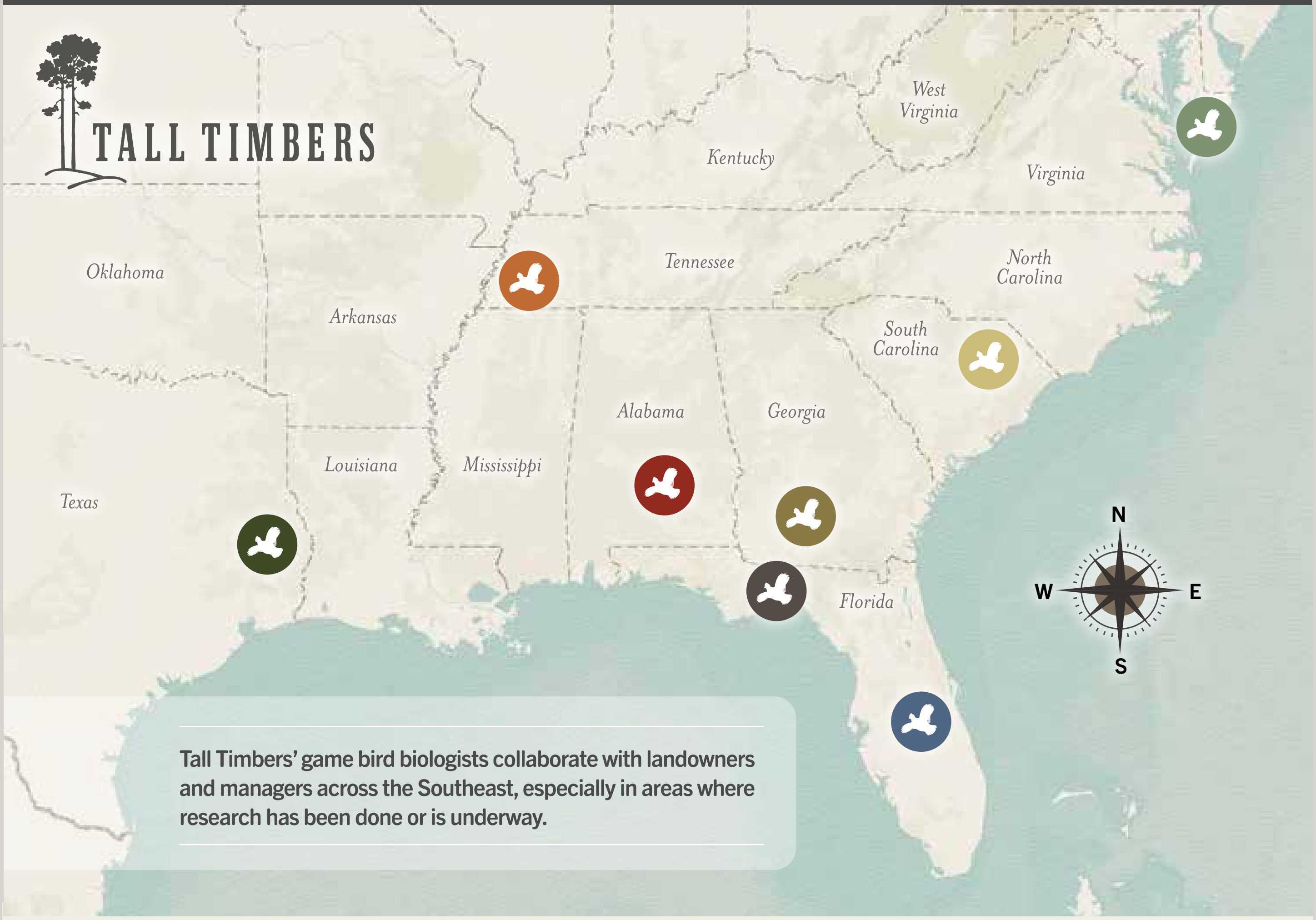
QUAIL CALL

2025 EDITION

TALL TIMBERS

GAME BIRD REGIONAL CONTACTS

RESEARCH | MANAGEMENT | TECHNICAL ADVICE | TRANSLOCATIONS | PRESCRIBED FIRE ASSISTANCE



Tall Timbers' game bird biologists collaborate with landowners and managers across the Southeast, especially in areas where research has been done or is underway.

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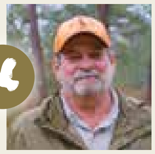

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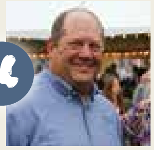

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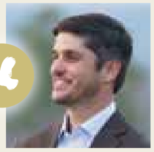

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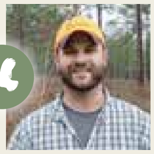

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QUAIL CALL

2025

YOUR SOURCE FOR BOBWHITE
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION.

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“BOB CALLING” BY RON THOMSON

We thank Ron for donating the use of this image for the striking cover of our 2025 Quail Call. Ron was born in Rota, Spain, and grew up in Florida. He earned his BFA with an emphasis in painting at Florida State University and has been a professional artist since 1993. Thomson is an expressive realist working in oils. His collectors often describe his work as “seemingly alive.”

