program within the county.

With their application NSWCD hopes to be able to provide landowners in Newberry County assistance in controlling the feral swine population in the county. The program is designed so that NSWCD will work with landowners and NRCS to establish points of contact for property damaged by feral swine. APHIS will then work with those landowners to set up traps on impacted land, to be manned by APHIS Wildlife Service (APHIS-WS) agents.

APHIS-WS will work with landowners to plot appropriate locations for traps, then set them up and monitor them using motion activated cameras and remote-controlled drop gates. Once the feral swine are caught, they will be removed by APHIS-WS agents. The goal of this project is the reduction of feral swine population in Newberry County and to ease the impact the population has on the county.

Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL), through the University of Georgia, has also been contacted to provide assessments throughout the program. These assessments will include aerial evaluations as well as ground surveying the land impacted and will be conducted both before and after trapping. This information will help to provide measures of success for the pilot project so that it can be expanded on in future years.

The FSCP also has a portion of funds coming from NRCS meant for cost share assistance to landowners impacted by feral swine damage. These funds will let landowners apply practices designed to restore their land and ease the effect the invasive species causes.

Joseph Berry, NSWCD district coordinator, stated that the conservation district has applied for the grant and is hopeful to get the assistance for the landowners in the county.

“This program is designed to run for 3 years at no cost to the landowner to get the pigs off their land. After that, the district will take control of the traps and will look into how to best use them throughout the area,” said

Berry.

For more information on the program and to pre-register, Newberry County landowners are encouraged to contact NSWCD by phone at (803) 597-3160 or through email at [NewberrySoilAndWater@Gmail.com](mailto:NewberrySoilAndWater@Gmail.com).

## Bobwhite Quail Monitoring Survey By Michael Hook

“I love it when a plan comes together” was a catch phrase from the mid 1980’s television show the A-team. The leader of the rag tag group, Col. John “Hannibal” Smith, would usually state this about the time the group’s scheme to save the day would come together successfully to end the show for the week. I may have uttered that same line several times as I ran this summer’s spring monitoring routes on the Indian Creek Bobwhite Quail Focal area as I was beginning to hear the bird response we expected after doing so much work in the area for the last three years.

Each year a biologist in the area goes to the same twenty-four spots across the focal area and listens for calling bobwhite quail and six other bird species that use similar habitat. Bachman’s Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, and Prairie Warbler are the other birds biologists listen for and they have all experienced the same population decline as bobwhites. When we started this summer’s monitoring survey, before much habitat work was completed, there weren’t many of the points where you heard any of these birds but boy has that changed recently.

Within the Indian Creek Area, the US Forest Service has completed a great deal of habitat work in the last three years. The timber has been thinned, the mid-story trees have been removed, the understory has flourished under a new fire regime, and smaller burn blocks create a patchwork of suitable habitat across the landscape. And boy have the birds responded! As I mentioned earlier, in the 2016 survey there

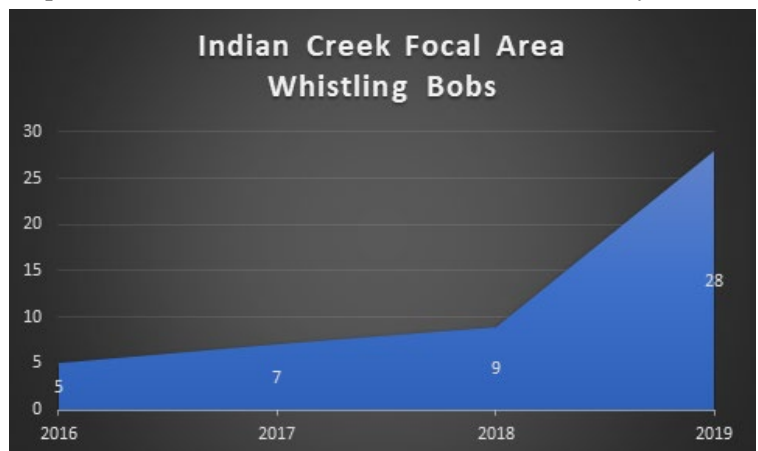


Figure 3 Graph of the Bobwhite quail survey data

weren’t many points where you heard one of our focal area species calling much less a bobwhite. That year we heard 5 male bobwhites calling on the 24 survey points and only 6 of the survey points held any of the other species. The following year 7 bobwhites were heard on the same 24 points, but we still

only heard the other species on 6 points. By 2018, we heard 9 bobwhites and had the other focal species on 10 of the points. Then came the big jump we had been waiting for. In 2019, we heard 28 whistling bobwhites across the 24 points. One point had at least 7 bobs whistling and maybe there was another one or two, but it was so many whistling it was difficult to keep track of them. The other focal area species were spreading out as well with birds being counted on 14 of the 24 survey points. These numbers just go to show you that if you create the habitat the birds do respond!

