

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**  
**NEW JERSEY**

**UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

(Ac.)

CODE 645

**DEFINITION**

Provide and manage upland habitats and connectivity within the landscape for wildlife.

<http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/wdb/pub/hsi/hsiindex.htm>

**PURPOSE**

Treating upland wildlife habitat concerns identified during the conservation planning process that enable movement, or provide shelter, cover, food in proper amounts, locations and times to sustain wild animals that inhabit uplands during a portion of their life cycle.

New Jersey Wildlife Fact Sheets can be found under Biology within the Field Office Technical Reference materials. Other technical biology information can be obtained from the national NRCS web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>, under technology/biology.

The evaluation will result in a habitat suitability index for individual species. This will consider the types, amount, and distribution of habitat elements required.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On land where the decision maker has identified an objective for conserving a wild animal species, guild, suite, or ecosystem.

Land within the range of targeted wildlife species and capable of supporting the desired habitat.

If the evaluation determines that the current habitat quality is less than 0.5, recommendations shall be made to improve the existing habitat so that the planned condition will have a quality rating of 0.5 or above.

If the evaluation is a 0.5 or above, alternatives will be recommended that will result in the necessary management to preserve, maintain, or improve the existing habitat in its present state or toward optimum conditions.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to all Purposes**

Habitat development and management necessary to achieve the purpose(s), shall be based on a wildlife habitat appraisal using New Jersey Wildlife Fact Sheets and/or USFWS Habitat Suitability Index (HIS). The evaluation procedure shall be used to determine a habitat suitability for either individual fields, home range areas, habitat type or natural community as well as to provide an overall evaluation for the entire property or operating unit. HIS models for individual species can be found at the following web site:

Application of this practice alone, or in combination with other supporting and facilitating practices, shall result in a conservation system that will enable the planning area to meet or exceed the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat established in Section III of the FOTG.

Establish additional criteria for components of this practice including, but not limited to:

- vegetation establishment for shelter, food and to enable movement;

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov), <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov>

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- structural measures to provide shelter, food or enable movement; and
- manipulation of vegetation to sustain desirable habitat conditions over time.

Plant material specifications shall include only high quality and adapted species.

Site preparation, planting dates, and planting methods shall optimize vegetation survival and growth.

Equipment travel, grazing, haying and other disturbance to habitat shall be restricted during critical periods such as nesting, brood rearing, fawning or calving seasons. States may establish exceptions when certain disturbance causing activities are necessary to maintain the health of the plant community and control noxious weeds.

Control of regulated noxious weeds and invasive plants shall be specified.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

This practice may affect the target species as well as non-target species through mechanisms such as hunting, predation, disease transmission, nest parasitism, etc. Consider effects of this practice on species with declining populations.

Wildlife population control may be necessary to protect and maintain certain habitats. This is a responsibility of the landowner. State and federal regulations may apply to population control methods.

Undisturbed areas conserved at a sufficient extent during management activities, may sustain disturbance-intolerant animals and plants.

Other conservation practices that may be utilized in conjunction with this practice to create a wildlife management plan include:

Pasture & Hay Planting (512)

Wildlife Watering Facility (648)

Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)

Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

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Range Planting (550)

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Prescribed Burning (338)

Forage Harvest Management (511)

Use Exclusion (472)

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)

Forest Stand Improvement (666)

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

NRCS shall ensure that plans and specifications for this practice are prepared by persons with adequate training in the fields of wildlife management, biology or ecology.

Written specifications, schedules and maps shall be prepared for each planning area and each habitat type.

Specifications shall:

- Identify the amounts and kinds habitat elements, locations and management actions necessary to achieve the client's management objectives.
- Describe the appropriate method, timing and intensity of management needed to produce the desired habitat conditions and sustain them over time.

Specifications shall be transmitted to clients using NRCS approved specifications sheets, job sheets, or customized narrative statements included in the conservation plan.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The following actions shall be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life:

- Evaluate habitat conditions on a regular basis in order to adapt the conservation plan and schedule of implementation.
- Annually inspect and repair structural or vegetative components of this practice.

## **REFERENCES**

Bolen, Eric and William Robinson. 2002.  
Wildlife Ecology and Management 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.  
Prentice Hall, 656 pp.

Bookhout, T.A. (ed.). 1996. Research and  
Management Techniques for Wildlife and  
Habitats, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Wildlife Society, 740 pp

Rayne, Neil F. and Fred C. Bryant. 1994.  
Techniques for Wildlife Habitat Management of  
Uplands. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 841 pp.

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National Biology Manual. Title 190,  
Washington, DC.

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