

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

news release

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## MASKED BOBWHITES ARE RELEASED IN ARIZONA

The Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife announced today that it has released 160 masked bobwhite quail in Arizona in an effort to restore this vanished species to its former range in the United States.

Masked bobwhites have been extinct in this country for about 70 years. The releases early in March were of young raised in captivity from 36 birds captured wild in 1968 in Mexico, where the species also has become rare.

"Under favorable circumstances, and with additional transplantings, the masked bobwhite again may be seen and heard in Arizona," says Dr. Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife, parks, and marine resources.

Originally widespread in Sonora, Mexico, and south-central Arizona, the native populations of masked bobwhites were gone from Arizona by 1900 because its habitat was destroyed by overgrazing by livestock and drought. The species continued to decline rapidly in Sonora. Now the bird is believed to exist only in two small areas of central Sonora.

In 1967, the Bureau began studying the masked bobwhite to determine its status and to investigate the feasibility of reintroducing the birds into southern Arizona.

In cooperation with Arizona's Game and Fish Department, the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, and the Agriculture Department's Forest Service, three prospective release sites were selected within the species historical range.

One site is located northeast of Arivaca and two are in the Altar Valley, a few miles north of Mexico. Special land management practices improved them as habitat.

The 160 bobwhites released were kept in groups of 20 to 25 after they were hatched at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Laurel, Md., in order to simulate wild coveys.

The coveys were shipped from Laurel to Tucson. After an acclimatization period of 24 hours in pens at the release sites, the coveys were released separately between March 2 and March 18.

The Bureau announced that releases will be made for at least two more years. Follow-up studies will continue for at least five years.

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MASKED  
BOB WHITE

