

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
South Carolina State Wildlife Grant F06AF00027
Habitat Improvement for Grassland Birds
October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012

GRANT OBJECTIVES

Improve grassland bird habitat on Oak Lea WMA, Bland Tract WMA, and Tuomey Tract WMA by developing and implementing various management strategies (e.g., burning, mowing, disking, fallow buffers, fallow fields, longleaf pine and native grass establishment, etc.) and monitor bird population responses.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Activities associated with the grant are described below, according to the original tasks and subtasks in the Project Statement for this grant.

Tasks

I. Hire a wildlife technician to implement grassland bird habitat improvements on Oak Lea, Bland and Tuomey WMA's and monitor grassland bird responses.

Activity: Jason S. Davis worked in this position until July 2012 when he decided to return to school to advance his education. Existing SCDNR staff continued with the field activities until the end of the grant period.

Significant deviations: None

II. Implement habitat improvements beneficial to grassland birds on project areas.

Activity:

On Oak Lea WMA 7 acres were winter disked to improve brood rearing habitat. Eleven miles of firebreaks were maintained. Six miles of roads were mowed to facilitate management and recreational access. Five acres of quail plots were disked, fertilized and planted in small grains for quail and songbirds. Ten acres of small grains were planted adjacent to dove field. A 90 acre dove field was disked, fertilized, planted and maintained. Twenty acres adjacent to and within the dove field were maintained as fallow land for quail and grassland birds.

On Bland Tract WMA, 14 acres were winter disked to improve brood rearing habitat. Thirteen acres of wheat were planted for quail and songbirds along roadsides. Twenty eight acres of quail plots were disked, planted and maintained. Sixty acres of dove fields were disked, fertilized, planted and maintained. Twelve miles of firebreaks were maintained.

On Tuomey Tract WMA, 30 acres of longleaf pine were burned. 50 acres were disked to improve quail and songbird habitat. Fifteen acres of soybeans were planted to enhance food sources available to quail. Forty acres were planted in small grains for quail and songbirds. Seven miles of roads were mowed and maintained to facilitate management. A 75 acre dove

field was disked, fertilized, planted and maintained. A variety of small grains and crops beneficial to quail and songbirds that were planted on the areas included grain sorghum, Egyptian wheat, winter wheat, oats, brown-top millet, sunflowers and corn.

Significant deviations: None

III. Monitor grassland bird responses to habitat management

Activity: Fall quail covey counts were conducted on Oak Lea WMA, Bland Tract WMA, and Toumey Tract WMA in November 2010. Survey points were established on all 3 tracts and summer quail and songbird surveys were conducted in July 2012. These call counts will be continued annually to monitor impacts of management activities on quail and grassland birds.

Significant deviations: None

Estimated Federal Cost (Oct. 10, 2011 to Sept. 30, 2012): \$79,504.70