

FOREWORD

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The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) hosted Quail VII, the Seventh National Quail Symposium, in Tucson, 9-12 January 2012. This scientific meeting and peer-reviewed proceedings have occurred every 4-10 years at locations around the country. In 1972 and 1982 in Stillwater, Oklahoma the meeting was known as the National Bobwhite Quail Symposium, and, as the National Quail Symposium (Quail Series) in 1992 in Kansas City, Missouri (Quail III), 1997 in Tallahassee, Florida (Quail IV), 2002 in Corpus Christi, Texas (Quail V) and 2006 in Athens, Georgia (Quail VI).

Quail conservation has changed dramatically since Quail III in 1992. Kevin Church and I co-chaired Quail III, so I bring a long-term perspective to this foreword. Major ideas brought forth in 1992, and reinforced at subsequent symposia, bore much fruit in Tucson.

The seeds were sown for conservation of all North American quails at Quail III, the first *national quail symposium*, an expansion of the bobwhite series held in Oklahoma. As part of this expansion, we asked Lenny Brennan to lead the Quail III Strategic Quail Planning Workshop. Two decades later, top features of Quail VII were ideas hatched at Quail III: The National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative 2.0 (NBCI) and The Western Quail Plan. The publication of essential elements of each plan in the proceedings ensures a permanent record of these ground-breaking initiatives. For bobwhites, the conservation movement was rapid, with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources hosting a quail meeting in 1995 that launched the Southeast Quail Study Group, the predecessor of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee and NBCI.

For western quail, Quail VII is *the* national launch of the multi-species restoration plan. Progress for western quail conservation, relative to bobwhites, has been slower: Kevin Church and I struggled in 1992 to find any current research on western species and over the past 20 years key research has been sporadic; and as reported at Quail VII, the masked bobwhite is near extinction. The location of Quail VII in Arizona is a testament to renewed interest in western quails and we anticipate significant progress as the western plan is implemented. Moreover, AZGFD has emerged as a premiere advocate for quail conservation, fitting for a state agency with the Gambel's quail as the centerpiece of the department's logo.

Amid the growth of quail conservation, leaders of previous quail symposia, Lenny Brennan, John Carroll, Steve DeMaso, Bill Palmer, Theron Terhune, and I agreed the quail series needed permanent management. Quail

VII, the first collaboration between a host (AZGFD) and NBCI resulted from steps made by the Research Subcommittee of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC) to create a permanent home for the Quail Series. This is a service provided to all professional quail enthusiasts by NBTC and the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI). Quail Symposium Series proceedings and digital data are now permanently available from the NBCI.

Over the years we learned that successful bobwhite conservation is very complex, requiring a mixture of basic science, study of management, the latest technology and thinking, and consideration of philosophy, political science and public relations. Quail VII papers were very diverse, and included 76 volunteered abstracts and invited presentations—a record number for the National Quail Series. Meeting participants were treated to unique invited presentations by leading conservationists, including the directors of Arizona's and Kentucky's state wildlife agencies, Larry Voyles and Dr. Jon Gassett, respectively, who addressed the importance of the new quail plans; Katharine Armstrong, former commission chair of Texas Parks and Wildlife, provided insights on the role of politics in conservation; Bollenbach-endowed chair, Dr. Fred Guthery, Oklahoma State University, provided a historical/philosophical review; Dave Brown, Arizona State University, analyzed western quail conservation; and Dr. James Grand, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Auburn University, provided the latest thinking on decision making. Dr. Leonard Brennan, Endowed Chair, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, wrapped up the meeting with closing remarks.

Quail VII papers were diverse, covering translocation of mountain quail and northern bobwhite, phylogeography of scaled quail and bobwhites (northern bobwhite, Yucatán bobwhite, spot-bellied bobwhite and crested bobwhite), hybridization of Gambel's and California quail, Montezuma (Mearns') quail, nutrition, arthropods, exotic grasses, the Conservation Reserve Program, predation, parasites, survival, reproduction, thermoregulation, harvest prescriptions, climate change, economics, conservation planning, attitudes of private landowners, etc. Geographically, these findings have implications for an area bounded by Brazil, Oregon, Nebraska, New Jersey, and south to Florida. The majority of Quail VII authors covered Texas bobwhites and scaled quail. Twenty-seven state and federal agencies, universities and institutes reported on their work at Quail VII.

A pervasive theme of quail management, pen-reared bobwhites, was also covered, providing some breaking 'peer-reviewed news'. The 21st Century brought the latest approach for releasing pen-reared bobwhites, the Surrogator®, a system backed by a plethora of well-marketed testimonials. Two independent Quail VII papers, in the Southeast and Texas, describe the *actual* efficacy of this system. This proceedings also published a ground-breaking advancement, use of prenatal and post-hatch imprinting to improve survival of pen-reared bobwhites. Harkening back to Quail III, Kevin Church and I were chagrined when one of our plenary speakers, the late Ed Kozicky, insisted on expanding his topic, 'history of quail management': "...I accepted with the proviso that I could discuss the dire need for more assistance from the academic community in the production of quality, pen-reared bobwhite for hunting purposes." Dr. Bill Palmer and associates appear to have fulfilled part of this vision in their Quail VII paper on parent-rearing—a genetically wild, but pen-raised bobwhite.

A long-standing highlight of the Quail Series is recognition of outstanding contributions to quail conservation. At the banquet, Dr. Lenny Brennan recognized lifetime contributions by John Roseberry, Fred Guthery, Dave Brown, Walter Rosene (in memoriam), and John Crawford (in memoriam).

The first-ever NBCI led Quail Symposia partnership was made possible by AZGFD, led by Mike Rabe.

AZGFD put on an excellent event, and were gracious hosts, particularly by providing the guided quail hunting all Quail VI attendees dreamed of at Quail VI in 2006. For a conservation movement so inextricably tied to hunting, first-hand experience by biologists is not a luxury.

The expeditious publication of Quail VII was made possible by the editorial leadership of Clait and Nancy Braun, and by due diligence by associate editors, reviewers, authors, and the NBTC Research Subcommittee (Chaired by Theron Terhune). Guidance for the technical program and proceedings was provided by the Quail VII editorial panel, including Lenny Brennan, Kirby Bristow, Steve DeMaso, and Theron Terhune.

The proceedings were made possible by generous contributions by the National Wild Turkey Federation, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, Texas Tech Quail Tech Alliance, Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch, and National Bobwhite Technical Committee.

The Eighth National Quail Symposium (Quail VIII) will be hosted by the University of Tennessee in 2017, and will feature progress and 'lessons learned' from implementation of the National Bobwhite and Western Quail plans. Regardless of the outcome of these and other initiatives, because of the passion for quails, we can be assured of another thought-provoking symposium and unique opportunity to mark the trajectory of quail populations.