

# Is it too early for Nest Boxes?

It's hard to believe, but a lot of the birds that winter in Michigan have already begun to scout for good nesting areas. At Wild Birds Unlimited we can help you choose a good, functional bird house that is right for where you live. Not all birds are going to use birdhouses. Depending on where you live, some birds that use houses are House sparrows, wrens, chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers, flickers, bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Purple Martins, Screech Owls, American Kestrels and Wood Ducks.

## The Best Nest

Just like feeders, it's best to find a house that is designed well and easy to clean. Look for homes with an easy clean out, proper ventilation, drainage holes, untreated wood, or recycled plastic houses with the proper design. Not all birdhouses are equal. Studies show the inside dimension, the shape and the diameter of the opening determine what birds it will attract.



*Our Nature Web Log (Blog) is updated daily with fun information and answers to questions. It is written locally about nature in the Mid-Michigan area. If you haven't seen it lately, here is a reprise of a recent entry.*

Read more posts at <http://lansingwbu.blogspot.com/>

## Wood Duck Nest Box

*I need to replace a Wood Duck house. Can you give me a little more information?*

You sound like a responsible landlord. The most important thing to consider when deciding whether or not to put up a Wood Duck nest box, is maintenance. That includes cleaning out the box annually in the fall, adding new wood chips in the spring and replacing boxes as needed. Wood ducks often return to the same nests year after year.



The Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* is a survivor. Hunted nearly to extinction during early 20th century, careful management procedures and nest box placements have succeeded in raising the population to well over a million. [1]

Unlike other ducks, the Wood Duck nests in trees. They make their homes out of old Pileated Woodpecker nests and trees that have natural hollows. So it would seem natural, to mount nest boxes on trees, but in order to protect them from predators like raccoons it's best to mount them on baffled poles. The females or hens readily accept these set-ups, and studies have shown they actually prefer low-mounted boxes.

The best time to put Wood Duck boxes up is now until the beginning of March. The peak nesting period is mid-March to mid-May in Michigan. Boxes put up later will be ready for the next season.

To read more of this entry, and see a video of "jumping day" for the little ducklings, follow the link to the blog site : <http://lansingwbu.blogspot.com/>

Sale prices good February 2-8, 2010 on in-stock inventory only. Good at Wild Birds Unlimited of Okemos and East Lansing.

**Go online to read more about nature news and questions. The WBU Nature Blog at:** <http://lansingwbu.blogspot.com/>

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