

ALL ABOUT NEST BOXES



FEATURES OF A GOOD

NEST BOX

BUILDING A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL NESTING HABITAT

+ IT'S WELL CONSTRUCTED



UNTREATED WOOD

Use untreated, unpainted wood, preferably cedar, pine, cypress, or for larger boxes (owls) nonpressure-treated CDX exterior grade plywood.



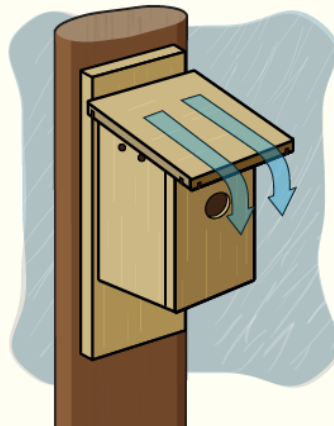
GALVANIZED SCREWS

Use galvanized screws for the best seal. Nails can loosen over time, allowing rain into the nest box. Screws are also easier to remove for repairs or maintenance. Do not use staples.

+ IT KEEPS BIRDS DRY

SLOPED ROOF

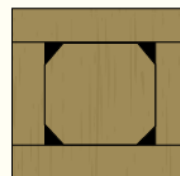
A sloped roof that overhangs the front by 2-4" and the sides by 2" will help keep out driving rain, while also thwarting predators. Add 1/4" deep cuts under the roof on all three edges to serve as gutters that channel rain away from the box.



Side View (cutaway)

RECESSED FLOOR

A recessed floor keeps the nest from getting wet and helps the box last longer. Recess the floor at least 1/4" up from the bottom.



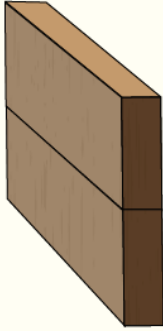
Bottom View

DRAINAGE HOLES

Add at least 4 drainage holes (3/8" to 1/2" diameter) to the floor to allow any water that enters the box to drain away. Alternatively, you can cut away the corners of the floorboard to create drainage holes.

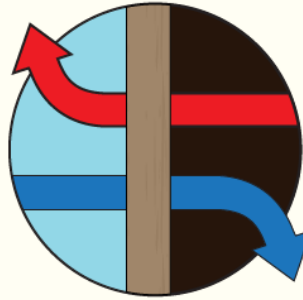


IT HELPS REGULATE TEMPERATURE



THICK WALLS

Walls should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick to insulate the nest properly. (Boards sold as 1" are actually $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick.)



VENTILATION HOLES

For adequate ventilation, there should be two $\frac{5}{8}$ " diameter holes on each of the side walls, near the top (4 total).



IT KEEPS OUT PREDATORS



NO PERCHES

A perch is unnecessary for the birds and can actually help predators gain access to the box.

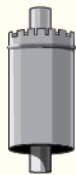
TYPES OF PREDATOR GUARDS

Although predators are a natural part of the environment, birdhouses are typically not as well concealed as natural nests and some predators can make a habit of raiding your boxes. Adding a baffle helps keep nestlings and adults safe from climbing predators. Below are some time-tested options.



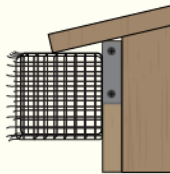
COLLAR

A metal collar of about 3' in diameter surrounding the pole underneath the nest box.



STOVEPIPE

The most complex, and perhaps the most effective. These baffles are generally 8" in diameter and 24-36" long.



NOEL GUARD

A wire mesh tube attached to the front of the nest box. Use this guard in combination with another, or attach it to boxes installed on trees.

COMMON NEST BOX PREDATORS



SNAKES

Many snakes are excellent climbers and can easily surmount an unguarded pole. Snakes most likely to climb into birdhouses are generally non-venomous (such as racers and ratsnakes) and helpful at controlling rodents. Avoid installing nest boxes next to brush piles.



