



WOOD DUCK NEST BOX CARD INSTRUCTIONS

Proper data collection and recording is an important aspect of the California Wood Duck Program. Information concerning box use and reproductive success is important for wood duck management and provides valuable feed back about box placement. These data also provide insight into the biology of western wood ducks.

Nest box cards provide a simple and organized means to record data. Cards also insure consistent data between project locations and among program participants, making data summaries and comparisons feasible. These cards contain two sections: project information and maintenance records. It is extremely important that all project information spaces are filled in for every card. Each card should contain information for one box and cover one nesting season.

The following data recording guidelines are provided to insure consistency by clarifying potentially confusing areas. Headings correspond to those used on cards.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Number: This is the five digit number assigned to your project. All information regarding your project will be cross referenced using this number.

If you are unsure of your number, or have not been assigned a number, call the California Waterfowl office (916) 648-1406.

Landowner / Property: Provide the landowner or property name. If your project is on public land, provide us with the appropriate and descriptive name possible (eg. Pyramid Cove/Lake Sponsa). Also, please indicate if the land is government affiliated (ie., BLM, USFWS, etc.)

Project Name: Invent a project name or simply use the landowner's (or your) last name (eg. Smith Wood Duck Project). Most importantly, be consistent from one year to the next. Provide CWA with a general map of the area, and a more detailed map that identifies the project location (eg. Photocopy of the area on 7.5 quad topo map).

Contact Name: Provide the name of the individual who coordinates data collection for the project. **Contact Phone:** Home and work phone number of the coordinator. If you have an e-mail address, provide this in addition to phone numbers.

Mount Type: This is self explanatory. Whether it is “on land” or “over water” depends on where the base of the tree or pole is, not whether the box hangs over land or water.

Type of Water Nearby: Ditches or canals refer to artificial waterways developed for agriculture or other purposes. Rivers and streams (also include sloughs) are free flowing, but may have been channelized and/or leveed.

Box Number: Each box should have a unique number and its own nest card. If a box relocated for some reason, clearly indicate it in the ‘maintenance records’ section of the old box card and begin a new card. It is important to use a new card because habitat information will likely change when the box is moved.

Date Box Established: The date the box was installed, or the date the box was moved to a new location (start a new card when box is moved).

Box Height: Distance (in feet) from box to ground/water directly below box.

Distance to Water: Distance (in feet) from point directly under box to nearest water. If the box is located over water this measurement is zero (“0”).

MAINTENANCE RECORDS

Observer: This should be the person looking in the box, not the person taking notes. Use full name for first entry and initials thereafter.

Date: Use month/ day / year.

Time: Be sure to indicate AM or PM.

Species: Use this column to record any wildlife (bees and mammals too) found in boxes during box checks. If eggs 2 bird species are present (eg. woodies and starlings), divide the row for that date in half and record data for each species (see sample card). Be sure to record the outcome of non-wood duck nests in the comments section (eg. Hatched, starling eggs removed, etc.)

Hen Status: Enter the status code from the key on the bottom of the card. Be sure to check for bands on dead hens. Record the band number for live and dead hens in the comments section.

Number of Eggs: Record number of whole, hatched, and predated eggs in the box and then total the amount. Missing eggs (before the hatched date) are considered predated.

The presence of flattened shell membranes is the best evidence that eggs hatched. The number of eggs hatched is equal to the number of eggs present the previous box check (assuming a full clutch was present) minus the number of whole eggs (dead/infertile) found. If the last egg count occurred before laying was complete, count the number of membranes to determine the number hatched.

Box Status: Enter status code from the key at the bottom of the card. There is often confusion about differentiating between an abandoned nest and a nest with a hen on recess. Wood duck hens typically take 2 nest recesses; one in the early morning (before 8:00 am) and another in the afternoon (after 3:00pm). Afternoon recess times are highly variable. Egg temperature and time of day are the best ways to differentiate. If eggs are warm and down feathers cover them, she is likely on a recess. If eggs are cold, the nest is likely abandoned.

Number of Dead Ducklings: Record the number of dead ducklings found.

Comments: Use this space to record any comments that may be useful to interpret data. This space should also be used to record band numbers if you are banding or recapture previously banded hens. Be sure to indicate it is a recaptured bird by writing “recap” next to the band number. Nest box maintenance (eg. Lid needed, shavings replaced) should also be documented in this section. Use the back of the card if necessary (include the date with your comments).

**Last, but not least please print clearly.
Non-legible data is lost data!**

Thank you for your efforts!