Over the years, he has created a vast body of work on various subjects and has focused his interests on wildlife and sporting art. Ron’s work can be found in private and institutional collections across the Southeast and beyond. To see more of his paintings and learn about commission opportunities, visit ronthomsonart.com.

THE MISSION OF TALL TIMBERS IS TO FOSTER EXEMPLARY LAND STEWARDSHIP THROUGH RESEARCH, CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION.

2025 GAME BIRD TEAM

Our Game Bird team members work across the Southeast
to further exemplary land stewardship.

Tall Timbers Headquarters
William E. Palmer, PhD, President/CEO
Dwayne Elmore, PhD, Game Bird Program Director
Alex Jackson, Quail Expansion and Outreach Biologist
Michael Hazelbaker, Game Bird Biologist
Garrett Ake, Research Technician
Katie Schroeder, PhD, Doctoral Researcher

Albany Quail Project
Clay Sisson, Director
Justin Rectenwald, Game Bird Biologist
Austin Lewis, Research Technician
Garrett Roberts, Research Technician

Ames Plantation
Jonathan Burch, Land Manager
Nick Thompson, Assistant Land Manager
Reed Tamplin, Research Technician

Livingston Place Research
Holly Lott, Game Bird Biologist

Central Florida Rangeland Quail Program
Geoff Beane, Director
Amanda Cramer, Game Bird Biologist
Marijean Hankins, Biologist
Matt Kunkle, Land Manager at Rollins Ranch/Yeehaw Plantation
Marilyn Ogof, Research Technician

Western Pineywoods Quail Program
Bradley W. Kubečka, PhD, Director
Elizabeth Fleming, Research Technician
Kirsten Szala-Krotkov, Research Technician

Carolina Regional Quail Program
Paul Grimes, Director
Trey Johnson, PhD, Game Bird Biologist
Kyle Magdziuk, Delmarva Prescribed Fire Coordinator and Game Bird Biologist
David Balser, Research Technician

Alabama Quail Program
Mark Sasser, Game Bird Biologist

Upland Ecosystem Restoration Project
Greg Hagan, Coordinator
Sarah Brown, Public Lands Monitoring Coordinator

Graduate Students
Trey Johnson, PhD Student, Texas Tech
Jon Dixon, MS Student, University of Georgia
Caitlin Walker, MS Student, University of Georgia
Keller Zamudio, MNR Student, University of Georgia
Garrett Roberts, MS Student, University of Georgia

RESEARCH – A CRITICAL PART OF EFFECTIVE LAND STEWARDSHIP

By Dwayne Elmore

In this edition of Quail Call, we highlight several research projects that Tall Timbers and our research partners have recently completed. Each of these articles provides a glimpse of the vast amount of information collected and its future implications. All of the projects are applied in nature, meaning they are intended to improve the management of bobwhite.

A key example is our project that examined the unrecovered portion of bobwhite harvest. This data is essential for setting appropriate harvest guidelines, but it has remained difficult for managers and biologists to obtain for decades. The reason for the gap is that capturing this data is both challenging and costly. Since hunting is the main reason most landowners manage for bobwhite, understanding harvest thoroughly is crucial. As a result, we prioritized this project and dedicated three years to accurately estimating it so managers can now apply the findings.

Another research project in this edition was recently completed to assess potential diseases affecting bobwhite in the Red Hills. Though bobwhite disease has been examined before, emerging diseases like avian influenza are now a concern across the Southeast. These threats affect both wildlife and domestic poultry. Since Tall Timbers leads in translocating bobwhite to create new populations, disease monitoring is crucial to prevent the spread of significant diseases to wildlife and the human food supply.

When managing for bobwhite, we need to understand all aspects of their life history. The part of this life history that is least understood is the survival of chicks and how habitat, management and weather may influence it. Researchers have long tried to understand this critical period with mixed results. New technology, using genetic analysis, now offers us potentially more effective ways to monitor survival. Tall Timbers is leading the way in applying these methods to bobwhite chicks, and we are pleased to share some of our recent findings.

Each research project in this edition of Quail Call required a team of people working over several years and across multiple locations to design the project, collect data, and summarize the results. However, long before any of these activities took place, it all began with an observation and an idea. These ideas are often formed with or by our stakeholders, people like you who are out there managing the land.

Tall Timbers is a science-based organization driven by the needs of the resource and the people who care for it. The data we gather aims to help you better manage bobwhite and other wildlife, and to make informed decisions to be the best land steward possible. With that in mind, we hope you find the information in the following pages helpful and informative. Tall Timbers will continue to learn and communicate information with you in the years ahead.

Dwayne Elmore, PhD joined the Tall Timbers staff in September 2023 as the Game Bird Program Director.

Dwayne has a genuine interest in helping people meet their wildlife management goals. He is highly respected nationally and brings a deep knowledge of game bird ecology and management.

