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 12 x 12 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 
Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures	▪ Orientation and protection as described above ▪ Not affected by vegetation in the surrounding
Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 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.

	 All native **bat species** feed on invertebrates. Because they are nocturnal they pray insects which will not be caught by birds. Therefore they accomplish valuable ecosystem functions. Artificial nesting aids contribute to species conservation. 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.
Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer	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.
Indicator/key data	▪ Number of nesting aids ▪ Number of nesting aids used by birds or bats
References	▪ 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 product and quality managers of 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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