

# Nest Box Plans:

American Kestrel

Eastern Screech Owl

Northern Saw Whet Owl

Plans designed by the Minnesota DNR

*Woodworking for Wildlife*

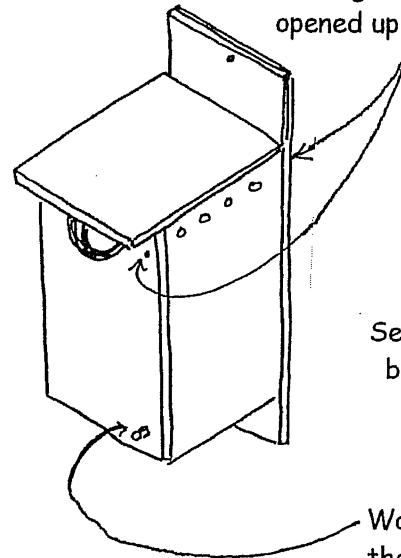
Adapted & modified by Wings of Wonder

Lumber needed: One 1" x 10" x 8' cedar board



By Matt Faulkner

Nails at these 2 points will act as a hinge allowing the side to be opened up for easier cleaning.



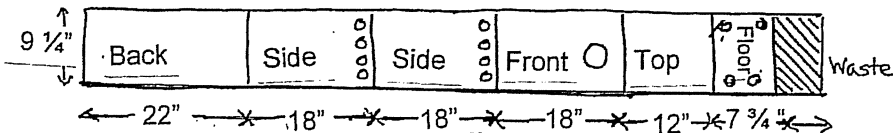
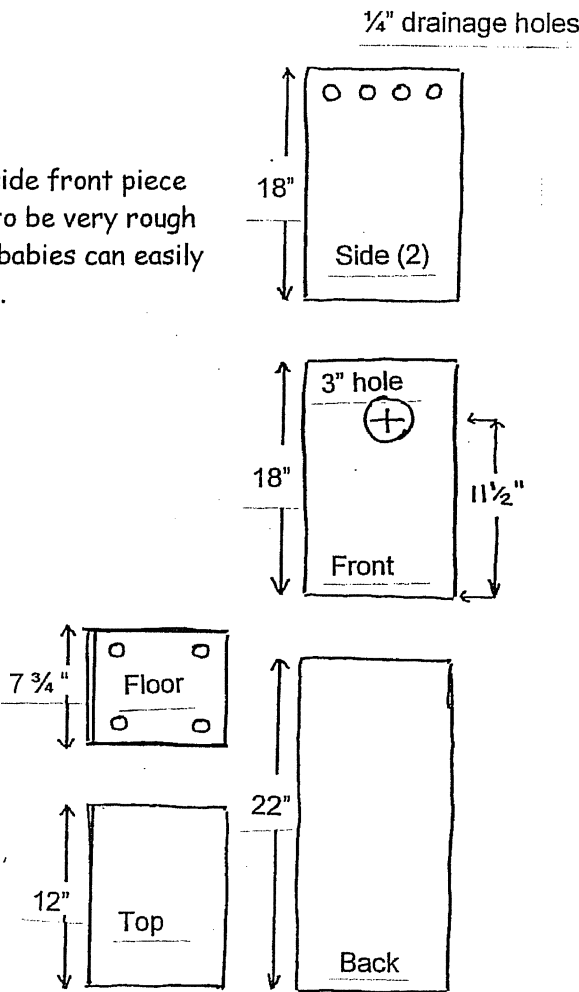
Secure top & bottom of box to a tree or post

Wooden peg to hold the hinged side closed

Place 2-3" of woodchips or dried pine needles in the bottom of the box

**Note:**

The inside front piece needs to be very rough so the babies can easily get out.



## Nest Box Project

### American Kestrel

The American Kestrel is the smallest falcon in North America. This robin-sized raptor prefers a variety of habitats including parks, suburbs, open fields, forest edges, pastures and deserts. Kestrels are found in both urban and rural areas hunting along open roadsides, using trees, telephone wires and power lines as perches. In summer, Kestrels feast on insects and rodents and can consume close to 900 rodents each year. Wintering Kestrels feed primarily on rodents and birds.

As a cavity nester, American Kestrels use holes in trees or artificial nest boxes to raise their young. Both males and females incubate the eggs which hatch in about 30 days. An average clutch consists of 3–5 babies which take flight within a month of hatching.

To attract a Kestrel to your area, place your nest box in a very open area, either tacked to a tree or attached to a free-standing post. I recommend mounting the box a minimum of 8 feet from the ground so no one can stick a hand into the hole of the box. Ideally, the box should be placed 10–30 feet high. The nest box hole should face south or west, and about 3–4 inches of wood chips or pine needles need to be placed in the bottom of the box.

Grassy habitat should be in the vicinity to provide hunting habitat for the kestrels.

### Eastern Screech Owl

Eastern Screech Owls are small gray or reddish owls with prominent feather tufts on the tops of their heads. These little 8 inch owls are the smallest tufted owls in Michigan and are sometimes mistaken for baby Great Horned Owls. Screech Owls are most often found in woodlands bordered by open fields and it is not uncommon to find these little owls in urban areas as they seem to have become well adapted to living near humans. They feed on a wide variety of prey including small rodents, birds, insects and reptiles. One Screech Owl can consume 700–800 small rodents each year.

To attract a Screech Owl, place the nest box in a grove of trees or at the edge of a wooded area, preferably adjacent to a field or wetland. The box should be mounted at least 10 feet high and 2–4 inches of wood chips or pine needles need to be placed in the bottom of the box. Female Screech Owls lay their eggs right on top of this bedding.

### Northern Saw Whet Owl

As the smallest owl in Michigan, the Northern Saw Whet stands only 7 inches high when full grown. These little owls are seldom seen because of their small size, nocturnal habits and cryptic coloring. Saw Whet Owls prefer habitat that includes dense forests, mixed

stands of pines and hardwoods, woodlots and swamps. They feast on primarily insects and rodents, and can easily consume 700 mice each year.

Saw Whet nests are usually quite high, so if you wish to attract one of these precious owls to your area you must mount your nest box 14 or more feet above the ground. These nest boxes should be placed in live mature trees. Most success reported has been with boxes placed in red pine and jack pine trees. Areas near water seem to also be preferred. Additionally, 3-4 inches of wood chips or pine needles need to be added to the bottom of the box.

As an added note, starlings may be a persistent problem so your nest boxes need to be checked regularly. If a starling nest is suspected in your box, remove the eggs and nest immediately. Check your nest box by simple observing for any activity around the box.

### *Wings of Wonder*

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