

Bodging for Birds

Making instructions

Main thing is internal dimensions and entrance hole size and position.

Wall thickness after hollowing needs to be >20mm for insulation.

Hollowed space needs to be between 100mm and 120mm diameter, around 180mm deep.

IMPORTANT The base of the inside needs to be 125mm below the bottom of the entrance hole to prevent chicks falling out.

Entrance hole, stepped hole starting with 45mm, then 35mm, 28mm and 25mm these steps only need to be 3 to 5mm, they are used later to guide a forstner bit to modify the hole for different bird types. e.g. 25 mm for blue, coal and marsh tits, 28 mm for great tits, tree sparrows and pied flycatchers, 32 mm for house sparrows and nuthatches, 45 mm for starlings.

Log:

Clear central diameter between 180mm and 220mm, allowing for external variation, length 220 to 250mm (can be bigger, but someone has to carry this up a ladder) for main part (spindle mount) and matching or exceeding width and slightly longer length than the width of the main part?? Split to make bowl blank for the lid.

Process:-

2 components BOX refers to the bulk of the item and LID is the lid...

BOX

1. On bandsaw cut a slice from the back, this will give a flat surface that can be used to fix to a tree or mount to a plank for fitting, also gives a flat to sit on the drill press.
2. (optional) Slice off the front gives a nice flat for drilling, and a place to mark numbers on if the installers want to. But the bark is a good habitat in itself so keep as much of it as you can.

LID

1. Cut to length longer than the width of the Box to give overhang.
2. Split into "Bowl blanks" as long as there is >20mm for the lid insulation you should get a bit of surplus here!

Drill Box

3. Use Forstner bits to make a stepped entrance hole, the idea here is that the entrance size can be adjusted by the installers depending on what birds they want to house. The bottom of the entrance hole must be at least 125 mm from the floor of the nestbox. If it's less, young birds might fall out.

- a. The entrance hole size depends on the species you hope to attract: 25 mm for blue, coal and marsh tits, 28 mm for great tits, tree sparrows and pied flycatchers, 32 mm for house sparrows and nuthatches, 45 mm for starlings.
- b. So start with the 45mm make a step 3 to 5mm deep, then the 32, 28, and finally 25

Lathe

4. Mount base section between centres, cut a chuck tenon on one end, obviously to suit your chuck jaws, but you will be hollowing so go for a big set!
5. Figure out the size of the tenon to fit the lid onto and the actual dimension of the hollowing ensuring minimum 20mm wall thickness.
6. Cut a mortice in the lid so that the back lines up just short of the back of the box, I tend to leave a tenon in the middle for optional chuck mounting later.
7. Mount base in chuck, cut tenon to match lid, IF the lid is the same width as the box I tend to put a bevel on to encourage water to run off from the joint.
8. Hollow it, just like any box, but probably a bit bigger than normal. Now this is the big ask! **Do not make the internal walls perfectly smooth!** Remember it is for birds and hopefully one day chicks will want to climb those walls!
9. Final step drill three 7mm holes into the bottom to let any water drain out. and drill one hole in the lid towards the front for a single screw to fix it on during installation.

The website at <http://TwistedTrees.uk/BodgingforBirds> should have the above with pictures once I get them done, I am also hoping to get YouTube videos made of various turners making these nesting boxes. I was (and may) do my own, but I have 1 camera and no experience of editing video.