

Wildlife Practice	Description	Program Offered
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management		
	Establishment of features that improve water quality, provide in-stream habitat, increase diversity and stabilize stream banks to provide better physical and biological conditions for desirable aquatic wildlife species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP
Tree/Shrub Establishment		
	Establishing native hardwood trees by planting seedlings/cuttings or through natural regeneration to create or improve habitat for desired wildlife species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CRP/CREP • CSP • ACEP - WRE
Wetland Restoration		
	<p>Installing conservation practices to return a degraded wetland area to the original wetland conditions.</p> <p>Wetlands provide important wildlife habitat and are one of the most diverse biological ecosystems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP • ACEP - WRE
Wildlife Habitat Management		
	<p>Actively managing upland and wetland habitats to provide nesting, feeding, resting and protective cover for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.</p> <p>Management of vegetation may be appropriate in both habitat types, and may include planting annual food crops for wildlife. Water level management may be utilized in wetland habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP

Increasing wildlife habitat is critical to ensuring the health and sustainability of nature's wild creatures. By installing wildlife-friendly practices on your agricultural and forest land, you not only make it more attractive for wildlife, but also contribute to the health of the land through improved water quality and soil health.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Delaware offers technical and financial assistance through several farm bill programs to help landowners restore or establish wildlife habitat. Regardless of plot size -- from a corner plot to multiple acres, NRCS and conservation partners can help you build the best habitat for your farm.

The first step is to walk the land with your local conservation planner and share your operational goals so you can work together to develop a comprehensive conservation plan that fits your needs.

Landowners and operators can implement a variety of practices to enhance wildlife habitat. Depending on your needs, practices can be installed for the short-term, long-term or permanently.

Farm bill programs offer different options related to the agreement length, type and available financial assistance for wildlife habitat practices. NRCS in Delaware utilizes the four programs below to restore, enhance or create wildlife habitat.



Program Name & Description	Eligibility Requirements	Participant Requirements	Financial Assistance Offered
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Wetlands Reserve Easement provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through easements.	Applicant/Land Eligibility: Privately owned eligible croplands, woodlands and parcels enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.* (*waiver required) Applicants must have owned the land for at least 24 months	Participant obligations: Maintain and restore wetlands as agreed. Agreement Length: Permanent and 30-year easement options.	Financial Incentives: NRCS pays 75 percent or 100 percent (30-year vs. permanent) of easement value; and 75 or 100 percent of the restoration costs. NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement.
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) rewards farmers who are good conservation stewards of their land and offers compensation for maintaining and agreeing to install additional wildlife enhancements on controlled acres.	Applicant/Land Eligibility: Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland with existing conservation practices.	Participant obligations: Maintain and increase level of current land stewardship. Agreement Length: 5-year contract	Financial Incentives: Annual payments for maintaining existing conservation practices and compensation for implementing enhancement activities. Separate funding pools for beginning, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps participants develop habitat for upland, wetland, aquatic and riparian species. Special Initiative: Restore habitat for the American Black Duck on working lands.	Applicant/Land Eligibility: Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland, pasture land or non-industrial forest land.	Participant obligations: Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards. Agreement Length: 1-3 year contracts	Financial Incentives: Compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Beginning, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)/ Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) helps participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, shrubs, trees and other herbaceous vegetation or restore wetlands.	Applicant/Land Eligibility: Land must be located in the project area (if applicable) and be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Applicant must own land for one year.	Participant obligations: Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards. Implement one mid-contract management practice. Agreement Length: 10- 15 years	Financial Incentives: Compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Producers receive a one time signing incentive payment/ acre plus annual rental payment.

Practices for Wildlife

Wildlife Practice	Description	Program Offered
Conservation Cover		
	Establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover of either introduced or native grasses, legumes and forbs for nesting cover, winter cover, brood cover, and food for wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP • CRP/CREP
Early Successional Habitat Management/Brush Management		
	Early successional habitat allows areas that were recently overgrown or unmanaged to return to an earlier state of growth. Succession is the change of vegetation over time, with unmanaged lands ultimately ending as mature forest. Reversing succession and managing it as an earlier habitat type can be valuable for many wildlife species. This habitat provides protective cover for nesting and valuable food sources for turkey, deer and many others. Examples of early successional habitats include weedy areas, grasslands, old fields, pastures, or shrub thickets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP
Field Border		
	A strip of perennial vegetation, primarily grasses and forbs (but may include shrubs), can be planted along one or more edges of a field to provide nesting and winter cover, and travel corridors that connect to other wildlife habitat areas. Flowering plants can be added to provide pollen and nectar for pollinators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP
Hedgerow Planting and Windbreak		
	Establishing a border of trees and shrubs within or along the sides of a field that serves as a living fence and provides travel corridors, winter, nesting, and loafing cover for wildlife and increased plant diversity on the landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP

Wildlife Practice	Description	Program Offered
Riparian Forest Buffer		
	An area between a field and a stream, lake or other water body established to trees and/or shrubs to improve water quality for aquatic life and provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP • CRP/CREP
Riparian Herbaceous Cover		
	A strip of herbaceous vegetation planted adjacent to streams, ditches, ponds or other water bodies. This practice improves water quality for fish and other aquatic life, and provides travel corridors and nesting cover for terrestrial wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP • CRP/CREP
Shallow Water Areas/Ponds		
	Shallow water provided and managed to benefit waterfowl and wading birds but also to support reptiles, amphibians, insects and other wildlife that need shallow water during at least part of their life cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP • CRP/CREP
Streambank Protection		
	Measures that stabilize and protect the banks of streams. Streambank protection measures may include woody and herbaceous plantings that improve habitat for riparian wildlife. Stream habitat measures improve, restore or maintain the ecological functions of a stream and its adjacent floodplain and riparian area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQIP • CSP