



Edgefeathering How-To for Bobwhite Quail

Covey headquarters provide essential shrubby escape cover for bobwhite quail, and edgefeathering serves as an effective temporary substitute. Quail coveys use these areas daily throughout the fall and winter until they break up in the spring. Brood also regularly rely on this cover to escape the sun and avoid predators.



Specifications:

- Kill sod-forming grasses underneath and around the edgefeathering
- Minimum 1,500 square feet or 30'x50'.
- Along a forested edge or fenceline, place 30'x50' blocks ever 100 to 150 feet. As older block break down, add new ones. This gives quail more usable space, since studies show they stay about 70-75 feet from woody cover in winter. This method also keep good cover available for the next 10-20 years.
- Prioritize supplementing existing covey headquarters of native shrubs to restore their functionality (TX research showed quail use of covey headquarters deteriorates when 3 sides or the overhead is topped by taller trees). Prioritize when trees are over 12 feet tall.
- Taller trees could be girdled and herbicide applied.
- Use labeled herbicides to prevent repeating the operation every 3-5 years on the same cut stumps or repeat if tree growth gets over 12 feet tall. Do not treat native shrubs stumps.
- DO NOT PILE, leave the trees lay where they drop or windrow them in shingle-like fashion
- Do not use a bulldozer. If using a bobcat clipper you can place the tree, but DO NOT PILE!
- Do not use a bullhog. The resulting mulch smothers the bare ground and delays the weed or native shrub response.
- Protect from prescribed fire , if possible, until after the edgefeathering deteriorates and is no longer useful for quail.
- Place adjacent to other quail cover. Edgefeathering cannot be 100s of yards from other cover types and still get the desired results.



PHOTOS BY BILL WHITE



Scan the QR code for more
information on covey headquarters.

Benefits of edgefeathering for wildlife:

Radio-collar studies in Missouri have shown that quail often remain in edgefeathering during major snowstorms and for several days afterward. Hunters have also observed this behavior in both covey headquarters and edgefeathering areas.

Landowners report finding quail and turkey nests in these structures, noting that whitetail does frequently seek shelter in them as well. Additionally, rabbits appear to prefer edgefeathering for its reliable cover.