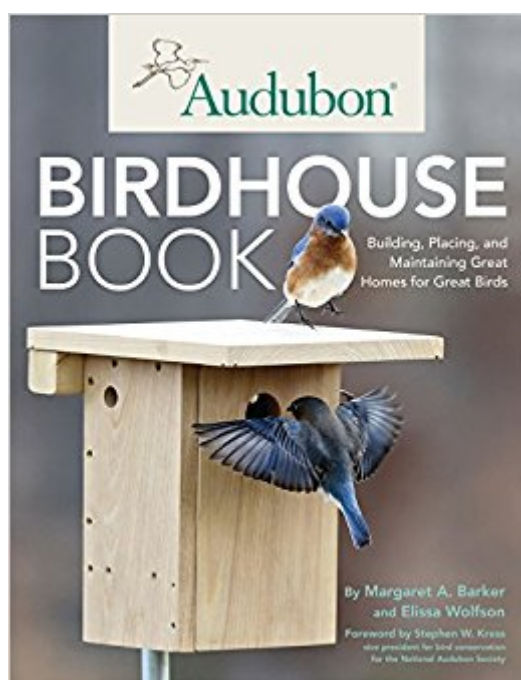


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Audubon Birdhouse Book: Building, Placing, And Maintaining Great Homes For Great Birds



Synopsis

A visit to almost any home or garden center presents birders with numerous cute and colorful contraptions that are sold as bird homes. But the fact is, many of these products provide anything but a safe refuge for your feathered friends. Produced in association with the National Audubon Society, Audubon Birdhouse Book explains how to build and place functional DIY bird homes that are safe and appropriate for more than 20 classic North American species, from wrens to raptors. Each of the easy-to-build boxes and shelves within is accompanied by cut lists, specially created line diagrams, and step-by-step photography, making the projects accessible to those with even the most rudimentary woodworking skills. In addition, this practical and beautifully presented guide is packed with color photography and information about the bird species covered—including titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, phoebes, swallows, waterfowl, and even kestrels and owls—to help the reader properly place and maintain the homes to attract birds. And because these projects are the product of years of experience and field-testing, you can be sure you're getting the best advice regarding proper design, safe construction materials, and correct home placement to mitigate exposure to elements, pests, and predators. Finally, beyond the birdhouses, you'll find out how you can contribute to the larger birding community and even enhance your birding experience with the aid of new technologies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"North American native birds are picky homeowners. Barker (coauthor, *The Feeder Watcher*)'s

Guide to Bird Feeding) and freelance writer Wolfson present a useful guide perfect for backyard bird watchers. The book starts with historical content on invasive species, introduced predators, and habitat loss. In addition, readers will find territory maps and material on bird food sources and identification. These projects cover all skill levels and are enhanced by wonderful illustrations. Contributor Chris Willett, a carpenter, provides clear blueprints with exploded views and detailed cut lists. Like *Birdhouses You Can Build in a Day*, this informative volume tailors designs to specific species. However, what sets this work apart is the inclusion of research and scientific study results on what makes a home suitable for a particular type of bird. **VERDICT** The designs here are for enthusiasts who prefer to serve the needs of the birds rather than human aesthetics. This well-organized and meticulously researched book is a winner." - Library Journal

Audubon Birdhouse Book is the most authoritative book available for creating safe, sturdy, and easy-to-build homes for many of North America's favorite birds.

Having been in the bird attracting and watching industry for over 20 years and being head of a non-profit bluebird organization, I've seen the good, bad, and ugly when it comes to books on bird housing. In my unbiased opinion, this book is the most complete, factual, and useful one I've ever seen. Whereas many birdhouse books are loaded with impractical designs that almost no one can build, the Audubon Birdhouse Book has simple, easy-to-build plans that are also much better for the birds. I love the excellent pictures, illustrations, and diagrams too. Another very good aspect of the book is it covers both eastern and western species of birds. So, if you're interested in getting started (or adding to your existing knowledge) in the wonderful hobby of attracting birds with nesting boxes, buying this book is a must.

