

Wood Duck Nestbox Assembly Instructions

Nestbox assembly:

Use a 1" x 12" x 12' piece of rough cut pine, fir or cedar to make your nestbox. Avoid using boards having cracks, knotholes or other imperfections. Cut and assemble as shown using ringshank nails or 2.5" drywall screws.

Assembly tips:

When properly assembled, the front panel will swing open for easy cleaning. Here's how to make that happen.

- Leave a 1/8" opening at the top of the front panel during assembly and position the hinge nails directly opposite each other so the front panel does not bind when lifted.
- Don't drive the hinge nails/screws in too tightly or the front panel will not pivot easily.
- Pre-drill 1/8" latchpin holes at a downward angle on either side of the front panel as shown in figure 2. Insert nails in these holes to hold the front panel securely in place.

To help the ducklings exit the nestbox, cut 1/8" grooves on the inside of the front panel from the floor to just beneath the entrance hole (figure 1).

Drill a series of 1/4" drain holes in the bottom panel and recess the panel into the box to keep water from creeping into the box interior (figure 2).

Drill mounting holes along the top and bottom of the back panel (figure 2).

Before installation, fill each nestbox with three to four inches of wood chips, shavings or course sawdust.

Figure 1. Cuts for Wood Duck Nestbox

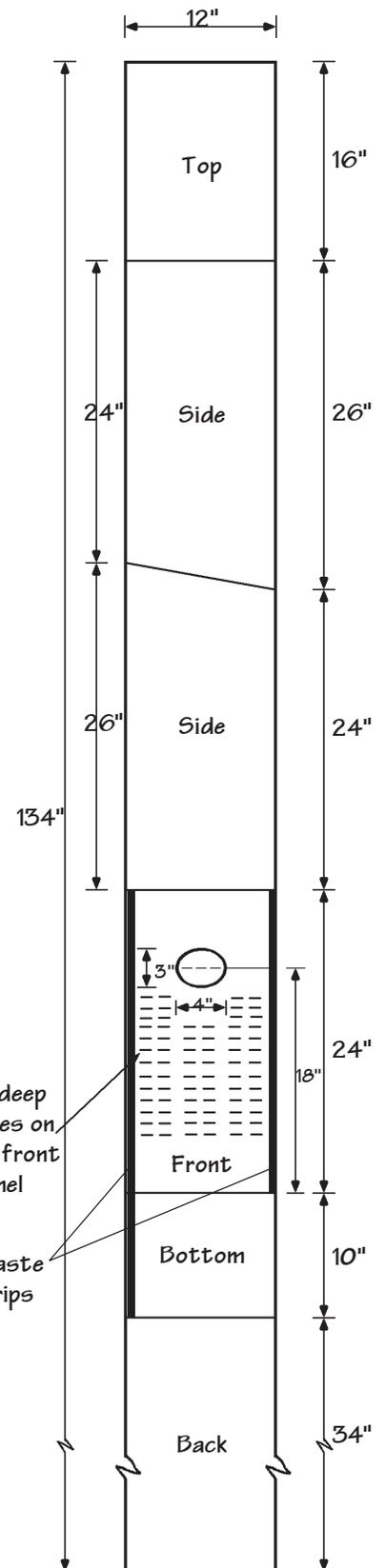
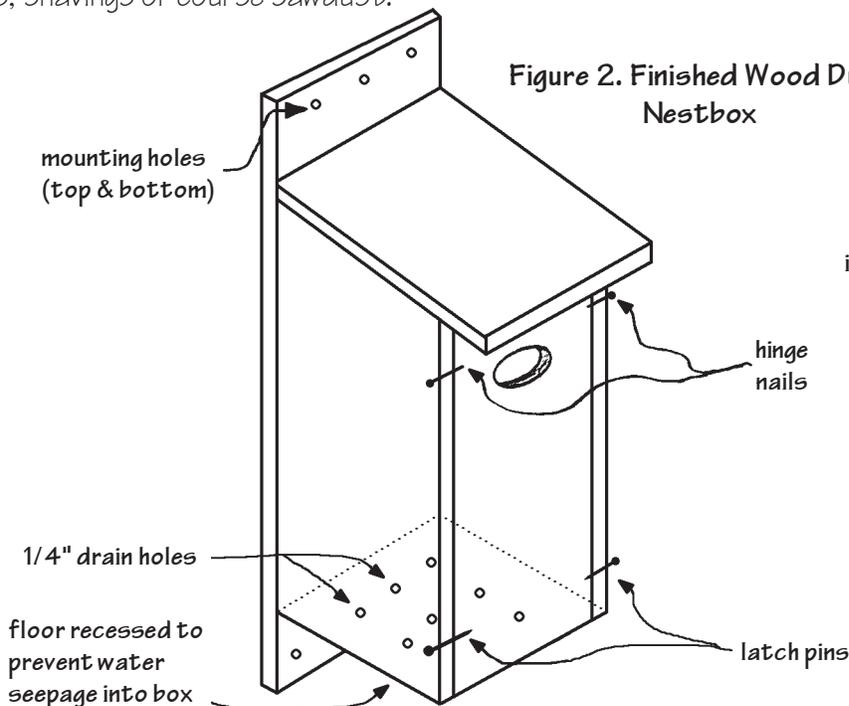