2025 TALL TIMBERS REGIONAL HATCH REPORT

By Michael Hazelbaker, Holly Lott, Clay Sisson, Justin Rectenwald, and Amanda Cramer

Long-term monitoring of our core research properties is important to track bobwhite response to management and weather. At each site, we capture bobwhite at different times throughout the year, attach radio-transmitters to them, and monitor multiple vital rates. In addition to providing a better understanding of bobwhite ecology and management, this data also allows us to forecast a regional outlook for bobwhite hunting. As you will see in the report below, 2025 was an excellent year for bobwhite on well managed properties in Southwest Georgia and in northern and central Florida.

ALBANY

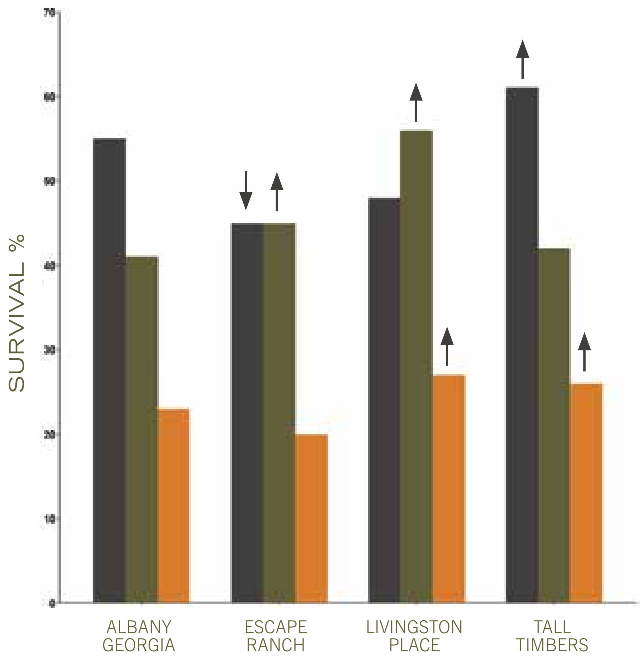
Following a good hunting season, the spring bobwhite density in Albany was equal to our long-term average despite having a record snowfall that reduced bobwhite movement and feeding for a few days. The breeding season got off to an early start, and reproduction remained consistent throughout the season. We found near record female brood production as well as high male contribution to reproduction resulting in one of the best breeding seasons we have documented in the Albany region. Summer weather with well-timed rains that stretched across the breeding season providing ample cover, which resulted in average adult survival and good apparent chick survival. These factors combined with positive reports from local managers leave us cautiously optimistic headed into the fall. Even with expected good bird numbers this season, we still need the weather to cooperate to provide the right hunting conditions.

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Unlike Albany, Escape Ranch started the 2025 breeding season with a below average spring density. We attribute this decline to lower reproduction in 2024 and below average overwinter survival, likely influenced by late season hurricanes and tornadoes in 2024. In response to the lower spring density, breeding bobwhite produced an above average number of nests. Strong nest production and high nest success resulted in above average brood production. A moderately dry spring and summer contributed to both above average breeding season survival as well as strong chick survival during the first half of the season. Given the high production and survival we observed this summer, we expect to see more bobwhite this fall than in recent years.

REGIONAL SURVIVAL

Seasonal and Annual Survival of Radio-Tagged Bobwhite on Four Properties in the Southeastern United States



Arrows indicate if this year's data is 5% above or below the long-term site average. No arrow indicates data within 5% of the long-term average.

At Tall Timbers, we documented the highest nest production in the last fifteen years and above average brood production. The outstanding reproduction was partly due to cooperative weather resulting in ample cover.

RED HILLS

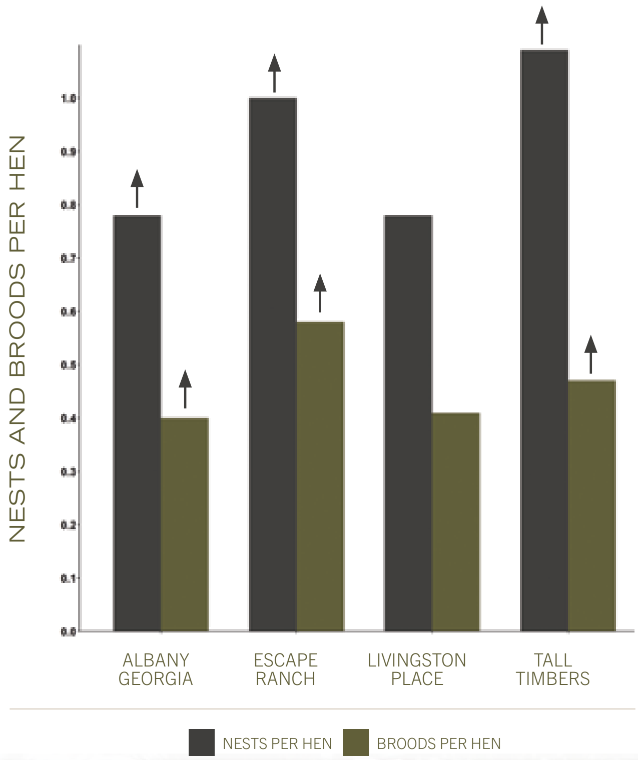
On the eastern edge of the Red Hills, Livingston Place entered the breeding season with below average spring density. We attribute this to below average overwinter survival and lower reproduction in 2024. Similarly, Tall Timbers started the breeding season with a lower spring population that was primarily due to reduced reproduction in 2024 as overwinter survival was above average. Breeding bobwhite responded with early nest production and that effort continued throughout the season. Specifically, both nest and brood production was up at Livingston Place and similar to the site's long-term averages. At Tall Timbers, we documented the highest nest production in the last fifteen years and above average brood production. The outstanding reproduction was partly due to cooperative weather resulting in ample cover. These excellent habitat conditions also contributed to average adult survival at Tall Timbers and above average adult survival at Livingston Place and good apparent chick survival at both sites. Due to the increased production and average survival across the Red Hills, we expect higher bobwhite numbers than last year.

