Construction of stone and deadwood piles

Goal	Provision of habitat and winter quarters for a variety of different beneficial animals and wildlife
Short description of the measure	Piles can be established all-year around, but ideally between October and April, and in critical Areas between October and January Both piles are, ideally, surrounded by a 50cm natural vegetated fallow. No pesticides are applied within at least 3m distance. *Stone piles*: ▪ Volumes of at least 2–3 m³ ▪ Sunny, wind-protected sites ▪ 80% of the stones should have a grain size of 20–40 cm ▪ Rocks/stones origins from the area *Deadwood piles:* ▪ Diameter of 1,5–2 m, height of 1,5 m ▪ Sunny, wind-protected sites ▪ Gravel layer beneath is advisable ▪ Wood/twigs origin from the area
Timeframe (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)	When to start: Construction ideally in autumn-winter time, from October to April, but in critical areas restricted from October to January
How auditors can assess if the measure has been implemented in a good quality?	▪ Diameter of about 1,5–2 m (deadwood); 2–3 m² (stone) ▪ Piles are maintained and not overgrown with vegetation  Pic.: Example of a stone and dead wood pile, partly overgrown with vegetation
Additional information the auditor need for verification (if any)	▪ Wood as well as stones ideally originates from the surrounding, e.g. collected on agricultural plots ▪ Don't depose stones or wood in areas with natural vegetation.

Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 Stone piles are dry and warm habitats and therefore important biotopes for native species. They provide valuable hiding, sunbath places and winter quarters for many different **heat-dependent animals**, such as lizards or blindworms. Bigger holes close to the ground are also used by mammals. Furthermore, piles pose habitats for **thermophile plant species**. As stones store heat from the sun and expose it at night, stone piles provide resting but also hunting habitats for nocturnal insects and reptiles. Deadwood piles provide **nesting, development, hibernation and hiding** place for various species: ▪ Beetles and larvae feed on deadwood ▪ Beneficials settle in deadwood ▪ Earwig, ichneumonid, ladybug ground beetle and spiders find habitat in deadwood piles ▪ toad, frog, newt, lizard and other amphibian and reptiles, shrews, hedgehog and weasel use deadwood piles as winterquartes ▪ Stone piles are an important habitat for rabbits, carnivorous predators and birds of prey. ▪ Partridges and warbler use stone/deadwood piles as nesting site ▪ Migrating birds use piles as resting site during passage in autumn and spring
Indicator/key data	▪ Number stone/deadwood pile ▪ Volume of stone/deadwood piles
References	▪ www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de ▪ Promotion of biodiversity in fruit plantations – NABU; REWE and Lake Constance Foundation, 2015 ▪ Catálogo de buenas prácticas para la gestión del hábitat en Red Natura 2000: bosque y matorral mediterráneos, ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/otherpub/index.htm ▪ Stiftung Rheinische Kulturlandschaft, DBU: Abschlussbericht Maßnahmen- und Artensteckbriefe zur Förderung der Vielfalt typischer Arten und Lebensräume der Agrarlandschaften, 2018

Further information: Knowledge Pool

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for auditors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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