

Wood Duck Nesting Boxes

Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL645F

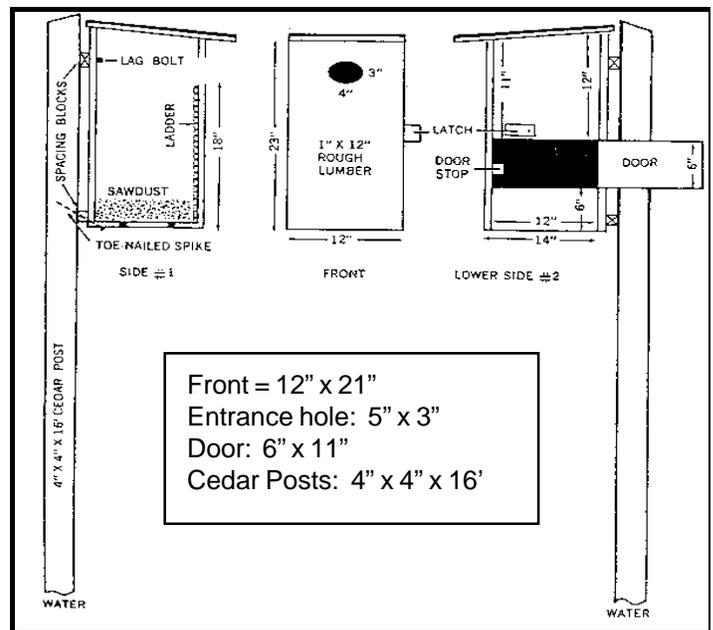


Twenty-six species of ducks are found in the coastal and inland waters of Alabama. The wood duck is a resident species found statewide throughout the year. When natural cavities are scarce or absent, woodducks may not reproduce successfully. They readily accept and nest in nest boxes that can provide safer nesting than natural cavities because they provide predator guards.

A wood duck nest box should be constructed of unplanned cedar, cypress, or other weather-resistant lumber. It should *NEVER* be constructed from treated, painted, stained, or creosoted lumber. The following diagrams illustrate the proper dimensions. The entrance hole should be oval shaped with the broadest distance horizontal. On the inside front of the box, beneath the hole, tack a strip of screen or hardware cloth to provide the ducklings a means of escaping the box. A predator guard should always be placed at least 36" above the water line.

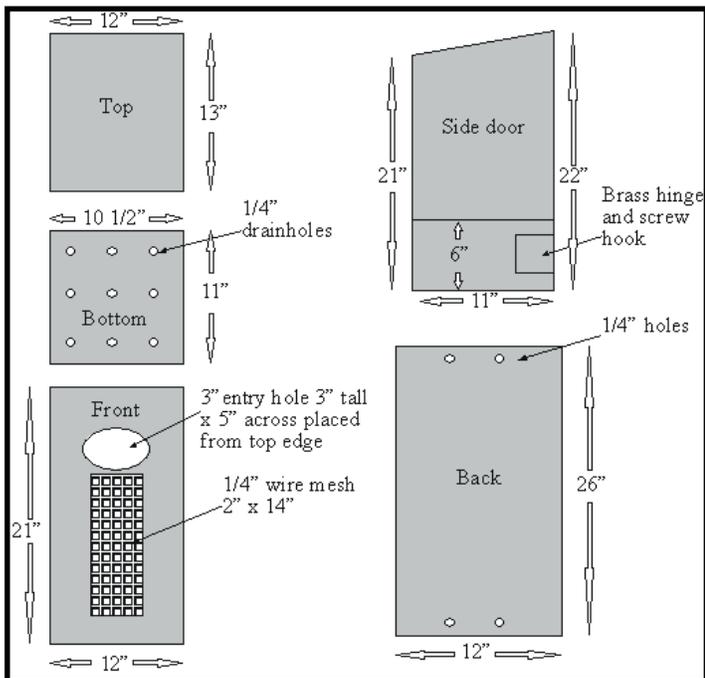
Materials

25 nails, 8 or 10 penny, zinc coated
 1 spike, 4+"
 1 lag bolt, 1/4", 6" long
 1 hinge, 3" cabinet + screws
 18" strip of hardware cloth at least 3" wide.
 4"x 4" post, 16' long (cypress, cedar or preservative treated wood)
 Sawdust or woodchips to form a 3" nest base in each box
 Estimated Cost: less than \$25.00



