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# Quail Genetics Are Sound, Partly Due to the Shuffle

*By Scott Cox, Senior Upland Game Biologist*
*Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation*

Events negatively affecting quail in the past five to eight years might prompt biologists or curious landowners who manage for quail to wonder about genetic issues within Oklahoma's populations of northern bobwhite and scaled quail.

When we think about genetic variability within species, we might wonder whether the current gene pool is getting enough mixture in our wild quail populations. If we relied on raising, translocating and releasing quail to create the mixing, we soon would be in serious trouble.

Conducting releases of quail has been mentioned from time to time, especially when we find our populations in trouble as we did in 2011-12. But an understanding of the bird's life cycle is needed. Some states recently have been using the translocation of wild quail from a heavily populated area to a newly re-established habitat to boost numbers and, possibly, boost the gene pool. In Oklahoma, we will not consider using this method for some time. I point to our research findings from the 1990s, as well as our ongoing research that began again in 2011 with our friends from Oklahoma State University.

There is no doubt that if a large tract of contiguous habitat (2,500-plus acres) has been reclaimed and if the right ingredients are there to support quail, bringing in birds might boost the genetic diversity and possibly increase the population over time. However, if the habitat is managed and if the