

Wood Duck

Beautiful and unique, this duck of woodland ponds and river swamps has no close relatives, except for the Mandarin Duck of eastern Asia. Abundant in eastern North America in Audubon's time, the Wood Duck population declined seriously during the late-19th century because of hunting and loss of nesting sites. Its recovery to healthy numbers was an early triumph of wildlife management.

Habitat: Wooded swamps, rivers, ponds. Favors shallow inland lakes, ponds, slow-moving rivers, wetlands, mainly those surrounded by deciduous or mixed woodland. Often in places where large trees overhang the water, creating shady conditions. Also, in open marshes within a generally forested country.

Nesting: Male courtship displays of males involve postures that show off colorful plumage. Nest sites are in large tree cavities near water, up to 65 feet above the ground. Cavity lined with down. Rarely nests in hollow fallen logs, barn lofts, crevices in rocks. Uses artificial nest boxes, even when placed low and in an open marsh.

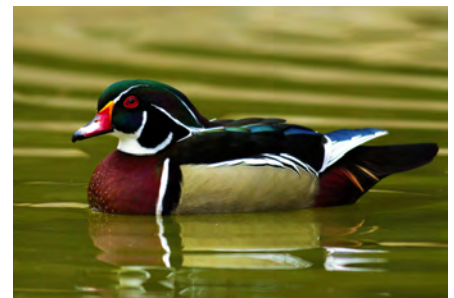
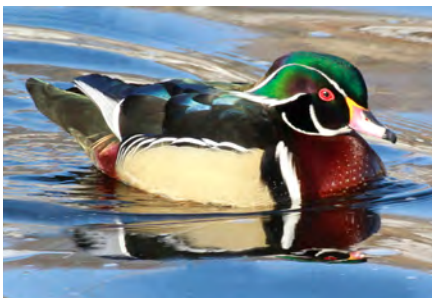
Nest Box Placement: Mount the nesting box between 6 and 30 feet above the ground. The nesting box entrance hole should face the water. Space boxes 600 feet apart.

Helpful Tips

- Mount the box so that it leans forward slightly to shed rain.
- Boxes can be installed on posts or poles in the water, at least 3 feet above the high-water mark, facing south or west.
 - If installing on land, choose a site within 100 feet from the water with no branches around the entrance hole. Predator guards should be installed.
 - Place 4 inches of wood shavings on the box floor.
- Make sure the box has a fledgling ladder under the entrance hole. This can be a strip of ¼-inch mesh hardware cloth stapled to the inside, or you can roughen a one-foot-deep section under the entrance hole with a chisel so the young ducklings can get a toehold while climbing up to the entrance.
 - Wood duck pairs are the only North American duck that regularly produces two broods in one breeding season. Clean out old nesting material and replace it with fresh wood-shavings after a brood is complete in case of a second nest attempt.
 - Cavity-nesting ducks frequently lay eggs in the nests of other ducks. Avoid clustering nest boxes together to reduce the likelihood of brood parasitism, which can lead to abandonment. Monitor for brood parasitism (indicated by unusually large clutches of 14 or more eggs or different colored eggs), and move boxes farther apart if necessary.
 - Cedar works well for constructing Wood Duck nest boxes. Avoid using plastic boxes as they can overheat.
- Monitor nest boxes in the early evening, when hens tend to leave the nest to forage.

