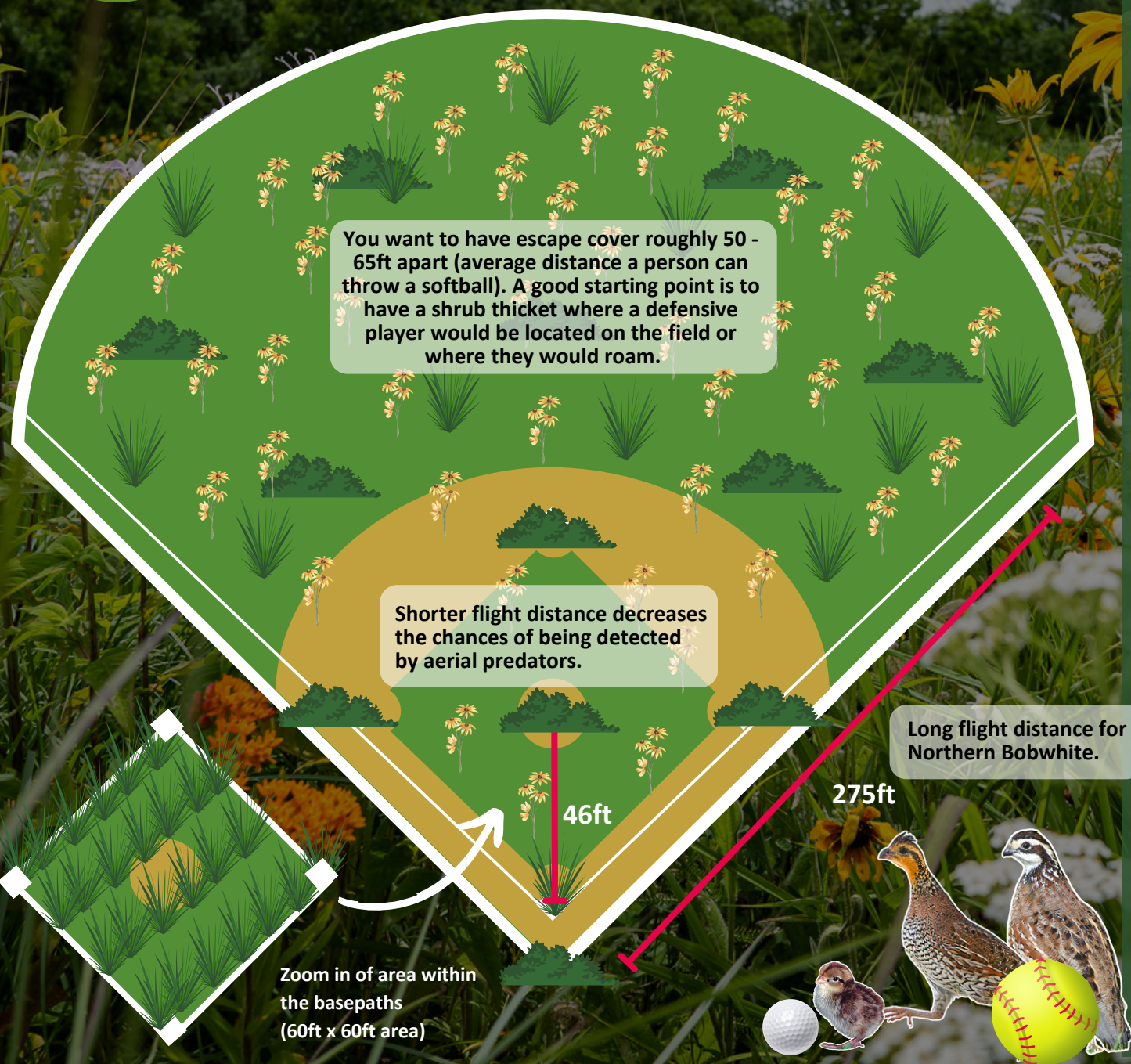




# Softball Habitat Evaluation Technique (SHET)

adapted from Texas A&M and Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch



The Softball Habitat Evaluation Technique was developed to help landowners and habitat managers easily evaluate the usability of their property for Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*). Northern Bobwhite need ample escape cover (i.e., shrubby thickets) interspersed throughout quality nesting and brood rearing habitat. It is important that escape cover is a short flight away or the distance you can throw a softball.

## Things to Consider:

- A good nesting clump of native bunchgrass (e.g., little bluestem) should be roughly the size of home plate.
- You should have 25-30 bunchgrass clumps (size of home plate) within a 60ft x 60ft area (size of the area of the basepath). That is roughly 300 bunchgrass clumps per acre.
- To determine if you have proper dispersion of escape cover for Northern Bobwhite, you should be able to throw a softball from one shrub thicket to another.
- If you throw a softball roughly 50ft (distance from pitcher's mound to homebase) and you still see the softball, you have insufficient cover.
- When the ball hits the ground and if it sticks (doesn't roll), the vegetation is too thick! Adult Northern Bobwhite will have issues maneuvering through the vegetation.
- If you are able to kick a golf ball around with your foot, chicks should be able to easily maneuver through the vegetation.