SUMMARY

Due to good nest and brood production at all four of our research sites, we anticipate the fall populations to be up and above average. Toward the end of this year's breeding season, our region has entered a drought with above normal temperatures. While this dry and warm period came too late to significantly affect the bobwhite breeding season, we are hopeful that cooler temperatures and moisture will soon arrive to improve hunting conditions.

NESTS AND BROODS PER HEN

Nests and Broods per Hen on Four Properties in the Southeastern United States



Arrows indicate if this year's data is 5% above or below the long-term site average. No arrow indicates data within 5% of the long-term average.

Michael Hazelbaker tracks quail at Tall Timbers during a rare snow storm.

UNDERSTANDING AND MINIMIZING UNRECOVERED HARVEST IN BOBWHITE

By Justin Rectenwald and Amanda Cramer

As hunters, we strive to hunt ethically, shoot cleanly and recover any shot birds.

Despite every effort a hunter makes while pursuing wildlife, some amount of unrecovered harvest is inevitable. Part of bobwhite management is harvest management. Making a complete accounting of all harvested birds, whether they make it into the game bag or not, is important. Tall Timbers recommends a conservative harvest rate of up to 15% of the fall population for bobwhites, which includes unrecovered birds.

Managers and hunters have always understood that there is some level of unrecovered harvest that needs to be factored into harvest decisions. Yet, despite bobwhite being one of the most researched gamebirds in the world, we have not had a confident estimate of the true loss from unrecovered harvest. Previous estimates (often 10-20%) were considered unrealistically low and frequently not accounted for in harvest recommendations, partly due to the uncertainty.

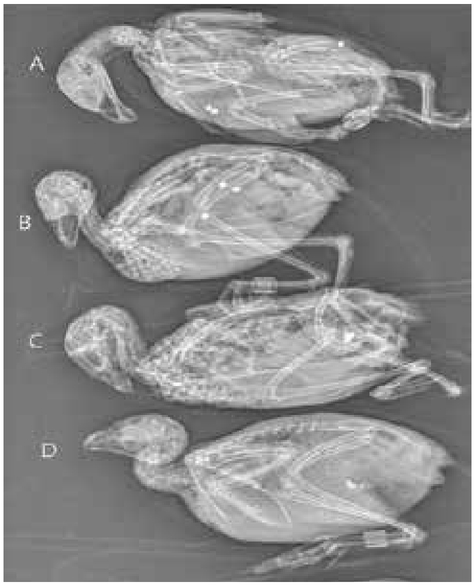
To address this knowledge gap, the Tall Timbers Game Bird Program and the Martin GAME Lab at the University of Georgia initiated a three-year comprehensive study to determine the unrecovered harvest rate of bobwhites at Tall Timbers, Livingston Place, the Central Florida Rangeland Quail Program and the Albany Quail Project.

Our staff of biologists and technicians joined hunting parties to collect data on radio-tagged bobwhites. We counted the number of shots taken at a covey, the number of birds shot and recovered and the number of birds shot and not recovered. And importantly, in the days following a hunt, we tracked the radio-tagged birds to find any that died because of hunt-related injuries or were knocked down and unrecovered by the hunting party.

Quail biologist Justin Rectenwald tracking quail during a research hunt near Albany, Georgia.

HERE IS WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT UNRECOVERED HARVEST BY TRACKING 1,700 RADIO-TAGGED BIRDS ON 181 HUNTS DURING THE 2021-2023 SEASONS:

1) The unrecovered harvest rate was 33% of the total harvest. This means that for every two birds that were shot and recovered in the field, one additional bird was shot and not recovered.
2) Most unrecovered birds died within a day following a hunt.
3) Hunters are likely to underestimate true rates of unrecovered harvest. We found that for every three birds that were observed as hit by hunters, an additional one was completely undetected.
4) For every 100 birds retrieved to hand; 10 more were shot down but lost; 25 more were visibly hit, flew away, and later died; and an additional 10 were not observed to be hit but later died.



Radiograph of bobwhite found the day after hunts showing pellets.

AS ETHICAL HUNTERS, HOW CAN YOU MINIMIZE UNRECOVERED HARVEST AND MAXIMIZE THE NUMBER BEING RETRIEVED? HERE ARE OUR TOP SUGGESTIONS FOR HUNTING SEASON:

1) Only shoot at birds that separate from the covey to reduce the odds you incidentally hit other birds in the covey.
2) Don't worry about doubles. Keep your eyes on the bird you first shoot at and be prepared to follow up with a second shot to knock it down if needed.
3) Get a good mark and spend time finding downed birds with a retriever.
4) Consider a one-bird-per-covey-rise limit per person to reduce the total shot count and to help hunters focus on the one bird.