I'm a birder, and Audubon member, and I sometimes get an urge to make something, so I started printing plans for bluebird boxes off the web, and knocking out some bluebird boxes. I'd seen this book on Audubon's Facebook a while back and put it on my wish list. After a couple boxes made from plans from the web, I decided I was enjoying it enough to take another step and I ordered the Audubon Birdhouse Book. I fully expected a saddle-stitched book about as thick as a magazine with some plans in it. This book is much more than that. Its 160 pages include the whys, as well as the hows, of building nesting boxes for different common species, from wrens to ospreys. It talks about predators and squatters. It shows how to protect your nest box, good woods and bad woods, what you can finish it with, and what not to finish it with. The plans themselves are clear and

concise. Some might be a little beyond my hand saw and cordless drill, but to be honest, I'm more into the making, I don't have suitable locations for many of these. I'll place boxes with birders as I build them. I do have to give it 4 stars because perfect-bind books are hard to work out of.

Something that would lay flat and stay open, or even a URL to download PDFs of the plans (with proof of purchase, of course) so I can just have a laser copy in my work area would have been great. I'm really looking forward to this weekend, when I can delve into some new plans and boxes.

It's good, but it still seems hard to find a great book on this topic. I think it's a bit short on species, or at least isn't comprehensive enough on which species might use which design. For example, I've seen it said that blue jays and robins will both use shelf-style houses. In this book there are two different styles for robins, but no cross-listing to show which, or both, would also be applicable to blue jays. Second, I think even a minimal amount of coverage by geographic area would've been a huge improvement. They could've used the space to also give some info on species breeding patterns. Third, one of the things we wonder about is cleaning: when and how. We know that many of the species will brood more than once. We also know that it's possible some of the houses will provide winter shelter. We're guessing there's a shoulder-season sweet spot to clean, but haven't seen anything to help guide the process. All in all it has a few nice designs, but we're still waiting for the elusive more comprehensive guide to building.

This book came pretty close to being perfect for me. I do recommend it if you're looking to build "authentic" houses that birds will actually use. After two 70+ hour projects this winter I wanted a quick win for the weekend. I built several houses from this book over the weekend and had such a good time that I built even more the following weekend for a total of 11 houses. I built 4 of their so-called "x box" houses. I gave two to my Mother in Law. My two are occupied with swallows and at least one of hers is occupied. In fact, one of mine was in use within 24 hours! I made the HUGE flicker house and mounted it high up on a tree (heavy!), but it's still unoccupied. I made two of their "carolina wren" boxes, mounting them to my barn and shed. The one on the barn was occupied just this past weekend. How fun! I made two platforms from another book but neither has seen any action yet and a bat house from another book, as well. No action there yet, either. The measured layouts are pretty good. I did find one mistake, so be sure to think about it while you're going, instead of following blindly. Also, be sure to adjust as needed if you're not using the same thickness stock. I used rough sawn cedar and white oak, so I had to make a number of adjustments. There's a lot of practical information in the book, and the plans are based on this data. Other books tend to

give you plans for houses that look like real people houses and have no scientific research backing their designs, sizes, hole sizes, etc. For the x box design I found that they made the pole mount as quick and simple as possible, which might make sense if you're installing twenty of these in a hurry, but for a homeowner I didn't like the design for two reasons. First, it has a single mounting point at the top. Once the house is set down onto the pole it flops down. Secondly the house turns in the wind! For me, I wanted the hole facing one direction that made sense for the location. Because of these issues I modified the design, adding a second mounting block to the back of the house where the pole passed through, thus preventing the house from flopping and tilting. Next, I drilled a small hole through the bottom block and through the first side of the pole. This let me install a screw that anchors the house in one direction, preventing it from spinning. If you make the second mounting block be sure to do it on a drill press because it's almost impossible to make the two holes perfectly parallel in 180 degrees of plane. If they're off even a little the house will be crooked and look awful. I made three attempts at this with a hand drill before realizing the solution. Another modification that I made was to cut shallow grooves along the top roof edges so rain won't hug the surface, running under the roof, towards the house. For more information, this is the same process used on home window sills. As a final comment I loved the inner and outer (top) roofs idea. This allows for a weatherproof roof and more freedom for the top roof. For mine I used rough sawn boards on the top roof, complete with bark and fun shape variation from the log. In fact, one even had the base of a limb embedded in it, which makes for a natural-looking perching surface.

Good and informative book on building houses and the birds themselves however, I would have preferred more on houses for smaller birds rather than owls, ducks, etc., I built a couple of the houses that is pictured on cover and they are easy to build and real nice, also it is suited for several types of birds.

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