

WILDLIFE TRENDS

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Nesting Ecology of the Northern Bobwhite: Persistence Pays Off!

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The advent of spring presents the eye with a pleasant greenish hue of new growth and the ear with the harmonious, familiar sound of the “bob-white” echoing throughout the southern forests. For most the increasing intensity of this male call signifies that reproduction is underway. Actually though the reproductive cycle of the bobwhite begins in late winter and early spring when coveys begin to break up and birds begin to form pairs. Therefore, it is ideal that by now prescribed burning has been wrapped up, fertilizer has been applied, cover patches planted, and other woods work is complete for it won't be long before the woods are saturated with nests and hopefully quail chicks. In this article we



Typical bobwhite nest constructed of grass and pine needles.

attempt to summarize nesting ecology of the northern bobwhite and offer some insight into producing optimal habitat conditions conducive to successfully hatching a nest.

Nesting Habits

The bobwhite is very opportunistic and persistent when it comes to their nesting habits and for good reason. There are numerous mammals and reptiles that seek their precious little eggs, many of which succeed in this search. The preva-

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