

# American Kestrel Eastern Screech Owl

Backyard Bird  
Project



## Tips

- One 1" x 10" x 8" piece of unpainted / untreated wood. Best choices: cedar, cypress, or redwood.
- 1 1/4" outdoor wood screws.
- Wire to keep side door shut.

## Tips

- Do not mount your box where you will be using pesticides, insecticides, or herbicides.
- With a chisel or knife, make horizontal scratches on the inside of the front piece, from the bottom up to the entrance hole (so the young birds can climb out).
- Make sure there are no nails or screws in the wood that could cause injury to the bird.
- Do not paint the inside of the box. Do not paint or treat with a wood preservative.
- For Kestrels - Best to place on a pole, side of a barn, or on a dead or lone tree in open field. Entrance should face an open area.
- For Screech Owls - Place in woods, along woodland edges, or in yards with large trees. Keep away from sidewalks or doors.

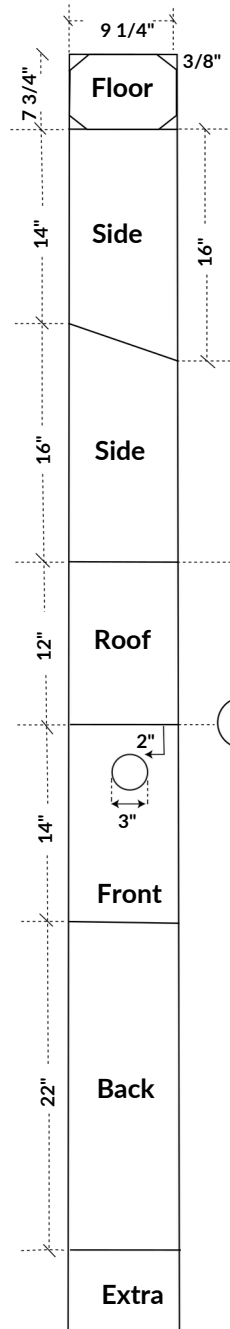
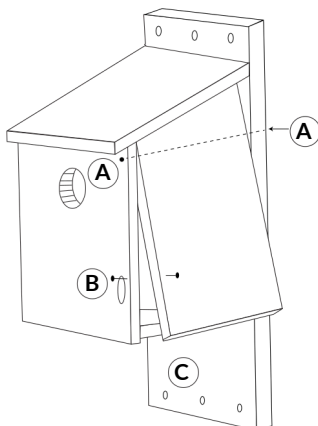
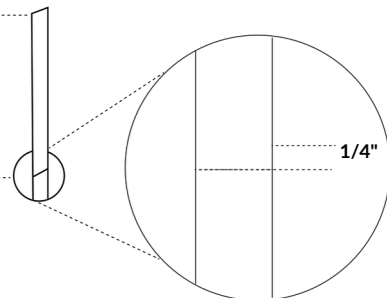


Photo by Rob Palmer



Detail of Two Slant Cuts



Photo by Roy Niswanger

- Pivot screws work as hinges. To allow the side to open easily, the pivot screw in the back must be level with the one in front.
- Loop wire around nails.
- Holes for attaching box to a tree or post with nails, lag bolts, or wire.

## AMERICAN KESTREL



- 9" tall falcons with long pointed wings and long tail.
- Males have blue-gray wings; females are mostly reddish brown.
- Has characteristic tail-bob.
- Makes excited, high-pitched cries when alarmed.
- Found in open habitats.
  - Primary diet in summer consists of large insects. In winter, mice & small birds.
- Nests in cavities 10-30 feet off ground. Old woodpecker holes, natural cavities, rock crevices, and man-made nesting boxes are all used.
- Usually have 1 clutch a year with 4-5 eggs laid. Parents are monogamous and both incubate for 29-31 days. First flight takes place 30-31 days after hatching.
- Life expectancy around 2-5 years in the wild.

## EASTERN SCREECH OWL



- 8" tall, small and stocky, with feather tufts and yellow eyes.
- Comes in two color morphs: reddish brown (cinnamon) and gray.
  - Found in urban and suburban areas.
- Diet consists of small birds and mammals, reptiles, insects, crayfish, and earthworms.
- They are nocturnal, and spend their days sleeping in dense foliage or inside a cavity or crevice, hidden away from other predators.
- Nesting occurs from mid-March to mid-May, and one clutch with 3 to 5 eggs is usually produced. Incubation lasts about 26 days and the young fledge approximately 28-30 days after hatching.
- Their vocalizations consist of mellow whistles and trills.
- Screech Owls search for nest and roost sites throughout the year, so build your nest box as soon as possible!

According to recent data, studies show a decline of nearly 50 percent in the American Kestrel population. They are considered threatened or endangered in 4 states, and their population is of concern in 21 others. Eastern Screech Owls are currently in decline in the northeastern United States. Building a nest box for these little birds can help in their recovery, while also providing you with nature's best pest control!