



1200 Pioneer Circle, Watkinsville, GA 30677
www.letsgetwild.net 866-880-9453

Wood Duck Boxes

The wood duck often is referred to as the “Summer Duck.” As a resident, it is one of only a few of the waterfowl reproducing in the Palmetto State. Wood ducks are cavity nesters preferring natural holes or “hollows” in older trees more common in mature forested wetlands.

Wood ducks readily adapt to man-made nest boxes where natural cavities may be limited or lacking. Construction of nest boxes and erection of nest box units can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for anyone interested in a hands-on waterfowl conservation project.

Do not build or erect a wood duck nest box unless it will be protected from predators and placed in or adjacent to a suitable permanent water site. Poorly erected and seldom maintained nest boxes only invite wood ducks away from secretive natural cavities to where predators will destroy eggs, kill the nesting hen or both. The all important conical guard placed below the nest box will protect it from climbing raccoons, rat snakes, and other predators. Trim low, overhanging limbs or small trees within 48” of the nest box to prevent the overhead approach of predators.

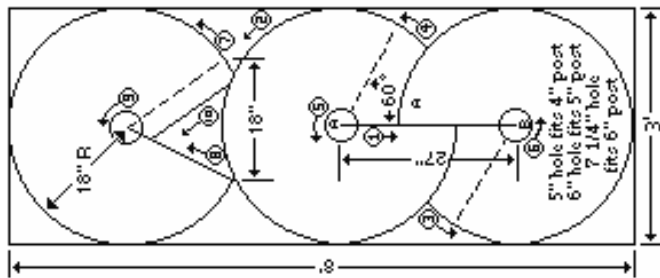
It is best to erect nest boxes in the shallow, permanent water of a marsh or pond having a good mix of open water and emergent plant cover. An adequate amount of interspersed wetland vegetation will provide both escape cover and habitat where ducklings will be able to forage for aquatic insects necessary for growth and development. Mount nest boxes on poles having a height of 52” to 60” above highest seasonal water levels.

Space nest box units such that it will be difficult to see one nest box from another either using distance or concealing vegetation. Never mount 2 nest boxes back-to-back in a “piggy-back” fashion. This practice encourages competition for nest boxes and leads to dump nesting. Dump nesting, a product of density strife, is the result of more than 1 hen using a single box and laying at least 18 and up to 50 or more eggs. Dump nesting drastically lowers potential productivity. Remember, the wood duck is not a colonial nesting species, wood ducks evolved as solitary nesters in forested wetlands where natural cavities were widely scattered. Nest box projects, therefore, should mimic nature.

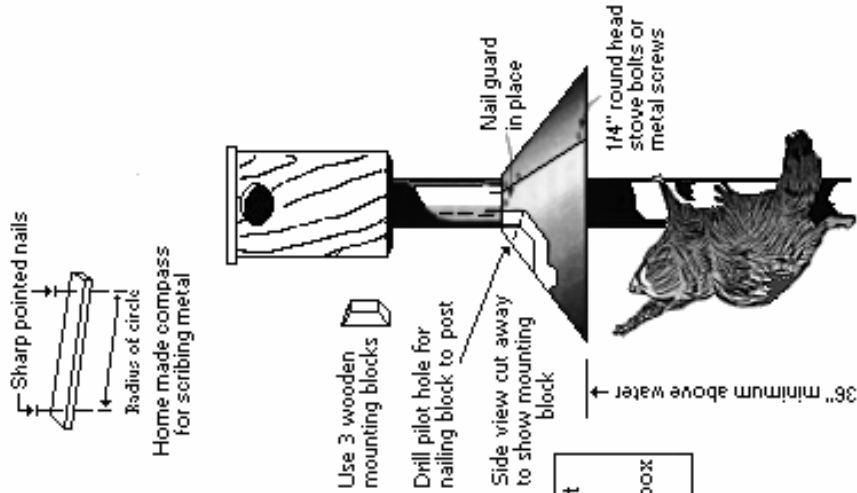
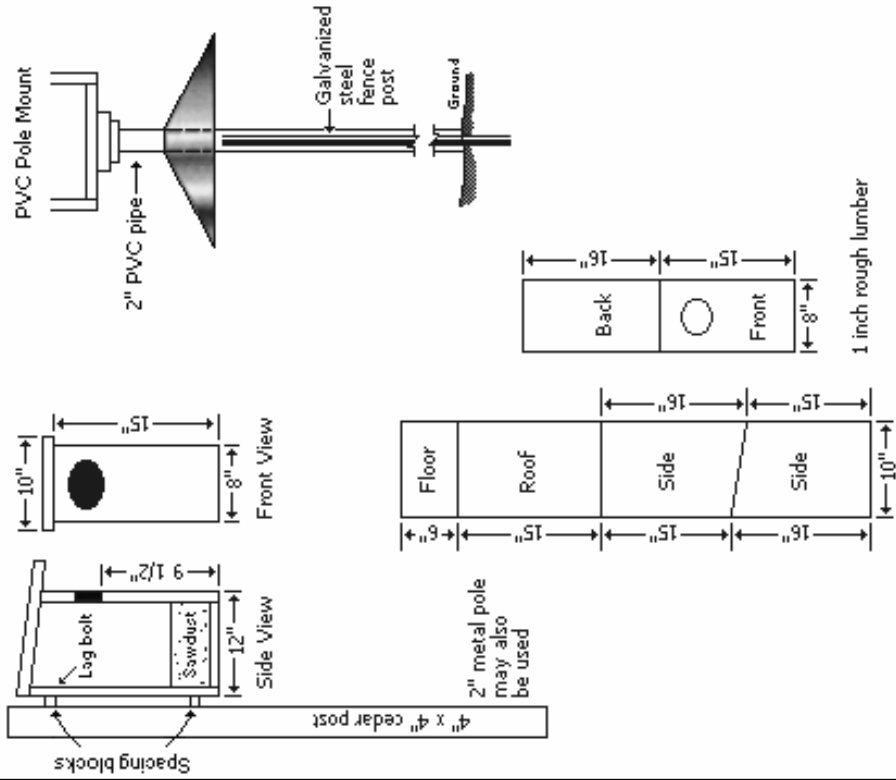
Start with a few boxes initially and increase as local populations grow remembering not to over-saturate. It may take several years before the first box is used, or it may be used immediately. The best time to erect nest boxes is December through February. Nest boxes preferably should be erected on wooden poles. Poles can be driven with a sledgehammer into soft, muck soil in most marshes or ponds. Posthole diggers work well, even underwater, in hard or clay soil. Be certain each post is securely set so it will bear the nest box. A submerged box containing a clutch of eggs defeats all conservation efforts. Wood ducks do not carry any nesting materials into the nest. Place 3” of wood shavings in the box to insulate the nest.

