

Nesting aid for birds and bats

Goal

Support of birds and bats, organic pest control

Short description of the measure

Before deciding to implement this action it would be good to have previous knowledge about the likely species that can use these boxes. Nesting aids can differ in size, height, diameter of entrance holes depending on the species which should be promoted. In the following are general aspects of how the aids should be constructed.

Nesting aids for birds

- Construction should be made of blunt, 20 cm thick wooden planks
- The ground should measure at least 12x12 cm.
- The downer margin of the hole must be at least 17 cm above the ground of the nesting aid
- The overlap of the roof above the entrance hole should be rather extended
- Installed 2–3 m height with direction east or south east

Nesting aids for bats

- Construction should be made of blunt, 20 cm thick wooden planks
- The inner side and backside should be rough and structured
- Installed at least 3–5 m height and bats should be able to approach the wholes freely, i.e. nesting wholes must not be overgrown or covered with branches

Timeframe

(When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)

When to start: Nesting aids can be set up all year but at best in autumn as they provide shelter already in winter

How auditors can assess if the measure has been implemented in a good quality?

- Orientation and protection as described above
- High quality, such as abandonment of chemical wood protectors, no splinters



Pic. 1: Nesting aid for Birds



Pic. 2: Nesting aid for Bats

<p>Additional information the auditor need for verification (if any)</p>	<p>Diameter of the hole of the nesting aid differs depending on the target species, but an average of 30 cm suits most of the songbirds.</p> <p>Birds like swift and swallow, however, require different kind of nesting aids. Species, which depend on cracks, such as black redtail or wren, will not breed in closed nesting aids with a small hole but need half opened aids. For the setup of those houses, protected sites, which are inaccessible for predators, e.g. house walls, barns or garden cabins are very important.</p> <p>Birds and bats are beneficials. During breeding they feed millions of insects and caterpillars to their chicks and function in that way as biological crop protection. Therefore, they contribute to the reduction of herbicide use.</p>
<p>Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>Many of the birds breeding in holes are insectivorous or feeding on mice. As most of the old and friable trees with their natural holes nowadays are missing in the landscape, artificial nesting aids for birds and bats are vital. Therefore, the establishment and maintenance of nesting sites for birds and bats is an important tool in applied nature conservation.</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>All native bat species feed on invertebrates. Because they are nocturnal they prey insects which will not be caught by birds. Therefore they accomplish valuable ecosystem functions. Artificial nesting aids contribute to species conservation.</p> <p>Furthermore, nesting aids provide shelter in winter. As birds need to keep their body temperature constant on 39-42°C, lots of their body fat gets burned. They lose in this way fast in weight and become weak. Bats require a frost-free shelter as well.</p> </div>
<p>Indicator/key data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of nesting aids ▪ Number of nesting aids used by birds or bats
<p>References</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de ▪ www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/voegel/helfen/nistkaesten/index.html ▪ Promotion of biodiversity in fruit plantations – NABU; REWE and Lake Constance Foundation, 2015

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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