

**THE COVEY CALL E-NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2017  
METRO & SE QF CHAPTERS  
“Helping To Bring Back The Bobwhite Quail”**



**UPCOMING WINTER WEATHER**

Another Minnesota winter is about to start for wildlife, including bobwhite quail. How cold and snowy will this winter be for people and wildlife? According to the experts (it's not a for sure thing), but looking at historic patterns; this coming winter will be colder than last winter, and more precipitation than last winter as well. Does that mean that we will get more snow this winter than last winter? The Twin Cities didn't get 40 inches of snow last winter. The average is about 55 inches. When considering harsh Minnesota winters, last winter was on the mild side, especially southern Minnesota. Weather\* in La Crosse, Wisconsin, which is representative of southeastern Minnesota's weather, where there are some quail, was above normal. When it comes to temperature, La Crosse was also + 6.2 degrees above normal from November through March. Snowfall was near normal at 42 inches, for the same period. I am going with the experts. My prediction for this winter is that the Twin Cities will receive 60 + inches of snow and colder than last winter; and, La Crosse will receive 50 + inches of snow and colder than last winter.

\* National Weather Service

**WINTER WEATHER CHALLENGES FOR THE BIRDS**

When it comes to other birds in the state, especially game birds, it is widely believed that quail have a harder time dealing with Minnesota winters than the other game birds, especially when it comes to deep snow cover for long periods of time. However, I have somewhat of a different view. I have seen over the decades that when good quail habitat is present, the snow cover doesn't seem to impact them nearly as much as when their habitat is marginal. Three main habitat components bobwhite quail must have to come through a Minnesota winter are:

- 1) Brushy/woody cover at ground level
- 2) Coniferous trees
- 3) A reliable food source.

**All three of the habitat components must be close together.**

Let's take a closer look at these three winter time needs for quail in Minnesota.

1. The best brushy/woody winter cover for quail are downed trees. I have seen over the years that when the snow is deep, and there is a reliable food source close to the brushy/woody cover, that quail will come through the winter.
2. Coniferous trees (conifers) are a huge need for quail during the winter months; they rely heavily on these trees to help them deal with harsh weather conditions and predators. The best conifers for quail in Minnesota are spruce, red cedar and white cedar trees.
3. A reliably food source is a must for quail during the winter. The best food source is a nice field of ragweed. Ragweed seeds are very high in protein and quail love them. Next would be a food plot that consist of sorghum/ milo with plenty of annual weeds in the food plot. Another food source that quail rely on during the winters are feeders. Ideally, these feeders must be close to some conifers. Many years ago when corn cribs were being used by farmers, I would see quail going to the corn cribs for their winter food. All three of these winter habitat components must be within 70 feet of each other. When we look at the Minnesota landscape, it is rare to find these habitat components close together; hence, we have fewer quail in the state. Our two Quail Forever Chapters in Minnesota, along with your help getting the word out about what quail need, will be helpful in producing more quail habitat.

**A Special Emphasis on the Importance of Conifers in Minnesota**

As you see from the photos below Conifers with the right habitat components can benefit quail.



Quail Under Conifers in Winter



Example of Conifers



Quail Food Plot



Another Example of Conifers



Quail Feeder Tucked in Conifers

### **NEW FARM BILL BIOLOGIST ON BOARD**

We believe our quail numbers will get a boost now that we have a new Farm Bill Biologist on board to help landowners in southeastern Minnesota take advantage of the federal programs that can help improve quail habitat in that region. The person who has just been hired is **Eric Ressel**. Eric will be working with some of our Southeast Chapter members in reaching more landowners for quail and other wildlife. Our two chapters want to thank Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever National, The Root River Soil and Water Conservation District, and the NRCS Office in Caledonia and others for making this happen.

### **UPCOMING CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Our two QF Chapters are serious about getting youth outdoors. We are currently working with some Audubon members in the metro area, and the southeast in starting our own annual Christmas Bird Count. Our aim is to select a site for the metro area and select a site in the southeast, where we will do our Christmas Bird Counts in December. After the counts are over, some of our chapter members will be working with the youth on those sights to help improve the wildlife habitat to draw in more birds. Hopefully when the next Christmas Bird Count comes around, we will have more birds to count.

### **METRO YOUTH OUTDOORS**





**At South St. Paul Rod & Gun Club Shooting Range**

**2017 SPONSORS**

**We want to say thanks to our Metro QF Sponsors:**

- **Vance Grannis, Jr.**
- **Central Church of Christ**
- **DM Law Group, LLC**
- **Paul Schutte**
- **Richfield Church of Christ**



**WEEKLY FACEBOOK**

**Visit our Facebook Weekly for Information on Quail and Other Birds:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/Quail-Forever-Minnesota>**

**MN QUAIL FOREVER WEBSITE**

The Website for our two QF Chapters in Minnesota is coming soon.

Thurman Tucker, Metro & SE QF Chapters Coordinator