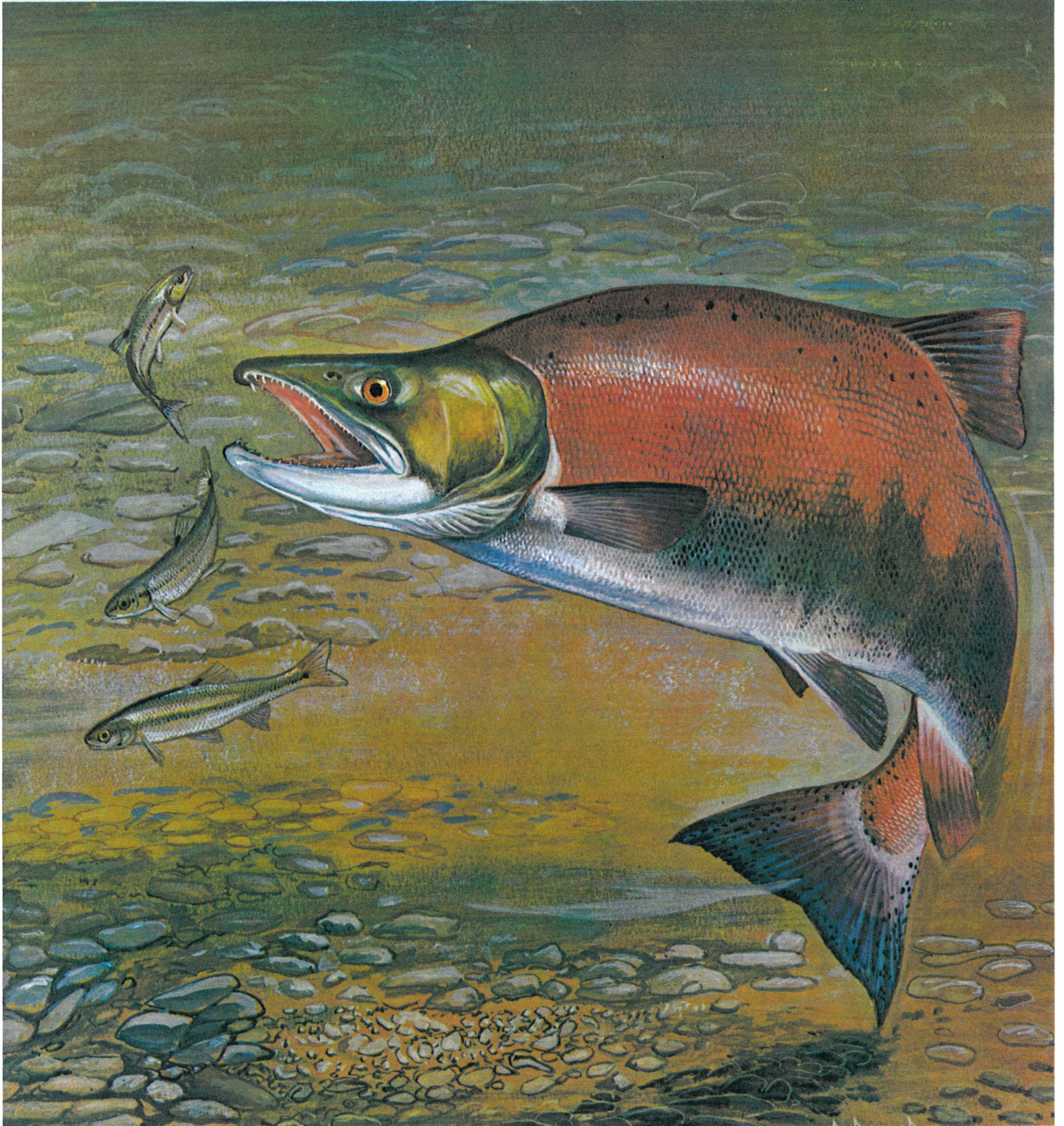


# *Wildlife* IN NORTH CAROLINA

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# Caswell County Quail Club

by Ralph E. Sadler and  
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**I**N the fall of 1963 a group of sportsmen who realized the precarious position of the bobwhite quail in Caswell County met and organized the Caswell County Quail Club. Modern farming practices in the county have all but eliminated many of the things that are necessary to support a normal quail population. As you travel over the county today, you will find that the pastures are kept grazed very close, and the old crooked rail fences are gone. With the absence of adequate cover, predators often take their toll of the quail pop-