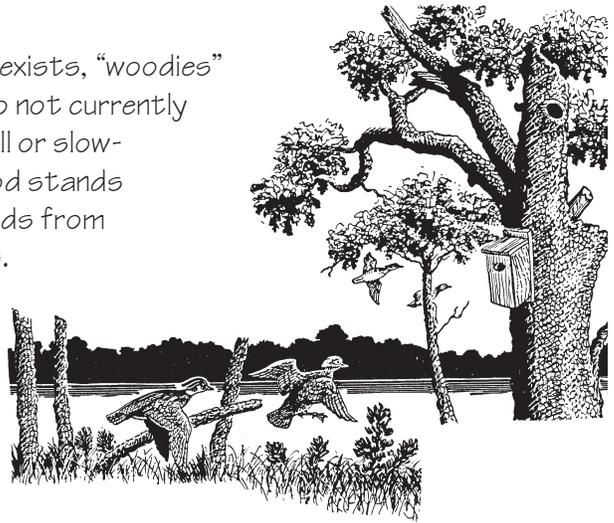
Figure 2. Finished Wood Duck Nestbox



Nestbox location:

The wood duck is a pioneering species; if suitable habitat exists, "woodies" will likely find and use your nestboxes, even if the ducks do not currently nest in the area. Place nestboxes over or adjacent to still or slow-moving water which has overhanging woody cover and good stands of trees along the banks (while nestboxes up to 400 yards from shore will be utilized, sites closer to water are preferred).

Clustering four to eight nestboxes in an area one-half to one acre in size will increase the likelihood of wood ducks nesting. Also, wood ducks tend to return to the area where they were hatched, so clusters of boxes will help ensure that your local population has nest sites available each spring.



Nestbox installation:

Place each nestbox in a vertical or slightly forward tilting (never backward) position in one of these locations:

- over land (10 to 20 feet above ground on a tree trunk where no branches shield the entrance).
- over water (three to 20 feet up on a suitable tree trunk or post).

Mount nestboxes securely (no wobbling) to a tree or post using large (20 penny) nails or lag bolts.

Nestbox maintenance:

Clean nestboxes and replace nesting material each winter or early spring. During cleaning, check the boxes for loose screws, holes and cracks. Tighten screws and fill holes and cracks with latex caulk.

Other notes:

If beaver are active in the area, tree trunks may need to be wrapped with chicken wire. Alternatively, place nestboxes in trees which are not preferred by beaver (such as conifers and maples).

Other cavity nesting birds (screech owls and American kestrels for example) may take up residence in some of the boxes, an event which is actually beneficial to wood ducks. Because most other cavity nesting birds are territorial (and therefore intolerant of others of their species nesting in the same area), a family of screech owls in one box insures that the remaining boxes will be available for nesting wood ducks. If you're unsure what might be using a particular nestbox, contact Fish and Game for assistance.



For more information regarding nest platform and nestbox construction plans, contact the Fish & Game Southwest Region office in Nampa, 465-8465.