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.** In the Rolling Plains, wood duck nest boxes should be erected at the rate of **1 per 200 yards in cottonwood bottoms where surface water is available.**

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 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; however, artificial cover of this type must be suspended on a frame above the ground if it is to subsist and be of any long term value (eg. 30’ diameter brush pile at 1 per 40 acres in CRP lands to meet optimum overhead protective cover requirement for bobwhite quail). This practice must be part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan. **A minimum of 3 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 most beneficial where cover is limiting in the habitat, i.e. cropland or tame

pasture, and should be part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan. **A minimum length of 100 yards of Fence Line Management is required annually to qualify.**

HAY MEADOW, PASTURE AND CROPLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WILDLIFE

Mowing/swathing of hay fields should be postponed until after the peak of nesting/rearing period of ground-nesting birds and mammals. Mow/shred 1/3 of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create "edge" and structural diversity. 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 on circle irrigation corners, 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. See Texas Tech Management Note No. 15 as applicable to CRP lands.

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 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. **A minimum of 25 trees/shrubs in one ¼ acre block must be half-cut 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 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 150 seedlings annually, or 4 rows in a 120 foot width by a 1/4 mile in length.** 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.

See Brush Management in Activity A for information on other practices 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. Special measures must be implemented to protect the snags during prescribed burning, mechanical brush management, etc. **A minimum of 5 snags per acre on 5% of the acreage 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.