Most importantly, keep your total bobwhite harvest conservative. With the 33% unrecovered harvest rate, we are returning two birds to the bag for every three that were actually harvested, one being unrecovered. If you are managing a property, build the unrecovered harvest rate into your planning by not bringing more than 10% of your fall population to the bag so that you don't harvest more than 15% (accounting for unrecovered birds).

Having an estimate of how many bobwhite are in the fall population, and keeping good records of harvest for each property are critical for harvest management. Otherwise, there is a risk of harvesting more than the population can replenish in the subsequent breeding season. This can lead to fewer birds than you might have otherwise had next fall, a declining population, or both.

COMPENSATORY VS. ADDITIVE HARVEST

Perhaps no terms are more misunderstood/misapplied in harvest management than compensatory vs additive harvest. We must first understand that both terms are abstractions of complex ecological systems and they are on a spectrum intended to help us understand and describe an animal's life history.

- Compensatory harvest can be summarized as "any animal that is harvested would have been lost anyway to some other cause."
- Additive harvest can be summarized as "every animal harvested is in addition to what would have otherwise died from some other cause."

The truth, as it often is, is somewhere in between. For example, bobwhite can sustain a high level of mortality (from whatever cause) due to their complex and vigorous reproductive strategy. But there are limits to this, and at some level, harvest can become additive, leading to fewer birds in the subsequent fall population. Yet, bobwhite exhibit a limited level of density dependent reproduction, meaning they can make up for higher mortality losses with higher reproduction, but only up to a point. So, the idea of partial compensation is more accurate to describe bobwhite.


Tracking quail in Central Florida using radio telemetry.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Post or explore job openings with private quail hunting properties in the Southeast. Managing world-class land and hospitality supports a variety of outdoor and indoor careers.
TallTimbers.org/Jobs

DNA, YOU SAY? NOVEL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING BOBWHITE CHICK ECOLOGY

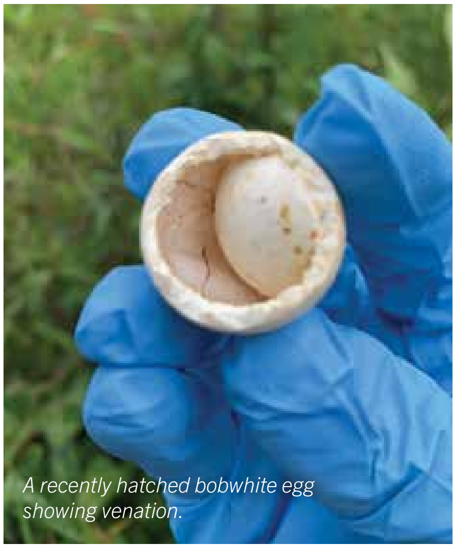
By Caitlin Jackson, Brian Shamblin, Dwayne Elmore, and James Martin

The use of DNA and related genetic analyses has been around for several decades to uncover crimes and human lineage – think CSI or Ancestry.com. But using these tools for understanding bobwhite chick ecology has not been attempted until recently.

Biologists have struggled to find methods to estimate chick survival that were both accurate and efficient. Past attempts used flush counts, wing tags and miniature radio transmitters sutured to the chick.

While each provided insight, they often disturbed broods, missed chicks, or produced biased estimates, leaving gaps in our understanding. In 2024, we began testing a new, less invasive tool: using DNA from hatched eggshells and feathers to track chicks over time.

The first two weeks are the most critical stage of a chick's life and is the life stage that we know the least about for bobwhite. Current wing tagging methods require us to wait until around 10 days after hatch to capture chicks and mark them. During this time, adults and chicks can die, radio collars can fail, or chicks may not be detected during routine flushes. Traditionally, we would have assumed those broods lost, leaving us unsure whether chicks actually died or simply went undetected.



A recently hatched bobwhite egg showing venation.

DNA GIVES US A FULLER, MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF CHICK SURVIVAL WITHOUT HAVING TO CAPTURE YOUNG CHICKS.

To address this, over the past two years, we collected 668 bobwhite eggshells. The newly hatched eggs of a bobwhite are rich in veins that allow us to extract DNA. We also collected 961 feathers from trapped and harvested juvenile bobwhite. This 'recapture' allowed us to evaluate survival over time.

Nearly all of our samples (99.1%) were successfully genotyped – meaning we could uniquely identify individual bobwhite, even full siblings within a brood. Our recapture of juvenile bobwhite produced 30 matches linking eggshells to feather samples recaptured later. Though the number may seem small, each match provides meaningful insight into chick survival. Of the 30 matches, 14 came from broods that we would have previously assumed had been lost.

In comparison, using our traditional wing tagging method, 186 chicks were wing tagged (requiring much more effort and stress to the chicks) with nine being recaptured during the same time period.

