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Status of Ohio Bobwhite

Everyone knows that the winters of 1976 - 1977 through 1979 drastically reduced Ohio's bobwhite population. So apparently does the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife and they are trying to do something about it. The Chief of that Division, Carl Mosley, stated in an article in the Cincinnati Enquirer in January of this year that the state's fall quail population in 1979 was less than 500,000. He said there was no quail in 32 counties and another 40 counties had extremely poor populations. The quail hunting season was closed in 1978 and has not reopened. Three hundred pair of wild quail have been trapped from Ohio's remaining population and moved to a wildlife propagation unit at Urbana to use as breeders for a stocking program. "Without assistance, our figures indicate it would take 10 to 15 years for the quail population to recover to the 1976 level," Mosley said according to the paper. The quail will be released first in counties that have no signs of recovery by natural production, but have good quail habitat.

He further explained to the reporter that wild quail are hardier and adapt better to the habitat than those pen-raised. Artificial lights causing constant reproduction stimulus and incubator hatching were producing 1,000 eggs per week. This is up to 100 eggs per quail per year compared to 12 or 13 eggs per year under natural conditions.

The facility now has 3,000 chicks and 400 one-year old adults.