

WILDLIFE IN CONNECTICUT

WILDLIFE HABITAT SERIES

Nest Structures for Wildlife

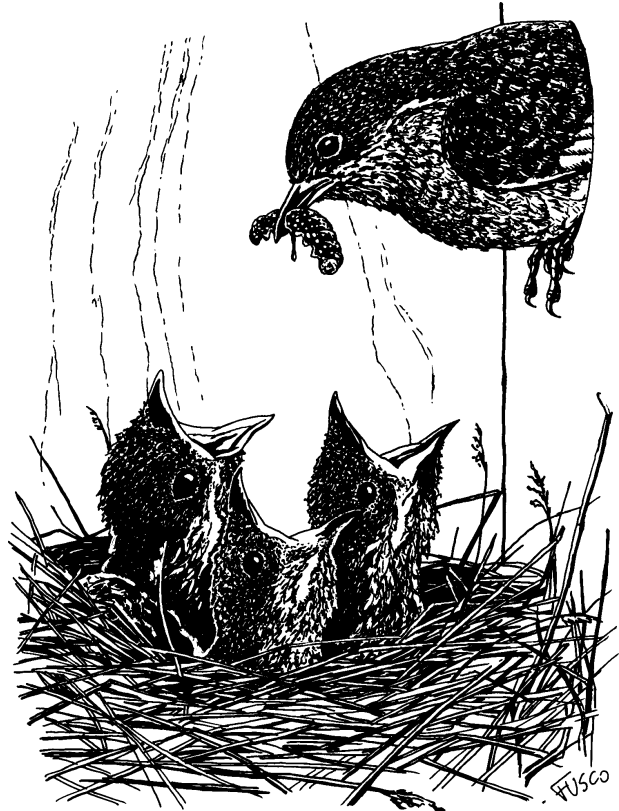
Many species of wildlife are attracted to backyards and woodlots when artificial nest structures are available. Wildlife use a variety of manmade structures for nesting, sometimes to the disappointment of people. Squirrels and bats may take refuge in an attic, raccoons in the garage or swallows under the porch roof. Birdhouses have been readily accepted by many natural cavity nesters, and the placement of houses in your backyard can be an effective way of providing for a number of resident birds.

The supply of nest sites available to cavity nesting wildlife has declined in certain areas due to the clearing of land for development, the removal of snags, standing dead trees, during agricultural and forestry operations, the use of treated fence posts that do not develop cavities and competition with introduced species, such as the European starling and the house sparrow.

Nest boxes have been used successfully as a wildlife management tool where surveys have shown that virtually no natural nest sites occur. In Connecticut, eastern bluebird, wood duck and osprey populations have increased, partially due to the erection of nest structures in suitable habitat. Nest boxes are used by many other wildlife species such as gray and flying squirrels, screech and barn owls, hooded mergansers, house wrens and kestrels.

Additional Comments

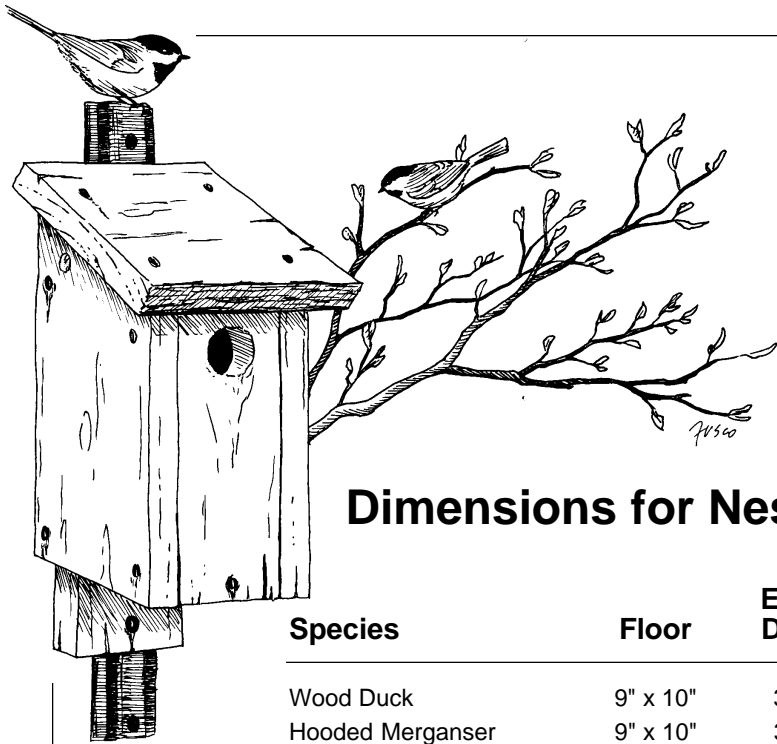
Nest boxes should be properly designed, erected and maintained for beneficial results. They should also be durable, predator-proof, weather-tight, lightweight and economical to build. Boxes for a target species should be constructed with the correct dimensions, placed at the appropriate height above the ground and installed in suitable habitat. When constructing nest boxes, do not use



pressure treated lumber and do not paint or stain the inside of the box. Whether there are one or 1,000 boxes, they should be inspected annually for needed repairs, replacement and cleaning.

Keeping an inventory of the location of each box and a history of wildlife use will not only provide important information, but will also prove to be a rewarding experience.

For specific nest box plans (including boxes for bluebirds and bats), contact the DEP Wildlife Division, at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, (860) 675-8130.



Dimensions for Nest Boxes and Platforms

Species	Floor	Entrance Diameter	Depth	Entrance Above Floor	Height Above Ground
Wood Duck	9" x 10"	3½" x 4"	25"	18"	3-20'(a)
Hooded Merganser	9" x 10"	3½" x 4"	25"	18"	3-20'(a)
Kestrel	8" x 9½"	3¼"	12-15"	9-12"	20-30'
Barn Owl	10" x 18"	6"	15-18"	4"	12-18'
Screech Owl	8" x 8"	3"	12-15"	9-12"	10-30'
Saw-whet Owl	6" x 6"	2¾"	10-12"	8-10"	12-20'
Red-bellied Woodpecker	6" x 6"	2"	12-15"	10"	10-20'
Downy Woodpecker	4" x 4"	1¼"	9-12"	6-8"	6-20'
Hairy Woodpecker	6" x 6"	1½"	12-15"	9-12"	12-20'
Flicker	7" x 7"	2½"	16-18"	14-16"	6-20'
Great Crested Flycatcher	6" x 6"	2"	8-10"	6-8"	8-20'
Tree Swallow	5" x 5"	1½"	6"	5"	6-16'
Black-capped Chickadee	4" x 4"	1⅛"	8-10"	6-8"	6-15'
Tufted Titmouse	4" x 4"	1¼"	8-10"	6-8"	6-15'
White-breasted Nuthatch	4" x 4"	1¼"	8-10"	6-8"	12-20'
Carolina Wren	4" x 4"	1⅛"	6-8"	6"	6-10'
House Wren	4" x 4"	1⅛"	6-8"	6"	6-10'
Eastern Bluebird	4" x 4"	1½"	8"	6"	5-6'
Prothonotary Warbler	5½" x 4"	1¼"	8-10"	6-8"	6-15'
Gray Squirrel	10" x 11"	4"(b)	24"	20"	12-30'
Flying Squirrel	6" x 6"	1½"	8-10"	6-8"	10-36'
Open Platforms					
Phoebe	7" x 8"		8-12"		8-12'
Barn Swallow	7" x 8"		6"		8-12'
Robin	7" x 8"		8"		6-15'

(a) Height above water surface

(b) Entrance on side of box



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