By tracking individual bobwhite directly from hatch, DNA gives us a fuller, more accurate picture of chick survival without having to capture young chicks. It gives a detailed picture of survival that other methods miss, especially during the first two weeks when chicks are most vulnerable.

With a more complete understanding of chick survival, we can better understand how to manage habitat for higher chick survival which is critical to setting the foundation for how many birds make it into the fall populations. After all, every covey flushed in the fall begins with chicks surviving those first few fragile weeks of life.

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of Chuck Ribelin, enabling us to explore chick survival to help guide bobwhite conservation for years to come.

FIELD TRIAL AND QUAIL CONSERVATION— A NATURAL PARTNERSHIP

By Alex Jackson, Clay Sisson, and Mark Sasser

The sport of field trialing bird dogs in the United States dates back over 150 years, when nine dogs and their handlers convened near Memphis, Tennessee, to compete in the "Grand Field Trial".

The trial was almost certainly run on wild bobwhite and is a reminder of how much we have lost with the ongoing decline of bobwhite across their range. However, focused efforts by dedicated landowners, land managers and field trial enthusiasts across the South have kept the tradition of wild bobwhite field trials alive. These trials are important for maintaining the highest level of bird dog breeding and help support quail hunting and, by extension, bobwhite conservation. Therefore, Tall Timbers is proud to be a partner in these trials.

Tall Timbers' first significant collaboration with the field trial world came when Livingston Place in Jefferson County, Florida, was gifted to the organization in 2013 after having been home to the Continental Open All Age bird dog championships since 1938. We were honored to continue and improve upon this trial, which is considered one of the top wild bobwhite field trials in the country.

Field trial grounds can be compatible with an intensive wild bobwhite hunting and research program. In fact, our research at Livingston Place has demonstrated that high-quality wild bird field trials can be successfully run without negatively affecting bobwhite survival or hunting success.

Tall Timbers' next venture into the field trial world came in 2014 at the historic Sedgefields Plantation in Union Springs, Alabama. Both the National Open Shooting Dog and the National Amateur Free-For-All Championships have been held there for decades, but with a recent history of using pen raised birds. This changed when prominent Birmingham businessman Raymond Harbert reassembled most of the original property as a hunting plantation for his family and guests, and he has graciously continued to host these two field trials.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT HIGH-QUALITY WILD BIRD FIELD TRIALS CAN BE RUN WITHOUT AFFECTING BOBWHITE SURVIVAL OR SUCCESS

Field trials, bird hunting, and quail conservation are integrally linked. Photo by Jamie Evans

Sedgefields' staff, Tall Timbers' Albany Quail Project, Alabama Department of Conservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and private donors in the Albany, Georgia area collaborated to translocate wild bobwhite over the last 10 years, starting on the morning course in 2015 and followed by the afternoon course beginning in 2022.

Both field trials are now exclusively run on wild bobwhite, and Sedgefields serves as a flagship property in Alabama, helping to encourage other landowners to pursue wild bobwhite management.

Recently, through the generous support of the Chuck and Martha Ribelin Quail Expansion and Recovery Endowment and additional private donors, Tall Timbers has expanded its efforts to include the Mid-South.

Early this year, Tall Timbers partnered with Ames Plantation, the University of Tennessee, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Wildlife Federation, Quail Forever, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the field trial community and passionate private donors to begin restoration of wild bobwhite on Ames, home of the National Championship Field Trial for bird dogs.

The project will follow the steps taken at Sedgefields by converting one course at a time, facilitating continued field trialing on Ames while restoration is underway. Ultimately, translocation of wild bobwhite will be used, once appropriate habitat conditions exist, to expedite population recovery and increase genetic diversity. This project is a significant undertaking and we appreciate the support of our partners. Our team at Ames is working diligently to bring wild bobwhite back to the National in a region rich in field trial history and tradition.

FIELD TRIAL AND
WILD QUAIL RESEARCH SITES

Timber harvesting was used to reduce tree canopy cover, allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor. This was the first step in quail habitat restoration on the Ames field trial course.

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE OF BOBWHITES IN THE RED HILLS

By Jon Dixon, Dwayne Elmore, Bradley Kubečka and James Martin

Tall Timbers has a long history of restoring bobwhite populations across the eastern United States. Translocations continue to serve as an essential restoration tool in areas where bobwhite are absent, yet habitat that can sustain them has been restored. Ensuring the health of bobwhite source populations is important for successful translocations to continue.

In spring 2025, Tall Timbers researchers completed one of the first studies to quantify the prevalence of Avian Influenza (AI) and Salmonella enterica in wild bobwhites from the Red Hills region. The pre-translocation process requires a screening for both of these diseases. The results? A clean bill of health.

We tested a total of 503 wild-caught bobwhites for AI and 323 for Salmonella in 2023-2025. Not a single bird tested positive for either disease—yielding 0% prevalence for both pathogens. This was despite the fact that an AI outbreak in waterfowl was taking place within five miles of our bobwhite source population during the study.

These findings support a growing body of evidence that wild bobwhites pose minimal risk for the transmission of AI and Salmonella to commercial poultry during translocations. Unlike waterfowl, bobwhites are non-migratory and closely tied to uplands, limiting their exposure to aquatic environments where these pathogens are more commonly found.