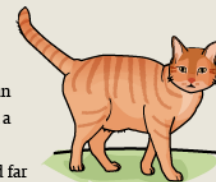
RACCOONS

Raccoons are intelligent and can remember nest box locations from year to year. They can be abundant in populated areas. Mount nest boxes on a metal pole equipped with a baffle; avoid mounting them on trees or fence posts.



CHIPMUNKS

Chipmunks are both a nest predator and a competitor for nest boxes. To keep chipmunks out, mount boxes away from trees on a metal pole equipped with a baffle.



CATS

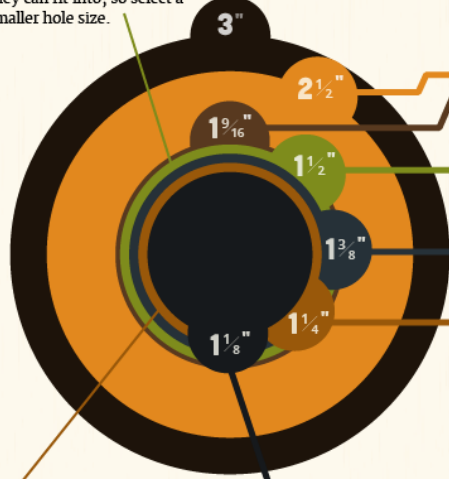
Cats are excellent jumpers and can leap to the top of a nest box from a nearby tree or from the ground. Mount your box high enough and far enough from trees so cats cannot spring to the top of the box in a single leap. Keep pet cats indoors for their own safety and for the safety of birds.

IT HAS THE RIGHT ENTRANCE SIZE FOR THE RIGHT BIRD

By providing a properly-sized entrance hole, you can attract desirable species to your birdhouses while excluding predators and unwanted occupants. Below are the requirements for some common species that nest in boxes.

DON'T WANT TO GIVE A HOME TO EUROPEAN STARLINGS?

1 1/4" is the smallest hole size they can fit into, so select a smaller hole size.



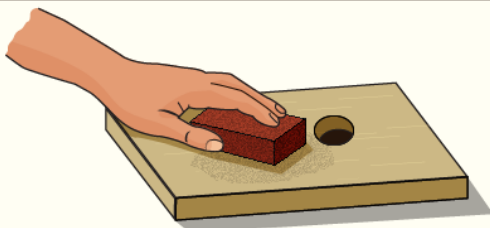
| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  Screech-Owls |  American Kestrel |  Northern Flicker |  Ash-throated Flycatcher |
|  Eastern & Western Bluebird |  Bewick's & Carolina Wren |  Tree Swallow |  Great Crested Flycatcher |
|  Prothonotary Warbler |  White-breasted Nuthatch |  Violet-green Swallow |  Mountain Bluebird |
|  Red-breasted Nuthatch |  Tufted Titmouse |  House Wren |  Chickadees |

DON'T WANT TO GIVE A HOME TO HOUSE SPARROWS?

1 1/4" is the smallest hole size they can fit into, so select a smaller hole size.



IT HELPS FLEDGLINGS LEAVE THE NEST



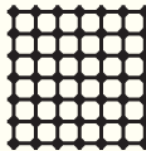
ROUGH INTERIOR WALLS

The interior wall below the entrance hole should be rough to help nestlings climb out of the box. For small boxes (wrens and chickadees), plain wood is usually rough enough, but you can roughen smooth boards with coarse sandpaper.



INTERIOR GROOVES

A series of shallow horizontal cuts, like a small ladder, works well in medium-sized boxes meant for swallows and bluebirds. Swallows, in particular, need a little help climbing out of boxes.



FOR DUCK BOXES

For duck boxes, staple a strip of 1/4" mesh-hardware cloth from floor to hole to help ducklings escape deep boxes.

DON'T FORGET TO MONITOR YOUR NEST BOX AND ENTER THE DATA INTO NESTWATCH!