



MONSANTO FUND

Waterbirds on Working Lands

Recommended Practices for Cotton Production

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Cotton does not provide a meaningful food source for waterbirds. However, it plays an important part in the southern U.S. landscape where many waterbirds overwinter and nest. The recommended practices for cotton involve many of the good stewardship components of crop management.

For most farmers, improvements to wildlife habitats within or near their cotton crop will only require minor modifications to current practices. The recommendations fall into four areas of your operation as outlined below. Please also see [Recommended Practices for All Row Crops](http://www.audubon.org/bird/waterbirds/all_crops.html) (http://www.audubon.org/bird/waterbirds/all_crops.html).

- 1. Nutrient management.** Nutrient management should follow a nutrient management plan that takes into consideration water quality and wildlife impacts.
- 2. Tillage management.** Use a reduced-tillage or no-till system. These systems protect water quality and improve habitat for aquatic invertebrates by reducing runoff and sedimentation. Their use can also improve soil health and thus enhance habitat for terrestrial invertebrates.
- 3. Integrated Pest Management.** Agrichemicals should be managed according to IPM systems. Control practices should be based on IPM insect thresholds. When selecting an insecticide, choose those with minimal environmental impact.
- 4. Field Border and Edge Management.** Maintain wetlands, and try to enhance field border effects in and around cotton. Filter and buffer strips should be used when feasible. If a farm has temporary wetlands or nonproductive areas, consider enrolling these lands in [conservation programs](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/) (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>) such as CRP, WRP, or easements. Your state may also have additional programs that may help with conservation.