

SECTION A - OPENLANDS AND WOODLAND MARGINS



Mourning Dove

Mourning Dove

Plan 3 (page 33)

Mourning doves are one of Pennsylvania's most abundant and adaptable birds. They do not nest in tree cavities or nest boxes, but they will use a simple, shallow cone of 1/4 or 1/2 inch hardware cloth that is wired into the horizontal crotches of tree limbs. First, cut out a 12 inch square piece of hardware cloth with tin snips, then trim the square to form a circle 12 inches in diameter.

Next, cut out a pie-shaped wedge about 2 1/2 inches wide along the outer edge of the circle. Pull the two cut edges together and overlap them about 1 inch. Wire the two edges together.

Evergreens, particularly pine and spruce, are favorite nest sites.

This simple and inexpensive nest cone is an excellent one for young people to make in nature classes.

Place the nest cone in moderate shade, in the crotch of a horizontal tree limb 6 to 16 feet above the ground. There should be open space around the nest cone for easy access by the doves. Use roofing nails, staples or wire to securely fasten the nest in place. Bend back the cut edges of the cone so that the sharp points of wire do not stick out.

Dove nests are very simple structures made of twigs. They usually contain two white eggs. Mourning doves may nest two or three times every summer. Sometimes they nest in old robin or grackle nests.

Northern Flicker

Plan 9 (page 41)

Northern Flickers are a common woodpecker across much of the state. They frequently nest in farm groves, orchards, woodlots and in urban areas. Unlike most other woodpeckers, flickers usually forage for ants and grubs on the ground in crop fields and in grassy meadows and yards.

The secret to attracting flickers is to use 1 1/2 inch cedar boards for nest boxes and to fill the interior of the box all the way to the top with sawdust. Tamp in the sawdust before April 1, so the box is ready when the flickers arrive. This house should have a hinged roof to facilitate filling it with sawdust. The filled box simulates a dead tree with soft heartwood. A "primary excavator," a Northern Flicker will start at the entrance hole and throw out sawdust until it creates a suitable cavity. Because this box remains filled with sawdust if not used, sparrows and starlings are not a problem. The entrance hole should be 2 1/2 inches in diameter.



Northern Flicker

This nest box idea was developed by Mr. A. J. Boersma of Sioux Center, Iowa.

Flicker boxes should be placed 4 to 6 feet high, along fencerows that border crop fields or pastures. They also may be placed in orchards and woodlots. Flicker boxes can be attached to existing fence posts or to free-standing posts with predator guards.