

WILDLIFE TRENDS

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Conservation Buffers

By: Wes and Leslie Burger

The long-term success of wildlife populations in the Southeastern United States is largely in the hands of private landowners. Nearly 80% of the total land base in the Southeast is privately owned forests, agricultural lands, and rural properties. As demand for food and fiber products has increased and technology advanced, agricultural practices have intensified. The result has been farm consolidation and larger fields, monocultural production, loss of idle fields, conversion and loss of native grasslands and wetlands, and reduction in overall landscape diversity. In other words, the environment has been simplified and there



A native warm season grass field bordering a soybean field provides nesting and brood rearing cover during the breeding season, increases usable space and supports winter grassland songbirds. Photo courtesy of USDA-NRCS.

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