Rough sawn, cypress lumber is the best choice as a nest box building material. If smooth or dressed lumber is used, be sure to tack a piece of mesh screening to the inside under the entrance hole. This will enable day-old ducklings to climb up and exit with the brood when the hen calls from the water below.

All nest boxes should be checked each winter prior to the nesting season to replace nesting material, check the tightness of the predator guard and secure the lid and screen door latch. Production inspections should be made as often as possible during March through June, but at least once in April or May.



To minimize access to nest boxes by predators, metal predator guards should be installed on all wood duck box support posts.





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COMMON NAME – Northern Pintail Duck

SCIENTIFIC NAME – *Anas Acuta*

DESCRIPTION –

- Length – 65 to 75 cm
- Males – Pale grey body, white breast, lateral neck stripe, dark brown head, long pointed tail
- Females – Light brown with whiter throat, shorter, pointed tail

RANGE/HABITAT –

- Northern Europe and Asia, most of Canada & Alaska, and the Midwest United States
- May migrate as far south as the Equator
- Open wetlands, wet grassland, and tundra

DIET –

- Plants, mostly found in evening or night
- Also may eat insects, mollusks, and crustaceans

FACTS -

- Numerous males will often pursue a single female in the air while trying to court a mate
- Males whistle while females quack



1200 Pioneer Circle, Watkinsville, GA 30677 - 1-866-880-9453 – www.letsgetwild.net

COMMON NAME – Mallard

SCIENTIFIC NAME – *Anas platyrhynchos*

DESCRIPTION –

- Length – 56 – 65 cm
- Wingspan – 81 – 98 cm
- Weight – 750 – 1,000 g
- Males – green head, black rear, black tipped yellow bill
- Females – Light brown, dark brown bill

RANGE/HABITAT –

- North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia
- Temperate and sub-tropical climates
- Most wetlands, including parks, small ponds, and rivers

DIET –

- Mostly plant food
- May sometimes eat frogs!

FACTS -

- Gave rise to most domestic ducks
- Males have nasally calls, females quack



1200 Pioneer Circle, Watkinsville, GA 30677 - 1-866-880-9453 – www.letsgetwild.net

COMMON NAME – Green-winged Teal Duck

SCIENTIFIC NAME – *Anas carolinensis*

DESCRIPTION –

- Length – 31-39 cm
- Wingspan – 52-59 cm
- Weight 140-500 g
- Smallest North American dabbling duck
- Male – Grey flanks and back with yellow rear and white-edged green speculum, chestnut head with green eye patch
- Female – Light brown, plumage similar to female Mallard

RANGE/HABITAT –

- North America, Europe, Northern Asia, South Asia, Northern Africa
- Wetlands, bogs, etc.

DIET –

- Plants
- Also may eat insects, mollusks, and crustaceans

FACTS -

- Males have clear whistles, females quack
- Fly at speeds up to 30 mph
- May sometimes be found on low-hanging branches and logs



1200 Pioneer Circle, Watkinsville, GA 30677 - 1-866-880-9453 – www.letsgetwild.net

COMMON NAME – Blue-winged Teal

SCIENTIFIC NAME – *Anas discors*

DESCRIPTION –

- Length – Approx. 11 inches
- Wingspan – Approx. 24 inches
- Male – Greyish-blue head with white facial crescent, light brown body with white patch near rear and black tail
- Female – mottled brown feathers

RANGE/HABITAT –

- Americas, sometimes wander off to Europe
- Marshes and ponds

DIET –

- Plants
- Sometimes mollusks and aquatic insects

FACTS -

- Male calls are short whistles, female calls are soft quacks
- Blue-winged Teals are among the last ducks to migrate north in spring and one of the first to move south in the fall
- Males often “stand guard” while females incubate
- Will go through an “eclipse plumage”, essentially molting all of its feathers at once and rendering the duck unable to fly until new feathers grow