

Conserving Two Connecticut Treasures: The Wood Duck and Eastern Blue Bird

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ABSTRACT

Connecticut is home to the Wood Duck and the Eastern Bluebird. For my project I worked on conserving their natural habitat and raising the population of these birds in our state. This was done by constructing wooden nesting boxes and placing them in suitable habitat. Connecticut's Wood Duck populations were in a struggle for survival at the beginning of the 1900's being near extinction due to loss of habitat, predators, and market hunting. The eastern Blue bird has faced similar threats to its survival in our state which can also be attributed to habitat loss, but the main reason is the presence of invasive birds. The most prominent of these nonnative birds are the European starling and the house sparrow. These birds take over the Bluebird's habitat and make it harder for them to find food.

INTRODUCTION

I chose to do my project on Blue Bird and Wood Duck Conservation in our state because as an outdoorsman I enjoy seeing these wonderful birds in their natural habitat. There are many interesting facts about the Wood Duck such as how it can fly at speeds of up to 50mph. Wood Ducks prefer to fly low to the tree tops and make a whistling sound as they soar by.

I began my project by locating several marshes and grassy fields that are suitable habitat for the birds. Then over the long winter I spent afternoons constructing several Wood Duck and Blue Bird Boxes. At the end of February I placed these boxes in the selected locations. Wood Ducks Typical arrive in our state at the end of March and Blue Birds are present year round.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials needed to construct Wood Duck and Blue Bird Boxes
A Board About 6ft long 8in wide 1inch thick. These can vary on the size box you are trying to build.

Tools Including:

A Drill

Jigsaw

Chop or table saw

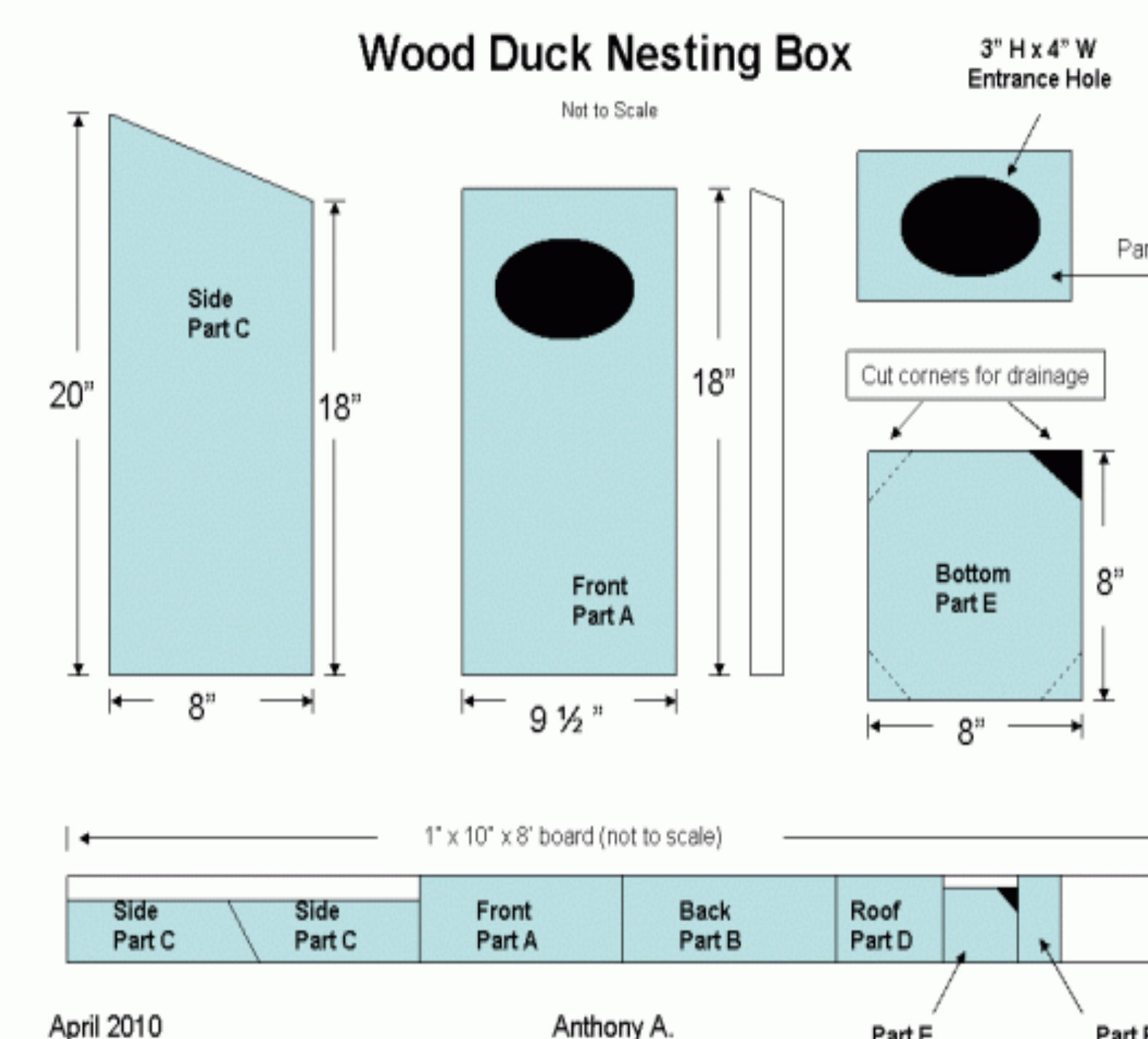
Hardware i.e.: Nails or Screws

All types of wood can be used to construct nest boxes. The construction of nesting boxes is a great exercise for people of all ages and abilities. Building a nest box will allow you a chance to see the positive impact we can have on nature and our environment. We pollute and destroy wildlife habitat everyday why not give something back?

A Blue Print is provided below:



A Complete Plan for Wood Duck or Blue Bird Box plans are available at the D.E.E.P Website or at their Franklin Office. If you are looking for a box or want to help construct one the Connecticut Waterfowlers Association (CWA) holds a build every winter. The boxes created at this meeting are then distributed across the state.



RESULTS

Due to the deadline of this project I was unable to observe any Wood Ducks inhabit my boxes. They are expected to return from their southern wintering grounds any day now to Connecticut. I have great hopes that when they return they will take to their new homes. When a female wood duck does return to find a nesting box to her liking she will lay an average of 12 eggs. You can tell when a nest box is being used by the presence of feathers and droppings. I will be checking my 6 boxes that I have placed in various locations across New London County regularly.



CONCLUSIONS

Since Wood Ducks are a migratory bird and have winter nesting grounds as far south as Mexico I have not yet had any returning ducks visit any of my boxes but I am very hopeful that by mid March the ducks will have returned and taken to the boxes. As an avid duck hunter and conservationist it gives me great joy to see an animal that I love grow in population.



REFERENCES

Pictures from
Ducks.org
DucksUnlimited.com
http://monarchbfly.com/2007/04/01/bluebird_cleaning/
I would also like to thank Kerry Manley for allowing me to place nesting boxes in her fields and pond.