

Conservation Security Program (CSP)  
WILDLIFE ASSESSMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Farm Unit(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS**

These assessment questions help determine whether your farming operation meets the minimum CSP quality criteria for wildlife habitat. If you wish to be eligible for Tier III, or you select wildlife habitat as a resource concern for Tier II, your entire farm operation must meet the wildlife habitat quality criteria. This assessment is not required for Tier I contracts.

Definitions of some of the terms used and lists of species referenced in the questions are found at the end of the assessment.

Check **Yes** or **No** for each of the questions. If the identified habitat type is not present on the operation, mark **N/A**. All applicable questions must be marked “Yes” to meet the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat.

Cropland - If your offered area contains crop fields:	YES	NO
1. Fall plowing does not occur on any cropland and the harvest method used leaves all residue above ground over winter.		
2. Do you use a crop rotation consisting of row crops in combination with small grains (average once every four years) and/or grasses and legumes on at least 75% of all cropland? <b>Note:</b> <i>Crop management records are required.</i>		
3. Is at least 75% of the cropland within 600 feet of contrasting vegetation? (Contrasting vegetation includes existing field borders, windbreaks, woodland, vegetated riparian areas, hedgerows or fencerows wider than 20 feet, and pasture?)		

Pasture - If your offered area contains pasture fields:	YES	NO
1. Is less than 10% of the total acreage of all offered pasture covered by undesirable plant species for wildlife? (Refer to the “Definitions” section for a list of some undesirable species).		
2. In addition to the above, do most of the pasture fields have at least <b>one</b> of the following: (Check all that apply) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain grazing height above 6 inches on &gt;20% of the pasture(s).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have at least 2 species of grass and at least 3 species of broadleaf herbaceous plants which when combined make up at least 25% of the total stand (but none of those species listed as undesirable).</li> </ul>		

<b>Hayland - If your offered area contains hay fields</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1. At least 30% of the total acreage of the offered hay field(s) is not harvested until after July 15 <sup>th</sup> annually <b>OR</b> ; at least 1 or more hayfields remain unharvested and set aside as a refuge annually.		
2. Is less than 25% of the offered hay field covered by species that are undesirable for wildlife? (Refer to the “Definitions” section for a list of some undesirable species).		
3. Do hay fields have at least 2 dominant species of grass and at least 3 broadleaf herbaceous plant species which in combination comprise at least 10% of the total hayland acreage (but none of those listed as undesirable)? <b>OR</b> ; at least 1 acre for every 10 acres offered are warm season grasses including one or more of the following species: switchgrass, Indiangrass, big or little bluestem or Eastern gammagrass.		

**Incidental Areas** – Complete this portion of the assessment if your offered area contains incidental areas such as idle lands that are not used for forage or crop production.

<b>APPLICABLE TO ALL INCIDENTAL AREAS – Answer the following 3 questions and then answer the section(s) that identify the type of incidental areas offered.</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1. Are the incidental areas protected from disturbance (such as mowing, disking, burning and grazing) between March 15 and April 15.		
2. Is less than 25% of the area covered by undesirable species for wildlife? (Refer to the “Definitions” section for a list of some undesirable species).		
3. Does the incidental area(s) consist of a mixture of trees, shrubs and grass or there are at least 3 different plant species present?		
<b>Incidental Woodland</b>		
1. Are there at least 4 native species of trees, shrubs and/or woody vines present with a well developed overstory and understory of various age and size classes?		
2. Are livestock excluded from woodland by fence throughout the year?		
3. Are there at least two 14 inch (or larger) snags and den trees per acre <b>OR</b> ; 2 constructed brush piles exist per acre?		
<b>Riparian Areas - If your offering includes riparian/stream corridors: Evaluate all perennial or intermittent streams flowing through the offered area</b>		
1. Are the streambanks not grazed and livestock excluded except for managed access points of less than 25 feet in width?		
2. Is the vegetated buffer at least 35 feet wide throughout the entire length of the stream(s) or waterbody?		
<b>Wetlands &amp; Water - If your offered area has wet areas greater than 0.25 acres in size:</b>		
1. Is the existing wet area(s) not drained <b>OR</b> ; if some drainage exists, the wetland is inundated or surface saturated for 14 or more consecutive days (in most years) between March 15 and November 1?		
2. Are existing wetlands/water areas protected from direct surface water runoff from contaminants such as chemicals or livestock feeding areas? Runoff is either diverted away from the area or it is protected by a vegetative buffer at least 35 feet wide.		
3. Are livestock excluded from the wetland/water <b>OR</b> is it managed such that grazing results in 80% or greater vegetative cover on shoreline or streambank?		
4. Mowing or harvesting of wetland vegetation only occurs outside the primary nesting season (April 15 – July 15).		

Additional Comments

DEFINITIONS	
<b>Annual Species</b>	Foxtails, ragweeds, smartweeds, ironweed, beggar ticks, tick trefoils, pig weeds.
<b>Den Tree</b>	A live tree with a cavity (hole) large enough to shelter a small bird or larger wildlife.
<b>Drainage</b>	Drainage ditches or underground tile with or without surface inlets.
<b>Inundation</b>	The condition where the ground is covered by water due to ponded, flowing, or flooded water.
<b>Native Species</b>	Plant species that have historically occurred (and continue to occur) naturally in an area without direct or indirect human interactions.
<b>Perennial Species</b>	Species that grow back every year from the root such as bluegrass, smooth brome, timothy, most warm season grasses, some goldenrods and some milkweeds
<b>Saturation</b>	The condition where the soil is saturated with water to the surface.
<b>Snag</b>	A dead standing tree or dead limb at least 10 feet long and 15 inches in diameter.
<b>Stream</b>	A permanent or intermittent flowing water course.
<b>Undesirable Species for Wildlife</b>	Tall fescue, Japanese stiltgrass, common reed ( <i>Phragmites</i> ), reed canarygrass, purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, common teasel, deer tongue grass, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, Tree-of-Heaven, or Paulownia

### Certification Statement

The above information is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if requested, I can provide a minimum of two years of documentation to support the information provided above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Certification of Review

I have reviewed this wildlife habitat assessment and the answers meet CSP enrollment criteria and are consistent with the farm records provided for review during the verification interview.

NRCS Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_