



GUIDELINES FOR NEST BOXES

Nest boxes resolve the problem many animals face when it comes to finding a protected area to live and raise young. When properly designed, the boxes can attract wildlife to new areas, help increase the species' populations, and provide endless hours of enjoyment for interested observers.

Below is a list of recommendations to make a nest box successful:

Animal species that are naturally "cavity nesters" can be attracted to man-made boxes.



Birds: house wrens, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, tree swallows, purple martins, bluebirds, great crested flycatchers, woodpeckers, owls, American kestrels, wood ducks, common mergansers...

For specific plans of nest boxes and nesting platforms with dimensions for species in your area check the NestWatch website

<https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/>

Building Materials

Whether you construct your own or buy a nest box, you should look for long-lasting, rough-cut wood that is an inch thick: redwood, white cedar, western cedar, and cypress. A rough surface is necessary as birds will need to climb on the wood. This is important for young birds trying to climb up the inside to the entrance hole. The woods listed do not need to be painted since they are durable as is and weathering will camouflage them over time. Hardware should be rust-resistant brass or galvanized materials.

Construction

Boxes should be built to protect from predators and the weather. A sloping roof that extends over the entrance will keep rain out of the box. A line cut across the underside of the roof overhang will help by creating a "drip line." Several small holes ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") drilled in the floor will allow drainage of water that does get inside.

The dimensions of the box will depend on the species desired. The entrance hole diameter and depth of the box are especially important in attracting the right species while keeping others out. Placement of the box in the right habitat is also key as birds need to be near a food source.

Drill a few $\frac{1}{4}$ " holes on the sides just under the roof to allow for ventilation during the hot summer.

One side should be hinged to facilitate cleaning after the birds have finished nesting. This can be done by using two nails at the top of the side as a hinge and a screw or a gate latch at the bottom of the side to secure it.

