

# Wood Duck

*Aix sponsa*

## General Information:

-Considered by many to be the most beautiful duck in North America, the colorful male of this species is unmistakable with its large iridescent crest and multicolored bill. In flight it appears to be big-headed with a short neck and a long squared tail.

## Song:

-Male makes a soft up-slurred whistle. Female makes a rising *hoo-eeek* and a sharp *crreek, crreek*.

## Behavior:

-Frequents wooded watercourses, ponds, and swamps. A dabbling duck that feeds primarily on vegetable material and insects, but also eats snails, tadpoles, and salamanders. Walks easily on land and often forages there. Sometimes several females “dump” eggs in single nest box that may hold 20-40 eggs. It is one of the 4 Wisconsin ducks that lives in trees.

## Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester

## Nesting:

-Incubation of 25-37 days by the female. In Northern Wisconsin the Wood Duck has 1 brood per year of precocial young which are tended by the female. First flight at 56-70 days,

## Population:

-Possible increase due to reduced hunting pressures and placement of nest boxes near habitat.



## Conservation:

-Habitat being lost to timbering and drainage. The Wood Duck often perches in trees.

## Shoreline Restoration Issues:

-If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Wood Duck on your shoreland property, first consider their diet. Wood Ducks eat a lot of acorns, therefore I recommend that you plant many Swamp White Oak, Red Oak, Bur Oak, White Oak, and Northern Pin Oak in your buffer zone. Then I would concentrate on emergent aquatic vegetation, submersed aquatic vegetation, and shoreline vegetation. This will help the Wood Duck in the long run, but for immediate help for this wonderful bird, I would hang a Wood Duck house in a tree as close to the water as you can.