

# WILDLIFE TRENDS

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## An Annual Schedule for a Successful Released Bird Program

by Jim Evans

A colleague of mine tells his clients, "Plan your work and work your plan." This sounds simple enough, but the reality is that few people do it. Of all my frustrations over the years as a consulting biologist, most can be linked to a land owner's lack of commitment to a plan. In today's world it takes commitment to have a successful quail project.

What I want to do now is to help you think about what you need to do in order to schedule your work for this upcoming year. Since I live in the Southeast, some of these suggestions may or may not apply where you live, but I believe they will help you. Also, most of my quail projects involve preseason releases of quail mixed with wild quail management. So this project calendar will include suggestions that apply for both situations.

First let's list the items of interest by the calendar.

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### January and February

- Evaluate your habitat and identify what improvements are needed and where.
- Continue supplemental feeding.
- Disk firebreaks for control burning.
- Burn off all sod grass areas that you plan to chemically treat this spring.
- Order seed for planting.
- Perform control burns.

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### March and April

- Call your bird supplier and place your order for next year's quail.
- Initiate predator control - get them before they multiply. Be sure to check with your state for permits and procedures.
- Begin chemical treatments to eliminate sod grasses.
- Harrow up seed beds for food plots.
- Continue supplemental feeding of quail.
- Manage hardwood brush by chopping or cutting.
- Place a double handful of crushed oyster shell around your feeders. This will supply extra calcium to the hens for egg production.

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### May and June

- Finish all plot preparation and planting of food plots.
- Continue predator control.
- Continue with supplemental feeding until berries ripen.

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### July and August

- Keep waterers filled even if you have discontinued feeding.
- Clean and check all feeders and waterers.
- Relocate release stations to suitable areas for the upcoming season. Make sure all equipment is in good working order.
- Now is the time to clean out your storage silos and order feed for the approaching season.
- Continue predator control.

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