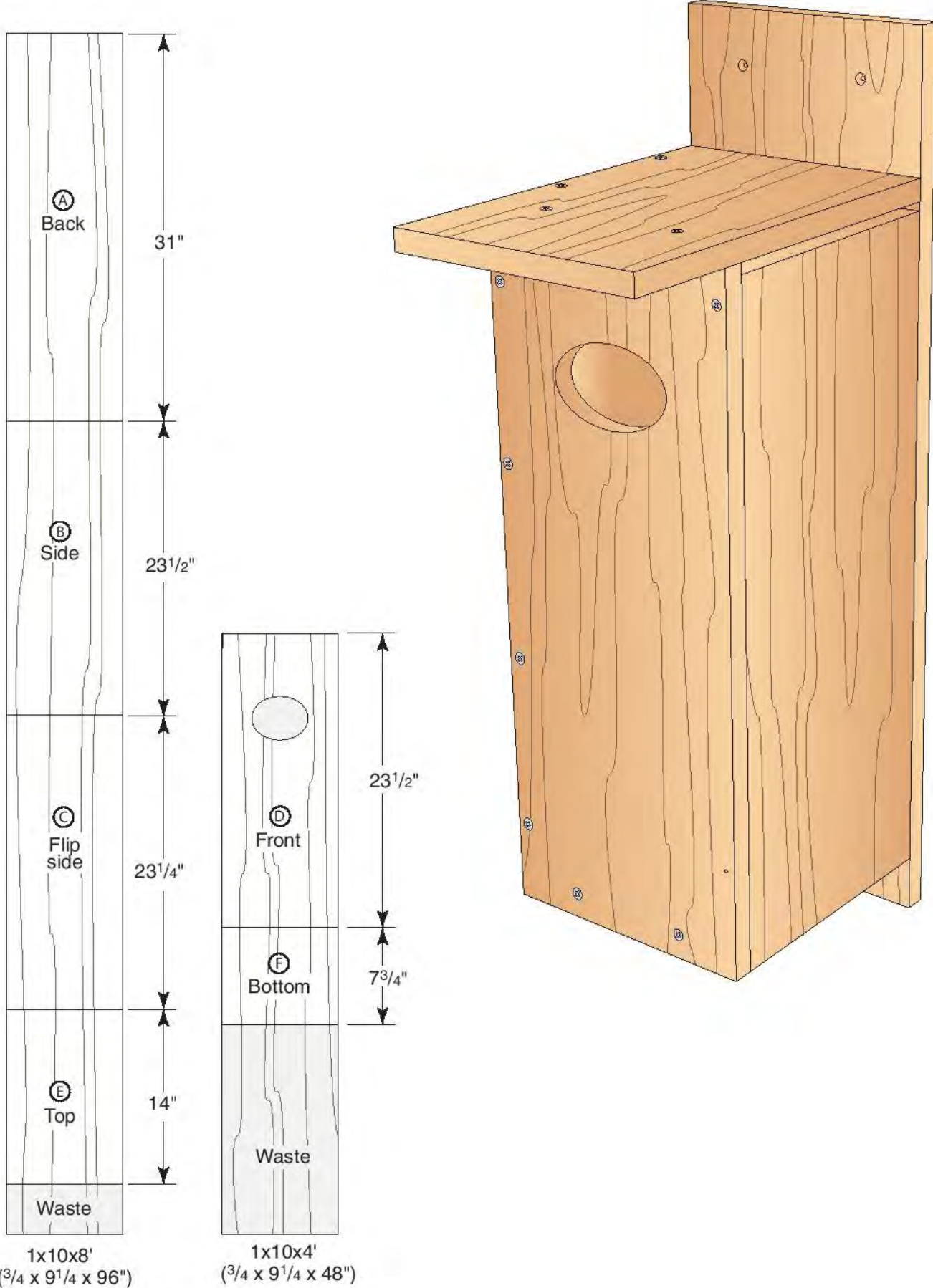
For more about North American birds and backyard birding activities:

