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Researchers Receive Grant to Study Quail Parasite Infection

Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory will continue to study eyeworms and cecal worms infecting wild bobwhite quail.

The Wildlife Toxicology Laboratory at Texas Tech University received a \$305,171 award from Park Cities Quail to continue research on the impact of eyeworm infections in wild bobwhite quail in the Rolling Plains of West Texas.

The laboratory already has received more than \$1.6 million from the Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation, Park Cities Quail and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to discover what is causing northern bobwhite populations to decline.

Ronald J. Kendall, professor of environmental toxicology at Texas Tech, announced in August that an eyeworm (*Oxyspirura petrowi*), which is a parasitic nematode, was a probable cause of the quail decline in the Rolling Plains, particularly since 2000. In 2011, his lab joined Operation Idiopathic Decline, which is the largest quail disease research project ever conducted in the United States.

“Without the support of organizations such as Park Cities Quail, we would have not been able to make the progress we have to evaluate the degree of infection of parasites in wild bobwhite quail and what we can do about it in a reasonable, strategic and scientifically based way,” Kendall said. “This new Park Cities Quail grant will dramatically enhance our field research data on wild quail populations that receive a treatment so we can determine their survivability, reproduction and health outcomes.”

The research funding from Park Cities Quail will allow implementation of a bobwhite quail population assessment when the quail receive a treatment for parasite control. This grant provides a database for the ultimate development of a treatment for parasite infections in wild bobwhite quail, including the eyeworm and the cecal worm.

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