

# Wildlife Habitat

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR WILDLIFE

Wildlife habitat management is important in reducing threats to wildlife due to habitat loss, disease, and invasive species. The Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS can help private landowners manage existing cropland, forestland and pasture to best meet wildlife habitat needs, or establish new wildlife habitat areas. NRCS has the technical expertise and funding available to assist landowners with the habitat improvement practices necessary to provide an optimal environment for wildlife.

Current habitat conditions on your land will be evaluated by NRCS to determine a plan for restoration. Plans with the largest impact on and benefit to wildlife habitat will be prioritized for funding.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program or EQIP, NRCS seeks to manage or re-establish the following types of habitat.

### EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT

Successful restoration and management of early successional habitat or young forests will benefit natural communities, pollinators, ground-nesting birds such as quail, field sparrows, prairie warblers, and American woodcock, as well as other associated upland wildlife. Activities include establishing habitats consisting of native forbs, grasses, and shrubs on crop fields, non-native pasture, and abandoned mine fields; creating habitat within existing early successional forests; and control of invasive species to establish native vegetation.

### GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT

EQIP practices seek to establish or manage habitat for grassland bird species. Activities include establishing native grassland habitat on crop fields, non-native pasture, and abandoned mine fields; managing existing grassland; and deferring forage harvest on working grasslands, pastures and hayfields.

### WETLAND AND SHALLOW WATER HABITAT

These habitats include seepage wetlands, Delmarva Bays and depressional wetlands, wet meadows, shallow water impoundments, and tidal marsh. They are often composed of herbaceous plants and/or shrubs, and usually have permanent or seasonal surface water driven by rainfall, surface runoff, groundwater, spring seeps, or tides. EQIP practices seek to restore and manage early successional wetland habitat and control invasive species such as phragmites to benefit waterfowl, wading birds, turtles, amphibians, and other wetland dependent species.

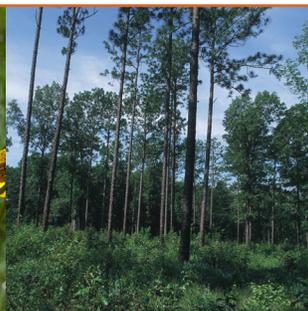
### STREAM AND RIPARIAN CORRIDOR HABITAT

EQIP practices seek to protect and restore streams, their floodplains and riparian buffers to support aquatic and riparian species such as brook trout, freshwater mussels, and neotropical migratory birds. This includes stabilizing stream headcuts and erosion, excluding livestock from riparian areas and providing shade on cool water streams; restoring floodplains with permanent vegetation and re-establishing hydrologic connections to streams; providing passage for fish and other aquatic organisms through blockage removal, and control of invasive species to establish native vegetation.

### FORESTED HABITATS

These habitats lie within large forests typically composed of mature hardwoods. Forested habitat greater than 300 feet from the forests edge benefits forest interior dwelling species such as wood thrush, Kentucky warbler, cerulean warbler, Delmarva fox squirrel, and Indiana bat. Restoration will focus on enhancing existing suitable forest habitat by increasing the total size of contiguous forest, closing gaps in large forest tracts, and increasing the interior-to-edge ratio either by establishment of new forest plantings or augmentation of existing forests.

Detailed fact sheets for each habitat type are available. Visit your local NRCS field office or [www.md.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov) for more information.





## NRCS Conservation Programs for Wildlife Habitat

### EQIP Wildlife Practices

The purpose of habitat restoration and management is to maintain or re-establish the attractiveness and productivity of healthy wildlife systems. Effective wildlife management can add value to outdoor recreational activities and the aesthetics of your property, as well as ecological importance. Though no one acre or one area can be all things to all wildlife, through careful planning and discussion we can make the best management choices for species with declining populations.

EQIP provides payments to restore and manage wildlife habitat through conservation practices such as:

- Aquatic Organism Passage
- Conservation Cover
- Early Successional Habitat Development and Management
- Field Border
- Hedgerows
- Prescribed Burning
- Riparian Buffers
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- Upland or Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management

### Maryland NRCS Field Offices

Allegany: 301-777-1494	Howard: 410-489-7987
Anne Arundel: 410-571-6757	Kent: 410-778-5353
Baltimore: 410-527-5920	Montgomery: 301-590-2855
Calvert: 410-535-1521	Prince George's: 301-574-5162
Caroline: 410-479-1202	Queen Anne's: 410-758-1671
Carroll: 410-848-6696	St. Mary's: 301-475-8402
Cecil: 410-398-4411	Somerset: 410-651-0370
Charles: 301-934-9588	Talbot: 410-822-1577
Dorchester: 410-228-5640	Washington: 301-797-0500
Frederick: 301-695-2803	Wicomico: 410-546-4777
Garrett: 301-334-6950	Worcester: 410-632-5439
Harford: 410-838-6181	

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Farmers can apply for financial and technical assistance for over 100 conservation practices to benefit their land and operations through EQIP.

### About EQIP

EQIP provides technical assistance and financial assistance to producers. EQIP conservation plans are developed with producers and conservation professionals. Plans that are selected and funded receive financial assistance--money to help turn that plan into reality.

EQIP has a continuous sign-up process; applicants can sign up anytime of the year at their local NRCS field office.

### EQIP Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must be a farmer engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land, or an owner of agricultural land or non-industrial private forest land. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, private non-industrial forestland, and other farm lands, as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.
- Applicants must comply with USDA's Highly Erodible Land (HEL)/Wetland Conservation provisions. For HEL, erosion must be reduced to minimum acceptable levels by the first year of the contract. Participants also must comply with Adjusted Gross Income provisions (the three-year AGI cannot exceed \$1 million, with some exceptions if at least 2/3 of the income is from agricultural production).
- Priority is given to applicants who have a current conservation plan that addresses soil erosion and, if needed, nutrient management. The conservation plan should describe the practices that will be included on the contract and the schedule for implementing the practices.
- Preference is given to applicants who can complete work within 1-3 years.
- Participants agree to maintain conservation practices implemented with EQIP financial assistance for the practice life span, which may exceed the length of the contract.
- Conservation Practices must meet or exceed Maryland NRCS standards and specifications.