



CANADIAN FÉDÉRATION
WILDLIFE CANADIENNE
FÉDÉRATION DE LA FAUNE

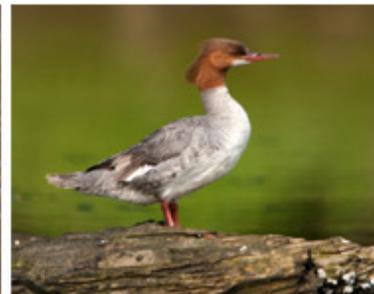
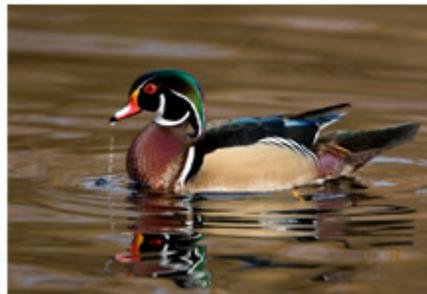
Building Nest Boxes for Ducks



Nest boxes are used by **cavity nesting** ducks. A cavity nest is a hole formed in a living or dead tree by natural decay or by other wildlife such as the woodpecker. Ducks use these cavities as a safe place to lay eggs (also known as a **clutch**) and to raise their **brood**. A brood is the term used for a group of ducklings. A single female can have a clutch comprised of between one and 44 eggs depending on the species of duck. Also, it is quite common for ducks such as the Barrow Goldeneye, Wood duck, and the Common Goldeneye, to lay their eggs in nests of other ducks. These nests are called "**dump**

nests." The next time you see a brood of ducklings, the mother could be a surrogate!

The purpose of building nest boxes is to increase the amount of places ducks may use to lay their clutches. It is getting harder for them to find lodgings due to forests being cut down for subdivisions and other developments. Nest boxes are easy to monitor. Naturally formed cavities are less sturdy than the cedar being used to construct nests. Nest boxes also help to protect broods from predator attacks.

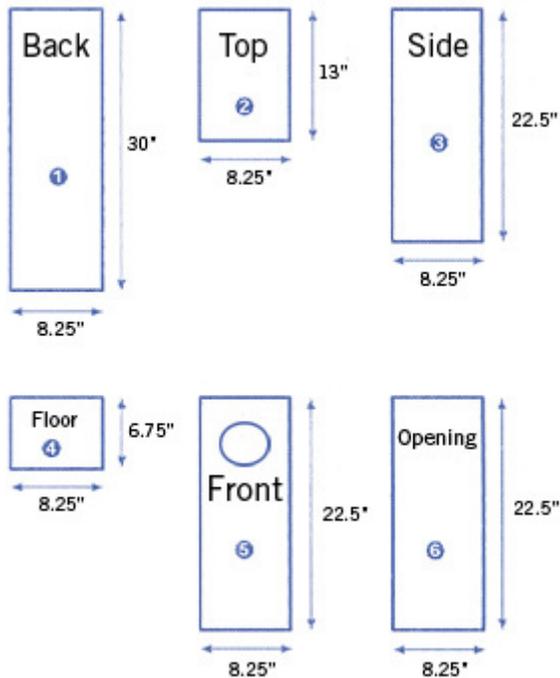


Types of cavity nesting ducks:

- Barrow's Goldeneye: This duck is one of the longest-living ducks in North America. The oldest on record attained the age of 18.
- Common Goldeneye: The Common Goldeneye is one of the last ducks to migrate south during the winter. The female Goldeneye often lays her eggs in another duck's nest rather than her own.
- Bufflehead: The smallest living duck in North America, the Bufflehead is one of the most popular ducks among bird-watchers.

- Common Merganser: The Merganser's long, thin bill contains toothy projections that help it hang on to its prey. While the mother protects her brood, she will not feed them; ducklings must hunt their own food.
- Hooded Merganser: The Hooded Merganser is one of the few ducks that seeks its prey underwater using its eye-sight.
- Wood Duck: With its colourful plumage, it is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all waterfowl.

Nest box design



Important Features of the Nest Box

- Cedar is used due because it is resistant to weather and insects.
- Lumber is left unfinished to avoid harming the eggs and ducks.
- **"Kerf cuts"** are grooves cut into the wood and act as steps for the ducklings to get out of the box.
- Six inches of wood shavings are placed in the box to help incubate the eggs and to stop eggs from moving around in the box.
- Holes have been drilled in the bottom of the box to release moisture.

Nest Box Placement

- Nest boxes are placed on a shoreline up to 150 metres away from the shore's edge.

Steel poles and dead and live trees are used to install the boxes four to 6 feet above the water or ground.

Maintenance

Nest boxes must be cleaned out in the fall or winter, repaired and filled with fresh wood chips on a regular basis. When ducks find a good place to nest they will return the following year. Maintenance is a must!

Contact

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