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## Bird Nesting Box Construction and Erection

In the past there has clearly been a perception that Nest Boxes of any kind are a simple device to assist some native birds to breed and that by placing a post in the ground or attaching to a tree the box made of plastic, steel wood ECT. The birds would do the rest.

Unfortunately this perception has no doubt wasted thousands of valuable hours along with materials. Our research has shown in many cases Nest Boxes could and would not reach their full potential without servicing along with persistent monitoring.

Let's take a closer look at the importance of supplying the correct home for the species you are encouraging to use the Nest Boxes. Firstly it is of the utmost importance the box be as maintenance free as possible for at least ten years, consideration to bird comfort particularly the requirement of floor space to allow enough room and more for the incubating bird whether it be Black Duck or Rosella to cover her eggs.

Consideration should also be given to the roof area along with the entry hole size. The roof slightly slopes to allow water to drain. The importance of a flat roof should not be under-estimated as some bird species spend many hours loafing on it. Secondly pairs also use this method for claiming the box to breed in, as you often see pairs sitting together on it. The size of the entry hole varies with different species 125mm for all duck species and down to 50mm for most parrot species.

The importance of the direction that the nest box faces, being a critical factor, experiments have shown North/North East/East in that order being the most favoured direction. Contrary to some beliefs that boxes must be faced away from the prevailing winds solely to prevent rain and wind entering the box. Having observed birds entering boxes on occasions I believe it has a great deal more to do with flight control, as the bird seems far more in control flying into the wind.

Another equally important aspect is to lean the box slightly forward. This creates a shadow in the box avoiding egg removal by predators, along with having a calming effect on the female.

Two different types of perches are attached to the front of most Nesting Boxes, firstly There is the dowel type for most parrots tree creepers ect and secondly there is the platform type for web footed species such as ducks. Sometimes the need for an



entrance perch can be eliminated by erecting the Nest Box in the fork of a tree with one horizontal branch to the side.

Nest Boxes can be constructed from many materials but experimentation has shown that 16mm marine five ply to be the most superior material. This can be purchased from most timber yards or hardware stores. It is advised to use treated pine products for all perches. Use of galvanized twister nails and galvanized bolts is advised to eliminate corrosion. When constructing the boxes it is also recommended to use a good quality wood adhesive such as liquid nails to attach the box panels together. Several 10mm drain holes should be drilled in the bottom of the box to allow for the drainage of water in the event of lording within the box.

Nest Box roofs should be constructed from suitable coloured colour bond metal sheeting this will help eliminate the glare from unpainted metal sheeting which could spook birds away from the Nesting Box. Attach the roof with galvanized roof screws.

There are several ways to attach Nesting Boxes to trees and posts the most common being for trees galvanized roof strapping and for posts galvanized bolts.

Nesting Boxes can be lined with many different materials; experimentation has shown that fine red gum wood chips, pea straw, and rice straw work the best. Place about 75mm in the bottom of the box making a small hollow in the centre for ducks and 50mm of wood chips or sawdust for parrots act.

Nesting boxes should be painted with two coats of low sheen acrylic with the preferred colour being Bronze Olive

**Jon Cers Conservation Officer Shepparton Field and Game 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009**



## **Nesting Box Construction Material List**

### **For the construction of Parrot and Bird nesting boxes.**

1. 1 320gram tube of liquid nails. ( Glue edges of box)
2. 1 x Pkt 50mm galvanized twister nails. ( Fix box panels together )
3. 1 x 200mm x 12mm dowel. ( Perch)
4. 1 x Pkt 50mm zinc wood screws. ( Attach inspection panel )
5. 1 x 1800mm x 900mm x 16 mm marine grade ply ( Box panels).
6. 1 x 4 litre exterior low sheen acrylic ( Bronze Olive to paint Box)
7. 1 x roll galvanized roof strap. ( To attach box to trees)
8. 2 x 12mm x 120mm galvanized bolts. (To attach box to post)
9. Fine saw dust to provide nesting material for bottom of box.
10. 1 x 64mm hole saw ( To drill entrance hole )



## **Nesting Box Construction Material List**

### **For the construction of Duck nesting boxes.**

1. 1 x 320gram tube of liquid nails. ( Glue edges of box)
2. 1 x Pkt 65mm galvanized twister nails. (Fix box panels together)
3. 1 x Pkt 50mm hex head hi grip screws. (2 x screws to attach perch )
4. 1 x Pkt size 12 – 14 x 20g hex head tek screws. ( 4 x screws to attach roof )
5. 1 x 120mm x 35mm x 150 mm treated pine. ( Perch )
6. 1 x 450mm x 350mm wide with 50mm turned down sides colour bond metal panel ( Roof section)
7. 1 x 1800 x 900 x 16mm marine grade ply. ( Box panels)
8. 1 x 4 litre can exterior low sheen acrylic (Bronze olive)
9. 1 x roll galvanized roof strap. ( To attach box to trees )
10. 2 x 12mm x 120mm galvanized bolts. ( To attach box to posts )
11. Pea straw to provide nesting materials for bottom of box.

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