



Wood Duck Habitat Restoration Project

The goal of this project is to bring back the wood duck to St. Clair Shores by forming partnerships with two business that provided financial support, students who constructed the nest boxes and the waterfront homeowners who allowed us to erect the nest boxes in their yards. The goal was reached in the fourth year (2000) of the project. A pair of wood ducks nested and successfully produced 13 eggs, of which 8 or 9 chicks survived. Currently there are 20 nest boxes located on Lake St. Clair, 2 on the Milk River and 3 located on the ponds in the St. Clair Shores Golf Club for a total of 25 nest boxes. Each year a progress report has been sent to all the active lakefront homeowners who are participating in the project.

Project Update – On June 18, 2013, Scout Greg Alter Jr. and Scoutmaster Greg Alter Sr. from Boy Scout Troop #1407 with the recommendation from the Waterfront Environmental Committee decided to use this project as an Eagle Scout project and to retain the project as an ongoing troop endeavor.

Success Stories

In the spring of 2001 we had two productive nest boxes. The Schwartz residence nest box was successfully again this year. Seven out of fourteen eggs hatched. The mother wood duck was last seen with chicks in tow swimming off into the sunset. The Holger residence also had an active box. While we were surveying the Holger nest boxes on 6-2-01, we inadvertently disturbed a hen wood duck sitting on a clutch of eggs. We stayed just long enough to identify the eggs and left quickly. We returned to check the box a month later and found bits of white egg shells along with 4 baby starlings. Starling eggs are a dark blue while wood duck eggs are creamy white and about the size of small chicken eggs. So we believe that the hen wood duck hatched out her eggs and a starling moved in after the wood duck chicks left the nest box. In the spring of 2006 we had a pair of kestrel falcons set up housekeeping in a nestbox on the St. Clair Shores golf course. We had three chicks successfully fledge out of that box.



History of Wood Duck Conservation

Wood Duck species outlook - - At the beginning of the 20th Century, the wood duck faced near extinction due to market hunting, wetland drainage and forest fragmentation. The decrease in beaver populations during this period also affected wood ducks since beaver ponds are important feeding and breeding habitats. The passage of the Migratory Bird Treat Act in 1918 closed all wood duck hunting season for 23 years. In 1937 man made nesting boxes were introduced as substitutes for natural hollow tree nests. The beaver was restocked and populations flourished. Collectively, these efforts enabled the wood duck population to rebound to an estimated 3-4 million at the beginning of the 21st Century. Hunting seasons have been reinstated throughout its range. The wood duck is a true conservation success story. However, the loss of habitat due to development and fragmentation continue to be major concerns for the continued success of this great American game bird.



For more information about wood duck nest boxes go to the "Wood Duck, Bird and Bat House Information" page!