JACK DERMID

**Want better hunting? Here's a plan that has worked for one group of sportsmen in Caswell County; maybe it will for you.**

ulation. Dogs and stray cats probably destroy more quail in Caswell County than all of the other predators together. Owners of these animals could help by keeping their dogs chained or fenced in during the nesting season.

There are two things that man can do which will help increase the quail population in any area. He can provide adequate food and cover for the birds. Both food and cover are essential during the winter months and cover is of extreme importance during the nesting season. Restocking is not the answer to our problem because food and cover must be available before any quail can survive.

The North Carolina Wildlife Commission distributes free to the residents and landowners of North Carolina, multiflora rose seedlings which provide excellent cover if planted and managed as recommended. Shrub lespedeza and sericea will provide cover and food for quail when most of the low growing plants are covered with ice or snow. These two plants will last for several years when they are planted and given adequate care for the first two years. In addition to the seeds mentioned, the Commission distributes large quantities of annual mixture to those desiring it. One limiting factor here is that it

is only good for one year; yet, many people prefer it because it requires less work at planting time.

**A**FTER discussing the situation in the county, the Quail Club voted to sponsor a wildlife contest for the F. F. A. boys in the county. This was to be a contest to see what boy or boys would do the best job of providing food and cover for wildlife on their home farm. As an added incentive, the club was to award an automatic shotgun as first prize and a double barrel shotgun as second prize. Membership fee was set at \$10.00 per member to cover the cost of these guns and one steak supper for the members.

Club officials wanted to make it clear that participants did not have to sign any agreement to let club members hunt on their farm. It was hoped that this would indicate that the club members were interested in improving hunting in all parts of the county for everyone—not just club members. Therefore, any student was eligible to participate whether his father's land was posted or not, and regardless of where he lived in the county.

Since we were teachers in the local high school, we were asked to be in charge of the contest.

Richard Eggleston, District

Biologist with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission met with the F. F. A. boys and others who were interested to discuss the planting materials that could be obtained from the Wildlife Commission. This discussion included where to plant, what to plant, how to plant, fertilization, time of planting and management after planting. All boys were encouraged to plant all the materials they could get. Many of the boys with the help of their fathers bought seeds from local seed stores and used some of the seeds produced on their home farms in addition to what they received from the Wildlife Commission. This was brought out very vividly during the judging.

In 1964 the boys received the following materials from the Wildlife Commission: 200 units of annual mixture, 50 units of shrub lespedeza plants, 30 units of shrub lespedeza seed, 80 units of sericea seed, 4,000 multiflora rose seedlings.

This material was delivered to the agriculture department at Bartlett Yancey High School for distribution.

With the help of Mr. Eggleston, we prepared a scoreboard which the board of directors approved for each contestant to fill out before the preliminary judging was done.

At their fall meeting each club member was asked to help with the preliminary judging in order to pick the top eight boys from which the top two would be chosen by judges selected from outside the club. During this preliminary judging, the club members were very favorably impressed with the results of the contest. The farms represented cover all areas of the county. The final judging was done by Earl Sanders, Caswell Refuge Manager; Richard Eggleston, District Biologist; and David Hopkins, Soil Conservationist in the county. After a very long day of walking, riding and seeing what the top eight boys had done, the judges reached their decision about

nightfall. These gentlemen certainly did a good job of judging and competition made it difficult to reach a decision.

**I**N order to create more interest in the program, Dorsey Bradner, 1965 president of the Club and Dr. T. L. Gwynn past president, presented the automatic shotgun to Tommy Underwood and the double barrel shotgun to Jack Pointer, Jr. at an assembly of the entire student body at Bartlett Yancey High School. The club gave 20 one-year subscriptions to *Wildlife in North Carolina* to the top 20 boys in addition to the shotguns.

