



Wood Duck Nesting Boxes – FAQ

- ***Where can you get Wood Duck Nesting Boxes to install on my property?***
Wood Duck box kits and assembled boxes are available for sale on our website wisducks.org under the “shop” icon.
- ***When should we be installing our Wood Duck Boxes?***
Wood Duck begin migrating back to southern Wisconsin in late February/early March. You should have your boxes installed near March 1st.
- ***Where is the best place to install a nest box?***
The best place to locate a wood duck box is in wooded areas within several hundred yards from small streams, ponds, coves, or sloughs.
- ***Can Wood Duck Boxes be located in the water?***
Yes, but wood duck boxes should be at least two feet above the high water level and in compliance with all applicable local requirements for river, lake, and boat travel.
- ***Do Wood Duck chicks need cover to hide after hatching?***
Yes, suitable locations for wood ducks should have adequate grass cover around the wetland to hide from predators.
- ***How do I maintain my Wood Duck Box?***
The wood duck box should be cleaned of all nesting debris and wood chips each year prior to the return of nesting hens in late February to early March. Check to be sure the box has its fledging ladder in place and that the box is still water tight.
- ***What kind of nesting material do I need in the Wood Duck Box?***
Woodchips are recommended, either cedar or pine. Do not use sawdust, as it attracts moisture.
- ***How much nesting material do I need for one box?***
Approximately four inches of woodchips in the floor of the box.
- ***How close can I place my Wood Duck boxes to each other?***
You should leave adequate distance -100 yards or more out of sight of each other, so the hen does not lay eggs in the nests of other females.



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- ***Are Wood Ducks the only duck that nests in boxes?***
No, there are several other common species that will use nest boxes including hooded merganser, buffle head and golden eyes.
- ***Do I need predator guards on my nest boxes?***
We recommend predator guards be placed on each box to deter predators from entering nest boxes and to trim all branches near or around the entrance hole.
- ***How many eggs are typically laid in one brood prior to incubating?***
Most often eight to twelve eggs are laid in one brood.
- ***Can Wood Duck boxes be installed on a tree?***
Locating a nest box on a tree may increase the chance of predators gaining access to the brood.
- ***What direction should the entrance of the box face?***
It is best to locate the opening of the box to face east or south away from heavy weather direction.
- ***Can Wood Ducks have more than one brood in the same box the same year?***
It is not uncommon to see the box used again the same spring. Not usually by the same hen unless her first nest has failed.
- ***When can we expect to see Wood Duck chicks jumping from the box?***
Usually the chicks will hatch & jump twenty eight to twenty nine days after the last egg in the clutch has been laid.
- ***Does the Wood Duck hen stay in the box all day while laying her eggs?***
No, wood ducks usually lay one egg per day in the morning, cover the egg with down and nesting material and leave for the day.
- ***When will the Wood Duck begin incubation of her eggs?***
After the last egg is laid (usually eight to twelve) the hen will not leave the box except for a short time in the morning and late afternoon each day.
- ***How do I know when the Wood Duck is incubating?***
When the hen doesn't leave the box and her clutch is laid, count the eggs when she is gone or observe her attendance.



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- ***How long will my Wood Duck box last?***

You need to check your box each year. Do routine cleanings, complete any repairs, and your box should last five to eight years.

- ***Will I have a Wood Duck hen in my box the first year I install it?***

It's not uncommon for the hen to take a year or two to find a new wood duck box. If the box is not being used after two years, relocate it.

- ***Do male and female Wood Ducks mate for life?***

No, the male wood duck will stay with the hen until she begins incubating, then he leaves to begin his molt in about a month.

- ***When does the hen Wood Duck molt?***

The hen molts when the chicks are hatched and she cares for them in a remote wetland area.

- ***What is molting?***

When a duck loses their primary flight feathers which takes three to five weeks.

- ***Why do ducks molt?***

Ducks molt to replace damaged flight feathers and ensure that other feathers are replaced to keep them healthy.

- ***Can ducks fly when they are molting?***

Generally, no they can't fly when molting. Although all primary feathers are not lost at the same time.

- ***When can the Wood Duck chicks fly?***

Wood duck chicks normally fly fifty-seven to seventy days after hatching.

- ***Does the same Wood Duck hen return to the same nesting box each year?***

It's not uncommon to have the same hen return to the same box each year.

- ***How can you tell a Wood Duck egg from a Hooded Merganser, who both nest in boxes?***

Merganser eggs are white and spherical with a thicker shell compare to a wood duck egg that is light brown and oblong with a thin shell.