

fauNature

Small Duck Box



Encouraging wildlife at home!

Thank you for purchasing a fauNature nesting box. It is hoped this “home” will give you many hours of pleasure, as it provides sanctuary for our feathered friends.

The clearing of native trees across Australia has resulted in the loss of millions of natural hollows. The devastation is particularly apparent in urban environments, which account for 85% of the nation’s human population.



Which birds will use a nesting box?

Over 100 bird species rely on hollows for nesting or shelter throughout the country. These include many parrots, kingfishers, raptors, and ducks as well as other lesser-known species. This nesting box has been specifically designed for smaller ducks (e.g Teal, Pacific Black and Wood Ducks). However, a range of different animals may use the box depending on local hollow availability (e.g. possums, other birds and insects).

Siting and installation instructions

You’ve bought this nesting box to enjoy it, so locate the box where you can see it regularly and access it relatively easily. Having said that, it is preferable if certain parameters are met:

A mature gum tree is ideal; if not, an exotic tree will do. Few birds nest close to the ground – most prefer hollows higher up in a tree. Some species will utilise the box as low as 1.5m off the ground, however, 4m-8m would be preferable for smaller duck species and near water.

The nesting box needs to be protected from the hot north/westerly sun and the entrance avoiding the wettest winds; northeast through to a southerly direction would work (for southern Australia). Ideally, the box will also be placed on a vertical or slightly forward-angled trunk, to reduce rainwater entry which could affect the inhabitants. Thus, the specifics of erecting the nesting box will vary from one location to another.

Hanging a nesting box by wire was historically recommended to prevent damage to the tree. However, the damage done by securing bolts is likely to be minimal; while wire-mounted boxes compromise the tree, if not regularly managed.



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A couple of tek screws (100mm) have been included to enable you to affix the box to a tree. Pre-drill the tree and screw in the top tek screw (3/4s of its length), then hang the box through the “keyhole” in the back. Next drill the lower hole then screw in the second tek screw. Finally, using the open door for access, tighten the top screw, ensuring the box is firmly affixed to the tree.

The use of “PV Spacers”, small spacing rings which fit over the tek screw between the tree and the box, is highly recommended. They serve two purposes 1) simplify the installation process on difficult trees; 2) perhaps more importantly allow the tree room to grow while minimising the impact on either the tree or the box. These have been included with your box.

Once the nesting box is in place: empty the bag of wood chips into the bottom of the box, to serve as nesting material.

Potential predators

A range of predators may take advantage of eggs or fledglings present in nests (e.g. cats, foxes or exotic rodents). “Tree collars” are guards which can be placed around the trunk of a tree to prevent these predators from gaining access to the box. While guards are not essential, such devices may be particularly useful in reducing the impact of the threats identified above.

Keeping the nesting box clean

Putting up the nesting box is just the first step, for its continued success maintenance is crucial. The box (assembled) has already been treated. However, to extend its useful life we would recommend re-treatment/coating the exterior of the box with oil or paint. If oil is used (e.g. environmentally friendly Lanotec timber seal), it is recommended to retreat the box every 1-2 years, or exterior grade acrylic paint is likely to last the life of the box, with a few minor touch-ups. The PV Spacers will need to be replaced every 12-24 months and the bedding material ideally changed every year. The removal of pest species is likely to be of prime importance.

Sparrows, Starlings and Common Mynas (eastern states) are aggressive hollow nesters that may take advantage of boxes erected for native animals. However, they are unlikely to displace ducks.

European Honey Bees may also inhabit the nesting box. This pest species is likely to displace or exclude ducks and would need to be removed. Obtaining advice from a beekeeper or pest controller is recommended.

Enjoy your new neighbours

Some nesting boxes are occupied quickly, others may take a little longer. Often you will attract the species you are targeting, though not always. Either way, we hope you enjoy providing for your wild neighbours.



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