This year a list of recommendations and other helpful suggestions was prepared and given to each contestant to help him to do a better job. The value of fertilization and planting of perennial materials as well as annuals was stressed.

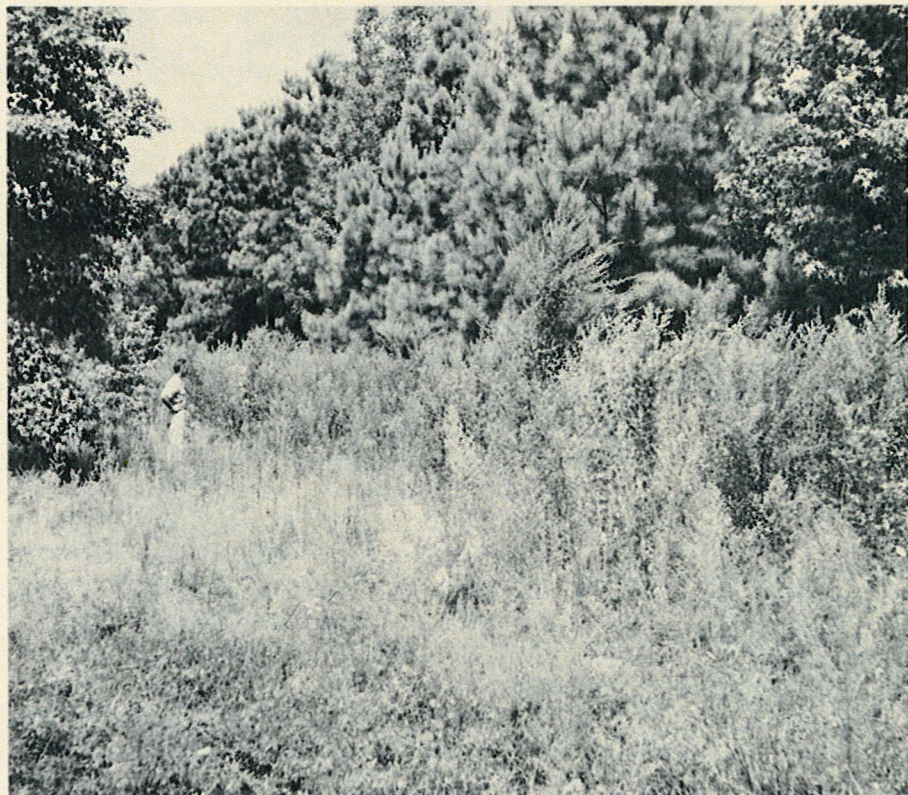
As of this date the boys have received and planted the following materials from the Wildlife Resources Commission: 249 units of annual mixture, 64 units of shrub lespedeza plants, 112 units of shrub lespedeza seed, 160 units of sericea seed, 9,000 multiflora rose plants.

This represents a 20 percent

increase in the annual mixture; 120 percent increase in the shrub lespedeza and sericea plantings. This is the direction that everyone wants to go. With a better than 100 percent increase in the number of multiflora rose planted, there is a very good indication that the boys and their parents are beginning to see the value of permanent food patches and cover for quail. The planting for the two-year periods represents 56 acres of annual food patches, almost 52 miles of shrub lespedeza (which would be a row from the Alamance County line to the Virginia line) and two and one-half miles of rose plantings.

The Caswell County Quail Club is sponsoring the contest again this year with the hope that each contestant can be visited by one of the club members to see what he has done and to talk with his parents.

The boys stated that they found quail in the food patches at least 75 percent of the time when hunting in the fall and winter. Mr. Ken Wilson, Area Supervisor of Wildlife Refuges visited Tommy Underwood in February of this year. He remarked that this was a wonderful program and the club should keep it going. ♦



Quail need places to live and feed like this patch of shrub lespedeza in the woods. The birds will soon find them.