

## 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:

- Target species?
- Box type:
  - cavity type.
  - bat boxes.
  - raptor poles.

### BRUSH PILES AND SLASH RETENTION

The planned placement and/or retention of brush piles to provide additional wildlife cover in habitats where cover is a limiting factor for the selected species. This practice also includes slash retention, or 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 tepees can provide cover for small game and other wildlife in open areas. **A minimum of 1 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.**

### FENCE LINE MANAGEMENT

Maintain, establish, or allow the establishment of trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses on fence lines to provide wildlife food and cover, minimum of 30 yards wide. This practice is only applicable where cover is limiting in the habitat, i.e. cropland or tame pasture. **A minimum length of 100 yards of Fence Line Management per 1/4 mile of fence is**

required annually to qualify.

## HAY MEADOW, PASTURE AND CROPLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WILDLIFE



Intensively managed hay fields can benefit wildlife if mowing is delayed until after July 15.

**Mowing/swathing of hay fields should be postponed until after the peak of nesting/rearing period of ground-nesting birds and mammals (July 1). Mow/shred 1/3 of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create "edge" and structural diversity.** A wide bar should be placed on the front of the tractor at a height of 1' when mowing to help flush wildlife using this cover. Weeds are an important source of food for many wildlife species, therefore minimize weed control practices. Use 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 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. **Annually mow/shred 25% of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create "edge" and structural diversity.**

Proposed Hay Meadow, Pasture and 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 supplemental cover in habitats where cover is lacking (see TPWD Bulletin 48) relative to an overall plan for target wildlife species. This practice is best done in the early or middle part of the growing season. **A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per 100 yards on at least 10 percent of acreage or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, annually to qualify.**



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.

## WOODY PLANT/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

Planting and protecting native tree and shrub seedlings to establish wind rows, thickets, mottes, corridors, and solid stands to provide optimum habitat for selected species. **A minimum of 500 seedlings annually, or 4 rows in a 120 foot width by a ¼ mile in length.** This is particularly effective around CRP lands, every ¼ to ½ mile. See last Appendix for list of native plants and shrubs.

## NATURAL CAVITY/SNAG DEVELOPMENT

Retain and create snags for cavity-dwelling species. Undesirable trees can be girdled or individually treated with herbicide and left standing. **A minimum of 5 snags per acre, on 5 percent of the acreage, must be retained/created 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.