

## **Upland Wildlife Habitat**

(Acres) Code: 645

### **Definition**

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

### **Massachusetts Practice Intent**

The purpose of this practice is to manage/enhance upland habitats for wildlife species that utilize uplands during a portion of their life cycle.

### **Condition Where Practice Applies**

On all EQIP eligible lands that are suitable for the kinds of desired wildlife and plant species.

### **Massachusetts NRCS Program Rules**

#### **For all projects:**

- Consult with NRCS-DFW Habitat Biologist for on-site planning assistance.
- The appropriate Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) must be completed for the existing and proposed scenario and must achieve a 0.7.
- If the proposed project is located in NHESP Priority Habitat, submit a data request form to the NRCS-NHESP Review Biologist prior to conducting a site visit and include the NRCS-DFW Habitat Biologist and NRCS-NHESP Review Biologist in the site visit.

#### **For forestland projects:**

- A forest management plan is required on all forest land applications per EQIP policy (515.80(C))

### **Further Explanation of Scenarios:**

#### **Mast/Apple Tree Release**

- For releasing hard or soft mast producing trees for wildlife purposes only.
- Mast trees to be released must be dominant or co-dominant,  $\geq 5$ " DBH, at least 25 feet tall, and without epicormic sprouting on stem.
- Tree must be released on a minimum of 2 sides.
- Cost share assistance is per each mast tree released.
- The mast tree and the trees to be cut must be marked.
- Must be prescribed in a DCR approved forest management plan.

#### **Snags**

- Used to create 8 wildlife snags per acre by double girdling the selected trees.
- Cost share assistance is for the creation of 8 snags per unit price.
- The snag trees to be created must be marked.

#### **Grassland Bird Management**

- Entails a change in the mowing regime on productive hay land by ensuring an early hay cut in mid to late May followed by a delay in the second cut of 65 days.

## MA NRCS- EQIP FY' 16 Practice Guidance

- First cut and all associated management including ranking, baling and manure spreading must be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Only eligible for quality hayfields, 10 acres or greater, where the producer is currently mowing before the end of May, and taking at least 3 cuts.