STUDY FINDS NO INCIDENCE OF PATHOGENS OF CONCERN

The absence of Salmonella enterica, including the Pullorum serotype, which is of concern to the poultry industry, has important implications as well. All 35 states in the bobwhite distribution currently require Pullorum-Typhoid (PT) testing for imported birds, and more than half require AI testing. These regulations, while precautionary, often assume all bird species carry a similar transmission risk. However, our results suggest that the current regulatory framework may overestimate the risk posed by wild bobwhites – potentially adding unnecessary costs and stress to translocated bobwhites.

Field-based prevalence estimates like these help agencies and organizations make informed decisions about wildlife and livestock health without compromising conservation goals.

We want to ensure that our actions are responsible and do no harm to the resources that we strive to conserve. This research was an investment in science to ensure that the source populations we are using are ideal candidates for responsible, science-based translocations.

Jon Dixon performing a necropsy on a harvested bobwhite to look for diseases of concern.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RED HILLS WILD QUAIL PROPERTIES

Quail hunting is not only a time-honored tradition in the Red Hills, it contributes millions of dollars to local economies across the entire region.

Through a periodic survey of Red Hills and Albany landowners, staff in the Tall Timbers Land Conservancy have documented and highlighted the important relationship between hunting properties in the region and their contributions to rural communities.

The 2024 Economic Impact of the Red Hills Region Quail Hunting Lands report shows that hunting properties in the region contributed $231.7 million to the local economy. The data collected anonymously from landowners has demonstrated that the regional hunting economy has grown over time.

Tall Timbers continues to update and reevaluate the economic impact of the Red Hills and Albany hunting communities and the findings within these reports are vital to Tall Timbers' success in working with elected officials and policy makers at the local, state and federal levels.

$231.7 MILLION

Economic impact of quail lands in 2023

19.4% INCREASE SINCE 2018

2,591

Hunting dogs, mules and horses locally receiving vet and farrier services

1,386 JOBS

Created by Red Hills Quail Lands

4.6% INCREASE SINCE 2013

10,789

Number of overnight guest stays at hunting properties in the Red Hills

$77.4 MILLION

In personal labor income in 2023

$150.1 MILLION

Money invested directly in goods and services, staffing, equipment and hospitality

833

Tractors and heavy machinery purchased, leased, and serviced locally

$1.34

Amount generated for every dollar spent locally at other businesses

845

Number of work trucks and ATVs purchased, leased, and serviced locally

$15.6 MILLION

In charitable giving to local organizations by Red Hills landowners

GET THE 2024 RED HILLS ECONOMIC REPORT

GET THE 2019 ALBANY ECONOMIC REPORT

TECHNOLOGY IN QUAIL MANAGEMENT
USING NEW TRACTOR TECHNOLOGY TO WORK MORE EFFICIENTLY

By Geoff Beane

Quail management relies heavily on products and advancements in the agriculture industry.

In today's increasingly data-driven agricultural landscape, the ability to make informed, real-time decisions is crucial for improving efficiency and maximizing crop yields. Many of the popular tractor brands have new technology that helps operators track operations.

In the Central Florida Rangeland Quail Project, we have John Deere tractors, so we use the John Deere Operations Center (Ops Center) app. The John Deere technology offers farmers a powerful tool to manage their operations digitally, transforming how farms are run by enabling better planning, monitoring and analysis. By leveraging GPS data, machine performance metrics and agronomic insights, the technology helps streamline farm activities and optimize resource use. By adapting this technology to fit quail management, we can help improve efficiency, reduce costs and mitigate for labor shortages.

One of the key benefits is its ability to centralize data from all connected machines. Managers can monitor equipment performance, fuel use and job progress remotely.

For example, the app provides live updates on where each machine is located, what task it is performing and how efficiently it is operating. This minimizes downtime, allows for quicker problem-solving and helps operators coordinate tasks more effectively. Managers no longer need to rely on constant phone calls or field visits to stay informed. Warning!!! Watching the progress in real time is addictive.

Managers can set up alerts that send notifications when the tractor throws a code, exceeds set speed limits or is idle for extended periods of time. Having the error code sent immediately to your phone enables instant diagnosis and scheduling of repairs without any delays. Monitoring progress, tractor performance and speed limits helps train new employees without having to be on-site actively watching. Costly repairs can be reduced by ensuring employees are operating the equipment correctly.

The mapping feature allows managers to monitor the progress of tasks. Using GPS tracking, the tractor's path is overlaid on an aerial map, a feature that is proving to be a game changer for a manager's ability to track the progress of tasks remotely.

Technology is rapidly changing how we manage for quail.