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



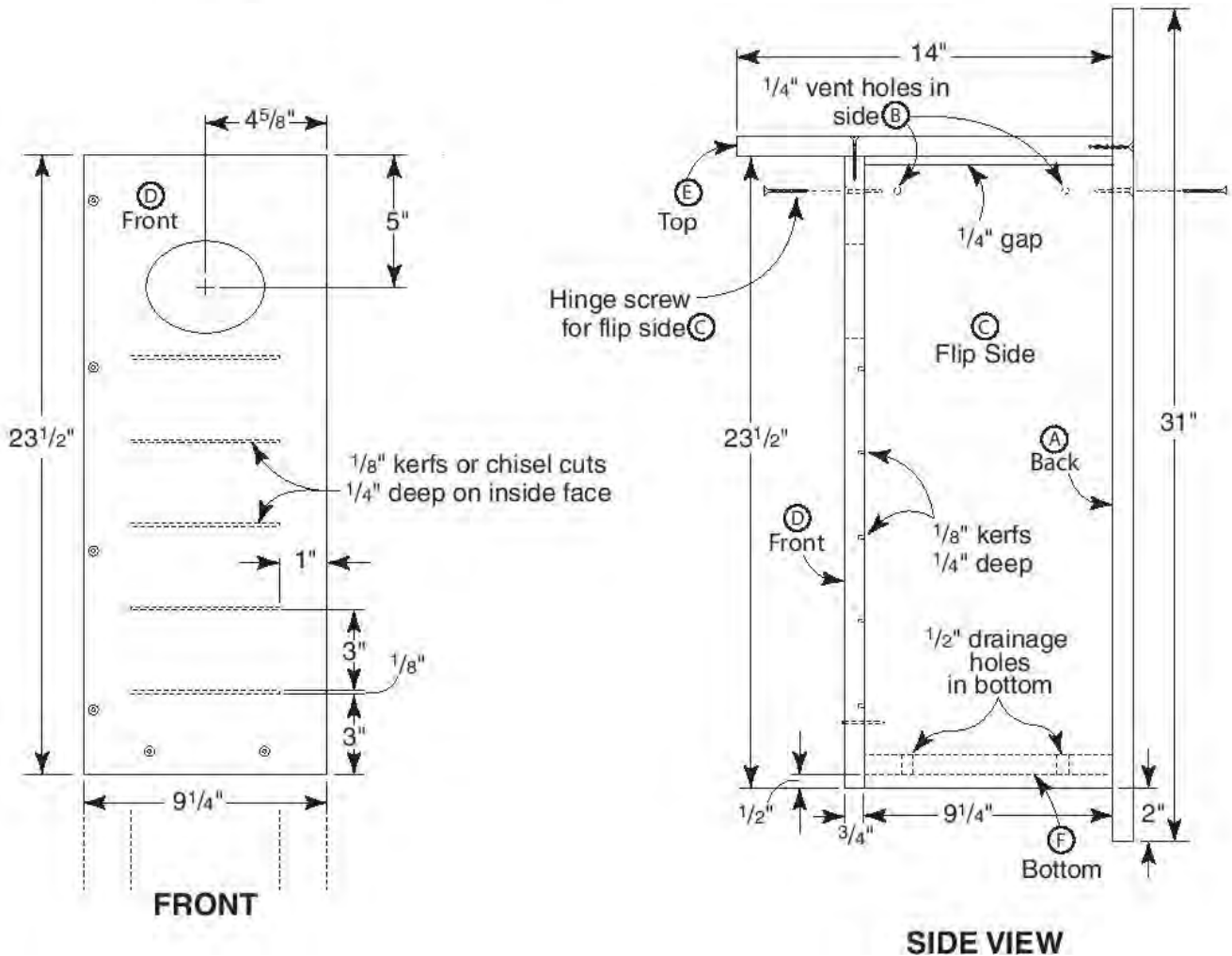
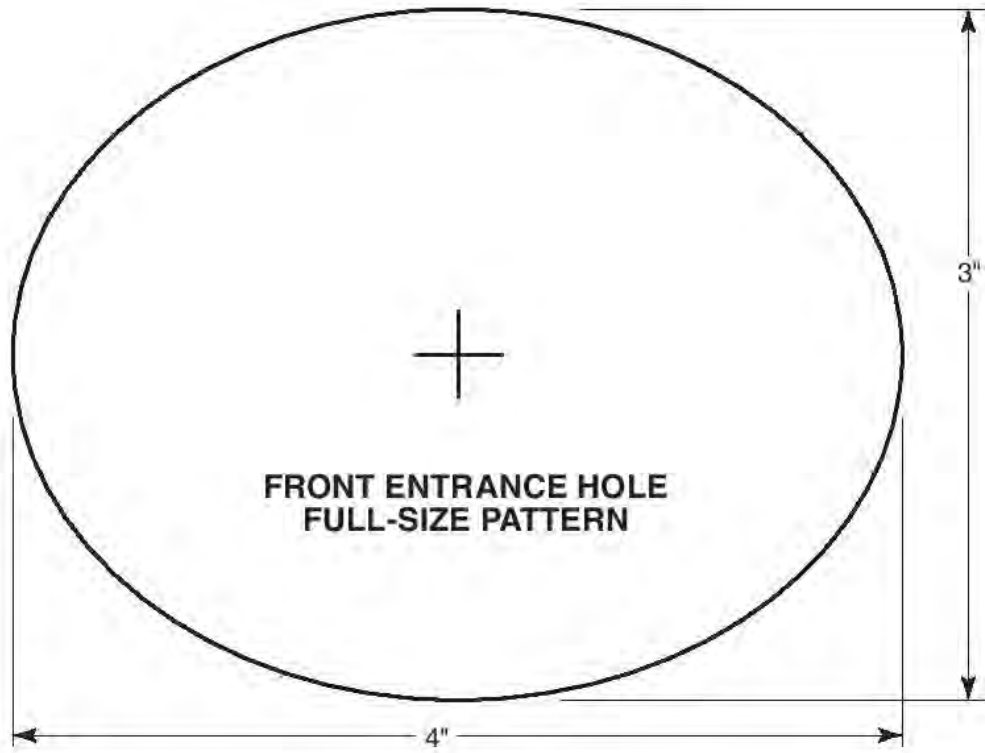
WOOD DUCK NESTING BOX PLAN