We also do a similar survey across the state for bobwhite quail with the major difference being that we are only surveying for bobwhites on our statewide whistle routes. From June 15 to July 10 fifty-three observers ran 72 routes across the state listening for bobwhite quail. We were able to use 65 of these routes in year to year comparisons. 2019 was the fourth year in a row we have heard more bobwhites on the same routes as the year before! In fact, there were 46 more birds recorded in 2019 than were heard on the same routes in 2018, which is an increase of nearly 15%. Unfortunately, we are still down nearly 70% from when we started the survey in 1979, but the last four years have provided a glimmer of hope that we are heading in the right direction. We just have to give the quail and other grassland birds a place to make a home and they will do the rest.

## You are ready to burn, but...

By: Gary Peters

- You need a plan,
- Need more experience or,
- Don't have the proper equipment?

**Step One:** If you are not experienced at burning, attend the hands on "Learn to Burn workshop" Oct 1<sup>st</sup> at NWTf headquarters in Edgefield. Register at [nwtf.org/events](http://nwtf.org/events). If you can't make that one, attend any of the Certified Prescribed Fire Managers courses scheduled. The next one is October 3<sup>rd</sup> in Columbia. Contact Leslie Woodham at (803) 896-8809 for more information.



Figure 5 Picture of the burn trailer with members from the Newberry Forestry Association

**Step Two:** Contact your local SCFC office for advice on preparing for a burn.

**Step Three:** Install defensible firebreaks.

**Step Four:** If you are short on equipment, contact Joseph Berry at the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District to reserve the burn trailer, email: [NewberrySWCD.Com/Burn](mailto:NewberrySWCD.Com/Burn) or, 803-597-3160.

**Step Five:** Get a burn permit the day of your burn by calling 1-800-777-FIRE (3473).

**Step Six:** Burn safely at the pace of the fire.

**Step Seven:** Enjoy your conservation accomplishments!

The burn trailer is stocked with basic firefighting tools and equipment available to landowners, practitioners, and professionals in Newberry and surrounding counties.

## South Carolina Prescribed Fire Council Annual Meeting September 24-25, 2019 Newberry SC

This is a 1.5-day workshop. The first day will be an afternoon field tour at the Indian Creek Focal Area and at a local private landowner's property. Everyone will meet at the Enoree Ranger District, 20 Work Center Rd, Whitmire, SC at 1:30 pm to begin the field tour. We need to carpool to reduce the number of vehicles on the field trip. The field trip will return to the parking area by 5 pm. The social will be at The Newberry Firehouse Conference Center, 1227 McKibben St, Newberry, SC from 5:30-7:30 pm.

The second day will be held at Piedmont Technical College, 1922 Wilson Rd, Newberry, SC with registration beginning at 8:30 am and the program starting at 9:00 am. This will be a classroom format, and a sponsored lunch will be served. Individuals can register for Day 1 (\$30), Day 2 (\$65) or Both Days (\$95). Reduced pricing available to landowners; call for additional details.

Register at: <https://2019scpfc.eventbrite.com>

## Interested in Cost Share Programs?

Check out the South Carolina Forestry Commission page on cost share programs in South Carolina  
<https://www.state.sc.us/forest/pubs/costshare.pdf>

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter electronically by email, please contact Jeff Fellers at [fellers@clemson.edu](mailto:fellers@clemson.edu).



# BOBWHITE QUAIL

## HISTORY, BIOLOGY, AND PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT FOR SC LANDOWNERS

Photo Credit: Tall Timbers Research Station

[www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry)

Join biologists and foresters from: SCDNR, Clemson Extension, SC Forestry Commission, and Quail Forever as they spend the day discussing and showcasing management of the Bobwhite Quail.

**Tuesday,**

October 8, 2019

**9:00AM-4:00PM**

**Wise Bar-B-Q House,**  
25548 US-76,  
Newberry, SC 29108

Participants will interact directly with biologists as they discuss the natural history, biology and management of bobwhites and other members of the grassland bird guild.

Classroom sessions will include:

- biology, history, population trends,
- various habitat management practices,
- and conservation efforts.

Costs \$25.00/person.  
Lunch provided.  
Register online at:  
[www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry)

The afternoon sessions will be held in the field with topics including:

- Equipment (selection, safety, and operation),
- Native plant identification and wildlife value, and
- Overview of management practices on the property.

### CONTACT

**Parker Johnson**

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Should you require special accommodations due to a disability, please notify our office ten days prior to the event.

