

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**  
**STRUCTURES FOR WILDLIFE**  
**(No.)**

**CODE 649**

**DEFINITION**

A structure installed to replace or modify a missing or deficient wildlife habitat component.

**PURPOSE**

- To provide or modify a structure to enhance or sustain target wildlife populations.
- To modify an existing structure that poses a hazard to wildlife.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

All lands where State-approved wildlife habitat assessment or other State-approved assessment tool identifies limiting habitat component(s) that cannot be provided within the desired time period with implementation of a vegetation management strategy.

Where modification is needed to structures that pose a risk of injury or mortality to wildlife.

This practice does not apply:

- Where structures will be installed or modified for the control of nuisance animal species.
- Where structures will be installed or modified for the benefit of captive, feral, or domesticated animals.
- Where structures will be installed or modified for aquatic species.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to all Purposes**

Build, locate and/or modify structures to meet the needs of the target species and not subject wildlife to increased risks of injury or mortality.

Use materials that are durable and safe for wildlife.

Construct habitat structures to withstand normal environmental conditions and meet the needs of the targeted wildlife for the target period of time.

Install appropriate methods to prevent predator access to structures.

Ensure access to structures for maintenance, monitoring and/or management.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Structural thermal regulation, ventilation, and caustic, dangerous, debilitating, and/or irritating materials when evaluating potential risk of injury or mortality to target species.

Potential negative impacts to target species and non-target species through an increase in predation, disease transmission, nest parasitism or other means.

If the structure is exposed to sunlight, use ultraviolet resistant materials and/or coatings made with non-toxic substances for additional protection from deterioration due to sunlight exposure.

Risks associated with the use of structures by non-target or nuisance species.

Implementation of adaptive management by relocating and/or modifying structures.

Modification of existing onsite and offsite barriers, or other conservation structures that may inhibit safe daily and seasonal movement of wildlife.

Utilization and/or management of native vegetation to supplement and/or eventually replace installed habitat structures.

Safe passage strategies for target and non-target species, e.g. road crossings.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Prepare plans and specifications for design and installation of all wildlife structures and predator guards.

Describe the biological and physical requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

Specify the number, location, spacing, grade, quantities, dimensions, materials and timing of installation of new or modification of existing structures.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Provide an operation and maintenance plan appropriate to the function of the wildlife structure installed. Provide the timing, frequency and/or duration to monitor and/or maintain structures, when least likely to disturb target wildlife.

Remove all structures determined potentially detrimental to target or non-target species, and/or no longer serving the function of this practice (e.g. abandoned structures).

### **REFERENCES**

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Wildlife Habitat Council. 2008. Artificial Nesting Structures. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet No 20 (revised) Washington, D.C.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2013. Retrofit watering facility for wildlife escape and to enhance access for bats and bird species. ANM38.

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2010. Upland Forest Wildlife Structures. ANM24.