Bobwhite quail populations in southwest Georgia have declined significantly over the past several decades. This is due in large part to changes in agricultural practices. Small fields separated by fencerows and woods have been replaced by large irrigated fields, often located next to each other with no cover for wildlife between them.

It was discovered that weed fields can benefit quail more than planted food plots. This was discovered accidentally as quail plantations harrowed fallow fields in the fall to reduce the area where quail could hide and thus the area that had to be hunted. The unexpected and happy consequence of this practice was the growth of weeds, such as ragweed, that benefited quail. It also increased populations of insects and other arthropods that provide food for young quail.

It is now an accepted practice to harrow a third of a field devoted to quail habitat each year. A different one third of the field is harrowed each year. The harrowing need not be deep or turn under all of the residue in the harrowed area—the soil just needs to be disturbed so that desired weed species can germinate and grow. This should be done in December, January, and the first half of February. Doing this allows for successional growth of weeds that provide food and cover for quail. Soil fertility and pH levels should be maintained for good weed growth. To benefit quail broods, fields should be larger than an acre. Two to four acre fields are ideal.

Prescribed burns of woodlands will also benefit quail. Burning promotes bunch-type grasses, such as broomsedge, bluestem, and related species that provide nesting cover for quail. It also promotes plants that provide food for quail, including the insects upon which young quail depend. Burning every other year also suppresses oaks that, once established, will prevent plants beneficial to quail from growing beneath them.

Woods should be burned every other year. Ideally, the woods to be burned should be divided into blocks no larger than sixty acres. Only half of the blocks should be burned each year. March and April are the best times to burn to promote quail habitat.