



**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
***Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species***  
**FOR USE TO GUIDE SITE SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OF PRIORITY SPECIES**

Cavity-Nesting Ducks

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) *Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species* do not have regulatory authority. Therefore, the following are recommendations only. This abbreviated version of a chapter in *Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species: Volume IV* (see [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/phs/vol4/phs\\_vol4\\_birds.pdf](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/phs/vol4/phs_vol4_birds.pdf)) has been modified for application on smaller parcels. Where applicable, these recommendations should be put into practice consistently across a landscape to be most effective. The following recommendations are not site-specific. Where available, a professional in a relevant field (e.g., wildlife biologist) should evaluate the site and surrounding landscape when applying these recommendations.

Attach parcel map with species location indicated if available.

**General Recommendations**

- Ideal cavity nesting duck habitat contains shallow, wooded wetlands having 50-75% canopy tree cover with abundant downed logs and large woody debris or low islands.
- Preserve snags and cavity trees near suitable wetlands (i.e., shallow wetlands within 0.5 mi of cavities) to achieve a minimum density of 5 potential nest cavities/ac. In general, the following nest tree and cavity characteristics will accommodate all species and should be considered when evaluating potential nest sites:
  - a minimum snag diameter of 12", although a diameter of 24" is preferred
  - an elliptical entrance hole at least 3.5" in diameter (buffleheads may prefer smaller cavity entrances that are 2.5" diameter)
  - an internal cavity 10" deep and 7.5" in diameter
  - cavities 6-49' above the ground or water are generally preferred, although cavities above 66' in trees will be used
  - the canopy around a cavity should be open and not overhang the entrance
- Large woody debris and large downed logs should be present, as well as low islands for breeding and brood use.
- Do not remove partially submerged timber or woody vegetation along the shores of nesting and brood areas. Partially submerged or downed timber may be used to create snags and brood habitat in certain situations.
- Maintain nut-bearing trees such as oak and hazelnut in areas used by wood ducks.
- Predator-proof nest boxes for cavity nesting ducks can be used in areas where natural cavity sites are limited. Boxes should be separated at least 150' from one another to minimize predation. Information on construction and placement of cavity duck nest boxes can be viewed on the Ducks Unlimited website at [http://www.ducks.org/conservation/duck\\_box\\_plans.pdf](http://www.ducks.org/conservation/duck_box_plans.pdf). See the table below for additional nest box specifications.

Table. Important specifications for construction of nest boxes for cavity nesting ducks. <sup>a</sup>

Species	Length	Depth	Height	Entrance diameter	Entrance height	Comments
Wood duck	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	See figure on following page
Bufflehead	15 cm	15 cm	40 cm	6.5x6.5 cm	-----	-----
Common goldeneye	>19 cm	>19 cm	33 cm <sup>b</sup>	13x10 cm	-----	-----
Hooded merganser	-----	>25 cm	-----	13x10 cm	-----	Orientation of cavity not important.

<sup>a</sup> Nest box structures should be placed at least 46 m (150 ft) apart from one another. <sup>b</sup> Measured from the bottom of entrance hole to floor of nest box.

I have read and understand the above recommendations (s) placed on Parcel # \_\_\_\_\_ located in the \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Section \_\_\_\_\_, Township \_\_\_\_\_, Range \_\_\_\_\_ (East/West meridian) with actual street address of \_\_\_\_\_.

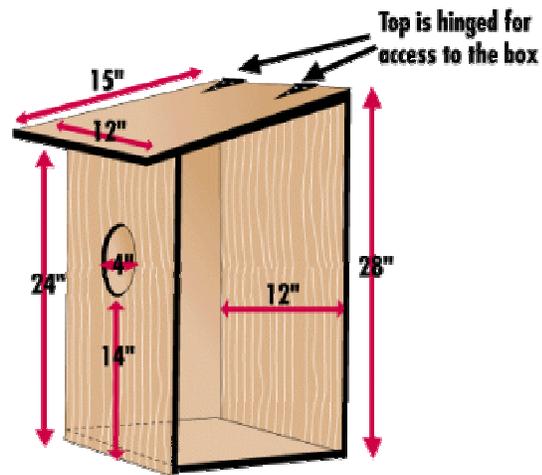


Figure. Wood duck nest box design courtesy of Ducks Unlimited. More information on wood duck boxes can be found at [http://www.ducks.org/conservation/woodduck\\_box.asp](http://www.ducks.org/conservation/woodduck_box.asp)