

Northern Flicker

This brown woodpecker flashes bright colors under the wings and tail when it flies. Its ringing calls and short bursts of drumming can be heard in spring almost throughout North America. Two very different-looking forms: Yellow-shafted Flicker in the east and north and Red-shafted Flicker in the west--were once considered separate species. They interbreed wherever their ranges come in contact. There is a broad zone on the western Great Plains where all the flickers are intergraded between Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted.

Habitat: Open forests, woodlots, groves, towns, semi-open country. With its wide range, from Alaska to Nicaragua, the flicker can be found in almost any habitat with trees. They tend to avoid the dense unbroken forest, requiring some open ground for foraging, maybe in an open country with few trees.

Nesting: Males defend nesting territory with calling, drumming, and many aggressive displays, including swinging head back and forth, flicking wings open, and spreading tail to show off the bright underside. Courtship displays are mostly similar. Nest site is a cavity in a tree or post, rarely in a burrow in the ground. Tree cavities are usually in dead wood; pine, cottonwood, and willow are favored trees. Both sexes excavate cavities, typically 6 to 20 feet above the ground, sometimes much higher (100 feet or more).

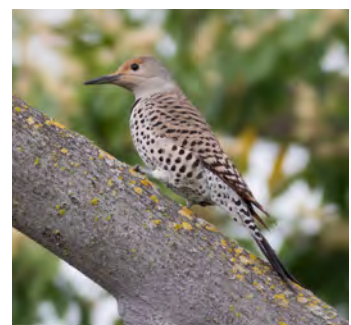
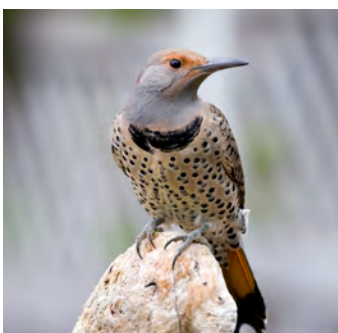
Nest Box Placement: Mount the nesting box between 6 and 12 feet from the ground. The nesting box entrance hole should face south or east. Space boxes 330 feet apart.

Helpful Tips

- Use 1-1/2"-thick boards for nest boxes.
- Cut 1/4"-deep parallel kerfs on the inside walls to assist the nestlings in climbing out. The cuts should form a shallow "ladder" with "rungs" spaced every from floor to hole.
- Completely pack the box to the top with white pine wood chips. Replace with fresh wood chips every year by April 1.
- Mount the box so that it is angled slightly forward to help the chicks climb out.
- Place the box in a shady area, near sparsely scattered trees, with an open flyway.
- To prevent squirrels from using the box, place the box on a pole equipped with a baffle at least 10 feet from the nearest tree (the distance most squirrels will jump).
- European Starlings can usurp cavities occupied by flickers even when additional nest boxes are offered nearby. Therefore, Eastern Starling management may be necessary for flickers to be successful.
- Because flickers forage primarily on the ground, avoid treating lawns with any chemicals.

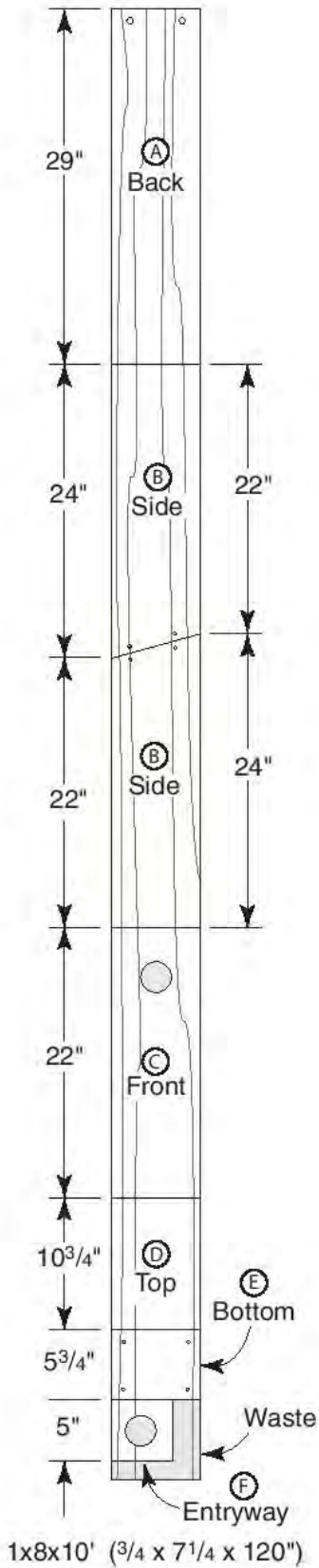
For more about North American birds and backyard birding activities:

