



# Upland Game Bird Trail

Perhaps no state in the country is more proud of its hunting traditions than Virginia, and no form of hunting in Virginia is more traditional than quail hunting. Native son and famous author Havilah Babcock often wrote about chasing the “Prince of Game Birds” when he was a youngster, through the fields of Appomattox. It is no secret that *Colinus virginianus*, more commonly known as the bobwhite or quail, has had a tough go of it lately. Tales told by our grandfathers of staunch alabaster pointers and setters standing firm on point in some bean field or thicket seem like ancient history to some of us. However, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has been diligent in its efforts to bring back the quail population. It also has been helpful in showing quail hunters where in Virginia they can still step back into time.

Virginia is fortunate to have many private hunting preserves throughout the state that offer a chance to hunt “the way it used to be.” Preserves also take the pressure off natural quail and can act as an excellent training ground for a young pup. Most hunters agree that a bird dog learns much faster when it has the opportunity to see a large number of coveys. The preserves are strategically placed so one can

take a son or daughter hunting and also take advantage of other points of interest along the scenic byways of our state. One could, on a crisp fall morning, enjoy an early morning pheasant hunt and tour the wine country of the Blue Ridge the same afternoon. You can have your dogs pointing quail, then take the family to relive the history of Williamsburg and Jamestown during the same weekend. There are a number of hunting preserves near such noteworthy venues as Monticello, Montpelier, the Homestead, Lexington, and Charlottesville.

Virginia’s hunting preserves offer a variety of opportunities and services for the sports-minded. Your family can hunt at preserves offering additional resort-like amenities such as tennis courts, skeet and sporting clay ranges, golf courses, fishing spots, and fine dining. Some locations may provide overnight accommodations and others, just the basic no-frills hunt. Several preserves offer the outdoors person a chance to hunt birds not usually found in Virginia, such as pheasant and chukar.

Finding a good hunting preserve in Virginia is like discovering a good Virginia wine—you don’t have to pay a fortune to enjoy one. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries can help you research the kind of hunt you want to experience. Whichever type of preserve you choose, a *good preserve* should offer strong flying birds at a reasonable price. □