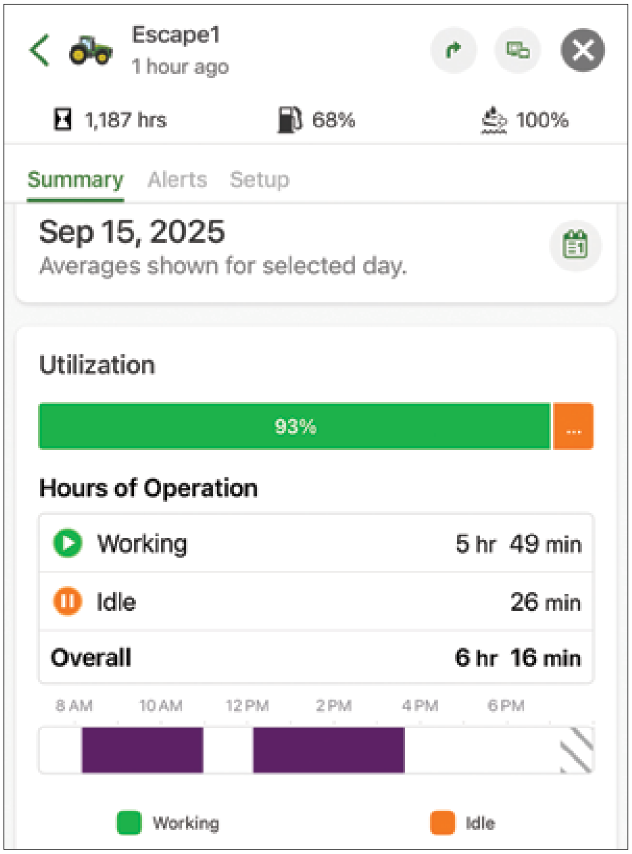
“WE NEVER THOUGHT WE’D SEE A TRACTOR PULLING A FEED WAGON WITHOUT A DRIVER, BUT WE DID LAST YEAR.” —GEOFF BEANE

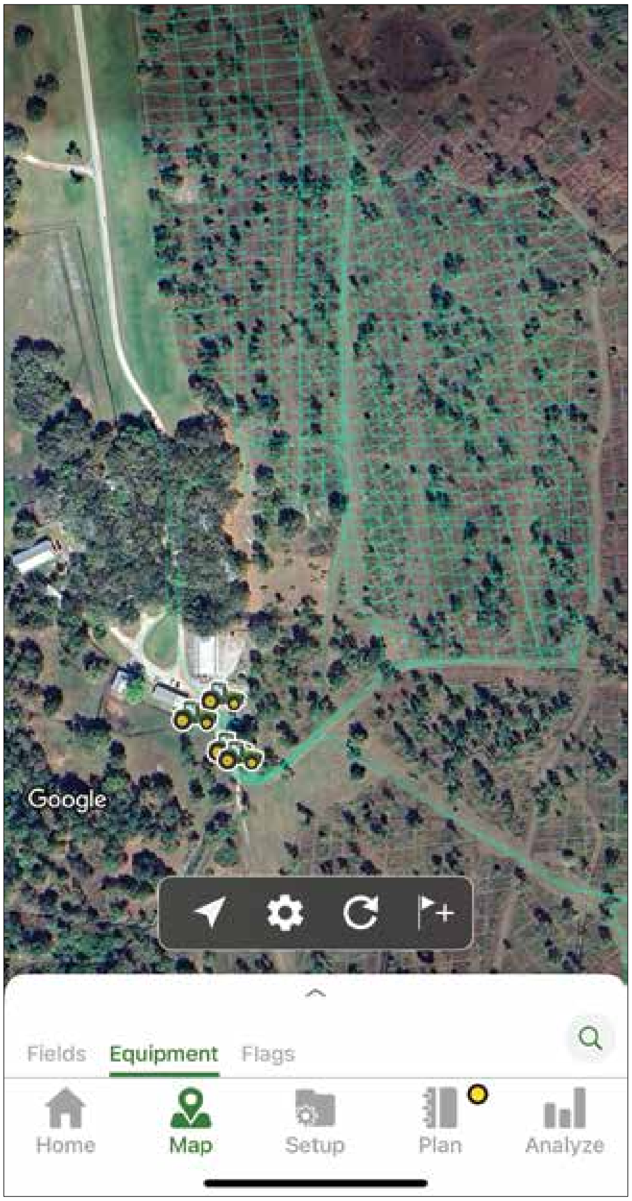
Managers can watch in real time the location of a tractor, the speed it is running and see what it has accomplished that day or over a specified time by searching a range of dates. Mapping allows managers to ensure tasks such as feeding, grid blocking and fire line installation are being done correctly without waiting until hunting season starts.

Technology is changing the game rapidly. Tall Timbers is continuously exploring the technology in agriculture and applying it to quail management. The use of equipment monitoring technologies is the beginning step to fully autonomous tractors. Their advancement is ahead of every manufacturer’s expected timeline and will soon be a reality on many properties.

John Deere is releasing its first autonomous tractors for tillage and orchard spraying. Kubota is already mowing sod fields autonomously, and several brands have released autonomous lawn mowers.

We never thought we’d see a tractor pulling a feed wagon without a driver, but we did last year. We successfully mowed a horse pasture, mowed woods roads and fed a feed line. The technology is not yet ready to fully implement, but it is close. With the constant concerns managers have regarding qualified labor shortages, this is one potential solution to improve efficiency and eventually automate some tasks.





The ability to monitor multiple pieces of equipment simultaneously can help managers focus on other tasks.

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