Project Plan: Marlen Kemmet
 Illustrations: Roxanne LeMoine

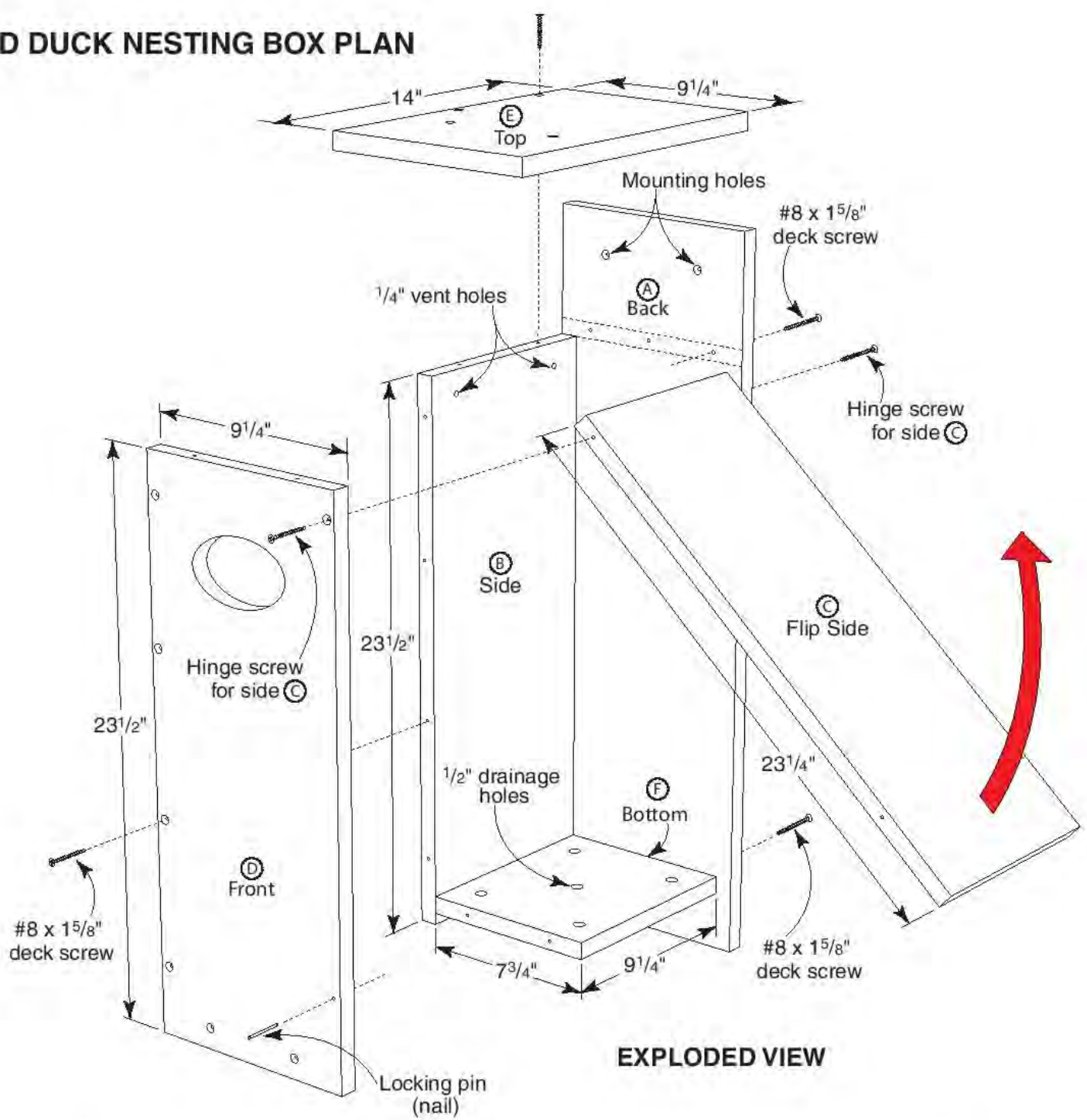


CUTTING DIAGRAM

WOOD DUCK NESTING BOX PLAN



WOOD DUCK NESTING BOX PLAN



EXPLODED VIEW

MATERIALS LIST FOR WOOD DUCK NESTING BOX						
Parts	Thickness	Width	Length	Material	Pieces	
A	back	3/4"	9 1/4"	31"	C	1
B	side	3/4"	9 1/4"	23 1/2"	C	1
C	flip side	3/4"	9 1/4"	23 1/4"	C	1
D	front	3/4"	9 1/4"	23 1/2"	C	1
E	top	3/4"	9 1/4"	14"	C	1
F	bottom	3/4"	9 1/4"	7 3/4"	C	1

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