

PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER

The best shelter and cover for wildlife is provided by a well managed habitat. Some practices can be implemented to provide types of shelter that may be limited in the habitat.

NEST BOXES, BAT BOXES

The installation of artificial boxes or cavities to provide nesting or denning habitat for selected species. **Number and location of nest boxes should be consistent with habitat needs and territorial requirements of the target species, and sufficient over the area to provide a real supplement to the target population and address an identified severe limiting factor as part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan.**



Proposed Nest Boxes, Bat Boxes Project(s) may include:

- Targeted species: _____
- Box type:
 - cavity type.
 - bat boxes.
 - raptor poles.

BRUSH PILES AND SLASH RETENTION

The planned construction, maintenance, and/or retention of brush piles to provide additional wildlife cover in habitats where low-growth, woody cover has been identified as a limiting factor for the selected species. This practice includes leaving dead brush on the ground where it was cut or uprooted to provide wildlife cover and protection for seedlings of desirable plant species. Stacking posts or limbs in a “teepee” arrangement can provide adequate cover for small game and other wildlife in open areas. Fastening the posts/limbs with wire will substantially extend the usefulness of these structures. Some of the most valuable, long-term brush piles for bobwhite quail, scaled quail, cottontail rabbits, and other wildlife are those suspended 8-10” above the ground by short corner posts and a wire frame (strand and netting). In areas devoid of low-growth woody cover, brush piles should be at least 15’ in diameter and constructed no more than 100 yards apart or about one per acre. In areas with some existing woody cover, artificial brush structures can be constructed at lower densities and still provide a substantial benefit. This practice must be part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan. **A minimum of 10% of the designated area or 10 acres, whichever is less, must be treated annually to qualify.**

FENCE LINE MANAGEMENT

Maintain, establish, or allow the establishment of trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses along fence lines to provide wildlife food and cover (minimum width of 30 feet). The wider the corridor or cover strip (eg., 60 feet or 90 feet), the more beneficial it is for wildlife. For example, narrow strips of cover may successfully be used for fawning cover or nesting cover; however, the narrower the strip, the easier it is for predators to find nests or fawns. This practice is only applicable where cover is limiting in the habitat (i.e., cropland or tame pasture) and must be part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan. **A minimum length of 300 feet of Fence Line Management per ¼-mile of applicable fence must be completed/initiated annually to qualify.**

CROPLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WILDLIFE

Use of no till/minimum till agricultural practices to leave waste grain and stubble on the soil surface until the next planting season to provide supplemental food or cover for wildlife, control erosion, and improve soil tilth. Other forms of supplementing and providing shelter include roadside right-of-way management for ground-nesting birds, establishing perennial vegetation on circle irrigation corners, levees, dikes, terraces, fencerows and field borders, establishing multi-row shelterbelts or renovating old shelterbelts, and protecting and managing old homesites, farmsteads and Conservation Reserve Program cover. Weeds are an important source of food for many wildlife species; therefore, weed control practices should be minimized.

Cropland Management Project(s) should consider:

- Acreage to be treated
- Shelter establishment:
 - irrigation corners
 - road side management
 - terrace/wind breaks
 - field borders
 - shelterbelts
- Conservation Reserve Program lands management
- Type of vegetation for establishment:
 - annual
 - perennial
- List species and percent of mixture
- Deferred mowing
 - Period of deferment
- Mowing
 - Acres mowed annually
- No till/minimum till

HALF-CUTTING TREES OR SHRUBS

The practice of partially cutting branches of a live tree or shrub to encourage horizontal, living cover near the ground, providing overhead cover for selected species in habitats where low-growth, woody cover has been identified as a limiting factor (see TPWD Bulletin 48). This practice, which should be conducted during the growing season when sap is flowing, also serves to protect nesting cover and other desirable herbaceous plants from grazing animals.



In open areas with very little near-ground cover, cutting half-way through the lower mesquite limbs and breaking them to the ground can form a "cage" that provides escape and roost cover for wildlife.

This practice is most effective when small groups or clumps (4-5 trees) of shrubs are half-cut within 15-30 feet of each other. **A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per 100 yards (~1 per acre) on at least 10 percent of the designated acreage or on 10 acres, whichever is less, must be developed annually to qualify.**

WOODY PLANT/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

Planting and protecting native seedlings to establish wind rows and shrub thickets, or to restore wooded habitats within former croplands, tame pastures or CRP land. In agricultural areas, this practice may include **planting a minimum of 50 seedlings annually in mottes, clumps, or short rows.** Plantings should consist of native trees and shrubs that produce hard or soft mast, or provide nesting or escape cover. Plantings should be made in groups to provide both cover and additional food, rather than scattered individual trees. For most sites in the Trans Pecos, irrigation of woody plantings is necessary for the first 3-5 years to improve survival.

See Brush Management in Activity A for information on other practices (shrub mottes) that may qualify under this activity. This practice can not qualify under more than one Activity.

NATURAL CAVITY/SNAG DEVELOPMENT

Create and/or retain "snags" (dead trees) for cavity-dwelling species. Undesirable trees can be girdled or individually treated with herbicide and left standing. This practice will have limited applicability in the Trans-Pecos where trees along riparian areas are relatively rare and valuable to a variety of wildlife species. Retention of naturally

developed snags generally will be more appropriate than the intentional development of snags. Special measures must be implemented to protect the snags during prescribed burning, mechanical brush management, etc. **A minimum of 1 snag per acre on the applicable portion of the property must be created/retained annually to qualify.**



Girdling trees is an effective means of creating snags, but be selective by avoiding mast producing trees (oaks, hickories) and judicious in extent.