Installation

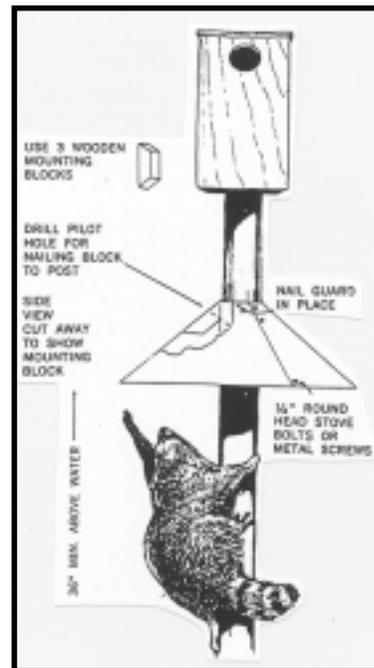
- Use rust proof screws or nails that are long enough to hold securely despite rough handling and weathering.
- Bore four 1/4" drainage holes through the floor.
- Tack a strip of 1/4" mesh hardware cloth cut 18"x 3" from the bottom of the box to the hole. This is necessary for the ducklings to be able to climb out the nest.
- Spray the inside of the box with Lysol or other disinfectant prior to the nesting season to discourage wasp and bees.



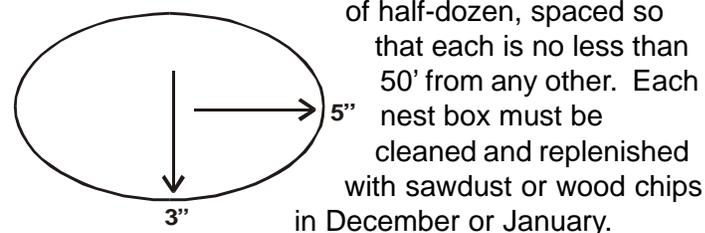
precautions should be taken to prevent nest disturbance.

Entrance Hole Dimensions

It is important to make the entrance hole large enough to accommodate the largest cavity nesters that are found in the area. An oval entrance of 3 inches by 5 inches will accommodate wood ducks and hooded mergansers.



Wood ducks will nest in close proximity, but for the best results the boxes should be grouped in clusters



of half-dozen, spaced so that each is no less than 50' from any other. Each nest box must be cleaned and replenished with sawdust or wood chips in December or January.

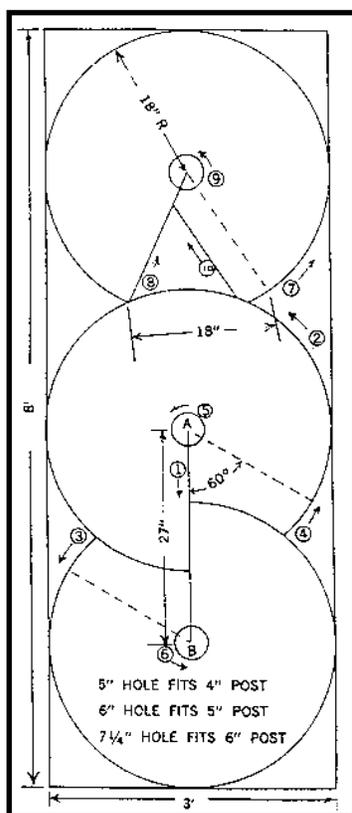
Predator Guard

Materials

- 3' x 8' piece sheet of 26-gauge sheet metal
- 3 wood mounting blocks
- 3 stove bolts or metal screws
- 6 nails

Installation

When installing the guard, overlap the cut edge to the dotted line. Make circular cuts in a clockwise direction. These type of predator guards work best on posts with a diameter of up to 6 inches. The guard is secured to the post with wooden mounting blocks and galvanized nails. The lower edge of the cone should be at least 36 inches above the water.



Raccoons and many snake species are responsible for the destruction of many duck nests in natural cavities and nest boxes. Proper

References

Messmer, T.A., M.A. Johnson and F.B. Lee. 1989. Homemade nest boxes for cavity- nesting ducks. NDSU Extension Service, Fargo, ND. Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/tools/nestbox/nestbox.htm> Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Woodduck Nest Box: Building and Placement Instructions. <http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/wildlife/Species/default.htm>

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