<https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities>

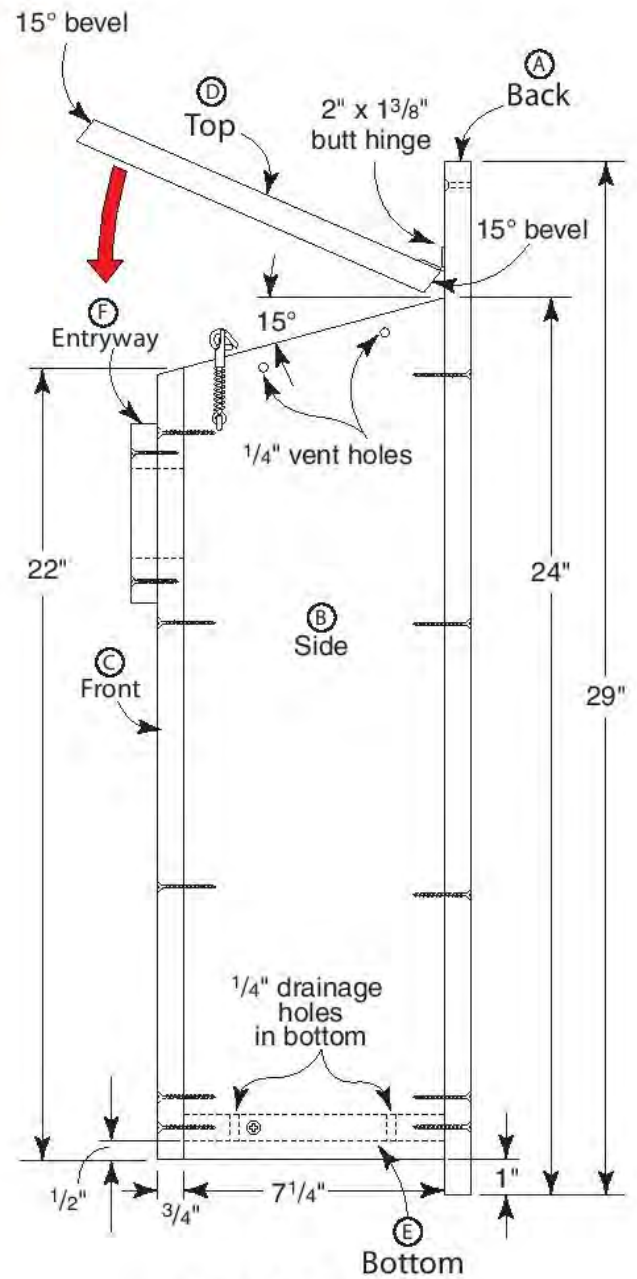


NORTHERN FLICKER NESTING BOX PLAN

Project Plan: Marlen Kemmet
 Illustrations: Roxanne LeMoine

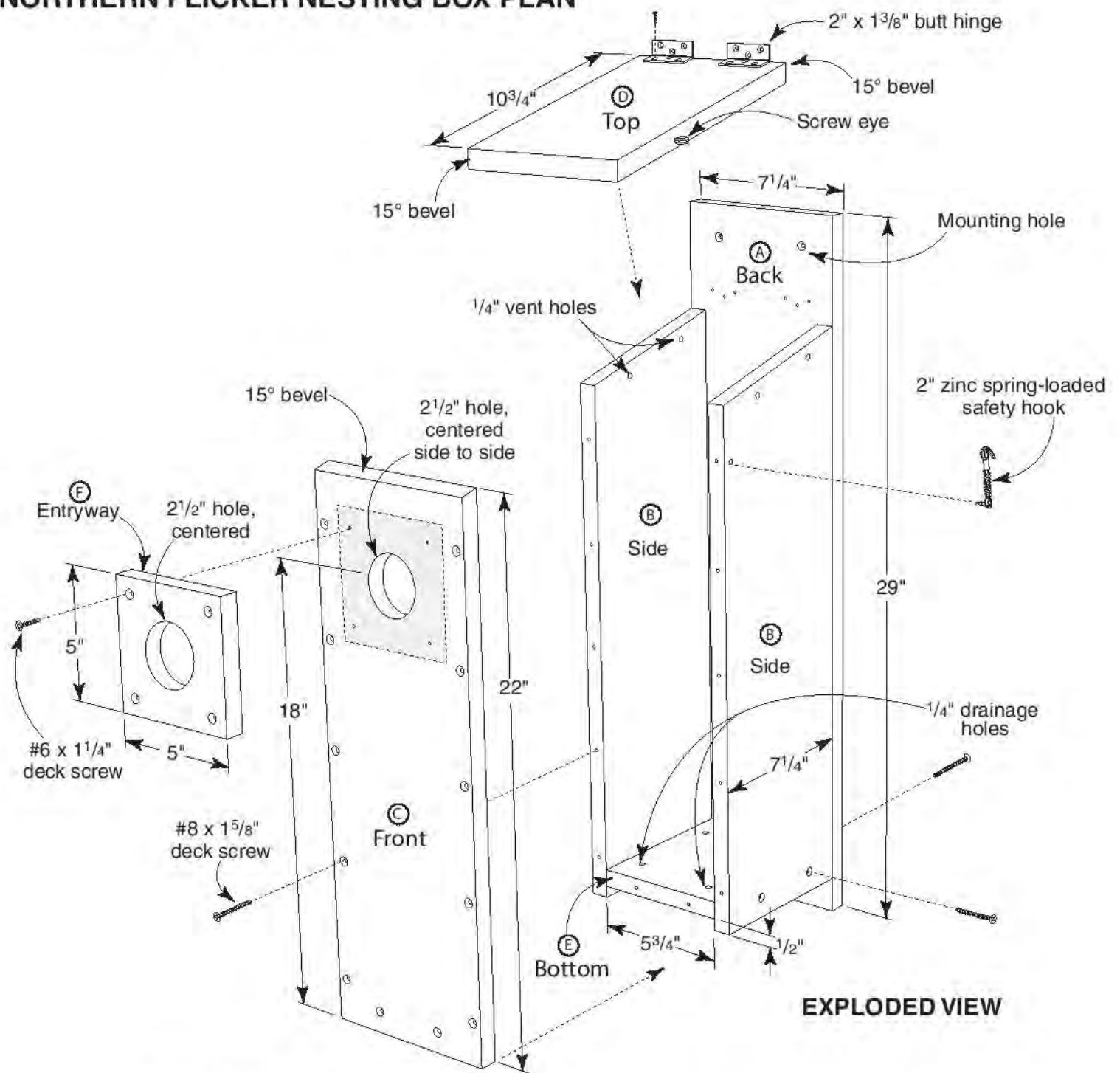


CUTTING DIAGRAM



SIDE VIEW

NORTHERN FLICKER NESTING BOX PLAN



MATERIALS LIST FOR NORTHERN FLICKER NESTING BOX						
	Parts	Thickness	Width	Length	Material	Pieces
A	back	3/4"	7 1/4"	29"	C	1
B	sides	3/4"	7 1/4"	24"	C	2
C	front	3/4"	7 1/4"	22"	C	1
D	top	3/4"	7 1/4"	10 3/4"	C	1
E	bottom	3/4"	7 1/4"	5 3/4"	C	1
F	entryway	3/4"	5"	5"	C	1

Choice of cedar, redwood, cypress, or painted white pine